A Philosophy of Nationhood and the Modern Self

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To my mother and father – for always being there.

PREFACE

When I first started my research for this book, the resurgence of sub-state nationalism in Catalonia, Scotland and Quebec, as well as nationalist movements in central and eastern Europe, was mostly seen as a delayed response to the decay of old empires. In political theory, this subject did not yield much interest, because, both intellectually and socially, we have thought of ourselves as progressing to a model of 'global citizenship'. The limited nature of nationalist movements suggested that they were rather a historical hiccup on the way to a more progressive global democratic order.[1] At the same time, the language of nationalism has been removed from the way we described the actions of the modern liberal state, or institutions, such as the EU or the UN. Thanks to globalisation, the rise of importance of international financial institutions to global governance has further contributed to this process. Many of us, especially in what is still labelled as the Western World, have come to believe that our 'selves' have outgrown the cultural, social and political limitations of the polities we were born in, or members of, and that we can therefore all participate in a kind of a global cultural supermarket. This of course is an illusion only available to the select few global travellers, dwellers of globalised cities and those either well educated or well-off. The financial crisis of 2008, as well as increase in global terrorism, has greatly affected the feelings and identities of people living in advanced industrialised economies—amongst whom Germans seem to be 30% less likely to identify themselves as global citizens than pre-2008.[2] As I finish writing this book, the European Union, with its project of European Citizenship, has been thrown into turmoil by a referendum in the UK, where clearly English nationalism has been one

of the main forces behind the vote to leave the EU and is now threatening the stability of the British Union as well.

The original aim for this book was then to present the reader with a largely untold story of the relationship between nationhood and the modern self, in the hope that perhaps this would allow us to understand the role which the former played in the production of the new globalised world order. The wholesale discarding of the concept of the nation stood in direct opposition to many examples of open nationalism. Certainly, I think that such a case can be made for the Scots, as well as the Polish democratic revolution in 1989, which was simultaneously nationalistic and outward looking. And yet the refusal of many thinkers to engage with the 'nation' has been overwhelming. I feared then that an advent of what can be labelled as 'abstract universalism' is the first step on the road to 'self'-destruction (i.e. destruction of the self), and therefore to losing the very subjective defence strategies, which give us the autonomy we so greatly desire—leading many people feeling anxious and helpless. Now my fears seem to be materialising, as the peoples of Europe are disenchanted with the increasing alienation of the political and financial elites—seeing transnational cooperation as representation of the abstract global order. Their diagnosis is misplaced, but it is understandable since a certain version of liberalism, which has dominated the twenty-first century, has done nothing to recognise political identities of citizens or to provide a framework in which a more open political agency could in fact flourish—other than through the global marketplace.

The above still remains one of the primary motivations behind this book. However, we have also seen more recently (2015) that nationalism can once again be more than just a localised force. Indeed, the refugee crisis of 2015 has uncovered a much uglier, and widespread, version of nationalist ideology and xenophobia, which Europe thought it has shaken off. The European project itself is in peril, with the UK most likely leaving the union and several other countries secretly fantasising about such a possibility. In my native Poland, a long marginalised anti-liberal part of the society has managed to take control of the state and all of its institutions (a victory which was handed to them by the arrogance and corruption of the previous regime). Within the first few months from gaining power, the ruling party has awaken memories of early twentieth-century Polish nationalism—through what the government calls 'historical politics'. While most of this new rhetoric was aimed at reinforcing some of the more noble parts of Polish recent history, it also represented a return

to an ethnically understood nationalism as a foundation of political community. This was plainly seen in the blanket refusal of the Polish government to host the small number of refugees it agreed with the European Union—as well as its redefinition of democracy, where sovereignty of the nation has no longer been understood through the principles of liberal democracy but through the concept of the 'will of the (ethnicall defined) people'. Populism and xenophobia have spread widely across Europe, as well as America—judging by the US presidency race. All these developments remind us again about the potential of national identity for being used for division, discrimination and control.

Far from making this project redundant, the question which we now must face is this: Given that nations are most likely to stay for some time, how can we transform nationhood to allow for the progression of the transnational and global identities, cosmopolitan duties and principles of global justice that we do care about? This is of course a complex issue and out of scope for a single book. What I focus here on is framing a conceptualisation of nationhood, which allows us to better see its inherent capability for transformation of local into universal and diversity into equality. By exploring this concept of nationhood, I start to outline a potential field of further investigation into not just different philosophical aspects of nationalism but a moral duty to transform nationhood.

NOTES

1. This was not the first time this view about nationalism was widely expressed. In Europe we certainly experienced a similar rally of post-national optimism until the transformations of 1989 have brought Eastern European nationalisms back into the spotlight.
2. Although on a global scale, there has been a rise in identification as 'global citizens'—led by attitudes in developing countries.

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Nationhood in Political Theory

Introduction

Liah Greenfeld wrote in her essay 'Nationalism and the Mind' that when she asked her students to draw pictograms of nationalism in one of her seminars, they came up with images of armed men fighting each other. However, when asked to repeat the activity at the end of the seminar, the students represented nations as different colours and cultures living side by side.[1] They no longer perceived nations as inherently militant and agonistic. The complex nature of nationalism has been to me more than an intellectual riddle—but a lived experience of my formative years while being brought up in Poland in the 1990s and early 2000s. Those years, which many commentators labelled 'the Polish democratic revolution', were to me clearly the result of a movement of national unity, which collapsed in the early 1990s and have turned into two competing versions of Polish nationalism. The western commentators were at the time only happy to notice the prevailing will for a democratically elected government. However, a carful observer would see that the banners held by protested did not say 'citizens', but 'Poles'—and the Polish Constitution assigned sovereignty to the latter. Nevertheless, the version of nationalism that ultimately won in 1989 was an open one. It was this nationalism, which directed The Polish state towards NATO and the EU—West not East. It should come as little surprise then that I grew up simultaneously fearing the dangers of Nazi ideology and appreciating the ability of nationalism to accelerate our openness to Europe and the World. It was

partly this experience which inspired my desire to understand the paradox of national identity at a time when much of the Anglophone political theory navigated away from 'nationality' in favour of a statist approach to politics. However, the paradoxical nature of nationhood has been much better understood within the field of nationalism studies, which itself is collection of scholars ranging from sociologists and historians to political sciences and social theorists.

Nations are valuable to us because of the way they organise social life and allow us to participate in shared traditions and practices that are also constitutive to many political communities. The shared cultural heritage of national communities allows us to celebrate diversity while being at home. Additionally, the plurality of different national identities represents a rich diversity of cultures, values and ideas of a good life.[2] Nevertheless, cultural distinctiveness comes at a price. National identity is often seen to be formed through rejection of what is 'alien' or 'foreign'. While nationhood does provide a way for citizens to participate in a common political world through shared practices and political imagination, it can also exclude aliens who by the same virtue fall not only outside the borders of the community but also outside of the borders of what can be imagined as common. This is why it is so much easier to ignore the suffering of those who are alien to us—because we cannot imagine their pain as clearly as when this suffering is shared by our compatriots. Nationhood is then characterised by a paradoxical tension between openness and closeness, between the apparent plurality of national cultures and the uniformity of national identity.

This book offers a critical study of the concept of nationhood that addresses this paradoxical tension. But instead of trying to eliminate the paradox, I embrace it. My study of the concept of the nation is crucially based on three fundamental propositions: (1) that nations are neither simply civic or ethnic, exclusive or inclusive, particularistic or universalistic, but instead represent a dialectic tension between those qualities; (2) that nations are historical concepts, rather than ready-made models. National identity is not a fixed social phenomenon but one of the key projects of modernity. This point is particularly important when we consider that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected. Thanks to the contemporary globalised culture, the lives of foreigners are more accessible than ever before. The radical difference of national belonging seems to be becoming tamed.[3] I attempt to make sense of the concept of the nation in an increasingly interconnected and globalised world. Finally, I will argue that (3)

the paradoxical nature of modern subjectivity allows nations to have the capacity to be a source of solidarity that transcends national borders while promoting the development of moral and political agency. Approaching this issue from a new angle, the book delves into the philosophical presuppositions of modern political and moral agency—uncovering the epistemological and anthropological elements of the place of the nation within the project of modernity.

Why should we embark on such a journey? It is because nations are in modernity key to the production of subjectivity—and therefore of individuals. 'Individual autonomy' and 'authorship' are not concepts often associated with nationalism, and yet it is specifically the modern nation-states that have brought to us a world, in which becoming an author of one's fate has become one of the core values of our societies. The continuing threat presented by the extreme right and fundamentalist nationalism can often make us blind to some more redeeming aspects of national identity. It is the tension between plurality and uniformity, which binds individuals, practices and institutions, and makes society possible. It is also this tension which provided the field in which we regulate, test and oppose various models of political normativity. In this sense, like many other authors, I see subjectivity as a socio-historical project. The origins of this project are two fold, and have been reiterated in Ancient Greece, as well in the Enlightenment. As such, subjectivity can be then located and examined both historically and geographically. A key element of tracing the formation of subjectivity in Europe is by examining the subject from the perspective of epistemology of politics. Today, the link between politics and cognition doesn't seem too obvious. Contemporary Political Theory has made it a habit of taking the political world for granted. Thus, the questions 'what is political' and 'how we can recognize it' (Arendt, Oakeshott, Leo-Strauss, Vogelin, Klaus Held, Michael Foucault) have been displaced by questions about our rights and duties (which are indeed very important ones). However, the problem of cognition has been central to classical political philosophy, and I believe it has become crucial to remind ourselves of it—especially at a time when the language we use to describe the political world seems to be failing. It is a particularly pressing issue when we concern ourselves with identity and nationhood. Looking at the political and social history of Europe, it is almost impossible to clearly see political, cultural or ethnical identities. It is then a political decision to recognise a certain collective. This process of differentiating is obviously susceptible to corruption. Minorities and groups are hardly primordial elements of politics (as individuals are).

They are not in either sense already 'there'. But neither are individuals as they are also involved in this process of identity forming. Theories of nationalism therefore reflect not only a specific ontology but a certain epistemology.

In this book, I attempt to show the relationship between nationhood and the modern subject. National identity has been usually understood only as a source of recognition. But the question that I believe is of even more significance is this: how does the national become recognised? I argue that changes in the structure of the epistemic subject that are characteristic to modernity have produced a new type of political experience that is inherently national. Nationalism is thus neither an ideology nor a sentiment or even a solely cultural concept but a form of modern political experience. By conceptualising nationhood through its epistemology, I intend to offer a way of understanding the role of national identity in contrasting political worlds based on equality of authorship.

I will argue that nationhood achieved its prominence, because it addresses, or perhaps results from the uniquely modern form of the modern self, which simultaneously strives to achieve autonomy and belonging in a world where traditional sources of identity no longer suffice. Following the direction of conceptualising nationhood initially pioneered by Liah Greenfeld, for whom nationhood is fundamentally the shape of the 'modern mind', I argue that nations are primarily communities of authorship, which allow for a democratic political agency. Furthermore, if 'nation' is an imagined community, it is one where people can imagine themselves as equals. However, the type of equality which nationalism brought was not the democratic legal equality—but the much more fundamental equality of authorship—of being able to participate in a common world, one not defined by social status, religion or honour. Nationhood has of course existed in an uneasy partnership with the state, whose purpose is to manage identity and recognition. It is therefore not surprising that nationalism as a state ideology has been one of the most dangerous and evil forces known to man. This book, however, is an optimistic voice in the debate on nationalism. In particular, it seeks a positive resolution to the conflict between nationalism and a cosmopolitan outlook, duties and norms.

Approach

Nationhood remains an understudied notion in political theory—especially in comparison to other concepts, such as 'state', 'citizenship', 'sovereignty' or 'community'. National identity has been neglected or severely

under-theorised by much of the liberal political thought—including those thinkers who argued for national self-determination. Simultaneously, our understanding of nationalism as a collectivist movement has been responsible for much of the criticism of national identity as a legitimate political concept. The word 'nation' has come to mean an anti-political and anti-democratic force. This state of political theory is in stark contrast with examples of nations opening up and transforming their identities in the light of global responsibilities. In this book, I therefore argue for an alternative genealogy of nationhood—one which places it at the core of thinking of universal rights and duties, where the contradiction between individual autonomy and national belonging is seen as historical rather than a logical one. In order to do so, I am going to be drawing heavily on the history of ideas. 'Nation' and 'self' are historical concepts, and they should be studied in their historical depth. Contemporary normative political philosophy has a tendency to avoid drawing on socio-historical arguments or history of ideas. There are indeed certain problems with using these types of arguments when engaging in a normative debate. First, interpretations of history are often difficult to verify—there might be multiple equally persuasive stories concerning the same concept or phenomenon. A philosopher is in a particularly difficult position here as she lacks the tools to investigate many of the claims she has to take for granted. Secondly, the relationship between history and history of ideas is not clear. Would individual freedom exist without the ideas of individuality and freedom?

However, the second issue highlights the special position of nationhood as a historical concept. Nationhood, as I argue in Chap. 2, would not exist without the idea of the nation. Nations are first constituted by shared belief. This is why investigating the origins of nationhood is so important, because it tells us something fundamental about the state of the modern *psyche*. As for the first reservation—my 'narrative' is indeed contestable. Things can be interpreted differently. There are always, however, ways of choosing one narrative over another. The purpose of my critique is not to establish historical truth, but to help us understand the sources of political, social and ethical problems that discussing 'nationhood' entails in the present. The task I have undertaken is not limited to the history of political thought, even if large parts of the argument draw heavily on the history of ideas. Political theory has a vital explanatory role in providing us—the users of political language—with an understanding of the general concepts that form our political world.

The challenge of this project is that it accommodates two different approaches: normative political theory on one side and history of political thought. The advantage of this kind of analysis is that it highlights gaps in both literatures and identifies areas in which they could be mutually beneficial to each other. In particular, while most nationalism scholars discuss nationality as a mass function, my approach shows that nationalism is inherently linked to the individual. I also highlight the value of an in-depth understanding of the nation for normative political theory by showing it to be both different from an ethnic identity and a civic community. My work aims to contribute to the debate on cosmopolitanism in two ways. The first is that it shows how the normative debate on the value of national boundaries is significantly affected by the underlying conceptions of nationhood and the self. Political theorists who want to write about the significance of national boundaries should investigate the complex role the nation plays, not only as a type of identity but also as a way of organising the experience of individuals. The second is that my work provides further evidence to those who believe that the defence of nationhood does not have to be formulated on particularist grounds, but are simultaneously sceptical about an abstract model of an up-rooted self. The view of nationhood presented here presents such a middle ground.

What Is a Nation?

There are obvious difficulties in defining the term 'nation', as like all historical concepts, its use has evolved. Romantic definitions of nationhood in terms of blood, belonging and natural bonds present a stark contrast to the enlightenment tradition which views nationhood in civic terms. It is also often difficult to state with absolute certainly whether a specific group is a national community or not. Are the Roma a nation or an ethnicity? What about Jews and Silesians? Defining nationality through a shared characteristic is another dead end. Nations do not have to share a common language, territory or other cultural features. While there is a tradition of talking about national character (e.g. the Italians are affectionate and lazy; The English are cold and sarcastic), these are clearly stereotypes that do not take into the account the huge internal differentiation of nations. An upper middle-class man from Oxford may have much more in common in terms of culture with his counterpart in Edinburgh than with someone from a council estate in Coventry.

Even though there doesn't seem to be a single unproblematic definition of the nation, one can aim to find some common features amongst the key conceptualisations. I discuss these theories in more detail further in the book. Here however I will limit myself to introducing the key similarities I find. There are three fundamental dimensions of my understanding of the nation. These are (i) that nations are constituted by belief, (ii) that nations provide a basis for mutual recognition between individuals and (iii) that nations are uniquely modern. The first claim means that nations do not exist independently of our ability to recognise them and cannot be simply thought of as groups of certain inherent characteristics. The perception of nationality has been allowed to evolve and indeed is still evolving. The second dimension is crucial for nationhood—in that nations are not only imagined but also that they are a way of imagining others. This is where stereotypes can become useful because they allow us to have access to the lives of others and care about them. In fact, without those prejudgements based on a shared nationality, social interaction would be greatly limited. Thirdly, nations represent a specifically modern cultural framework. While I do not engage in the debate about the origins of nationalism and industrialisation, I agree with Gellner who views nations as vehicles of modernisation.[4] It is within the national framework that individuals were offered the possibility of social mobility, advancement and pride. The mobility that came with nationhood in the name of the shared prosperity of the people allowed individuals to define themselves in terms that transcended social class and local sources of belonging.

I will propose to understand nationhood not simply as an identity but as a form of modern political experience. By this I mean that nations should not be simply seen as a movement inwards but as sources of bounded rationality that allow individual agents to define themselves morally and politically as well as to bond with others. This is clearly a communitarian view of nationhood. However, rather than focusing on the roles of tested practices and traditions in forming our moral sources, I want to highlight the political value of the thus-constructed self in a way that allows us to participate in global discourse.

Finally, one should note that while in the sense I will be using the term 'nation', it refers to communities of shared cultural and historical heritage which, while political, are not identical with states. National boundaries do not always overlap with state boundaries.[5] There are theorists, such as Gellner,[6] who do not make this distinction explicitly, because they regard the state as the main motor behind the formation of nations. But while

the link between the state and nation can indeed be strong, they are distinct concepts.[7] I understand nationalism as a term that relates to a set of modern movements, where citizenship is derived from an inclusion in the nation rather than in a 'mere' state where citizenship is derived from cultural norms.

Nation, Nationalism and Ideology

It is important to distinguish between the concept of nation a, nationalism as a process, nationalism as a normative theory and nationalism as an ideology. I have briefly outlined my understanding of the concept of the nation in the previous section, and further discussion can be found in Chap. 2. The majority of this book is preoccupied with nationalism understood as a socio-cultural process of modernity—one which can be traced to the modern ideal of the self, and in particular to notions of individual autonomy and authorship. Nationalism can also refer to a normative stance, whereas some claim that we have special duties to our fellow nationals—or that we should simply give priority to members of our own nation when resources are scarce. But for most of us, we see nationalism as an ideology, which is often linked to xenophobia, tribalism and racism. However, it is also clear that not every nationalist process results in a nationalistic ideology, and certainly there are almost no nationalist normative theorists who are also nationalistic in a sense which invokes a nationalist ideology. This book is therefore not a defence of the far-right movements, or the current desire of some European populations to return to the nineteenth-century world of the nation-state. On the contrary, I hope to show that nationalism can be, and in fact has been, a politically open force. Perhaps more importantly, the central nature of nationhood to the ideals of the self highlights the risk of omitting national identity from our political debates—as nations remain the key source of political agency. Failing to acknowledge this can lead to a feeling of diminished agency—and I believe that many of the populist movements today are an expression of this.

Definition of the Self/Subject

The concept of the 'self' refers to the entirety of the subjective individual experience of a person as opposed to the life of a community. Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term 'subject' has also gained popularity and we can often find it used with a similar meaning as the

word 'self'. While I will indeed use these words interchangeably at times, they are often not the same. 'Self' refers to a self-reflective part of our subjectivity, or in other words, the word 'self' denotes what we perceive when we say 'I', 'me' or 'us'. In that sense, self is intrinsically linked to identity. However, I will also use the term 'subject' to refer more specifically to a modern model of the self (as opposed to the classical one).

The term 'subject' itself is notoriously ambiguous. I will list only three main meanings here. First, in everyday language, it can mean 'topic' or 'theme'. This is what we refer to, when we want to 'change the subject', or want to 'know more about a subject'. The second meaning is political and relates to the original Latin root of the word *subjectus*, which stands for 'placed beneath' or 'inferior to'. This is the meaning which Foucault uses in his work to signify a self, which is produced by disciplinary power of the state. The third, philosophical use, refers to a self in a moment when it is directed to the world as an object of knowledge. In philosophy, the opposition between 'subject' and 'object' is particularly central to modern epistemology. The 'subject' here refers to a self actively withdrawing itself from the world in order to know the world. This is also the meaning in which I will use the word 'subject'—the thinking mind as differentiated from the objects of thought. I will use inverted commas to distinguish this meaning from the first one as a 'topic' or 'theme'.

It is a particular feature of modernity that the self wants to be a 'subject' of politics. This means both, that we find expression through politics and that politics appears to enable popular agency through democratic processes. Much of contemporary continental thought has been devoted to the question of the extent to which subjectivity is a strategy of the self or a product of the socio-economic processes of the modern state. I take the former perspective, but not without acknowledging the persuasiveness of some of its critics. It is at this intersection between self, subjectivity and the political world where we find the 'nation' as a specifically modern phenomenon.

Structure of the Book

The first part of the book is devoted to the current state of the theory of nationhood and sets out the framework for understanding nationality later in the book. This is particularly important given the limited nature of engagement between political theory and nationalism studies. Chapter 3 examines the limited nature in which nationhood has featured in contemporary

political theory and proposes this narrow view of the nation that haunts current debates on the subject. Critics of nationality as a philosophical category perceive it as both conceptually and normatively problematic, labelling nationalism as collectivist, a- or anti-political, and morally arbitrary. I argue that these criticisms, while partly valid, represent inadequate grasp or unreflective use of the concept of nationhood. In particularly, I look at Arendt's and Oakeshott's critique of nationalism as a political principle.

Chapter 2 is an attempt to establish a more reflective view of nationhood as a concept and a normative category. Drawing on works both in philosophy and sociology of the nation (Anderson, Greenfeld, Hobsbawm, Canovan, Miller, Zizek), I put forward a conceptual framework for the further study of nationhood based on four principles: (1) that nations are constructs; that (2) the constructed nature of nations makes the distinction between nature and politics useless; that (3) nations create a common world defined by a shared sense of rationality (logos); that (4) the trajectory of the nation has its origins in the trajectory of the modern self.

The second part of the book entitled 'Subjectivity as Modernity' explores the fundamental elements of the epistemological framework which I draw up in the first two chapters—subjectivity and our place in the political world. Chapter 4 revisits classical (Plato, Aristotle) and modern (Descartes, Locke, Kant) concepts of the self. I claim that the project of modernity (Geuss, Adorno) leads to an irresolvable tension within the self—one which seemingly jeopardises our ability to participate in a public world. I also argue that this inherent dichotomy within the modern subject is in fact constitutive not only to our understanding of freedom but also to identity and belonging. Taking as a starting point the transformations of the modern self, the author shows that the project of modernity leads to an unresolvable tension within the self—one which jeopardises our ability to participate in a public world.

In Chap. 5, I move away from a historical perspective to a critical one and explore the tension within the modern self by focusing on its implications on how we understand our relationship with the world and others. Specifically, I look at the concepts of authorship and autonomy, which are at the heart of democratic universalism and our understanding of freedom. The project of modernity can in this sense be labelled 'a society of authors'. In doing so, I follow the works of Charles Taylor, Eyal Chowers, Richard Lindley and Cornelia Klinger.

Chapter 6 probes the limits of political universalism. Our political dilemmas, problems and interests do not come from a void of an original position,

but can only be recognised thanks to the common language and practices that define our being together. Politics is not merely the administration of issues, but a communal process of pursuing often competing ideas of the good life. Politics, in other words, requires practical reason. Nation, I shall argue, represents that bounded rationality better than the state and allows us to engage with the political through social practices and institutions that make the common good accessible and tangible to us.

The third part brings the discussion on nationhood and subjectivity together, by showing how the nation enables democratic political agency. Having established that the modern self is defined by an internal tension between freedom and belonging, in Chap. 7, which is central to this book, I show that the nation successfully mediates this tension. By referring to Margaret Canovan's concept of nations as 'worlds', I explain that nationhood remains conceptually and normatively relevant to the way we think about political community—including our global responsibilities. In particular, nationhood allows us to imagine others as equal political agents, and therefore can provide the basis for a community based on authorship.

In Chap. 8, I argue that my understanding of nationhood does not lead us to a tribal understanding of politics. Nationalism does not have to restrict our recognition of autonomy of others to our fellow nationals. In fact the concept of organising political communities into nations has proven both practically and theoretically open, as I show by referring to the Scottish case. This is partly because national citizenship can be 'tamed' and made accessible (Kymlicka); but more importantly, the national self is ultimately an open one, and it is that openness that has been the vehicle of success of the modern nation.

In Chap. 9, I address those thinkers to whom the very categories of self and subjectivity are problematic at best. Concepts of sovereignty, identity and citizenship are continuously undermined by technological and socio-economic process which we call globalisation. I attempt to tackle some of the fundamental issues raised by what I call 'post-national' thought (Hardt & Negri, Beck) by looking at whether the form of political identity represented by nationhood can continue to facilitate our engagement with what is 'common' or 'political'.

My study of nationhood is not uncritical as I will acknowledge some of the most commonly recognised problems with national identity. There are many reasons why political theorists may be particularly cautious when it comes to the concept of the nation. These can be organised into three main lines of criticism: (a) That national identity is collectivist and

undemocratic; (b) That national bonds are apolitical and arbitrary; (c) That nations are an obstacle to the moral progression of mankind. This book maintains a dialogue with the first two criticisms: Ad. (a) While creating a sense of belonging, nations promote individual autonomy. The modern 'self' thrives on a tension between the two. Ad. (b) National bonds are political; they represent bounded rationality which allows us to engage with 'the political' through social practices and institutions that make the common good accessible to us (Chaps. 2 and 4).

The final part of the book also addresses the question as to what extent are national boundaries morally arbitrary—if indirectly. It often seems counter-intuitive that one could have special duties to a fellow national on the other side of my country, which would not apply to a person living five kilometres across the border (or indeed a foreign resident in my country). Furthermore, with the progress of globalisation, the argument from cooperation seems to lose its strength. Indeed, political action becomes universalised with the growth of global political movements, migration and the empowerment of further minorities. National borders are arguably less significant than they used to be.

My answer is partly indirect. In Chap. 6, I argue that politics itself is a limited activity. Our political dilemmas, problems and interests do not come from a void of an original position, but can only be recognised thanks to the common language and practices that define our being together. Politics is not merely the administration of problems, but a communal process of pursuing ideas of the good life. These ideas are, however, dependent on the community in question. Politics, in other words, requires practical reason. Nation, I shall argue, allows us to engage with the political through social practices and institutions that make the common good accessible and tangible to us, through allowing us to recognise others as equals. I further argue in Chap. 7 that nations can be seen as key to promoting individual autonomy. There are no reasons however why our recognition of autonomy of others should be limited only to our fellow nationals. It is true that nationalism as the historical process of nation-formation has been, and often still is, politically exclusive and thus anti-universalistic.[8] In particular, the ethno-linguistic type of nationalism dominating the twentieth century is not suited for the global era.[9] However, the concept of organising political communities into nations has proven both practically and theoretically open. This is partially because national citizenship can be 'tamed' and made accessible. More importantly however, this is because nationhood expresses an ability to open up to

others. In recent years, and perhaps as a result of globalisation, the expressions of national sentiment in the West seem to have become more inclusive. Societies are more multi-cultural which also allows increased access of non-nationals to positions of social status.

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This book is not a defence of nationalism—at least not in the way we have become used to this concept. As will become clear to the reader, I am particularly dismayed, like many others at this time, by the rise of far-right and populist movements across the Western world. Instead, I see my task quite differently—and this is to give a philosophical account of nationhood, which gives justice to its formative role in our polities, and more importantly to modernity. Liberal theory has not done this to date, and in my view, neglecting the language of 'nationhood' by the political elites, as well as by many theorists, has been one of the culprits to the rise of populism. If there is then one question, which I want to answer, it is—can nation be transformed to encompass universal values and identities? I argue that not only they can, but that such transformation lies at the heart of the political model of the modern self.

Notes

1. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2006, p. 204.
2. Also within nations themselves, as every nation recognises a level of internal cultural diversity. For example, out of different features of an Englishman, there is a particular type of Englishman that comes from Yorkshire. These sets of features do not contradict each other, though certain local identities might be associated with higher social status than others.
3. However, while nowadays citizenship seems more open than ever before, questions about who should be 'in' and who should be 'out' are as politically vivid as ever. Migration, asylum seekers, multiculturalism and the emergence of supranational bodies—all of these challenge the classical understanding of a liberal nation-state.
4. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983. One should note here that Gellner also argues that neither nationalism nor capitalism could create the modern society without the role of the state.
5. Although nationality and citizenship can coincide.
6. 'Nationalism is primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent'. Ernst Gellner, *Nationalism*, London, Blackwell, 1983, p. 1.

7. I will discuss the work of many scholars whose definition of the nation varies from mine, and in these circumstances, I will use the term nation in the meaning specific to these authors. I will however explain how their understanding of this term varies from mine.
8. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 168–9.
9. Anthony Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge, Polity, 1995, p. 11.

Defining 'The Nation'

Little has shaped modern European history more than the formation of nation-states and the accompanying belief that citizens should be nationals. The relationship between nationalism and state has proven useful not only because of the (however questionable) value of nations as structures capable of generating loyalty and support, but also because of the way they allowed for the generation of social solidarity. National identity offered an alternative to feudalism in terms of conceptualising political authority both territorially and legally. Whilst the bonds of nationhood are central to the way modern polities function in the West, the concept of the 'nation' received little theoretical attention until the second half of the twentieth century. It is then not surprising that the term itself remains ambiguous. This is further complicated by the fact that nationalism itself is not a uniform phenomenon. The way the German nation came into existence is quite different than that of the French or the English. The historical diversity of nations and the nation-building processes has made it particularly difficult to conceptualise nationhood. Whether or not members of the same nation share a set of common features (so-called national character) has been a subject of philosophical debate since Hume.[1] But is has proven hard, if not impossible, to identify such features. Not all nations share a common language or territory, and it is very difficult to determine how we would identify common cultural features.[2] For instance, both the Jewish and Roma nations lack a common territory, and other nations, such as the Swiss, have incorporated multiple languages into their national heritage.

However, the way we perceive national identity and nationalism has been greatly transformed since the time of Hume. In particular, the ethno-linguistic model of nationalism has been affected by the diffusion of traditional sources of identity by global cultural and social trends.[3] I no longer see my national identity as necessarily pivotal in determining my political choices and views. Increasingly we also meet individuals who do not belong to the same nation, and the conditions of making a successful claim to membership in some national communities seem to have weakened.[4] Even in places where ethnic identities are relatively strong, such as Eastern Europe, these identities develop in recognition of, and response to, the global processes of internationalisation.[5] The language of national belonging has survived many transformations. It is not clear how much of the original vocabulary has remained unchanged. But as with any language, once the network of meanings shifts, so do the things we can express with it. It is a task of the theorist to continuously monitor whether that language continues to offer a meaningful way of understanding and being in the world in relation to our moral and political life.

In this chapter, I try to answer a basic question: 'What sort of thing is the nation?'. It is therefore a question not about the particular features or the sociological status of nationalism, but about the fundamental political ontology of nationhood. I attempt to show that even within the diverse literature on the nation, one can find common themes that shed some light onto the type of political subjects nations are. These are (1) that nations are imaginary constructs, (2) that provide a framework for organising our political experience (3) and make it possible for us to navigate the specifically modern tension between 'the particular' and 'the universal'. The concept of the nation refers to a key form of modern political experience—its nature is ultimately epistemic. Framing the nation in this way leads me to evaluate the political and moral role of nation-states as frameworks for political action in the third section. I claim that nationhood has offered the most historically successful basis for a common conceptual language which in turn is crucial to modern democracy.

The specific understanding of nationhood, which I outline here, goes beyond the distinctions between ethnic and civic definitions of nationalism on the one hand, and particularistic and universalist visions of politics on the other. In that sense, I am striving to go beyond the limited understanding of the phenomenon of the nation offered by liberal political theory as well as to one that is normatively more useful than is what can be currently found in nationalism studies. I will show that viewing

nationhood as a type of political experience offers a more comprehensive account of the nation than when the nation is discussed simply in terms of national identity.

The Liberal Consensus

The critique of nationhood has not always taken a direct form, and it is worth noting that much of liberal political theory has ignored the concept almost completely. Questions of identity do not feature as serious political problems in classic liberalism, because a shared identity is assumed as a condition of communication. There is no better analysis of the uneasy relationship between liberal thought and nationhood than Canovan's *Nationhood in Political Theory*,[6] and therefore I will not attempt to replicate it here. However, the refusal of much of the liberal political theory to recognise nationhood as a political concept can be traced back to Hobbes and John Stewart Mill. It is their portrayal of the relationship between the individual, society and the state, that have ultimately formed a framework for much of Anglophone political thought.

In Hobbes' Leviathan, nationality is absent from his considerations of the state.[7] Even when 'the nation' is mentioned, this is always in the context of the international order, where he seems to use it only to mean 'state'.[8] The continuous readiness to war that remains an inherent remnant of the state of nature can only be tamed by a forceful ruler. Therefore, the stability of civil institutions that guard the peace depends on inherent violence of legal authority and nothing more.[9] There is no place for identity as a separate source of power. States (understood as legal entities), not political peoples, are subjects of Hobbesian politics. For him, it is the unifying power of institutions that might make it possible for a community to identify with itself. The bonds of loyalty are not established prior to political community. On the contrary, the only kind of allegiance that can protect us from the state of nature comes from the recognition of the Right of the sovereign—either by institution or by conquest.[10] The quality of the will that recognises the sovereign (whether based on national identity of not) is irrelevant for Hobbes, which is clearly highlighted in Foucault's interpretation:

> It does not matter whether you fought or did not fight, whether you were beaten or not; in any case, the mechanism that applies to you who have been defeated is the same mechanism that we find in the state of nature, *[and]* in the constitution of the State.[11]

But, as Foucault argues, this passage must sound strange to us. Europe has been immersed in conflicts that originated from the refusal of the conquered to recognise the authority of the conquerors' claim to power—a refusal which was often based on claims of national identity. 'We may well have been conquered, but we will not remain conquered. This is our land, and you will leave it.'[12]—such seems to be the recurring chorus of modern politics. Nationalism has indeed been the main source of power both in the military sense—as the ability to conscript modern armies has been based on the right of blood—and in the political sense—as large schemes of institutional cooperation require a level of motivation and commitment, which doesn't come from voluntary membership.

In contrast to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, national identity does play a role in Mill's essay 'On Representative Government'. For Mill, like for many liberal thinkers after him, organising nations into states was a condition of social cohesion and of sufficient identification with political institutions to enable political participation and representation, and to navigate the individual self-interest in such a way, that it can benefit the common good. Mill's view of the nation was framed in terms of a common history of a people that recognise themselves as a sort of extended family. Nationality is here defined primarily as the 'identity of political antecedents'.[13] National identity is for Mill not a substantive bond, but one that allows us to assign value to an individual's commitment to particular community—a type of sentiment that exists amongst its members. These sentiments allow citizens to engage in cooperation within common institutions and are crucial to the creation of conditions for a public dialogue. This understanding of nationality became archetypical for the liberal tradition, where national identity is considered normatively relevant only so far as it is an individual preference. We should only then respect the desire of individuals to belong to a nation if their commitment is beneficial for their self-realisation.[14]

Mills' understanding of nationhood runs through much of the contemporary normative political theory—particularly within broadly understood liberal thought. Even today, the complexity of both the nation and nationalism is often unappreciated by political philosophers, including those whose work focuses on matters of political identity, membership or citizenship. Just like in Mill's case, we prefer to address the topic of nationality only indirectly. As Canovan argues, common descent or a degree of common cultural identity is usually either assumed or remains a fundamental condition of liberal politics while there is little consideration about the role of nationalism in politics. National identity is therefore only deemed

'acceptable' as long as its status remains similar to that of religion—i.e. it remains practically and theoretically limited to the private sphere.

While many liberal authors highlight the importance of civic participation to democracy, expressions of national unity clearly make them somewhat uneasy. I share some of this anxiety. Whilst, the principle of national unity has often been used against different types of partisanship—both in the nation and state building processes (By mediating—at times through violence—the ethnic diversity of every nation-state, e.g., French Revolution.)[15] as well as in secession—expressions of national sentiment seem to achieve this unity through forms of social uniformity and conformism. This in turn would often lead to xenophobia towards those who do not conform to what is seen as the common norm—standing in stark contrast with models of political unity, which is always achieved through plurality and compromise (the 'many in one'). For those who devote their lives to advocating political freedom, expressions of national unity awaken the same type of internal contradiction we often experience at mass events—the contrast between manifesting individual freedom of expression and the uniformity of the masses. However, as I will argue later in this book, this tension is rather an inherent feature of the modern self—not of nationalism.

A Problematic Definition

The language of identity has become one of the predominant ways of conceptualising and ordering our contemporary political experience. In a time when the role of the state is constantly being undermined, regional and global identities present both theoretical and practical challenges to political participation and accountability. Debates on citizenship, immigration and alien rights in Europe and North America are the most common examples of this trend. We can observe an equally interesting phenomenon in Eastern Europe where the idea of forming supranational and global identities encounters deep historical divisions originating from the state of political transition. One particular type of identity is notoriously problematic—national identity.

The pejorative meaning given to nationhood as a result of the nationalist ideologies of the twentieth century has successfully damaged our political language. Not only has it become difficult to speak of the nation without striding into the well-known roads of right-wing populism. The main damage was done by creating a 'nation-free' language totally devoid of anything we can identify with. The illusion that the two ways of talking

about community are exclusive has in fact been haunting contemporary political thought. In this sense, our difficulties with nationalism are deeper than the new spring of nationalist parties and movements. In the growing gap between the rational individual and the state, the former had to face new threats that reflect the changing role of governance. Issues such as obesity, bird flu or sexuality that were previously considered an element of the natural order were conceptualised in notions of risk, welfare and identity, hence becoming public and political. The emergent and supranational nature of these problems has led many sociologists following Ulrich Beck, to see nationhood as an obstacle to a cosmopolitan deliberative democracy.[16] Paradoxically, it is partially through this language of risk, safety and security that the concept of the nation is being reconstituted in the public sphere. This has been reflected in the various immigration and welfare policies of countries such as Britain, Holland or Denmark. On a different front, processes of globalisation that led many to think of nation as an artefact of ethnic politics have been accompanied by a spring of nationalism in Eastern Europe and Asia leading to radical changes on the political map. More importantly however, these changes were not expressions of opposition towards globalisation. On the contrary, a huge part of the movement for national self-determination at the same time supported identities that were open to the new international order. The shift in nationalism theory from blood as the defining factor of ethnicity to imagined communities, inspired by Benedict Anderson,[17] was also reflected in new ways of understanding and giving meaning to national identity. This movement has been especially strong in literature. In Scotland, where identity has typically been associated with the romanticised image of the highlanders as one can find in Burns and Scott, a new generation of poets and writers has been reshaping the countries identity.

> [...] "Glasgow is a magnificent city," said McAlpin. "Why do we hardly ever notice that?" "Because nobody imagines living there," said Thaw. McAlpin lit a cigarette and said, "If you want to explain that I'll certainly listen."
>
> "Then think of Florence, Paris, London, New York. Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he's already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films. But if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively."[18]

Here, the author expresses very accurately an intuition that imagination is a fundamental condition of creating a place to live. Nation is such a place. It allows us to define the borders of 'our' living together. National identity is

naturally a very complex phenomenon, and no simple definition or metaphor can fully eradicate its ambiguities. On the contrary, in spite of the dynamic development of nationalism studies, nationhood remains hard to conceptualise. There are at least several ways of explaining this difficulty. One obvious way is that nationalism is not a uniform phenomenon. Unlike with democracy, or state, there is no theoretical model of nation that we could look at and compare with the real world. Consequently, a study of nationhood has to be a historical inquiry. That is to say that no one actually 'thought nation' in the modern sense until it was already there. And this is true regardless of our beliefs about when nations actually come into being. There are two distinct but mutually beneficial debates on nationhood. The first is the socio-historical field of nationalism studies; the second, the philosophical discourse on national identity and obligation. The former is an attempt to trace the origins and mechanisms of nationalism, whereas the latter confines itself to a normative inquiry. However, the two approaches cannot be fully separated if we are to make sense of our experience of nationhood as a political identity—especially as notions of the political and identity may not be necessarily from the same conceptual order.

The ambiguity surrounding the definition of the terms nation and nationalism precedes the discipline of nationalism studies by roughly two centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we find a vast literature on national character with Montesquieu and Hume being just two key examples of the voices in the debate.[19] This is where we can recognise the basic landscape of the contemporary discussions—the questioning of the substantive character of national characteristics. Recent debates in nationalism studies focus on the process of nation-building, national self-determination and secession. While even now politicians and thinkers often tend to use the words 'nation', 'ethnicity', 'people' and 'state' almost interchangeably, the development of nationalism studies in the 1960s highlighted complex dynamics amongst these concepts. The study of nationalism rather than the nation-state highlights the fact that (1) not all nationalisms are successful as (a) not all ethnic groups succeed (or aspire) to become nations and (b) not all nations acquire statehood; as well as that (2) there is no single type of nation.

We can find different dimensions of this debate represented within nationalism studies in the discussion between primordialists[20] and modernists[21] as well as in the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism.[22] The above debates, while being predominantly sociological in character,

have bearing on a number of philosophical problems, such as to what extent nations are exclusive or inclusive, individualist or collectivist. In particular, an overwhelming body of research shows that different types of nationalism transcend these binary distinctions. For example, Greenfeld argues that English nationalism has always been more liberal and hence both more individualist and civic than German nationalism which represented the romantic organic model.[23] The very distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism—still happily thriving in normative political theory—has been repeatedly criticised as misleading.[24]

In *Rethinking Nationalism,* Jonathan Hearn argues that the many definitions of the 'nation' represent different aspects of the complex phenomena of nationalism. It can be understood, for example, as (1) a combination of social solidarity, historical contingencies and collective will (Renan),[25] (2) a community of perceived common destiny and frequency of social communication (Anderson)[26] and (3) a community based on kinship and descent (Connor).[27] These are however not exclusive definitions, but lenses which allow us to see the 'nation' as a feeling, an identity, an ideology, a social movement or a historical process. Depending on which lenses we choose, we can uncover different aspects of the nation.[28]

Finally, in the sense I will be using the term 'nation', it will refer to communities of shared cultural and historical heritage which, while political are not identical with states. National boundaries do not always overlap with state boundaries.[29] There are theorists, such as Gellner,[30] who do not make this distinction explicitly, because they regard the state as the main motor behind the formation of nations. But while the link between the state and nation can indeed be strong, they are distinct concepts.[31] I understand nationalism as a term that relates to a set of modern movements, where citizenship is derived from an inclusion in the nation rather than in a 'mere' state where citizenship is derived from cultural norms.

An individual can have many identities. Depending on social context, some of these identities will be more important than others and will have a more formatting impact on the individual. But nations are only partially sources of identity. They provide a framework of recognition that exists beyond individual identification. Whilst I can renounce my 'Polishness' and consciously adopt another identity or I can reject the notion of identifying myself in national terms, this choice makes sense only in the light of my recognition of the claim that I am Polish. In other words, while we can consider identity a choice to a certain extent, the experience of belonging to a national culture is itself something that we do not choose

and can merely take a stance towards. This commits me to a particular, yet relatively broad modernist view of the nation. In this view, nationality is uniquely linked to the cultural transformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—and in particular to the changes of understanding of self, agency and subjectivity. I leave all considerations regarding the relationship between those cultural changes and European socio-economic history to nationalism studies scholars and other experts in the field. However, even this broad modernist understanding of the nation is relatively under-utilised in political theory. The next three sections explicate the key dimensions of nationhood from a theoretical standpoint.

First Dimension: Nations as Constructs

The concern with nation, both historically and in recent years, has largely concentrated on conceptualising its origins understood both temporally (primordialists and modernists) and anthropologically (essentialists and constructivists). There is indeed a direct conceptual link between identity and origin. Origins are sources 'of'. They become the object of study precisely because we have differentiated 'this' from 'that' and have been able to assign to it a continuity in time. To be identical with oneself means to have limits, to have a unique place in space-time.[32] This *locus* is given to everything once. The finitude of the material world is the condition of plurality of things. The candle that we have burned will be replaced with another 'one'. In European thought, there was a complementary metaphysical assumption that things are most essential in the moment of their birth. Historically, this has been the offspring of an Aristotelian teleological view of the world. If the dynamics behind the transformation of *potentia* into *actus* is guided not by general laws but by *entelechia*, then the complete form of every being has to be already included in its beginning. The dialectics of the beginning and the end is linked to the idea of the substance as an autonomous unity. For mortal, limited creatures—such as ourselves—this unity has to be broken as we can never see things in their entireness. As a consequence, the philosopher sets himself on a way to what 'is' and not merely 'becomes' by means of withdrawing herself from the world of appearance (Plato) or attending to it exactly (Aristotle). This structure has been made even stronger through the transformations in European thought that came with Christianity. Here, the meaning of the origin or beginning cannot be separated from its eschatological context. Furthermore, in contrast to the Greek world, where the

end was conceptualised in relation to the beginning (the circle of life), with Christianity history becomes one way and progressive.

The modern narrative behind identity is told in the spirit of a 'lost' or 'forgotten' beginning. We are like Odes who cannot come back to Ithaca. The images of faraway home, lost childhood or a pre-modern 'organic' society are different expressions of contemporary social and political melancholy and have been reflected in many ideological as well as social movements. The moment we evoke the language of identity, we enter this spirit of melancholy, of something lost or broken.[33] By this, I do not mean that all identities are necessarily negative and strictly historical. But they all rely on an image of the past that ensures its stability. And this mythologisation of the past takes place not only in countries whose identity is traditionally claimed to be 'ethnic', such as Germany or Poland. It also appears strong in countries such as USA (the myth of the frontier[34]), whose identity is based on the enlightenment's idea of rational autonomy and social contract. In contemporary European thought, there is no longer any immediate metaphysical connection between origin and identity. Instead, there are different methods of recollecting this relationship.

In the case of concepts, such as nationhood, this relationship is always unclear, precisely because we use these notions as though they were natural and universal. There is a natural inclination to extend the history of moral and political notions retroactively into antiquity. This is why we can so easily talk about Ancient Greek democracies or nations, even if this means altering the sense of a product of a particular social and cultural context. We are seduced by the need to find the ultimate origin, a model that could serve as a source of comparison for judging or identifying all other forms of the same kind.

The first widely accepted dimension of nationhood is that nations are 'imagined' or 'constructed'. While members of the same national community share certain rituals, symbols, etc., these practices themselves are a result of a process of invention. Nations are constructs also in the sense that their existence is constituted by belief. For example, Renan famously defined the nation as an 'everyday plebiscite'.[35] Even though nations are constituted by belief, we conceive of them as substantive entities with historical depth. When I think of Poles, I do not imagine simply those fellow nationals who live now, but I am somehow directed in my thoughts towards all the Poles that lived before me. In particular, I might be inclined to think of the famous Poles who died in battles, wrote books in Polish or

contributed in one way or the other to what we sometimes call national heritage. However, while it is often the case that national communities perceive themselves and their practices as ancient, their antiquity is contested.[36] Anderson saw the ability of nations to create their own antiquity as a nation's central feature. He defined the idea of the nation as an 'imagined community moving through time'.[37] Nations thrive on stories created about their own past. Even today there is a tendency of talking for example about the history of Poland in the ninth century B.C., while the words 'Poland' or 'Poles' were not even used then.

For Anderson, nation is an imagined community because unlike in Athenian Democracy none of the citizens will ever be able to see all of its members[38]; thus, the relationship with others is 'imagined'. But this principle runs across time as well as territory. He argues that with the collapse of the religious paradigm, history lost its eschatological character and is no longer understood as part of the divine plan. Nationalism has put history in the place of God.[39] Within the nation, individual members find the meaning of their worldly existence in homogenous and empty time:

> The century of Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning.[40]

Nationalism then, according to Anderson, responds to our need for the divine and transcendent because even though we are individually finite, nations are not. Nations do not have historical births or deaths, although they may have mythical ones.[41] The author of 'Imagined Communities' attempts to show that only through this 'immortality in history'[42] could rulers demand their citizens to sacrifice their lives in the name of the nation. Nationhood postulates then an imagined community between the past, present and future. This relationship is symbolic and can be found in institutions, practices, artefacts and monuments—such as the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.[43]

But what should a political theorist make of this term 'imagined community'? On the face of it, the term 'imagined' usually reduced the object to that of individual belief. Are nations then nothing more than secular

belief systems—yet another religion? It seems that many liberal thinkers think so (Chap. 3). However, I argue that to hold this view would be to greatly misunderstand the political role of imagination. Imagination is not in fact a solely inward movement, and therefore neither simply a matter of personal preference nor anything that can be reduced to the workings of the individual's mind. Pretending, role playing and contra-factual thinking represent the fundamental way in which we learn to engage in social activities—imagination is an epistemic faculty that allows us to experience and interact with others. It is particularly this ability of our mind to contradict immediate empirical reality that differentiates us from other animals. What remains a crucial disposition on the playground fulfils a more ambitious role in politics. Imagination is crucial in creating a sense of common good and purpose with peoples and institutions across great distances. It makes a dead person's body appear as both "a corpse and a candidate for the after-life".[44]

> They [artefacts] help to transport participants out of reality and into some imagined setting. These artefacts have three characteristic features: (i) they are collectively produced and socially recognizable; (ii) there is a discrepancy or mismatch between the imagined world that they help to instantiate and the actual situation in which the props themselves are constructed and displayed; (iii) their manufacture calls for capacity to move back and forth between those two contexts.[45]

Nations are not unique in being 'imagined communities'. As Smith suggests, the nation is simply the strongest type of modern peoplehood which has claimed sovereignty over others—be it social classes, religious groups or political movements such as Oxfam.[46] However, only nations are imagined as sovereign and limited communities of equals. This equality of recognition is regardless of the actual legal status of nationals, and therefore has provided grounds for democratic recognition of political peoples. Thus, nations should not be understood simply as constructed by individual beliefs. The power and longevity of nationalism could not be fully explained if the concept of the nation referred solely to individual preferences. Instead, national imagination is reinforced by a symbolic sphere of political artefacts which constitute an autonomous order.

   This is perhaps what Žižek's has in mind when he defines national identity as a bond that binds members of a community to the 'national Thing.'[47]

The national Thing exists as long as members of the community believe in it; it is literally an effect of this belief in itself. The structure is here the same as that of the Holy Spirit in Christianity. The Holy Spirit is the community of believers in which Christ lives after his death: to believe in Him equals believing in belief itself, i.e., believing that I'm not alone, that I'm a member of the community of believers.[48]

Žižek's analogy with the Holy Spirit (which becomes 'materialised' in the institution and practices of the Church) seems to suggest that the ontology of the nation, whilst constituted by individual belief, takes on a life of its own through the institutions, practices and rituals of its members. According to Žižek, the national Thing itself has no substance, but it cannot be reduced to belief. It, of course, would still not exist without the practices and beliefs of its members, and in this sense, nations do not have substance—neither through biology nor through society. The relationship between the members of the nation and the national Thing takes the form of 'enjoyment', which refers to a specific lifestyle or set of practices that the community sees as their 'thing'. In short, while nations themselves are constructed, they evoke practices that create and sustain substantive ways of life. It is this enjoyment of a particular way of life which ultimately is seen threatened by aliens and can therefore lead to exclusive nationalism or to xenophobia.[49]

Slovens are being deprived of their enjoyment by "Southerners" (Serbians, Bosnians...) because of their proverbial laziness, Balkan corruption, dirty and noisy enjoyment, and because they demand bottomless economic support, stealing from Slovens their precious accumulation of wealth by means of which Slovenia should already have caught up with Western Europe.[50]

However, since nationality does not really expresses a 'common thing', and instead establishes what the 'common thing' is—difference cannot be here understood substantively, but only as a political device. There is no such national community in which all members enjoy the same unique lifestyle. The paradoxical nature of nations as communities sovereign in virtue of being imagined as sovereign and equal highlights both the possibilities and threats of nationalism. On the one hand, the political imagination of the nation can and has been a key driver behind democratic movements. Mass political mobilisation is not possible without a sense of community. And whilst there are other causes and identities that mobilise and

motive our political imagination, the nation has been the most successful at organising people spatially and overcoming local defences. On the other hand, national imagination is prone to fantasies about the uniqueness of our way of life, which can be used to inspire fear in individuals and entire populations. It is fear not nationalism, which allows us to so easily give up the fruits of liberty and democratic values.

Second Dimension: *Sensus Communis*

The second dimension of my understanding of nationhood is that, aside from being constructed by discourse, nations organise discourse. Social reality originates from the network of meanings through which people communicate, give themselves a common identity and determine their attitude towards institutions. Social life creates values and norms along with systems of imaginings which articulate and conserve these norms. It is from the way people imagine their bonds and mutual duties that political language originates. Nationhood became a particularly powerful way of imagining our bonds in modern societies. In this sub-section, I briefly explain how the nation serves as a community that allows us to participate in a common political world. I will also argue that the concept of the nation represents an intrinsically political community. First, I will establish that politics requires a common world. I will move then to exploring how this common world is formed. Finally, I will argue that the nation is a successful example of a framework that promotes the formation of a political realm.

Political action assumes the existence of a common world—i.e. a universe in which we can communicate with others makes our interests known to them and gives meaning to rights, duties and obligations. It seems to follow that we should be able to give account of an ability to identify that which is not common. Politics can be then seen as a bridge mediating between what is personal and not common on the one hand and that which is public and common on the other. This function of politics was already appreciated by the Ancient Greeks, to whom the question of the relationship between the personal and the common was particularly problematic because of the distinction between *doxa* and *episteme*.[51]

Classical philosophy identified *doxa* with opinion, which it understood as particular and subjective. *Doxa* is limited to practical judgements about our world and cannot lead us to true knowledge. *Episteme* is opposed to *doxa* not only because *episteme* is knowledge about what is universally true, but also because it undermines the validity of practical judgement.

Plato's metaphor of the cave, for example, illustrates this tension between opinion and true knowledge with the figure of a philosopher, who longs for the light of the sun but cannot bear to expose himself to that light.[52] Pure thought cannot relate us to the world—in Plato's metaphor *episteme* is blinding. This is why the pursuit of true knowledge was often associated with a retreat from the world or even from ourselves to the universe of abstract thought.[53] Consequently, neither *doxa* nor *episteme* could have become the basis for conceptualising politics. When politics was discovered as a unique manner of organising human affairs, Ancient Greeks referred to it in terms of *logos*—a term that stands for language as well as reason.[54] *Logos* represent the ability of mankind to communicate private interests publicly through language, making them inter-subjective. Communicating and sharing our interests allow us to engage in a common world which is a condition of politics.

The common world and our ability to engage in it are neither obvious nor natural. In fact, our natural dispositions are unable to take us above the level of the particular without reason. Consequently, that which is common in thinking can become problematic. If indeed *episteme* represents absolute knowledge of the universal and the eternal, and *doxa* can only relate us to subjective opinion, then neither of these can constitute the common world. The latter, because it does not relate to the experiences of others; the former, as it does not relate to experience at all.

This raises the question of whether there is a type of thinking or reasoning that affirms our being in the world. One possible line of investigation relies on the idea that we can engage in the political world through practical reason. The nature of practical life is that our knowledge of our interests does not come from universal considerations but from specific choices we make within our community. The ability to make these particular judgements within a community that recognises them as right or wrong has to come from somewhere. Klaus held suggests we should seek the origins of that ability in the notion of practical reason (Greek *phronesis*).[55] This is part of a wider tradition that refers to what Kant has called in *The Critique of Judgment* 'a broader type of thinking'[56]—a type of reflection that allows us to move between epistemic horizons of individual human actors. In other words, the ability to take the position of someone else can allow us to make judgements and make them intelligible to others.[57]

Since Aristotle, political theory has resisted claims to found politics on universal knowledge. Although truth remains an important issue, especially in normative political theory, true knowledge is anti-political as it

negates the plurality of opinions and horizons. So where does this ability to move between epistemic horizons come from? The humanist tradition, represented especially by Vico, Shaftesbury and Hume, will look for it in what they refer to as *sensus communis* or common sense.[58] Contrary to popular opinion, *sensus communis* is not necessarily a group of shared belief. The origins of the concept are twofold. On the one hand, we can look for it in the notion of *phronesis* which means an ability to apply general notions to particular situations and is responsible for practical reasoning. On the other hand, we have Aristotelian 'common sense', which combines data from all five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing, in order to make it possible for us to recognise objects as 'things' rather than random sets of sensations.[59] For example, when I see my friend Anna, I don't see an accumulation of isolated colours, smells, sounds and so on—but I can almost instantly recognise her as Anna (perhaps even before I receive all the sensations).

The modern use of the term 'common sense' takes something from both these notions, though it is certainly closer to the first one. These two meanings constitute our ability to perceive the world as given. Common sense is common because, unlike sensual data it perceives things as coherent examples of general types (a brick a stone, a stick) but unlike pure reason common sense does not undermine the sensual world. In short, *sensus communis* is an ability to recognise particular standpoints and make judgements in recognition to what is common and universal.

> The many as citizens, who form judgments based on the common sense, transcend their imprisonment in private worlds thanks to their openness to *doxa*, and not by practicing *episteme*. The political world is something "more" and something different than the plurality of the private worlds.[60]

The type of rationality that allows us to make and justify particular judgements cannot be grounded in universal knowledge. It requires an understanding of what is particular and yet can become intelligible to the community. Some believe that states provide this and that citizenship developed as a way of mediating difference. However, both nationality and citizenship have been historically divisive. It is ultimately nations that have been able to offer a type of common language which makes a common set of practices and institutions of the state possible. These in turn provide a basis necessary to create a common political world. This world would not be possible, if it wasn't for a community of people who are not

only recognised in the same way by the law, but equal in their ability to take part in and co-author the community in which they live. Nations, as I explained in the previous section, are constructs which allow us to care about others whether we know them or not. In the same way, nationhood allows us to relate to fellow nationals thanks to the shared practices and ideas of life. Chapter 7 develops this aspect of nationhood further.

Third Dimension: Universality

The third and final dimension of the nation as a form of political experience is that it represents a particularistic model of community that nevertheless creates a framework that opens up to universal values and norms. This is because, as I will argue in this section, nationalism promotes a model of an individual liberated from the old hierarchies of feudalism and, as a result, created a sphere in which political agents can interact under conditions of equality.

While the primary experience of the individual in classical thought was the world and its order (*kosmos*), the primary experience of the modern individual is that of self. It is no longer possible to maintain the naturalistic disposition to the world. On the contrary, the world becomes more and more a world of experience—subject to the laws of human intellect. As I show in the next chapter, modern concept of the 'self' originates from the quest for self-knowledge and control. The equality of membership that is characteristic of modern societies[61] means that this quest becomes even more difficult, as the only way of meaningful differentiation by referring to an external or absolute order has been lost. Nationalism fills this empty space created after the destruction of the concept of natural order by providing a space of equality of authorship for individuals in which they can seek to realise their notions of a good life within the limits of a community. These norms are ultimately embodied in the principles that define citizenship within the liberal nation-state. Nations unify, individualise and universalise their experience with the modern state leading to recognition of certain values and norms as universal.

Equality among members of a national community is a crucial disposition allowing for universality of political action.[62] In pre-modern societies, other types of group membership (family, local community and nobility) limited the life options of individuals much more strongly than social status does in national communities.[63] For example, it is not unusual in most of today's states that a son of a farmer can become a politician or a civil

servant. This has been made possible by the unifying power of nation-hood. Democracy is not a sufficient condition of political and social equal-ity as it can be easily combined with different concepts of the individual. The right to vote, for instance—the most fundamental to all democratic societies—means something different in societies based on family ties. It does not necessarily require the autonomy that becomes possible only in a secular and individualistic world brought to life by the nation. Equality of individuals is paradoxically one of the main characteristics of nationhood. First, because national bonds operate on the notions of homogenous time and space[64] in which all other citizens exist at a similar distance. This is to say that the nation creates an illusion that a person on the other side of the country is just as related to me as my neighbour. I might have some spe-cial relationship with my neighbours, but their interests should not prevail over the common good.

The link between nationalism and thus conceived individualism is not an obvious one. One theorist who supports this view is Liah Greenfeld, who argues that nationalism can be understood as the form of modern culture, inseparable from the development of the self. She claims that what we perceive as a plainly socio-economic process, the formation of nation, inhibits the formation and normal functioning of the human mind.[65] This, however, has both positive and negative effects, on one hand promoting the development of individualism and individual autonomy, and on the other hand leaving the individual without any 'map' or 'guide' according to which she should live her life. The lack of strong moral sources leads, according to Greenfeld, to *anomie*.[66]

> The greater the choice one is given in forming one's destiny, the heavier is the burden of responsibility for making the right choice. The more oppor-tunities one is offered to "find oneself," the harder is to decide where to look. Life has never been so exciting and so frustrating; we have never been so empowered and so helpless. Modern societies produced by nationalism, because of their very secularism, openness and the elevation of the indi-vidual, are necessarily anomic.[67]

However, understanding nationhood mostly as a cultural process as Greenfeld does takes us away from understanding the political significance of the nation. Furthermore, Greenfeld's definition of the nation does not set sufficient limits allowing us to differentiate between the nation, modernity, the modern state or civil society. For example Greenfeld's attempt to single out the impact of nationhood on mental health seems

exaggerated. While it seems reasonable that by marginalising the role of close-knit organic communities', nationalism could have some negative effect on how we experience certain mental disorders, it seems far-fetched to say that a secularised and more open world needs to be a source of anxiety. Our inability to produce such reliable data across different types of polities and time periods makes this claim highly contestable.[68] This is one example of how easily we can confuse empirical statements about history and the cultural narrative which accompanies it. However, this does not override the immense value of Greenfeld's work. Let's not forget that her view of nationalism has been built from the bottom up, and few could criticise the author of 'Five Roads to Modernity' the lack of historical details. My account of nationhood does therefore build on the fundaments laid by Greenfeld, which show the centrality of nationhood not just to socio-economic developments of modernity, but to the philosophical paradigm, which defines our thinking about self and agency.

This ontology of the 'nation' reflects the historical role nations in providing a framework for political community and the state. I would therefore argue that rather than conceptualising the nation simply in terms of identity, it is more accurate to think of the nation as a form of modern political experience. Framing the concept of the nation in this way highlights two aspects of nationhood significant to political theory. Nations are (1) contingent social constructs (2) representing a type of imagination typical of modernity. They are contingent because things 'could have turned out differently'—the relationship between the state and the nation is a necessary model for organising political communities. They are constructs of a particular kind of modern imagination, because nations do not exist independently from the beliefs that we have about them. We imagine them as communities moving through time,[69] and this sets the framework for our engagement in the political community. Nations also create a framework which allows solidarity with others who are imagined as equals. Nationhood allows us to go beyond the particularity of our own experience and reach into the political world in virtue of a shared world rather than just a shared identity. While the language of nationalism still frames much of our discourse, with the emergence of international law and supranational bodies such as the European Union (EU), we often find ourselves confused by the very syntax of language. The idiom of national belonging has been under attack for the last few decades—and often for the right reasons. This is due to the growing importance of supra-national governance, particularly human rights, international bodies and the implications

of these institutions for national sovereignty. Moreover, increasing multi-culturalism in contemporary liberal democracies has led to a blurring of individual national identity. What nationality shall we assign to an individual who holds a British passport, is a Muslim, is fluent in two languages and has an Indian mother and a Polish father?[70] It seems that if our language was only national and did not open up to other levels, we could not fully understand contemporary society. There has to be a space for cosmopolitan emotions, allegiances and duties, but also for an inter-cultural dialogue. Whilst nations are key to understanding modern politics, so are our dreams of a more individualist and universalist society.

NOTES

1. David Hume, *Political Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2003, pp. 78–92.
2. This is not to say that attempts have not been made, even recently, to appeal to some sort of shared cultural heritage. Statements of this kind are often made by representatives from the entire political spectrum, as one classic publication on English cooking by George Orwell illustrates. George Orwell, *In Defence of English Cooking*, London, Penguin,2005.
3. Zygmunt Bauman, 'From Pilgrim to Tourist-or a Short Story of Identity,' in: Stuart Hall and Paul de Gau (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage, 1997.
4. For example, Rogers Brubacker claims that in Western Europe after 'decades of heavy labour migration and subsequent family reunification, public attention has focused on immigrant ethnicity, while ethnic claims have not generally been framed as national claims.' Rogers Brubacker, 'Ethnicity, Migration and Statehood in Europe,' in: Michel Seymour (ed.), *The Fate of the Nation State*, London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004, p. 359.
5. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 164; See also similar comment in: Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity, 2006, p. 4.
6. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996.
7. While Hobbes could not possibly have a modern view of nationhood, given that European nations were still in the process of formation at the time, the distinction between the state and the people identified by their common history and culture was one that could already be made.
8. For example: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London, Penguin, 1997, p. 115.
9. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London, Penguin, 1997.

10. *Op. cit.*, Chapter XX.
11. Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the College de France*, London, Penguin, 2003, p. 97.
12. Ibid.
13. J.S. Mill, *On Representative Government*, London 1962, pp. 360–361.
14. Margaret Canovan, 'Sleeping Dogs, Prowling Cats, and Soaring Doves: Three Paradoxes of Nationhood,' in: Michel Seymour (ed.), *The Fate of the Nation State*, London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004, pp. 24–25; MacCormick, 'Is Nationalism Philosophically Credible,' in W. Twining (ed.) *Issues in Self-Determination*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1991.
15. Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1997, pp. 79–83.
16. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage Publications Ltd., 1992.
17. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006.
18. Alasdair Gray, *Lanark,* London, 1982.
19. Charles Montesquieu, *The Spirit Of The Laws* ,Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, David Hume, *Political Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2003.
20. Primordialism is a theory within nationalism studies that claims that nations are primarily defined by ethnicity and as such are ancient. See for example: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London, Fontana, 1973.
21. Modernists, in contrast, believe that the emergence of nations was linked to the modern state and transformations in industrial economy. See for example: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983; A very good discussion of both views can be found in: Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernity*, London, Routledge, 1998.
22. Jonathan Hearn, *Rethinking Nationalism. A Critical introduction*, London, Palgrave, 2006.
23. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003.
24. Dominique Schnapper, 'The Idea of Nation', *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1995.
25. Ernest Renan, *Qu'est.-ce qu'une nation?*, in: John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 17.
26. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006.
27. Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.

28. Jonathan Hearn, *Rethinking Nationalism. A Critical introduction*, London 2006, pp. 4–5.
29. Although nationality and citizenship can coincide.
30. 'Nationalism is primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.' Ernst Gellner, *Nationalism*, London, Blackwell, 1983, p. 1.
31. I will discuss the work of many scholars whose definition of the nation varies from mine, and in these circumstances, I will use the term nation in the meaning specific to these authors. I will however explain how their understanding of this term varies from mine.
32. This particular understanding of identity was most clearly articulated in modern European thought by G.W. Leibniz. See: *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, London 1992.
33. Alicja Kuczynska, *Piekny stan melancholii*, Warsaw, WFiS, 1999.
34. Michael Clifford, *Political Genealogy After Foucault. Savage Identities*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. X.
35. Ernst Renan, *What is a Nation*, in A. Zimmern (ed.), *Modern Political Doctrines*, London, Oxford University Press,1939, pp. 186–205.
36. While Anderson perceives the nation as a specifically modern phenomenon, some other nationalist scholars would say that all effective modern nationalist movements are in fact based in antiquity. For example: Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.
37. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006.
38. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.
39. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
40. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
41. *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
42. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.
43. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
44. Paul Harris, The Work of The Imagination, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, p. xi.
45. *Op. cit.*, p. x.
46. Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 19–32.
47. Žižek Slavoj, *Tarrying with the Negative. Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 201.
48. *Op. cit.*, p. 202.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 201.
50. *Op. cit.*, p. 204.
51. Giovanni Reale, *Storia della filosofia antica Vol. 2, Platone e Aristotele*, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1979.

52. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
53. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, New York, Harvest, 1978, pp. 72, 75.
54. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek–English Lexicon*, Logos, 1889.
55. Klaus Held, *Fenomenologia swiata politycznego*, Warsaw, IFiS PAN, 2003, p. 23. (Translator Andrzej Gniazdowski).
56. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952, para. 4.
57. Klaus Held, *Fenomenologia swiata politycznego*, Warsaw, IFiS PAN, 2003, p. 27.
58. David Hume, *Political Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
59. Aristotle: *De Anima*, Book III, Part 2.
60. Klaus Held, *Fenomenologia swiata politycznego*, Warsaw, IFiS PAN, 2003, p. 33, author's translation.
61. *Op. cit.*, p. 209.
62. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays in Modern Culture*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2006, p. 207.
63. *Op. cit.*, p. 208.
64. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006, pp. 23–36.
65. *Op. cit.*, p. 213.
66. Greenfeld's use of the term anomie seems to be borrowed from Durkheim. However, Durkheim did not associate anomie with nationalism, but in fact with any context in which a crisis of the social order leads to anxiety caused by a vicious cycle of endless aspirations; Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1970, p. 41.
67. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind,* Oxford, Oneworld, 2006, p. 332.
68. Dusan Kecmanovic, 'Nationalism and Mental Health: A Critique of Greenfeld's Recent Views on Nationalism,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, No. 13, 2007, pp. 274–275.
69. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006.
70. For a further discussion of multiple identities see: Bhikhu Parekh, 'Discourses on National Identity,' *Political Studies*, XLII, 1994, p. 496.

Nationhood and Its Critics

The experience of twentieth-century totalitarianism, ethnic conflict and extremist nationalism has made political philosophy particularly sensitive to the threat nationalism poses to democratic politics. It should come as no surprise that one of the most popular current British public intellectuals, Anthony Grayling, begins his essay on nationalism by stating: 'Nationalism is an evil. It causes wars, its roots lie in xenophobia and racism, it is a recent phenomenon—an invention of the last few centuries—which has been of immense service to demagogues and tyrants but to no-one else'.[1] Grayling's strong stance towards nationalism is placed within a deeply rooted strand of thought, in which national identity represents a primitive tribal sentiment. In contrast, politics is portrayed as a public, legal activity that only makes sense under the conditions of diversity. This image of nationhood as an organic community is the one that is criticised by many authors, especially those who were writing in response to the dramatic events caused by the nationalistic ideologies of the early twentieth century. Thinkers such as Minogue and Berlin saw the biological, unifying and homogenising character of nationalism as a threat to democratic legitimacy.[2] Many liberal thinkers came to see nationalism as a principle of organic homogeneity in which the members of the national community have to submit their wills, their individuality, to the pursuit of uniform set of values and goals.[3] Those who are not members of a particular group or do not share particular values and goals are then forced to do so.[4] One of the most pronounced expressions of this view comes from

Bernard Crick, who argues that even though the existence of nations is morally ambivalent,[5] nationalism promotes two potentially anti-political ideas: (1) that 'there are objective characteristics' of identity and that (2) 'there can be a single criterion for organizing states'.[6] However, in the previous chapter, I have shown that the idea of the nation being a natural or an ethnic community needs to be abandoned.

The idea that a degree of ethnic, cultural and historical homogeneity is required for a political community is not novel. Common descent was an important element of many classical and modern models of political community. Even Plato, when trying to conjure his ideal form of community, finds it necessary to tell a story about 'soldiers from earth' to provide the commonwealth with a sense of brotherhood and unity.[7] As Rogers Smith points out, narratives about peoplehood are commonplace both in philosophical and religious literatures.[8] Plato's story, however, is especially illuminating. He does not place the mythical origins of his community in a state that can be located geographically or historically. Instead, he writes of the ancestors as being soldiers made of earth, placing them clearly in the natural order. Since national bonds are often defined in terms of ethnicity or historical belonging, we may think of the nation as a natural community as opposed to the state which is a positive or constructed one. While we can imagine a contractual beginning to a state, nations are *ex definitione* resistant to this sort of intellectual experimentation. Instead, nations usually have founding myths that place them in some sort of (pre)historical antiquity. As a result, the nation is perceived in these accounts mostly as a natural (pre-political) force or sentiment, which demands a certain type of homogeneity and unity.

The set of institutionalised practices that the state employs to define its citizens as nationals, or its nationals as citizens, is complex and multi-layered. However, these practices rest on the idea that rights of individuals can be articulated and defended only through the principle of the sovereignty of the nation. As Hannah Arendt points out, '[in the French Revolution] the same nation was at once declared to be subject to laws, which supposedly would flow from the Rights of Man, and sovereign, that is bound by no universal law and acknowledging nothing superior to itself'.[9] As a result, nationalism became a synonym for using the state as a tool of ideology. The employment of the state's administrative apparatus to manage immigration policy, education, propaganda, resettlement and segregation policies are just a few infamous aspects of nationalist ideology.[10]

However, the identification of the state with its (ethnically defined) population is philosophically and practically problematic. This deformation

of the national principle, acclaimed to be the force behind many tragedies of the twentieth century, was followed by a failure of political philosophy to adequately incorporate the idea of national identity into the theory of political community. I already partly described this failure in Chap. 2, where I looked at the way that the concept of national identity has been neglected by much of liberal political theory. I also argued that the nation should be understood as constructed, rather than natural, community. Now, I shift my attention to those lines of thought, which, rather than neglecting nationhood, have challenged the concept of national identity as inherently a- or anti-political. There are many avenues which my investigation could take, but my focus is here on reconstructing Michael Oakeshott's and Hannah Arendt's critical approaches to nationhood, given their influence within late twentieth-century thought.

Michael Oakeshott: The Arbitrariness of the Nation

The relation between citizenship and nationhood is notoriously problematic. While the national principle was historically one of the forming forces behind modern citizenship and—in some cases to this day—a condition of it, the boundaries of citizenship and nationhood do not overlap. Equally, not all nations make claims to statehood (as opposed to other types of political autonomy), and there are many more nations than states. Nevertheless, national identity remains one of the most common grounds for political claims to statehood and to citizenship. Michael Oakeshott understood the complexity of the modern nation-state very well. Unlike many in his time, he did not see nationhood as a biological force or a principle of ethnic homogeneity.[11] On the contrary, European politics was to him an arena of constant instability and internal differentiation. The emergence of the state was, according to Oakeshott, not a product of the unifying force of the nation, but a result of the destruction of local law by centralised administrative structures. The population that inhabited the territory of the early modern state did not form a community. Oakeshott remarks: 'the most that might have been expected was that some day, with luck, it might discover some sort of precarious identity and manage to be itself'.[12] Nationalism is then for Oakeshott, just as for Gellner, not only a contingent process, but a product of the development of the administrative processes of the state.

> It is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity out of a wilful cultural Machtbedűrfniss; it is the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism. If it is the case that a modern industrial state can only function with a mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population, as we have argued, then the illiterate, half-starved populations sucked from their erstwhile rural cultural ghettoes in the melting pots of shanty-towns yearn for incorporation into some one of those cultural pools which already has, or looks as if it might acquire, a state of its own, with the subsequent promise of full cultural citizenship, access to primary schools, employment, and all.[13]

In this sense, the nation-state is clearly an illusion. National identity is a response to the changing form of political authority. The kind of changes in a constitution produced when passing from a feudal state to absolute monarchy required a new device for acquiring legitimacy. And this, according to Oakeshott, could be only acknowledged in a language of civil intercourse.[14] It is only through this type of legitimacy that the state can exercise its continuously growing power which rests mainly on administrative control.[15] It is on these grounds that Oakeshott opposes nationalism as a political principle. His critique is particularly significant because it allows us to grasp the relationship between the nation and the state. To think of nationhood as a fundamental component of political community is for him to be confusing two different types of modes of political organisation—'civic (or political) association' and what Oakeshott comes to call as 'enterprise association' (enterprise refers here to a business-type activity).[16] These two modes of association cannot be traced historically, but form two ideal types which modern politics can aspire to.

Enterprise association is defined by Oakeshott in the terms of a common purpose and of the management of this purpose. Examples of such associations are easy to find. Oakeshott mentions a fire station or a tennis club,[17] both of which provide a good idea of the kind of activities members of these associations engage in. To become a fireman or a member of a tennis club means to accept the rules of these organisations. It also requires a will to play tennis or save people from fire. On this idea, Oakeshott comments: 'Pursuing a purpose or promoting an interest is, however, nothing other than responding to continuously emergent situations by deciding to do this rather than that in the hope or the expectation of curing an imagined and wished-for outcome connected with that purpose'.[18]

Conversely, civil association is for Oakeshott not a relationship based on a common pursuit of a shared goal. In other words, it is a formal and not

a functional or a teleological relationship. Members of such a commonwealth are not required to share beliefs or opinions about anything. Just like in the case of Hobbes, civil relationship is thus defined by Oakeshott as a relationship in terms of recognition of a common authority. Such recognition cannot come from loyalty or affection. It does not depend on our opinion of the person or people in authority. A political association is entirely based on the recognition of rules (laws) that bind it together.[19] This does not mean that tennis clubs or fire stations do not have rules or laws, but that they are not constituted by their rules or laws. The rules of an enterprise association codify an already-shaped engagement.[20]

Of course it might be said that the same can be applied to the state. It is in fact very difficult to imagine any kind of legislation that would not be to an extent a codification of some pre-existing practices. But Oakeshott would argue that even when these rules are deliberated, their desirability is not assessed solely in terms of a substantive result. Or as Oakeshott puts it: 'What relates *cives* to one another and constitutes civil association is the acknowledgement of the authority of *respublica* and the recognition of subscription to its conditions as an obligation'.[21] In other words, a civil relationship is a relationship amongst individuals solely in terms of their obligations to each other and to the community they are members of. These obligations do not determine the choices that individuals have to make, but prescribe the conditions of any actions they could take, both in their private and public capacities. In contrast to with enterprise association, the recognition of these conditions occurs prior to consent.[22] A political association is entirely based on the recognition of rules (laws) that bind it together.[23] This does not mean that tennis clubs or fire stations do not have rules or laws, but that they are not constituted by their rules or laws. The rules of an enterprise association codify an already-shaped engagement.[24] Civil association is therefore a self-sufficient mode of association in the sense that it is not constituted to achieve any extrinsic purpose or good. Membership is not voluntary—we are born as members of a particular state.

Oakeshott emphasises that both civic and enterprise associations are valuable in political life but notes that enterprise association can threaten politics as an autonomous mode of action if we begin thinking of the state in those terms. The plurality of voluntary groups (tennis clubs, political groups, social movements, religious groups), which allows the richness of expressions of individuality and private life, is guaranteed by the existence of an autonomous civic community. Enterprise associations allow us to explore the rich diversity of human life, without which politics would not

have any meaning.[25] However ultimately, to Oakeshott, it is politics that creates the necessary formal equality between citizens that allows us to pursue this diversity of private life.

Oakeshott chooses then to avoid referring to a language of national identity or belonging as anti-individualistic and destructive to the formal nature of civil association. Instead, he claims that politics is sustained by a notion of civility, in which individuals can participate if they set aside 'all that differentiates them from one another' to 'recognize themselves as moral equals'.[26] Richard Boyd argues that:

> Because civil association is defined by this relationship of morality, it requires more than just equal treatment in the eyes of a rule of law that makes its appearance only in situations of conflict or transgression. As a kind of moral relationship, implicated in shared 'moral' or 'adverbial' practices, civil association emphasizes the active recognition of others as our moral equals.[27]

There are certainly many groups where coercion is absent, and yet which have a semi-compulsory character. Examples of these include obligatory trade unions, established religious denominations and churches to which we are born to and so on. It is these types of groups which are non-voluntary, and yet based on substantive bonds of fraternity, which Oakeshott seems to perceive as homogenising and inherently anti-political because of their capacity to limit our freedom.[28]

Consequently, in Oakeshott's theoretical framework, nationhood is treated neither as a type of civil relationship nor as an enterprise association. Nations are associations in virtue of a perceived shared identity and history rather than recognition of common authority. As such, they represent a substantive rather than a formal relationship. However, unlike clubs, societies and other business-like organisations, they are not generally regarded as voluntary. The nation is, for Oakeshott, not a political community. In contrast to the state, nationhood often postulates a level of homogeneity, which is irreconcilable with the richness and diversity of private life. However, this does seem to be a very limited and one-sided view of nationalism and not surprisingly. Oakeshott wrote at a time where the threat of collectivism was paramount. While his analysis of the nation can apply to the ethno-centric nationalism of the twentieth century, and the ideologies which rose out and supported it, nationalism as a broader phenomenon within modernity expresses a form of political agency which is much more fluid and theoretically open. Perhaps more importantly, the equality which Oakeshott assigns to purely civic bonds would not be possible without an epistemic equalisation of men within one nation.

Arendt: Nation as an Anti-political Force

The difficult relationship between politics and nationhood has also been observed by another student of Heidegger (although Oakeshott was one only indirectly). For Hannah Arendt, the emergence of the modern nation and in particular the national principle of citizenship is one of the key elements of her critique of the French Revolution. And the revolution[29] is indeed a key element not only in the original history of the West but for our understanding of modernity—including nationalism. In that sense, our political language is in essence revolutionary.[30] Arendt's examination of the revolution is intended to uncover the basic assumptions of this language: what it brought to political discourse and what has been lost.

For her, both the French and the American Revolutions were primarily expressions of public spirit, which presented an alternative form of government (direct democracy) to that of the centralised, representative democracy emerging from old monarchical institutions. Man could no longer be happy only in the private sphere,[31] so citizens demanded access to public life.[32] But the public spirit of radical (democratic) self-determination of the Parisian Clubs and Societies, Communal Councils, and then *Soviets* and *Räte* has been lost. In Arendt's view, liberal nation-states are not fruits of the success of the revolutionary movements, but a mark of their failure. The civil liberties, contemporary individualism, the welfare state and the rule of public opinion are concessions that the revolutionary movement made. They replaced direct public engagement, autonomy and representation.

The idea of revolution is characterised by the need to start from the beginning. There is, however, an inherent tension between that type of radical self-determination and stability. One cannot always start from the beginning. Hence, the idea of the republic, on Arendt's reading, is proposed in order to overcome this contradiction through the principles of sovereignty of the nation and democratic representation. However, she is instinctively suspicious of both, which for her have one primary purpose—that is, to establish a centralised apparatus of control.[33] For Arendt, this relapse of democracy into centralised rule through the medium of national representation represents the tragedy of the revolution, as newly gained political freedom could not be translated into a political will that could constitute a durable entity. The ability of the people to govern themselves was overcome by the need to create a stable entity, capable of protecting the rights of individuals. During the French Revolution, societies offered

ways of accessing the public realm. Thus, the gap between the government and the governed was closed. But when the revolutionaries were faced with the task of writing a constitution, they decided to do away with societies as enemies of the republic. Robespierre turned against them in the name of what he called the great popular Society of the whole French people.[34] This need for unity is not merely a concern about the strength of institutions. For Arendt it is a problem inherent in the act of revolution. The idea of starting from the beginning is a powerful concept in modernity because it is linked to the concept of autonomy (see previous chapter). But in the act of revolting against the government, it is precisely the principles under which the community is based that are recognised as both alien and oppressive[35]; it is this freedom understood as re-invention that can be the source of public spirit. However, the act of creating a constitution involves a tension between revolutionary freedom and questions of stability.

> The act of founding the new body politic, of devising the new form of government involves the grave concern with the stability and durability of the new structure; the experience, on the other hand, which those who are engaged in this grave business are bound to have is the exhilarating awareness of the human capacity of beginning, the high spirits which have always attended the birth of something new on earth.[36]

It is not clear whether Arendt actually believed that the public spirit of the revolution could be preserved without the need to constantly renew it. As Jefferson put it, 'the tree of liberty must be refreshed, from time to time, with blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure'.[37] Arendt's sympathy towards Jefferson's concept of a wards system and towards French clubs and societies was justified mostly by her hostility to the concept of representation. Apart from the many theoretical difficulties that it produces, representation for Arendt is a device which destroys the autonomy of politics in the modern nation-state. Representative democracy, which was supposed to be the answer for preserving the newly gained freedom of the people, transfers all power to the nation but simultaneously limits the ability of individual citizens to act in the public sphere.[38] As a result, the public sphere becomes dominated by private interest, and the only way of protecting the people from the corruption of their own government is to limit it.

All of this has to be done in the name of the nation through the unifying force of the state. Because even though the nation, in its modern sense, comes into being in a different way than the state, they become closely

linked in the act of a revolution. The state was formed by the changes within political institutions of the medieval realm (*regnum*). It inherited the function of a supreme legal institution that protects all inhabitants in its territory. As Arendt puts it:

> The tragedy of the nation-state was that the people's rising national consciousness interfered with these functions. In the name of the will of the people the state was forced to recognize only 'nationals' as citizens, to grant full civil and political rights only to those who belonged to the national community by right of origin and fact of birth. This meant that the state was partly transformed from an instrument of law into an instrument of the nation.[39]

In Arendt's interpretation of the French Revolution, nationhood presents itself as an alternative to public spirit—to citizenship. And in this sense, national identity becomes deeply anti-political. While Arendt does not disregard the value of identity in politics, she criticised the nation-state for identifying politics with instrumental control under the label of sovereignty of the people.[40] As Elizabeth Fraser notes, Arendt's *On Revolution* is a 'sustained analyses of what happens when instrumentality replaces politics'.[41] The nation-state does not represent the people but rather the interests of a small group of individuals who become identified with the national interest through the principle of representation.[42]

Arendt's account of the revolution has been challenged by some historians of thought for being grossly selective and conceptually charged—in some cases counterfactual. Christopher Hobson, for instance, argues that the contrary to Arendt's narrative, the notion of democratic rule was unpopular with the French revolutionists, who saw it in traditional terms as the system that brought Athens to its doom.[43] Classical (direct) democracy was also deemed impossible in a large state and, thus, is de facto obsolete. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Plato's and Aristotle's criticisms of democracy as 'rule of the mob' were still largely regarded as accurate.[44] This has only changed, according to Hobson, thanks to the introduction of the idea of representation (to Arendt's dismay), which would not be possible without the concept of the sovereignty of the people—without which a 'mixed system' (rather than a democratic one) would have been preferred.[45]

Another of Arendt's critics—I. Israel—argues that the importance even that Arendt gives to the event of the French Revolution is misleading. Instead, he argues in *Enlightenment Contested* that the word 'revolution'

was readily used before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[46] The difference, he claims, between pre-modern and modern revolutions is that the latter 'quintessentially legitimize themselves in terms of, and depend on, non-traditional and newly introduced, fundamental concepts'.[47] The social and political revolutions of early modernity only gained their meaning by being part of a broader strand of revolutionary thought. The most stereotypical example of that thought is Descartes' model of methodological scepticism. However, it was part of a general philosophical shift, observed not only by Descartes but also Hobbes, Spinoza and Leibniz.[48] In that sense, the French Revolution was not (as Arendt claims) a specific moment of freedom or of a particular intellectual breakthrough.

Whether or not Arendt's view of the revolution is accurate, it has greatly influenced our view of modernity, because it captures modern politics in terms the struggle between two opposing forces. These can be found under many names: radical individual autonomy and social order; direct democracy and representation; political freedom and stability. By understanding revolution as part of a broader process of modernity, as even Israel and Hobson do, we can see that its main effect was not the re-creation of direct rule but the harmonisation of the radical autonomy of the subject produced by the enlightenment and a new type of political community.

While Oakeshott and Arendt approach nationhood from two different historical perspectives, they both see politics as a unique mode of human action. Nationhood becomes a threat to this mode, because it brings non-political ends into politics (these are labelled either 'natural' or 'social'). The so-called autonomy of the political, which is now a separate area of philosophical investigation, is beyond the scope of this book, but it has been commonly used argument against nationhood. Where the classical liberal approach excludes nationhood from debates about politics on primarily moral grounds,[49] Oakeshott and Arendt see nationalism as a specific threat to the very existence of politics understood as a civic engagement, that is, one defined by freedom and equality.

The origins of this understanding of the nation can be found in the Romantic tradition represented by Herder, Humboldt and Fichte, who were first to attempt to provide a philosophical understanding of the nation. Fichte's theory situated national identity almost entirely in a pre-political, natural force, effectively leaving the nation out from the normative debate on the structure and limits of political community. National identity has since often been framed in radical ethnic terms as an identity

based on 'blood and soil' rather than common values or aims. Having said that, many liberal philosophers tolerated nationalism because they believed it would disappear with the progress of rationalism and the concept of an egalitarian society—the sources of which they sought in the European enlightenment.[50] But this did not happen. On the contrary, national interest became one of the strongest factors shaping contemporary politics.

However, the Romantic view of nationalism seems to be a very limited and one-sided one. While it can relate to ethno-centric nationalism of the twentieth century, or even certain contemporary forms of nationalism (e.g. in Eastern Europe), the reality is that many modern forms of national identity are substantially different or at least much more fluid (see Chap. 7). Not only is it the case, that nationalism can take forms, where it is defined by culture, rather than blood. The historical transformations of the relationship between the nation and the state suggest that political equality has been at least one of the key features or nationalism.

Furthermore, Arendt's and Oakeshott's insistence on the autonomy of the political, while theoretically interesting, cannot be accepted at face value. As the subsequent chapters will show, I am deeply sceptical about the usefulness of treating 'the political' as a separate mode of experience (but not of study). In particular, the way in which the nation participates in establishing our political world is explored in Chap. 7. Now, I move to a more fundamental investigation on the nature of modern subjectivity.

NOTES

1. A.C. Grayling, *Ideas That Matter: A Personal Guide for the 21st Century: Key Concepts for the 21st Century,* London, Phoenix, 2010, p. 55.
2. K.R. Minogue, *Nationalism*, London, University Paperbacks, 1969, p. 11; Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current, Essays in the History of Ideas*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 9–11.
3. Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current, Essays in the History of Ideas*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 338, 349.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 341.
5. Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 2nd edition, London, Penguin, 1982, p. 77.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 75.
7. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, Book Three.
8. Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

9. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, London, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 222.
10. While this feature is not inherent only to nationalism, nationalist ideology seems to have been historically the most prominent in facilitating the expansion of the administrative apparatus in Western states. The process of nation-building benefits from a strong unified state and vice versa; creating a feeling of national unity and uniformity has assisted the development of centralised power (such as by ensuring that the populous knows the language of the administration). Shared national identity was also used to justify claims to the throne and was a major step in transforming military service to that based on conscription. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006, pp. 19–22.
11. Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003, p. 186.
12. *Op. cit.*, p. 188.
13. *Op. cit.*, p. 46.
14. *Op. cit.*, 2003, p. 191.
15. *Op. cit.*, p. 195.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. *Op. cit.*, p. 155.
19. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
21. *Op. cit.*, p. 149.
22. *Op. cit.*, p. 152.
23. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 490.
26. *Op. cit.*, p. 128.
27. Richard Boyd, 'Michael Oakeshott on Civility, Civil Society and Civil Association,' *Political Studies*, 2004, Vol. 52, p. 612.
28. *Op. cit.*, p. 608. Oakeshott has a modernist view of nationalism like Gellner. However, Gellner shows us that homogeneity can be seen as a product of the modern industrial society rather than shared national identity. Homogeneity is then not imposed by nationalism but 'rather that homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism'. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983, pp. 39–40.
29. I chose to use the term 'modern revolution' rather than the term 'revolution' or 'revolutions'. At first sight, these three formulations seem similar. But they are not. The term revolution has been appropriated by Western discourse to denote any type of radical change. In that sense of course,

revolutions are not modern. In a narrower sense, historians and political scientists often write about revolutions specifically to distinguish between social transformations and political changes (reform), and violent changes of leadership (coup). But when we try to write the intellectual history of the West, then we come across a different, but well-established meaning of the term revolution: one that understands revolutions as inherently modern because they have something to do with the erosion of the old grand order.

30. Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.
31. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, London, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 127.
32. *Op. cit.*, p. 216.
33. *Op. cit.*, p. 244.
34. *Op. cit.*, p. 232.
35. For a discussion of Arnedt's account of the exclusivity of the modern state, and how this exclusion has been also been present in the discourse of human rights see: Patrick Hayden, 'From Exclusion to Containment: Arendt, Sovereign Power, and Statelessness,' *Societies Without Borders*, No. 3, 2008.
36. Elizabeth Frazer, 'Hannah Arendt: The risks of the public realm,' *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2009, p. 223.
37. Thomas Jefferson, *The Complete Jefferson*, ed. Padover, Modern Library, p. 295, quoted in: Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, London, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 233.
38. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, London, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 253.
39. *Op. cit.*, p. 230.
40. Hannah Arendt, *The origins of totalitarianism* .Cleveland, London, World Publishing Company, 1961, p. 127; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 244.
41. Elizabeth Frazer, 'Hannah Arendt: The risks of the public realm,' *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2009, p. 213.
42. *Ibid*.
43. Christopher Hobson, 'Revolution Representation and the Foundations of Modern Democracy,' *European Journal of Political Theory*, No. 7, 2008, p. 452.
44. *Op. cit.*, p. 453.
45. Ibid.
46. Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 10.
47. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

48. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.
49. In the sense that nationhood does not play a role in the understanding of formation of agency and the subject.
50. Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current, Essays in the History of Ideas*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 340.

Subjectivity as Modernity

The Genealogy of the Modern Self

In Chap. 3, I argued that the nation is a construct or an imagined community which has the ability to transcend particular epistemic horizons and provide a framework in which individuals can recognise universal norms and values through the equal status of others. I will look now at the conceptual mechanism that made this transition from the particular to the universal possible by examining the development and the architecture of the concept of the modern self. The study of the self is central to modernity for two reasons: First, the emergence of democratic individualism has been accompanied by a particular understanding of agency and individual freedom; second, the self has been seen as a key driver behind political transformations of modernity—either as a consequence of the socio-economic transition to industrial and then post-industrial economy (Arendt) or as a product of the power of the state itself (Foucault).

Throughout the course of this chapter, I investigate the transformations of the concept of the self from antiquity to modernity. This discussion shows that the modern self is characterised by the tension between its passive/non-reflective and active/reflective dimensions. I argue that this tension is at the foundation of how we think of ourselves as agents in the political world and explains the uneasy relationship between political freedom and social belonging. By exploring the transition from the concept of the pre-modern self to (modern) subjectivity, I show that the latter is defined by a type of dualism that was partially alien to the pre-modern

understandings of the self. Moreover, in modernity, the conceptualisation of the self was often based only on the active dimension of 'subject'. The two approaches to the 'self', classical and modern, correspond historically to two different sets of political problems. The classical understanding of the self as a soul equipped with a body represents the problem of a grand 'order'; classical thought traditionally perceives the role of political philosophy as legitimising the role of the *body politic* as an extension of the natural order.[1] However, in the modern secularised world where nature and politics are no longer perceived as elements of the same order, an individual's place in the world is not determined by it. Politics is perceived as placed at the intersection between freedom of the man-made world and the determinism of nature.

THE CONCEPT OF THE 'SELF'

In the simplest terms, the 'self' refers to 'what distinguishes me from others' and 'persists through changes'.[2] It represents the self-reflective part of our subjectivity which we invoke when we say 'I' or 'me'. Modern culture has been particularly preoccupied with pursuing self-knowledge which is seen to be able to bring liberation and power over one's fate through work on your 'self'—psychology, meditation, mindfulness, coaching. In this sense, 'self' has always been a project.

> 'At no time did identity become a problem; it was a problem from its birth – was born as a problem (that is, as something one needs to do something about – as a task), could exist only as a problem'[3]

I will then refer to 'the self' to mean the entirety of the subjective individual experience of a person as opposed to the life of a community. However, our existence is socially and biologically dependent on others and the world we inhabit. Family, national belonging and other types of strong emotional ties call our self-determination into question.[4] While the term 'self' has been widely used throughout Western thought, the term 'subject' is specific to modern reflection.[5] Subjectivity itself can sometimes be interpreted as a strategy of identity or a way in which we constitute and defend our distinctiveness as selves.[6] Some of the strategies used by the subject can be that of collective identity.

> Although identity is often seen as intersubjectively produced or, in other words, formed through social interaction, what is meant by this is sometimes

no more than that a pre-existing (but uncultured or pre-linguistic) subject is socialised into particular cultural settings. In this view identity then becomes something the subject acquires – and a subject may have many different identities.[7]

Those of us, who were brought up within the Western tradition, have a certain understanding of what 'subject' is and some meanings are implied in words such as 'subjective' and 'subject-object'.[8] Yet how precisely should we understand this term? Is 'subject' the same as the self? Some discourses certainly use the two terms in a very similar way. One undisputed point is that the idea of 'subject' is modern. The concept of 'subject' rests on an idea alien to the classical world: that truth is not an attribute of what really is, but a relationship between the knowing mind and external objects.[9] The opposition between 'subject' and 'object' is particularly central to modern epistemology, where the self actively withdraws from the world in order to know it. However, a different genealogy traces the word 'subject' to its Latin roots, where it means something that lies beneath.[10] It can then be understood as a foundation or basis of something else. In psychological terms, for example, subjectivity is the continuous basis of the processes that allow individuals to negotiate, acquire and renounce their identities. In this sense, 'the subject' cannot be withdrawn from the world—far from it, it refers to individuals as agents of actions rather than thinking selves.

These are many models of selfhood: the Cartesian *Cogito*[11] (self-knowledge), Husserl's 'immanent sphere',[12] Freud's '*ego*'.[13] What they have in common is that they all recognise that the modern self has to constitute itself in a world to which it does not belong; this can mean either remaining in constant conflict with what is not 'my own' or by transforming the world around 'me' so that it becomes 'my own'. And this ability is deeply embedded in our political and moral self-awareness. Hence, to defend subjectivity does not mean so much to promote a particular type of personhood or political identity, but to defend the western intellectual tradition itself. As in the case of all historical concepts, 'subject' has to be studied through a historical perspective. It is a particularly difficult exercise in recollection, as subjectivity is part of how we perceive ourselves, and therefore the very activity of reflecting on the self grants it temporal qualities: such as a memory and forgetfulness. The very fact that we understand ourselves as subjects is crucial to the analysis of subjectivity.

In order to better understand the development of the modern self, I compare the self with the way it was framed in classical thought. In the

following section, I attempt to show both the continuity and discontinuity between the concept of 'subject' and its pre-modern equivalent—the soul. I will first look at the continuity between the two concepts by analysing the Ancient Greek concept of the self. I then move on to show the limits of that narrative. I argue that the pre-modern concept of the self is based on a different type of dualism than the one we find in modernity.

THE CLASSICAL WORLD: SOUL AND BODY

One of the earliest stories about the pre-modern self can be found in Homer's tale of Odysseus and the Sirens.[14] In this story, Odysseus and his crew face the threat of creatures which have the ability to bewitch passing sailors with their voices and cause them to forget who they are. The danger is of losing one's identity, losing the self.

> So far so good,' said she, when I had ended my story, 'and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you- heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If anyone unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men's bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them. Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men's ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross-piece half way up the mast, and they must lash the rope's ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.[15]

While Homer's story does not provide a conceptual definition of the self, the self is identified with memory and identity. In this story, the desire to follow the song of the Sirens is clearly threatening the coherency of the sailors' lives. The danger is that they can forget who they are if they surrender to their immediate desire. They are forced to cover their ears so that they cannot hear the song; nonetheless, Odysseus asks to be tied to the mast so that he can hear the call at the same time, remaining safe from the voices that call him to the sea. Horkheimer and Adorno use the very same story in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to illustrate a politically significant narrative.[16] The sailors avoid the danger of oblivion because their ability to hear the song is taken away from them—whereas for Odysseus, the song

of the Sirens becomes an object of contemplation. What saves him is his ability to discipline and restrict himself. The apparent strength of his ego is based on self-subjugation. What this parable illustrates then is a model of a hierarchical 'self' based on the opposition between reason (Odysseus) and passions (sailors). According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the character of Odysseus embodies the higher self (pure reason-contemplation) and the sailors represent the lower self (passions). Like Horkhemier and Adorno, I believe that this model is archetypical to how mainstream Western Culture envisioned the self at the time. The Homeric understanding of the self was already quite complex as it referred both to the bodily (desires) and spiritual or reflective (reason). However, as Jerrold Siegel notes, it is unclear from the parable whether in Homer's world individuals can indeed exercise any rational control over their desires.[17]

Conditions of rationality of the self were expressed differently but consistently by both Plato and Aristotle.[18] However, for both of them, rational self-determination was a condition of political autonomy. Plato's view that philosophers should be rulers is usually portrayed[19] as a direct translation of his view of the soul where reason is given rule over passions and desires.[20] Perhaps more importantly, in some of his writings, Plato identifies the soul solely with intellect.[21] And even though his writings on the soul are not consistent about this relationship, the crucial texts that elevate the place of intellect in the internal order of the soul are *The Republic* and *Phaedrus.*[22]

In the parable of the cave, it is through the light of reason that we are able to move ourselves away from the images created by senses and into the world of true ideas.[23] Moreover in one of his later writings, *Letter 7*,[24] Plato clearly separates intellect from the other faculties. While the progression from the senses to common sense and *phronesis* is continuous, the passing from reason (*dianoia*) to intellect (*nous*) is 'a spark of the gods'.[25]

Even Aristotle, who does not believe in the duality of the two worlds of appearance and being as Plato does, could not escape from giving some sort of autonomy from the material world to intellect (active reason).[26] In his treatise *De Anima*, Aristotle says that even though individuals possess passive reason as part of their natural ability to grasp the qualities of the world, it is through 'active reason' that individuals are able to abstract and construct knowledge.[27] This form of reason is what Aristotle calls the 'divine element',[28] and he seems to suggest that it is the only part of the human soul that is immortal.[29] However, it is unclear if active reason can indeed be seen as part of the soul because, as Siegel notes, depending on how we read Aristotle, active reason is not always portrayed as individual.

Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 47, 49.

We find a slightly different picture in Taylor's analysis of the classical concept of the self, which, he argues, rests on the distinction between what is 'immaterial and material', 'invisible and visible' or 'immanent and transcendent', 'worldly and heavenly'.[30] This is why the self is often identified with the soul, even in the case of the writers who found the whole distinction between soul and body problematic. The problem of the relationship between man and the cosmic order, which was mirrored by the distinction between what is visible and invisible, was one of the main issues for both ancient and Christian philosophies. By understanding the internal order of the soul, man is promised to find harmony with himself and with nature. This is because ultimately, the distinction between immaterial and material was solved by the fact that we people were thought of as embodied. The visible order could therefore represent the invisible one. If there is a classical problem of the self, then it can be summarised in the ancient proverb, allegedly set on the temple in Delphi: 'Know Thyself'.[31] This is because classical philosophy understood our cognition of the world as mostly passive, so that falsity was a product of the inaccuracy of our senses and not of any structural fault in cognition.[32] As a result, our place in the world becomes unproblematic. Society was supposed to imitate and be an extension of the natural order. Thus, we can see the analogy between the constitution of the soul, our bodily organs and society in the works of such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle. For them, the question about the best type of government was intrinsically linked to the problem of what it means to be a good man. Charles Taylor describes this as the key feature of pre-modern societies:

> Traditional societies were founded on differentiation: royalty, aristocracy, common folk; priests and laymen; free and serf, and so on. This differentiation was justified as a reflection of a hierarchical order of things. […] Man could only be himself in relation to a cosmic order; the state claimed to body forth this order and hence to be one of man's principal channels of contact with it. Hence the power of organic and holistic metaphors: men saw themselves as parts of society in something like the way that a hand, for instance, is part of the body.[33]

Classical thought then represents a holistic and passive[34] representation of the self. First, it is holistic because, while acknowledging the distinction

between the spiritual and the material, classical thought sees the soul as encompassing both. Second, classical thought is passive as it treats our cognitive engagement with the world as essentially unproblematic and because it places moral sources outside of the individual. In fact, Siegel argues that it is precisely because the self is not radically separate from the body (for either Plato or Aristotle), the self has to be seen as part of a broader teleological order.[35] As a result, we need to seek the idea of a good life, which may be external to any moral reasons—for example, because that is what God wills, or because it is expedient.[36]

Modern Self: 'Subject' vs. 'Object'

While the classical view based morality on obedience (as it assumed that people are too weak-willed to behave badly), in modernity, morality becomes about self-governance.[37] Modernity represents the intellectual framework that was mostly shaped in the period between the fifteenth and the early twentieth centuries. It starts with the fall of scholastics (such as Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard and Thomas Aquinas)[38] and the reinstatement of philosophy as a discipline independent from theology. Its end is marked by the fall of the great philosophical systems and the emergence of the anti-humanist movement (such as Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger). There are still values, concepts and institutions which we understand as 'modern' in that sense—amongst which there are rationality, secularism and tolerance. In modernity, self-subject becomes one of the key concepts. In a way, this is surprising because the term itself was not popular in philosophical literature until the late seventeenth century; even through the eighteenth century, it was rarely and narrowly used, principally in opposition to the subjective-objective.[39] The term 'subject' only became crucial to modernity retrospectively and as a concept attributed to conscious beings.[40] To be 'subject' meant first and foremost to have a privileged and active epistemological position in the world.[41] In order to further unpack this concept of the modern 'subject', the following section addresses the birth and development of the idea of the modern self. I will examine briefly the route that led to identifying the self with consciousness. I will then show that modernity produced alternative understandings of the self and that the tension between them is deeply political.

While both Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts place politics in a broader framework of the order of being and the structure of the (embodied) human soul, the modern concept of the self is uprooted.[42]

With secularism, the world ceases to be internally ordered. There is no cosmic principle to discover; the only way for an individual to find their place in this world is to look into themselves. As we no longer have a pre-given place in the world, we have to reinvent that order instead and define ourselves in relation to what is 'outside' of us. This binary nature of modern identity divides the world into 'outside' and 'inside', 'I' and 'other'. It is exactly in that binary tension that the modern self develops.[43]

I have already mentioned one theorist who has delved deeper into this subject than any other. According to Charles Taylor, what differentiates the modern moral world from the ancient is the transformation of the 'self' into a noun. 'In every language there are resources for self-reference and descriptors of reflexive thought, action, attitude […]. But this is not at all the same as making 'self' into a noun, preceded by a definite or indefinite article, speaking of 'the' self, or 'a' self.'[44] Taylor shows us that the notion of respect for human beings—which is at the centre of modern ethics—is emblematic of the changes in our understanding of identity. In the classical world, we were subject to the law of nature. But with modernity, Taylor claims, we no longer recognise a grand moral order, and the self became the source of subjective right.[45]

This point becomes clearer when we look at Locke's theory of natural rights. What distinguishes this theory from the classical concept of natural law is not the religious dimension, but the location of 'right' within the 'subject'.[46] The passing from the law of nature to natural rights is a step towards political recognition, but also represents a move towards inwardness. Thus, the modern notion of respect that comes from this concept of the self is different to the classical one. Being based solely on the recognition of the moral autonomy of individuals, it cannot be earned or lost.[47] Taylor tries to show how these notions of moral autonomy and modern identity evolved together in early modernity.

> To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose.[48]

In his book, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity,* he traces the genealogy of the key elements of modern identity. These are (1) modern inwardness, or the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths and the connected notion that we are 'selves', (2) the affirmation of ordinary

life and (3) an expressive notion of nature as an inner moral source.[49] But it is specifically the first element (modern inwardness) that is most relevant to my investigation. He traces the origins of the concept of the modern self in three major theoretical steps. The first step is Plato's notion of self-mastery. Taylor explains how Plato's moral theory is based on a hierarchical model of the soul. According to this model, we are virtuous only when our desires and emotions are subject to reason.[50] The rule of reason in the individual soul mirrors the rational harmony of the universe (*kosmos*), and through knowledge of that rational order, we can exercise our own reason. Virtue, then, comes from knowing about the good. According to Taylor's reading of Plato, acting on emotion or desire takes us away from the truth and from good. For Taylor, this is the origin of the modern idea of rationalism: 'to consider something rationally is to take a dispassionate stance towards it. It is both to see clearly what ought to be done and to be calm and self-collected and hence able to do it […].'[51] Thus, to be rational means to be truly a master of oneself.

In Plato's theory, the self can be located in a single place—the mind. In earlier Greek writings—and especially in Homer—the soul would be identified with bodily locations.[52] It could be divided just like the body and did not differ from it substantively. Plato also uses the term 'soul' in this way. However, he starts using the same word to refer solely to the higher human faculty of the mind. Unlike reason, Plato perceives the mind as a unitary space.[53] For Plato, to be ourselves is to be in control of our faculties and to be thoughtful and conscious of ourselves. The opposite of the self is not the outside world but is instead the body. Sleep, rage, sorrow and thoughtlessness are all for Plato moments when we lose ourselves.

The opposition between the 'inside' and the 'outside' becomes central to the concept of the 'self' much later with the development of Christianity. This transformation that Taylor calls 'internalisation' consists in a replacement of Plato's understanding of the dominance of reason by another, 'in which the order involved in the paramountcy of reason is made, not found'.[54] In order to show this, Taylor refers to Augustine's concept of the inner light (*lumen naturale*).[55] In Taylor's reading of Augustine, even though good and truth are aspects of God, they cannot be found through exploration of the outside world. God's creation speaks of God's might; however, the only true road to God lies inwards.[56] This is perhaps why Augustine's inquiry takes the form of confessions, as confessions are a type of personal journey. According to Taylor, this cognitive turn is the beginning of a road leading to the concept of radical reflexivity.

> Radical reflexivity brings to the fore a kind of presence to oneself which is inseparable from one's being the agent of experience, something to which access by its very nature is asymmetrical: there is a crucial difference between the way I experience my activity, thought, and feeling, and the way that you or anyone else does.[57]

For Taylor, the final step in the process of internalisation was made by Descartes. What for Augustine was a search for transcendent sources of our existence by reaching into the human soul, for Descartes is, according to Taylor, an autonomous and self-sufficient process. This is because Descartes identifies the self with the thinking substance. The aim of Descartes' enquiry was to establish what we can know for certain. In order to do that, he puts into doubt the validity of his own beliefs about the world, searching for a type of knowledge that can withstand this process.[58] He comes to the conclusion that even though we can doubt in the existence of the object of our doubting, we cannot doubt in the existence of the thinking subject without self-contradiction.[59] Thus, our own existence as thinking subjects is the first and most basic principle of knowledge. The existence of our body, however, according to Descartes, does not possess the same level of clarity and certainty.

> I rightly conclude that my essence consists only in my being a thinking thing, being a thinking thing [or a substance whose whole essence or nature is merely thinking]. And although I may, or rather, as I will shortly say, although I certainly do possess a body with which I am very closely conjoined; nevertheless, because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in as far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and as, on the other hand, I possess a distinct idea of body, in as far as it is only an extended and unthinking thing, it is certain that I [that is, my mind, by which I am what I am] is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it.[60]

Taylor's account of Descartes could be seen as somewhat one sided. Siegel, for instance, notes that the Cartesian subject, in Descartes' own thought, is not as independent as is sometimes perceived. Siegel reminds us that it is God who, in the end, has to rescue the self from not being able to know the world.[61] In this sense, Descartes' theory is not entirely revolutionary and does not, according to Siegel, perceive the subject as the sole agent of activity.[62] It could also be argued that Taylor's view of the development of the 'self' overvalues the reflective element of selfhood. Taylor's aim in

the end is to portray human beings as 'self-interpreting animals' who find their identity by existing in the space of moral questions.[63]

However, the moment in the history of philosophy when the self became identical with the thinking substance is crucial for the development of modern subjectivity. This is because consciousness is not part of the world in the same way as body is. Body is subject to laws of nature and, according to Descartes, it can be explained purely mechanistically. Consciousness, on the other hand, cannot be understood simply as a mechanism. Thinking is independent from body and is subject to its own laws. This concept of the independence of the self is a crucial step in a long process of forming the concept of the individual autonomy, as we will see further in the next section.

Descartes' move to place body outside of the self by objectivising it as an object of our experience as thinking subjects also meant that the universe no longer presented itself as a model for the self. The criterion of truth is no longer the reality outside of us but the clarity with which we think. In this sense, the self becomes independent and cannot find itself in the world. Descartes' *cogito* situates moral sources within us.[64] But this now becomes a political problem, because there is no way of knowing other individuals than through their bodies. And Descartes does not provide us with a persuasive answer about how to conceptualise the connection between the thinking substance and matter. In other words, by making us think of ourselves as thinking 'selves', Descartes' model of the self does not offer an explanation as to how we can construct political subjectivity. How can 'I' transform to 'We'?

The three main features of the 'subject' understood as the 'thinking thing' are: inwardness, reflexivity and rationality. Firstly, inwardness refers to the above-described localisation of the sources of the self within the 'subject'. It divides the world of our experience into the subjective and the objective. This dichotomy represents a type of dualism other than the classical opposition between soul and body. As Taylor notes, in Plato's dualism (repeated in Christian thought), the world is divided between spiritual and material; self has to be located in relation to both. But with modernity, the division is between inside and outside.[65] This is because consciousness is not part of the world in the same way as the body is. The existence of our body, according to Descartes, does not possess the same level of clarity and certainty.[66] Thinking is then perceived as being independent from the body—it is 'subject' to its own laws. This is why inwardness results in a specific idea of autonomy of 'subject'.

Secondly, reflexivity can be understood as an ability of the consciousness to turn on itself. It is, as Siegel suggests, an ability of the mind to 'see cognition as a source of understanding not only of the things but also of the self'.[67] In this sense, 'subject' has the inherent ability to take on both an active and a passive role. It is this ambiguity that will also make 'subject' a key political notion for modernity, because it allows us to question the 'necessity' of the existing political and social structures. Having said that, different theories will assign various levels of activity to 'subject'. As Siegel notes, the radical empiricist tradition perceives the Humean stance on 'subject' to be completely passive.[68] On the other hand, Kant views all experience as possible only because it is actively conditioned by the 'subject'.[69]

Finally, I differentiate between rationality and reflexivity to indicate another quality that springs from identifying 'subject' with consciousness. When Descartes differentiates between the thinking substance and what he calls extensive substance (matter), he also claims that they belong to different orders. The mind is a sphere of freedom limited only by reason. Matter, on the other hand, submits to mechanical laws of nature and is a realm of necessity. Therefore, the human condition is to be able to will everything, but be limited by nature in doing so. The role of reason is to restrict our will by following a set of methodological steps that allow us to reach certainty.[70] However, because the modern self is both rational and reflexive, it is a 'subject' of technical rationality. Our understanding of ourselves is also technical in the sense that our self-understanding can and does serve as a tool enabling us to transform ourselves. This ability to reflectively redefine oneself is crucial to the modern notion of individual autonomy, which I will return to later on.

The transformation from the classical self to modernity has introduced a conflict which places demands on the political. The tension between the passive and active elements of the self is central to this. The Cartesian ego which sprung as a radical consequence of dualism has grounded the way in which we think about our freedom but has not provided a way to understand our belonging in the world and to society. If the self is identical with consciousness, it becomes separated from the outside but also from itself. The self cannot know itself without division, and this is where the actual opposition of the subject and object is born. The combination of two worlds into one comes then with the price of dividing the subject. This translates into a political problem as modern society is based on both: the radical notion of freedom plus the modern self on one side and a deep sense of national belonging on the other.[71]

Notes

1. This has been noted by many scholars, most notably Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre and Benedict Anderson. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue – A Study In Moral Theory*, London, Duckworth, 2004; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 2006.
2. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 3.
3. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge, Polity, 1997, pp. 18–19.
4. *Op cit.*
5. Having said that, the actual use of the term 'subject' was popularised much later, in particularly by Heidegger.
6. For example, a very typical strategy of identity is thinking of oneself in terms of one's own history and memory. The recollections of our goals, dreams and values form when we were little and 'uncorrupted' by others often serve as a basis of maintain a feeling of self-worth and self-ownership.
7. Jenny Edkins, Veronique Pin-Fat, 'The Subject of the Political' in: Jenny Edkins et al., *Sovereignty and Subjectivity,* London, Lynne Rienne Publishers, 1999.
8. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005.
9. Vasilis Politis, 'Invoking the Greeks on the Relationship Between Thought and Reality: Trandelenburg's Aristitle – Natorp's Plato,' *The Philosophical Forum*, 2008, p. 192.
10. Or is thrown underneath something else.
11. Rene Descartes, *A Discourse on Method* Etc., London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1937.
12. Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001, pp. 154–157.
13. Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id,' in: Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, London, Penguin, 1991.
14. I am aware that there are many interpretations of this story. My interpretation does not aspire to establish a historically accurate translation. It serves as an illustration and example that the above-mentioned understanding of the self was present in larger Ancient Greek culture and not only Plato's and Aristotle's work.

15. Homer, *The Odyssey*, London, Penguin, 2003, Book 12.
16. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 1997.
17. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 45.
18. George E. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?, Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford Scholars hip Online, 2006, pp. 2–3.
19. For example: Bernard Williams, 'The Analogy of City and the Soul in Plato's Republic,' in: Richard Kraut (ed), *Plato's Republic. Critical Essays*, Oxford, R&L Publishers, 1997.
20. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
21. Reale, Giovanni, Storia della filosofia antica Vol. 2, Platone e Aristotele, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1979, pp. 95–99.
22. We can find varying descriptions of the soul in Plato's work. The ones I refer to are: the definition Plato gives in The Republic, where he defines the soul as having three parts: rational, spirited and appetitive; and the image of the soul from Phaedrus, where it consists of a good horse, a bad horse, a chariot and a charioteer. Plato, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, *The Republic*, 439d-443b; Plato, *Phaedrus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 246a–247c.
23. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, Book 7.
24. Plato, *Plato's Seventh & Eighth Letters*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1947.
25. *Op.cit.*, 341c–d.
26. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, London, Dent, 1956, Book XII, Ch. 7–10.
27. Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book. III, 430a10–25.
28. Ibid.
29. *Op. cit., p. 63.* However, it is unclear if active reason can indeed be seen as part of the soul because, as Siegel notes, depending on how we read Aristotle, active reason is not always portrayed as individual. Jerrold Siegel, The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 47, 49.
30. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, Introduction.
31. H. Parke, D. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, London. Basil Blackwell, 1956, vol. 1, p. 389.
32. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy, Vol. 1: Greece and Rome From the Pre-Socratics to Plotinus, Garden City*, Image, 1993, Introduction.
33. Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 112.

34. Having said that, I agree with Siegel that we should not think of the classical concept of self as free of internal tensions. See: Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 50–51.

35. Op cit., p. 49.

36. Gregory Millard , Jane Forsey, 'Moral Agency in the Modern Age: Reading Charles Taylor through George Grant,' *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 40, No. 1, p. 184.

37. Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 509, 513.

38. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy, Vol. 2: Medieval Philosophy From Augustine to Duns Scotus*, Garden City, Image, 1993.

39. Jean A. Perkins, *The Concept of the Self in the French Enlightenment*, Genève: Droz, 1969.

40. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005.

41. *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

42. By this, I do not intend that the modern idea of self developed solely in separation from broader theological or metaphysical thought. On the contrary, the modern self developed in a dialogue with traditional sources of order. See: Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, especially, pp. 55–58.

43. I explain in the later sections that this alleged independence of the self is unsustainable.

44. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 113.

45. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

46. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

47. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 12.

48. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

49. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, p. X.

50. *Op. cit.,* p. 115.

51. *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

52. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005.

53. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 119.

54. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
55. Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion,* London, SCM Press, 1955, p. 78.
56. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, 129.
57. *Op. cit.*, p. 131.
58. Rene Descartes, *A Discourse on Method* Etc., London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1937, p. 85.
59. *Op. cit.*, p. 86.
60. *Op. cit.*, pp. 132–133.
61. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, especially pp. 56–57.
62. *Op. cit*, p. 72.
63. Charles Taylor, 'Self-interpreting Animals.' In: *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 45.
64. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 143.
65. *Op. cit.*, p. 121.
66. Rene Descartes, 'Meditations on the First Philosophy,' in *A Discourse on Method* Etc., London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1937, pp. 127–146.
67. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 12.
68. Ibid.
69. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 67–69.
70. Rene Descartes, 'Meditations on the First Philosophy,' in *A Discourse on Method* Etc., London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1937, pp. 95–110.
71. Taylor notes that in Romanticism, this tension can be solved only through an expressive unity of the body and the spirit, individual and society. Not only is thinking not possible without language, but thinking is always confined to a particular language. Ultimately, the unity of the self can only be achieved in a limited cultural world, in a community of words and images—the nation. As Herder argues, 'languages of different peoples reflect their different visions of things.' As a result, individual autonomy can be seen only in relation to the self-determination of the moral will of the community. This link, however, is only an illusion. Neither Herder nor any of his forerunners can explain the nature of the link between body and spirit. Instead, they tend to believe that matter and nature are themselves spiritual. Hence the choice of the language of heart and intuition which combines certain features of reason and perception. However, as Charles Taylor

notes, 'if our unity with the cosmic principle was to be achieved by aban-doning reason, through some intuition inarticulable in rational terms, then we have in fact sacrificed the essential.' (Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 12) The Romantic vision of a man as an expressive unity is powerful, but one sided. In the same way, as rationalism has problems with understanding belong-ing, expressivism does not offer a language in which to talk about our choices, rights and duties.

Individual Autonomy and Belonging

The previous chapter revealed the inherent tension within the concept of the modern self—specifically between its active and passive dimensions. This tension, I argue, is a key feature of modernity. The Cartesian *ego* which sprung as a radical consequence of (ontological) dualism has grounded the way in which we think about our freedom but has not provided a way to understand both our belonging in the world and to society. If the 'self', as Descartes suggests, is identical with consciousness, it becomes separated from the outside as well as from itself. The 'self' cannot then know itself without division, and this is where the actual opposition of the subject and object is born. The combination of two worlds into one comes then with the price of dividing the subject. This translates into a political problem as modern society is based on both: the radical notion of freedom and the modern self on one side, and a deep sense of national belonging on the other.

This chapter further explores the tension within the modern self by focusing on its implications on how we understand our relationship with the world and others. Specifically, I look at the concepts of authorship and autonomy, which are at the heart of democratic universalism and the modern understanding of freedom. In doing so, I draw on Charles Taylor's and Richard Lindley's works on selfhood and autonomy through a particular lens of the intellectual history of the self, which we can find in Eyal Chowers and Cornelia Klinger. The way we have conceptualised

the 'self' in modernity makes us view autonomy as the one of the primary foundations of selfhood.[1] Conversely, when directed at oneself, authorship can be seen as a particular type of autonomy. The weight in this chapter moves from thinking of the self from a historical perspective to a critical one. This approach will allow us to see the transformations of subjectivity as the driver of a political dilemma specific to modernity—that of the parallel desire to belong and to be 'oneself'. This dilemma is indeed at the heart of the trajectory of the self, as well as of nationalism.

The Concept of Autonomy

The word 'autonomy' derives from a combination of two ancient Greek words: 'self (reflective pronoun)' and 'rule' or 'law'.[2] It is, like most philosophical concepts, notoriously ambiguous and often used interchangeably with self-determination, freedom, self-creation, authorship and independence. Definitions of autonomy range from relatively narrow and strict to broad and weak. An example of the former can be Robert Wolf's definition of autonomous action as one that can only originate from one's own desires. In that sense, any external authority contradicts our autonomy.[3] Politics then is a sphere of subjugation. The latter is represented by Joel Feinberg's definition, in which he states 'I am autonomous if I rule me, and no one else rules I'.[4] At its most narrow interpretation, autonomy has something to do then with being free. However, the broader and more common definition of autonomy is closely linked to our ability to act rationally and is therefore limited to rational beings. I will explore both of these ideas in turn.

First, freedom is often confused with autonomy. This is partially because some historical ways of thinking about freedom do indeed relate to both concepts. For example, in Berlin's famous discussion of positive liberty, he states: 'I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside'.[5] Berlin develops then an idea of positive freedom which seems to be co-extensive with autonomy or self-rule. In contrast, his concept of negative freedom does not include any requirements concerning autonomy, but is limited to the lack of coercion.[6] Following in Berlin's footsteps, Richard Lindley argues that freedom (or Berlin's 'negative liberty') and autonomy are two quite different concepts. To show this, he uses the example of deceiving a patient in order to convince her to agree to a specific treatment. In this example, the patient is not restrained and, consequently,

can exercise freedom of action. If we were to, as argues Lindley, criticise deception in this case, it would not be on the basis of a lack of freedom, but because deception interferes with the patient's autonomy.[7]

We naturally find similar arguments in the political sphere, although in popular discourse, autonomy is here usually (confusingly) referred to as independence. Certainly, the popularity of the Leave campaign in the UK Referendum on membership in the European Union in 2016 cannot be explained in pure economic terms. Unlike much o UK politics, which at times may seem 'business-like', the referendum has polarised the nation on issues ranging from immigration to trade. It was, however, Leave's slogan to 'take back control', which has won the hearts and minds of most voters—even if they understood it quite differently. In its essence, it was, however, a cry for autonomy, rather than freedom. The UK enjoys a high level of personal liberty, and certainly state coercion is reduced to minimum. Even in the wake of terrorist attack, and the excessive amount of additional powers the government has gained since then—the UK has been good at refraining from using them. UK voters had no reasons then to feel particularly un-free. However, cuts in spending on public services, support programmes (including third sector ones) and the increasing alienation of the British political elites have all resulted in a significant reduction of political autonomy of certain groups of people. The press often refers to them as the 'disenfranchised'. This is of course inaccurate, since those in question have certainly held the right to vote. The 'disenfranchisement' relates rather to decreased autonomy of those groups of the society who have been systemically overruled, deceived or simply ignored.

Second, rationality is often cited as a condition of autonomy. We find this view most vividly expressed in Kant, who saw humanity's coming of age as the result of progression of reason. Lindley sees Kant's view of autonomy as one which only fully rational agents can be considered to autonomous. Of course, Kan'ts view of rationality is a gradual one—otherwise, the metaphor of 'coming of age' would be empty. Rationality and autonomy are therefore things we can have more or less of. However, Lindley argues that Kant's requirement of rationality is still too strict because it assumes that the true will of an agent is purely rational and disregards the role of passions, desires and inclinations.[8] The problem therefore is not that full rationality isn't achievable, but that will is not located solely in pure reason. Lindley suggests then that the rationality condition should be treated more broadly. In his view, rationality is ascribed not when an individual's actions are motivated by desires, but by an individual's

ability to choose which desires are motivational.[9] Rationality is thus a quality associated not with higher intellectual functions, but is simply the possession of will. Human beings are rational, according to Lindley, and prawns are not: 'Prawns cannot be judged in terms of autonomy / heteronomy not because they are irrational but non-rational'.[10]

Autonomy is then a quality assigned to free and rational creatures. But these are only necessary conditions of being capable of autonomous action. In order to call someone autonomous, we require one other quality—agency. Dearden points to this quality when he argues that 'a person is 'autonomous' to the degree that what he thinks and does cannot be explained without reference to his own activity of mind'[11]—or in other words without 'agency'. When we demand autonomy, we want more than to be left alone, we demand (or claim possession of) the means to our own independent thought and action. It is this particular element of the concept of autonomy that is most interesting in relation to politics. To become autonomous, we must then first acquire agency.[12] Thus, not everyone has the capacity to claim autonomy—infants, for instance, cannot be thought of in such a way, which presupposes ability to think in act with the same level of agency as fully formed individuals. Certainly, certain types of health conditions where conscious brain activity ceases (e.g. in a coma) do constitute states of lack of agency. The reason why certain types of treatment of patients are seen as disrespectful is just that because they refuse to recognise the patient as the agent. Examples of such behaviour include the practice of doctors not introducing themselves to terminally ill patients and not looking at them when speaking.

This is where the concept of autonomy intersects with the idea of the modern self. Agency is not something that can be assumed as given, but has to be claimed through a certain type of relationship with oneself and the world. This relationship is most commonly referred to as authorship. The following section investigates what it means that the self is an author and explores the political implications of demanding authorship. Certainly, both ideas are central to the self-understanding of the modern culture, where 'being oneself' is just as valued as 'being the author of one's own destiny. Drawing on Eyal Chowers' concept of 'entrapment',[13] I continue to show how the tension within the modern concept of the 'subject' affects our understanding of the political and the demands we place on political community.

Authorship and the Dilemma of the Modern Self

Authorship is a concept central to both the concept of autonomy and the idea of the modern self. Within modern individualist society, being an author is a unique quality. The concept of authorship is ambiguous; it refers to two distinct phenomena which are often confused when we use the word casually. Firstly, we refer to authorship when we want to say that a 'thing'—an article, a book, a piece of music—was created by a person or a group of people. The term authorship describes here a special relationship between the author and the world. An article, a book or a piece of music is supposed to represent something unique about the author.[14] They are expressions of his or her inner self, perhaps even the soul. When we think about authorship in this way, we assume that authors are somehow unique. And it is this uniqueness that grants special value to the author's words and deeds. As authors we are responsible for the final outcome of our work and, hence, we are entitled to ask Homer 'What did you want to say in your story about Odysseus and the Sirens?'. Moreover, on meetings with an author, we seek to learn something secret about their work, something otherwise hidden to non-authors.

The second meaning of the word author refers to the relationship the author has with herself. I understand this as a claim that the self is partly or completely in control of its interpretations. In other words, we are the creators of the image of ourselves and have the ability to transform ourselves according to who we want to be. This ability to reinterpret oneself is based on the belief that an individual can constantly 'start from the beginning'. The claim that this is, in fact, a key element of the modern 'subject' seems today a truism, particularly when we consider the link between individualism and authorship in popular culture and everyday life. The motto to 'be yourself' can be found not only in pop music or advertising but is used in all parts of culture as well as in education and politics. From a young age, we learn that we are unique 'subjects' and that the purpose of our development as selves is not to reproduce knowledge but to be 'original' and unique. Creation, which was previously a right reserved only to God, is now a moral imperative of the self, which is consequently characterised by a permanent desire to reconstitute itself. This imperative to always start from the beginning has become a basic principle of science and—with the idea of the revolution[15]—of politics. Nothingness is its natural starting point. However, as nature knows no such thing as nothingness, the task to create it becomes an ideological one. The revolutionary discourse, which

holds dominance over much of European modernity, became known for its fight against prejudgment and prejudice[16]—everything that has to be deconstructed. Paradoxically, fetishisation of the absolute beginning is a product of the same metaphysical thinking that modernity attempted to overthrow.[17] The tensions that torment the idea of a rational self are impossible to understand the tensions without this idea of absolute beginning.

I differentiated between the two meanings of the word authorship: (1) as the relation between the author and the world and (2) as the relationship between the author and herself. What the two different meanings of 'authorship' have in common is that they both relate to a conception of 'subject' that is autonomous and in control of its representations and products. This conception is, of course, contestable. For instance, Foucault's essay "What is an author?" criticises the importance our culture attaches to authorship.[18] He suggests that we should think rather of authors as products of their times.[19] Simultaneously, he investigates why we see culture and society as expressions of individuality. One example Foucault gives is the customary order to display and search for books in a bookstore where books are ordered according to author. Foucault asks if it would not be equally possible to have books grouped according to writing styles, themes or length.[20] Foucault convinces us that this shows that the relationship between the individual and the world is conceptualised in terms of authorship.[21]

Moreover, one can argue that the language we use to reinterpret and develop ourselves exists only within a community. The words and images used to interpret ourselves carry meanings that we cannot necessarily intend or anticipate. In that sense, we do not have full autonomy in the way we constitute ourselves because we are limited by the inter-subjectivity of language.[22] All in all, the danger of looking at the self mainly as an author is obvious—we simply do not possess the necessary autonomy in our social and cultural environment. As human beings, we are born with no autonomy. As citizens, our ability to be authors is condition by the language and set, which is external to us.

But it is the second meaning of the word authorship—the relationship between the author and self—that is most misleading. For the relationship between the self and the world is unlike the one between the self and one's own interpretation of the self. There is an inherent duality between 'I' and the world. But when we think about the self in terms of authorship, we inevitably understand it as split in two. As a result, we objectify not only the world but also ourselves. The 'subject' exists in that divided space

between the self-made 'I' and the self-made world. But this creates a paradox. How can 'I' be a passive 'subject' of society with a duty to conform to its norms, and also an autonomous individual? The emancipation of the individual based on self-creation is put into question by the existence of nations, social classes and ethnic groups. This is the political dilemma of the modern self. In Eyal Chowers' words: 'only the "I" that I think and intuit is a person; the "I" that belongs to the object that is intuited by me is, similarly to other objects outside me, a thing'.[23]

Chowers argues that while individuals gained freedom and authorship in early modernity, they also became susceptible to the threat of subjection.[24] The sources of this phenomenon can be found in the collapse of the idea of natural law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which resulted in two different views. The first view, represented by Kant and Condorcet, claimed that the self was finally awaking from its slumber, and with the progress of society, mankind will finally reach full maturity.[25] The second view, which Chowers assigns to Herder, states that mankind lacks the necessary knowledge and ability to control the social world it created.[26] As a result of these conceptual transformations, the later popular imagination of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exemplified the fear that the products of our reason will chain us to a uniform and degrading existence.[27] Chowers believes that the tension between reason and nature is something inherent to the modern 'subject' itself. This duality of the modern self was according to her best described by Kant's distinction between 'subject' and 'object'. For Kant, because we are 'subjects', we are free—we belong to the *noumenal* world (the world of things in themselves). However, as objects of knowledge, we become part of the phenomenal world and are consequently bound by the laws of nature.[28]

Chowers' narrative sheds light on the idea of individual autonomy because it shows its dependence on a particular view of the self, which he sees as problematic. Thus, autonomy understood not simply as freedom but authorship is not only impossible but counter-productive—it alienates us both from ourselves and the world. However, I do not think this is entirely the case. In the following section, I seek a solution to the dilemma of entrapment. I agree with Siegel that the type of autonomy associated with authorship rests on a one-sided and largely inaccurate view of the self. We can only reach autonomy in the sense offered by authorship if we choose a fully reflective existence, detaching ourselves from the world and consequently being unlimited by it.[29] Even Christian hermits and Buddhist monks can only hope for glimpses of such a mode

of existence. To withdraw ourselves from the world would mean to lose any point of reference between 'I' and the 'Otherness' and consequently to cease to exist.

Autonomy and Heteronomy

While it is true that there is a tension between the passive and active dimensions of the modern 'subject', it does not necessarily follow that we need to overcome it. For Chowers, the condition of entrapment, which defines the relationship between the modern self and the social order, is one that needs to be overcome through a re-assertion and integration of the self—a project which is individual rather than collective. However, what Chowers describes as 'entrapment' is its primary experience. In her article 'From Freedom without choice to choice without freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', Cornelia Klinger argues that both elements of tension within the 'self' in modernity spring from the same moment of liberation from the constraints of the holistic order,[30] which drives two divergent currents of modern culture: rationalisation and subjectivisation. Both strive to achieve autonomy, which rationalisation defines for making the world rational and 'subject' to our will, which becomes reflected in modern science, economy and law. Ultimately, the role of scientific reason is to differentiate, measure and divide. Subjectivisation is, according to her, the opposite process that centres on both the individual and collective identities.[31] The tension between those two currents of modernity is what produces the self. Klinger's narrative shows how the modern 'subject' gains its 'inner depth' through maintaining an alterity[32] towards society and political institutions.[33] The 'self' can be thus located at the crossroads between celebrating its uniqueness and the desire to be like everyone else in terms of efficiency and utility, while subjectivisation does in terms of 'subject' no longer being assigned rank in a grand order.[34] Rationalisation represents the technical aspect of modernity—the drive for making the world rational and 'subject' to our will is reflected in modern science, economy and law.

Philosophers know this tension as one between autonomy and heteronomy. 'Heteronomy', which makes its grand appearance in Kant's moral philosophy, is there defined as acting out of our wants and desires rather than following the transcendental laws of pure practical reason. Kant positions himself as an acolyte of rationalisation by identifying the 'self-subject' with intellect. Outside of Kant's philosophy, 'heteronomy' relates more broadly to all the external sources of action: god, tradition, fate,

habit, social norms (as opposed to reasoning). By basing our action on these external sources, we seemingly renounce agency and therefore are in danger of losing ourselves. In fact, certain interpretations of religious calling within Christianity require just that—the renouncement of the 'ego', understood both morally and metaphysically. The goal of the faithful is to lose herself and to become one with God.

However, pure rational autonomy is an aspiration which does come with its own downside. No one describes this burden of having to be a thinking 'self' better than Nietzsche (see also Chap. 9).[35]

> Observe the herd which is grazing beside you. It does not know what yesterday or today is. It springs around, eats, rests, digests, jumps up again, and so from morning to night and from day to day, with its likes and dislikes closely tied to the peg of the moment, and thus neither melancholy nor weary. To witness this is hard for man, because he boasts to himself that his human race is better than the beast and yet looks with jealousy at its happiness. For he wishes only to live like the beast, neither weary nor amid pains, and he wants it in vain, because he does not will it as the animal does. One day the man demands of the beast: 'Why do you not talk to me about your happiness and only gaze at me?' The beast wants to answer, too, and say: 'That comes about because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say.' But by then the beast has already forgotten this reply and remains silent, so that the man wonders on once more.[36]

Nietzsche is well aware of the fact that the modern 'self' experiences both the burden of identity and the desire to get rid of its own individuality. Heidegger also saw this tension, which he expressed in the concept of '*das man*'—the desire of the individual to shed her autonomy and act as 'one acts'.[37] This explains why the diffusion of the nation-state as a source of substantive identities is accompanied by ambiguous feelings of both freedom and melancholy[38]: As Klinger remarks:

> Modern subjectivity is torn between the impulse to rejoice at the loss of the fetters of origin, tradition, and conventional wisdom of all kinds on the one hand, and the urge to re-establish certainty, orientation, and solidarity on the other.[39]

However, Klinger's analysis goes further because, as I noted earlier, she sees the tension between rationalisation and subjectivisation as a source of the modern self and therefore of individualism. Paradoxically then, individual autonomy is only possible within this tension between internal and

external sources of the self. Klinger argues that in late modernity when the traditional sources of meaning were lost and replaced by a commercialised production of meaning, the tension between subjectivity and rationalisation was abolished.[40] The decline of family, class, nation and other sources of substantive collective identities in late modernity and more recently leads to a dominance of rationality over subjectivity. As a result, we find ourselves in what Klinger calls a no-win situation, that being a world offering neither freedom nor identity.[41] The modern 'subject' progresses from 'a freedom that proved to be without choice to innumerable choices without freedom'[42] because 'the subject that would be able to enjoy this new freedom vanishes'[43] in what Mathews calls a cultural marketplace.[44]

Klinger evaluates the contemporary attempt to see the 'subject' mostly through its reflective, rational aspects and finds this attempt misconceived. She shows that if we understand the self mainly though self-reflectivity—its ability to choose identities and self-interpretations—we in fact amplify the strength of the disciplinary power of society. It is not the state that is the main source of that power but the market. Consumerism ultimately leads to a loss of alterity towards society and transforms the hegemony of politics to that of economy.[45] Whenever we think of the concept of the self as primarily reflective, we place demands on it that are simply too high. This approach is faulty because it creates disharmony between the self and the world. It sustains a false opposition between authorship and determination, 'masters and slaves, civilized and barbarians, saved and damned, oppressed and free'.[46] The radical freedom of thought that the Cartesian ego postulates cannot be fulfilled in the world.[47] As Siegel notes—the Cartesian ego itself 'suddenly enters into the truth of its own self-reflectional subjectivity just at the point when its subjection to worldly confusion and uncertainty seems complete'.[48] In order to bring harmony back between the self and the world, we need to resign from this notion of radical freedom. Siegel calls this 'moderate autonomy'.

Siegel does not expand on this concept of 'modern autonomy', so it is left to us to connect the dots. He does however offer a way of dealing with the tension between subjective and rational components of the self. In his opaque work *The Idea of the Self*, Siegel argues that we can find three separate dimensions of selfhood within modernity: bodily, relational and reflective.[49] The bodily dimension of selfhood places the sources of selfhood in individual passions and needs. The first dimension of selfhood is evoked when we identify ourselves with our deepest, often subconscious, desires and believe they are key to explaining our actions.[50] According to

Siegel the second, relational aspect is usually culture-specific and relates to our social identity and place in society, the most radical example being Marxism.[51] Finally, the reflective dimension of selfhood is defined by a specific notion of rational autonomy or self-determination. The self is here defined as being independent from passions and needs as well as external conditions. We are perceived as masters of our own fate. For Siegel these three dimensions of the self are not exclusive but necessarily remain in a state of continuous interplay. This gives us a clue as to what 'moderate autonomy' would involve. By saying that full autonomy is impossible, we acknowledge that our agency in the world relies on external sources of the world, which is common to us. 'Men inhabit the Earth'—Hannah Arendt's refusal to base her reflections on an abstract self, which has been so widely used in modern Western philosophy, is emblematic to our investigations. In 'Life of the Mind', she further reflects on the nature of selfhood and identity. One of my favourite passages reads:

> In addition to the urge toward self-display by which living things fit themselves into a world of appearances, men also present themselves in deed and word and thus indicate how they wish to appear, what in their opinion is fit to be seen and what is not. This element of deliberate choice in what to show and what to hide seems specifically human. Up to a point we can choose how to appear to others, and this appearance is by no means the outward manifestation of an inner disposition; if it were, we probably would all act an speak alike. Here, too, we owe to Aristotle the crucial distinctions. "What is spoken out," he says, "are symbols of affects in the soul, and what is written down are symbols of spoken words. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all. That however of what these primarily are symbols, the affections [pathēmata] pf the soul, ate the same for all."

In a culture which insists on finding our 'true self', and to 'be yourself', we succumb to the romantic notion of an 'inner self', which exists outside of the world and can be reached when we get away from the world. Arendt, as ever insightful, shows us that the distinction between appearance (how we appear in the world) and truth (our real self) is a false one. Because no matter how much we reflect on this, we cannot imagine or see that which does not appear. Truth, and here Arendt clearly follows Heidegger's footstep, is ultimately a 'revelation' of something that becomes visible to us. Our selfhood cannot be detached from what we do in the world and what we think. It is the choice of how we act and what we think, that ultimately defines how we appear, and consequently our 'self'. Perhaps then, modern

autonomy is a concept best explained by the idea of self-limitation—of being reflective about how we appear and therefore co-authoring our own identity. It is the opposite of doing of what Heidegger criticised, as doing what 'one does' ('*das man*'). It is the thoughtless following of others, of the crowds, that leads to us losing our autonomy.

INDIVIDUALISM AND NATIONHOOD

One could therefore see why Arendt, as many other thinkers, was famously critical of nationalism as a homogenising force, which contradicts political freedom. In particular, the fact that nationalism relates to naturalistic view of political membership, for Arendt, it presents a danger to politics as a distinct activity. It was precisely this point which made nationalist thinkers the subject of particularly hateful attacks by Isaiah Berlin to whom nationalism was simply not a political concept (I addressed this critique in Chap. 3). Nationalism was meant to be the cause of war and unrest by leading to the break-up of empires. It is seen by Arendt and Berlin as collectivist and illiberal in character. However, I think Arendt's and Berlin's accounts of nationalism are grossly one-sided—which is understandable given the time in which they wrote.

The dichotomy between nationalism and freedom is a false one. Paradoxically, it was individualistic politically liberal societies who have produced the level of sameness that became associated with nationalism. While one could disregard this as a 'historic' coincidence, Allan Patten's defence of Herder's account of nationalism suggests that there may be more to it. In 'The Most Natural State', Patten defends Herder, whose writing has been classically labelled as an example of a romantic nationalism.[52] In order to do so, Waldron constructs an interpretation of Herder's work, which portrays him as a liberal author by arguing that nationalism facilitates the conditions for individual, rather than collective, wellbeing and freedom.

This is because, according to Herder, while the conditions of happiness of each individual are unique, those who belong to the same nation are much more likely to develop such conditions in a way where they are compatible with each other—or lead to mutual facilitation. This 'empirical clustering', which Patten suggests to have been inspired by Locke,[53] expresses a common belief that national communities create conditions which are more similar within the national community than out. The fact of sharing such conditions of happiness is politically significant, because

we tend to hold a common sense expectation, that when we decide for others, we are more likely to be well disposed towards them and better at making the decisions when we share similar conditions of individual happiness. This belief is ultimately the basis of all theories of subsidiarity.

However, far from simply restating a popular belief, Herder bases his view on a very specific empiricist epistemology. Reasons is only thought of as a faculty which helps organise experience—which 'involves an 'image' (*Bild*) possessing a certain 'shape', 'unity', 'focus' and 'order' that cannot be attributed to raw materials and 'specks of light' presented by sensation'.[54] Since the development of concepts, categories and values which are key to our political and private life is not a universal function of reason, it is through socialisation that we accumulate the impressions needed to conceptualise the conditions of our happiness and indeed freedom. It is through language that we ultimately know not only others, but also ourselves. The images, which allow the self to develop and flourish by finding a direction (or a telos), are therefore for Herder, based on a community within which we are socialised during childhood. This a posteriori approach to personal and civic development fuels the cultural vision of Herder's the nations, which is defined as a unit of tradition—'passing on of language, a character, a manner of thought, a set of myths, and so on'. Naturally, national communities are for Herder more than language groups. The formative influence of nations allows members of the national community to share political agency within a defined territory. This is why ultimately, the problem of nationalism is a problem of sovereignty, because a transnational state (or what Herder calls an imperial power):

> […] would have difficulty appreciating that the subjugated people have a genuinely different set of conditions of happiness, and even if it does manage to appreciate this it will have difficulty identifying, from afar, the precise content of these conditions.

This is why…

> She (the individual) should prefer that the people making decisions at least have shared a common socialization experience with her, so that they are more likely to have some appreciation of her form of happiness and to be able to identify the conditions that do promote her happiness and avoid those that do not.[55]

Patten argues that for Herder nations are then primarily communities of sympathy, which are conditioned by our ability to understand the suffering

of others through language and similarity of character. And since our conditions of happiness are similar to those of our fellow nationals—so are the circumstances that make us unhappy.[56] For Herder them, a multi-national state could not rest on sympathy, and therefore it would be unlikely to create conditions for individual happiness and flourishing. It could still be an effective state in terms of the ability to exercise its authority—but this authority would be purely based on obedience. This is the point which most readers of Herder find most difficult to accept. Why, one would ask, should we accept that our sympathy should be limited to communities we are born to? Isn't human happiness and suffering at least partly universal? However, neither Patten's nor mine reading of Herder indicates that either is implied here. Waldron notes that Herder makes a clear distinction between nation and race, with only the latter being understood as a community of origin.[57] Nationality is truly something that is gained through living and interacting with others, rather than through birth. Perhaps Herder does think that this socialisation into a nation is limited to childhood. However, an opposite account would not be contradictory with his theory. There is little to suggest that individuals' conditions of happiness would change as they relocate to another country and therefore socialise into the new nationality. Perhaps what does flow out of Herder's account is that we then do have a duty to welcome those as our co-citizens, precisely because we come to share their toil and their happiness. As Patten argues, for Herder, identity 'is not given from the start – it is worked out'.[58]

Perhaps more importantly, Herder's view is not meant to lead to limiting our moral horizons to our fellow nationals. While sympathy and understanding of suffering are developed in conditions of a shared national community—where conditions of happiness are the most similar—the same empiricist principle allows us to universalise our experience to understand the suffering of others outwith our immediate community. The emotional bias for what is close and familiar to us always persists in this account, but it does not prevent us from taking a more global outlook. What it does exclude is the type of universalism, which assumes that conditions of human happiness are the same everywhere, and in that sense, Herder's nationalism is much more in line with critical versions of cosmopolitanism (for instance Ingram)[59] or rooted cosmopolitanism. It prevents us from striding into models of cosmopolitan neutrality, which are often criticised for imperialism.

Herder's account of the nation sheds some light on the uneasy alignment between nationalism (which became synonymous with tribalism) and liberal individualism. The drive towards greater individual autonomy

has obviously not been driven by nationalism in itself, but rather both nationalism and individualism are products of the project of modernity. I discussed the key components of this project earlier in this chapter, as well as in the exploration of the transformations of the self in Chap. 4. One of those components was authorship. In modernity we define ourselves as 'authors' of our destinies because limits set by more traditional societies no longer exist within nation-states. However, the openness of social structures does not provide enough grounding for the modern individual, who feels displaced. In this sense, alienation, which we experience in our societies today on a mass scale, is a uniquely modern problem. It is associated with feelings of depression and anxiety on a scale not seen ever before. This is because our moral and social development is directed simultaneously by two 'truths', which we cannot easily reconcile: (1) that what makes us individuals is our inner self (2) and that at the same time everyone is the same inside. The Cartesian 'cogito' ultimately is meant to represent the uniqueness of my experience, as well as its universality (once we succeed in defeating the solipsist objection). Paradoxically, it is with the notions of autonomy, self-creation and originality that the self has been finally defined in terms of its most basic and common needs and desires. The mechanics of the soul—psychoanalysis—is a by-product of the process of individuation along with the development of national propaganda. All of this bears heavily on modern epistemology. While the primary experience of classical thought was the world and its order (cosmos), the primary experience of the modern individual is herself. It is no longer possible to maintain the naturalistic disposition to the world. On the contrary, the world becomes more and more a world of our (human) experience, subject to the laws of intellect. The modern individual sets out on a quest to know this world hoping that it will help her to understand herself— that which is not directly given in her experience. However, the quest for knowledge and exploration easily turns into a type of domination. This has been the problem of the modern spirit in its most profound articulation in the exploration of America. The 'other' could only be recognised either through radical difference (Native Americans as non-humans) or sameness (Native Americans as degenerated people). The former method leads to constructing an ethical, religious or scientific hierarchy, and the latter to lack of respect to identity.[60]

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By exploring the changes in the concept of the self and the origins of the modern political self, I have shown that the story of the self is more

complex than it could seem at first sight. The modern account of the concepts of the self and autonomy is one-sided and reflects tensions between the idea of individual autonomy and community. I have shown that the tension within the self between its active and passive elements and the tension between the self and the world are not problems but are instead key fundamental accomplishments of modernity. The dualism of the self that exists whenever it maintains an alterity towards society and itself is a condition of individual and political autonomy. Consequently, we should not think that individual autonomy and national identity are mutually exclusive. I will develop this point further in Chap. 7, in which I argue that this dualistic view of the self requires the framework of nationhood in order to facilitate the development of moral and political agency. The self cannot exist in nothingness—it needs a bounded space of a political community (as explored further in Chap. 7). Most liberal accounts of subjectivity neglect this aspect of subject formation and political agency—opting instead for a view of the subject, where the individual is assumed as the foundation of political ontology. By showing that individual self develops in a position of alterity to a political order defined by nation, I attempt to open up new ways of thinking about global citizenship in political theory.

Notes

1. Even if complete autonomy is an illusion (it is impossible to think of individuals outside of any network of reference—human beings are biologically dependant on others), autonomy became one of the most pursued ideals in modernity.
2. Richard Lindley, *Autonomy*, London, Macmillan, 1986, p. 5.
3. Robert Paul Wolf, *In Defence of Anarchism*, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 14, 41.
4. Joel Feinberg, 'The Idea of a Free Man,' in: R.F. Dearden (ed) *Education and the Development of Reason*, London, Routledge, 1972, p. 161.
5. I. Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in: *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 6.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Richard Lindley, *Autonomy*, London, Macmillan, 1986, p. 14.
8. *Op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.
9. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
10. Ibid.
11. R.F. Dearden, 'Autonomy and Education,' in: *Education and the Development of Reason*, London, Routledge, 1972, p. 453.

12. I discuss agency further in Chap. 7.
13. Eyal Chowers, *The Modern Self in the Labyrinth, Politics and the Entrapment Imagination*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004.
14. The idea that art represents individual authorship is itself modern. This is why it is often difficult to establish authorship of some of the medieval works.
15. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the philosophical transformations of subjectivity and the idea of the revolution, see: Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man*, Oxford, New York , Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 3–45.
16. Terms brought to their modern philosophical use especially by Gadamer: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Continuum, London 2004.
17. Agata Bielik-Robson, *Inna Nowoczesnosc. Pytania o wspolczesna formule duchowosci*, Krakow, Universitas, 2000 and Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 1997, p. 8.
18. Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', 1969, in: Harari, Josué V., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1979, p. 101.
19. *Op. cit.*, pp. 101–105.
20. *Op. cit.*, pp. 105–108.
21. *Op. cit.*, pp. 108–113.
22. This point was argued for example by Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 1958.
23. Eyal Chowers, *The Modern Self in the Labyrinth, Politics and the Entrapment Imagination*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004, p. 22.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
26. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
27. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
28. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 120.
29. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 10.
30. Cornelia Klinger, 'From Freedom without choice to choice without freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations,* Volume 11, No. 1, 2004, p. 121.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 122.
32. I have taken this term from Cornelia Klinger. 'Alterity' refers to the 'otherness' of the entity in contrast to which the self's identity is developed. Cornelia Klinger, 'Freedom without choice to choice without freedom:

'The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations*, Volume 11, No 1, 2004.

33. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
34. *Op. cit.*, p. 121.
35. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, NuVision Publications 2007, p. 1.
36. Ibid.
37. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, pp. 165–167.
38. Cornelia Klinger, 'From Freedom without choice to choice without freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations*, Volume 11, No. 1, 2004, p. 126.
39. Ibid.
40. *Op. cit.*, p. 132.
41. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
42. *Op. cit.*, p. 131.
43. *Op. cit.*, p. 131.
44. Gordon Mathews, *Global Culture/Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket,* 2000.
45. Cornelia Klinger, 'From Freedom without choice to choice without freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations*, Volume 11, No 1, 2004, p. 134.
46. *Jerrold Siegel, The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005*, p. 10.
47. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.
48. *Op. cit.*, p. 55.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Allan Patten, 'The Most Natural State': Herder and Nationalism, History of Political Thought, Volume 331, Number 4, 2010.
53. Op. Cit., p. 5.
54. Op. Cit., p. 9.
55. Op. Cit., p. 35.
56. Op. Cit., p. 36.
57. Op. Cit., p. 38.
58. Op. Cit., p. 42.
59. James D. Ingram, *Radical Cosmopolitics. The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013, p. 147.
60. Agata Bielik-Robson, *Inna Nowoczesnosc. Pytania o wspolczesna formule duchowosci*, Krakow, Universitas, 2000, Part II.

Why Politics Cannot Be Universal

In the previous two chapters, I have shown that the transition from the classical world to modernity was accompanied by a politically significant transformation in how we understand the 'self'. The breaking with the traditional order of the world has not only sparked the need for autonomy of the self, but also led to the expansion of politics into other areas of life, which were previously restricted either through birth or through reference to the 'natural order'. This transition rests at the foundations of the relationship between nationalism and democratic universalism. As Dominique Schnapper puts it:

> The citizen (in the idea of modern nationhood) is defined precisely by his ability to break with determinations that would stifle him in a culture and a destiny imposed by birth. It releases him from prescribed roles and imperative functions. It is this tension between the universalism of the citizen and the particularism of the private man as a member of civil society which shapes the principle – as well as the values – of the democratic nation.[1]

The integration of various types of peoples into one community of citizens would not have been possible without nationalism and is a crucial condition for the development of modern democracy.[2] However, the universalism of modern citizenship has remained in conflict with the bounded nature of nation-states. The extension of politics from the privileged (white, male) landowners to the general population, which happened with the transformation from feudalism to modern nation-states, has resulted

in a consolidation of political power—but also opened it to questioning. This is why the universality of political action and the omnipresence of politics we experience today are both closely related with moral and political universalism.

In Chap. 3, I have established that the concept of the nation cannot be simply discarded as being anti-political or apolitical. I argued that this was due to too narrow an idea of what politics is as a sphere of activity. In this chapter, I want to move on to defending the idea that regardless of the apolitical nature of the nation, politics has to be bounded and that nationhood provides an appropriate framework for doing so. In particular, the nation enables us to participate in the 'political' world through shared social practices and institutions which in turn allow us to develop a language of bounded rationality. Political universalism, I argue, is as equally dangerous to politics as particularism. I analyse the common critique of the universality of politics by drawing on accounts put forward by Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe. These of course do not represent a survey of the field, but have been almost universally recognised as the key critical forces against a certain type of universalism, which we may call 'liberal'—but perhaps should be more appropriately simply referred to as 'philosophical universalism'. For all three thinkers have had a less than easy relationship with political philosophy—all drawing extensively on Western intellectual traditions, as well as refusing to be completely immersed in them. I also show how the limited nature of politics does not imply the impossibility of political or moral universalism in general, but does make some types of universalism more convincing than others.

My argument is divided into three sections. Section one investigates the notion of politics as a limited activity defined through the concept of 'the political'. Drawing mainly on Arendt and Schmitt, I will show the perils of extending the notion of politics to the non-political. However, I will also criticise their models as insufficient in explaining the universality of political action brought about by the idea of nationalism. In section two, I examine the limits of politics from the perspective of the concept of bounded rationality. I show that the idea of political community indicates a specific form of common experience. I use the concepts of *phronesis* and *sensus communis* to provide my definition of bounded rationality. This leads me, in the final section, to investigate how bounded political rationality finds its place in the modern form of political community as 'the nation'.

The question of the universality of politics has become particularly significant in the context of the contemporary globalised world. Globalisation does not only mean a change in the way we perceive the nation's place amongst other nations. It also transforms our understanding of political action. This is due to two phenomena: First, our lives are increasingly affected by global factors such as global warming or an international credit crunch. These phenomena are universal in the sense that they affect us all. As a consequence, the national perspective becomes insufficient from which to tackle many of the most significant issues on the political agenda. Second, with globalisation comes an awareness of certain issues evoking a sense of compassion or solidarity. Issues such as poverty, human rights abuses, genocide and other types of mass suffering are increasingly perceived on the grounds of common humanity transcending national or racial boundaries. The universalist view can be summed up by saying that with this notion of humanity, politics should enter a new era which makes traditional state boundaries obsolete.

Universality of Political Action and Political Universalism

The universality of political action experienced by modern democracies is a relatively new phenomenon. The extension of political rights and rise in political activism have gone hand in hand with the expansion of the state itself and of what is deemed to be the subject of political discourse. In particular, the distinction between private and public activity—so carefully cherished by early modernity—has been redesigned in such a way that private lives of individuals can now be subject to public control, while the state increasingly demands privacy for reasons of security and efficiency. It might not seem all that strange then that at a time when politics seems omnipresent, it is also perceived by many to be in peril. In fact, in itself the idea that politics is something that can be in crisis or in need of defence is a sign of our time. If we were to point out the causes of this phenomenon, amongst them we would have to name the crisis of participation, of political trust and the privatisation of public life.[3] These three factors pose questions about both the nature and value of contemporary liberal democracy as well as about the state of contemporary political culture in relation to the processes of globalisation, multiculturalism and social atomisation. The progressive retreat of the political before the private and the social has

been described particularly vividly discussed in the second half of the twentieth century by thinkers as diverse as Carl Schmitt,[4] Michael Oakeshott[5] and Hannah Arendt,[6] as well as more recently by Chantal Mouffe.[7]

In fact the word 'crisis' can be seen as one of the distinct features of philosophical thought until recently. Some authors, such as Fukuyama, explicitly herald the end of politics, history and art.[8] In a sense, this position reflects the theoretical impasse European thought fell into following Nietzsche and after Husserl brought the notions of 'end' and 'crisis' to moral and scientific discourse.[9] However, these developments present a new type of problem for political philosophy because the threat to politics allegedly derives from the way we conceptualise political life. On the one hand, authors such as Schmitt and Mouffe point out the problems that liberal politics has with conceptualising and responding to conflict.[10] On the other hand, Arendt and Oakeshott, as we have seen in Chap. 3, are concerned about the progressive deconstruction of politics as a unique way of organising public life.

To say that politics is omnipresent can mean one of two different things. Firstly, the omnipresence of politics can be understood as a statement about the growing scope of the state. It is an article of faith today that the state performs many new functions and the list has been growing ever more rapidly, since the mid-nineteenth century. This is partly because of the advancement in technology as well as the *techné*[11] of governing. A technical approach to governing presupposes a self that is rational and 'amendable', otherwise we could not hope to predict the effects of political decisions. But this expanded scope of state control could not be justified without a compatible concept of the self and its role in politics. Secondly, 'omnipresence of politics' can simply mean that politics has entered our everyday discourse in a much more widespread way than before. Thus, this is no longer only a statement about the scope of the state or political institutions, but about the self-understanding of the political world. Based on this understanding, our everyday experience is deeply politicised—such as our sexuality of gender. Previously non-political choices or differences are now seen as political. Here 'political' no longer means 'concerned with the affairs of the state', but is described through other categories such as 'oppressive', 'unjust' or 'risky' which can relate to the economic or intimate, amongst others. It is no longer about public life, but also about private life. The expansion of politics into the private world is not only represented by the inclusion of that which is not common—private interest or preferences—but also of that which cannot be public, because it

is hidden. Thus, the growing scope of the state's role in surveillance means that not only our private lives are exposed and can be 'revealed'—but also that the state has a hidden side: one that is itself private or intimate.

This second, and normatively more interesting, way in which the omnipresence of politics affects us is not necessarily a product of the growing scope of the state. It became noticeable with the universality of political action that came with the birth of the nation-state. By universality of political action, I mean that in modern democracies, the political class is recruited from across the society. The fact that anyone can become a politician or be otherwise engaged in politics is a great achievement of modern liberal democracy—but more significantly—of nationalism. Nations of course themselves can act as limits for political participation. It is not a necessary feature of nationhood, as the example of the openness of Scottish nationalism reminds us, but certainly a common one.

The Limits of Politics

The philosophical conditions of political universalism are then intertwined with the limits of politics itself because the way we think about 'politics' can determine what universalism is actually possible. For Hannah Arendt, the foundation of thinking of politics as a limited activity can be found in the (Western) ancient world. For the invention of politics itself was a reaction to a crisis of moral language. This is clearly visible in Plato's dialogues which represent a struggle to define notions no longer recognised as clear and common. In fact, his entire project can be seen as an attempt to objectify the increasingly divisive language of the Greek *polis*.[12] Aristotle makes a similar attempt to address the moral and political crisis in Greek city-states—mostly responding to the slow downfall of religious explanation of the world.[13] *Polis* becomes a place where many opinions can coexist. Politics is thus a unique device allowing us to accept a diversity of interests and opinions without destroying them. It is in this sense that we can talk about defending politics as defending a specific, historically developed way of living in community amongst equals.

The term 'politics' in its original sense—just like all other political notions—is polemical. Aristotle uses it to distinguish the Greek way of life from that of barbarians. And it is because the latter are alien to politics that they can only exist as slaves.[14] Two things are meant by this: Firstly, barbarians are not free because their lives do not belong to them, but to the despot. Secondly, they cannot *become* free because, in Aristotle's view, they

are incapable of rational speech (*logoi*). Hence, violence is, in Arendt's reading of Aristotle, the only way of guaranteeing their obedience. By opposition, she defines politics as the realm of free word and deed.[15] The exclusiveness of politics in Aristotle's theory is a product of a restriction on what and who can appear 'publicly'. In other words, it is a result of a strong distinction between the private and the public. In fact, the ability of citizens to distinguish between their own individual interests and the common good is constitutive to Aristotle's categorisation of the forms of government.[16] This is why, in this analysis, Aristotle envisions democracy as the least preferable political system because it is almost bound to corrupt its citizens by allowing them to pursue individual interests instead of the common good. There is a key distinction between Aristotle's theory of politics and Plato's vision drawn in 'The Republic'.[17] On the one hand, both political projects rest on a theory of the human soul. This is why Aristotle's investigations into politics are preceded by *Nicomachean Ethics.* For Aristotle, the ultimate purpose of the state is the creation of a 'good citizen'[18]—just as it is for Plato.[19] On the other hand, while for Aristotle politics is always a limited activity—because it rests on notions of virtue which can only be read within and are specific to a particular community of citizens—Plato reverses this relationship, making the political community the key to a just life.

Hannah Arendt is one of the thinkers who offered the most convincing defence of a limited, classical vision of politics. Arendt sees politics as unique sphere which allows us to present ourselves to others in conditions of freedom. Drawing on the Aristotelian understanding of politics, Arendt argues that it is speech and the ability to persuade that define the political relationship between citizens. According to Arendt, the equality of public speaking (*isegoria*) was what distinguished the political system of Athens.[20] She follows Aristotle in her description of the household as a natural relationship in the domain of subordination and violence. But as Arendt says 'sheer violence is mute'.[21] It cannot be communicated and in that sense cannot participate in creating a common public realm (see discussion in Chap. 4).

This version of the Aristotelian view is neither the only nor the dominant understanding of politics. Elizabeth Fraser and Kimberly Hutchings point at two main modern traditions of framing politics: one in which political power is identified with domination and another which attempts to exclude violence from politics.[22] The former, they claim, has been dominated the way we think about politics in the West and can be associated

with Machiavelli.[23] The latter has gained ground since the birth of contractual political theory wherein politics constitutes the domain where individuals entrust the power to use force to the sovereign.

In a more contemporary context, however, politics is no longer so clearly defined. Politics is not an exclusive activity; thus, the traditional ways of defining it through the distinction between private and public, or in the Aristotelian terms, 'household' and '*polis*', are no longer representative of many elements of the private sphere and are now seen as potentially political. In fact, the problem of what can and cannot be considered political has become one of the key political battlegrounds distinguishing various ideological and theoretical positions. In other words, even though theorists broadly agree what politics is in its broadest sense, we find it problematic to determine which areas of human action should be present in the political domain. This confusion is a reflection of the historical development of the state.

In *The Human Condition,* Arendt argues that with the birth of the concept of society, this classical distinction between 'natural' and 'political' is destroyed. For her, the sole term 'society' assumes a type of mutual dependence between individuals forced to live or co-operate together to satisfy their needs and wants.[24] We can see this most explicitly in the classical social contract theory. Both for Hobbes and Locke, the contract is a product of striving for survival and the need of protection or co-operation.[25] Arendt argues that with the coming of 'society' as a key political concept, private interests gained public significance.[26] The final expression and culmination of this process is, according to her, the invention of political economy and the language of national identity.

The reason why Arendt's analysis is relevant to my argument is that it follows the same pattern of transformations of the modern self and its dichotomy between freedom and society. Arendt shows how the growing scope of society in early modernity has changed the way we perceive politics. The purpose of government became securing and providing for the needs of the individual—but in doing so, the freedom that the citizen enjoyed had to be limited. Modern politics is, according to Arendt, concerned with the management of society. The consequences of this move from the political to the social are dangerous both for the individual and for 'politics' itself. The reasons for this are twofold.

First, the growing scope of the state and society means that it is no longer possible for the individual to maintain a holistic perspective in decisions and actions. By this, I mean that the knowledge required to solve

most political or social problems is so advanced, one individual is unable to comprehend it. Thus, it is this world that becomes characterised by *anomie*[27]—the progressive alienation of the individual from the ways of life of the community and the wide moral order. Second, according to Arendt, the modern concept of politics as management of the affairs of society leaves the political sphere empty and neutral. The decisions become impersonal and bureaucratic.[28] And in this sense, they become similar to the laws of nature. For Arendt, the invasion of the social onto the political ultimately threatens to destroy the latter through privatisation of the public and the reduction of politics to economy and social management.

We can find a not altogether dissimilar argument about the danger of losing the distinction between public and private in Carl Schmitt's. Schmitt famously criticises liberalism for constructing a language that confuses politics and society and, as a result, for how the political enemy becomes confused with an economic competitor, private adversary or a partner in a discussion.[29] In this process, Schmitt argues, everything becomes political and, consequently, nothing is no longer specifically political.[30] In other words, political issues become expressed through non-political language. Modern society is described in *The Concept of the Political* as a product of a bourgeois consciousness. Schmitt shows how the appreciation of the apolitical private sphere becomes part of the middle-class ethos. The bourgeois 'rests in the possession of his private property, and under the justification of his possessive individualism he acts as an individual against the totality'.[31]

Schmitt's negative evaluation of the liberal model of politics rests on his definition of 'the political' as an autonomous category. The political distinction between friend and enemy cannot be derived from any other entity.[32] He writes: 'The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions.'[33] For Schmitt, the concept of political community rests on the ability to distinguish ourselves from others. The only distinction strong enough to legitimise political power is one between friend and enemy. As much as this may seem an obscure empirical observation, it is not. The distinction between friend and enemy is for Schmitt much more than a general statement about human nature. Schmitt uses it to show the distinct nature of 'the political'. Friend and enemy is a similar dichotomy to good and bad or beautiful and ugly, which are distinctions characteristic to moral and aesthetic discourses. The political distinction between friend and enemy is,

according to Schmitt, existential and cannot be solved or erased by means of persuasion. The difference in terms of which this distinction is drawn is not necessarily a substantive difference of interests or values. Schmitt argues that political enemies need not be hated personally or be defined in terms of conflict of interests.[34] In the crudest sense, political enemies are just those who do not belong to 'us'. This is why, political community is the highest form of association; political community is sovereign, because it has the ability to produce the 'highest unity'. As Schmitt states, 'not because it is an omnipotent dictator, or because it levels out all other unities, but because it decides, and has the potential to prevent all other opposing groups from dissociating into a state of extreme enmity – that is, into civil war'.[35]

The concept of the political in the form which Schmitt proposes is closely linked with the concept of the modern state. First, this is because while Schmitt is not a theorist of the state[36]; he sees states as historical expressions of the political to the extent that these function within a plurality where the existence of the state presupposes the existence of other states.[37] Secondly, Schmitt defines the state as an entity of a people[38]; the state *is* the political status of a people. Hence, in Schmitt's view, the existence of the state presupposes the distinction between friend and enemy. Thus, the 'state' is a political distinction which ultimately manifests itself in the right of a government to wage war. This is what distinguishes the state from all other types of organisations in society such as clubs, political parties or churches.

Schmitt sees liberalism as the force behind a progressive destruction of the political dimension of the modern state. He is especially critical of the type of pluralist theory which understands the state as just one of the many social organisations; if the state is to be understood as a political community, it must be sovereign. In the pluralist perspective, Schmitt argues, the state not only ceases to be the most important type of human organisation, as individuals might see their membership in the church or in the tennis club as in fact more central to their lives, but it also strips the state of its political dimension. Perhaps more importantly for Schmitt, liberalism presents a threat to politics because of its inability to incorporate radical conflict in its political language. As a consequence in liberal democracy, as Schmitt writes, the 'adversary is not an enemy but a disturber of peace'.[39] An example of this being that many western liberal states have changed the name of their Ministries of War to Ministries of Defence, though they do not intend to entirely halt their role in initiating conflicts.

In other words, for Schmitt, liberalism fails to see that political language is in fact antagonistic and polemical.[40] All political notions have the ability to turn the world into the dichotomy of friend and enemy.[41] 'Every religious, moral, economic, ethical, or other antithesis transforms into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy.'[42]

A somewhat different argument against the universality of politics comes from Chantal Mouffe. Mouffe argues that the concept of universality belongs to the moral and not the political order.[43] Drawing on Schmitt in her reconstruction of the concept of the political, Mouffe shows that the political requires an underlying antagonism without which pluralism becomes an empty slogan. She argues that if we are to take democracy seriously, we need to encourage a higher level of meaningful difference. 'A healthy democratic process calls for vibrant clash of political positions and an open conflict of interests. If such is missing, it can too easily be replaced by a confrontation between non-negotiable moral values and essentialist identities.'[44] To say that pluralism depends on antagonism is to say that politics is not only a way of transforming conflict, but that conflict is a condition of politics in general in the sense that it provides the options necessary for political choice. This is why Mouffe is critical about liberal democracy as well as liberal cosmopolitanism. The notion of humanity as a community is not political because it does not allow for the recognition of meaningful difference.

Politics as a 'Pluriverse'

The issue of limits of politics is then at the heart of both Arendt's and Schmitt's arguments. For Schmitt, politics is a limited activity *ex definitione* as the political entity presupposes the real existence of an enemy and therefore coexistence with another political entity.[45] Politics cannot be universal. It is a 'pluriverse'[46]—the political community has to be limited. For Arendt, politics can only be understood as a limited sphere of human action which is, in essence, a bounded activity. Politics is conceived as a place where individuals choose to appear publicly amongst others. But the creation of this public space is conditioned by the forms in which we are able to appear to each other. In *polis,* this was made easier because of its size. With the birth of the nation-state, this became much more problematic—hence, Arendt described the competition between forms of direct local self-rule and representation (Chap. 4).

The criticism of Arendt's restrictive view of politics is all too well known. The alleged border between the private and the public has been used to support practices that were exclusive and oppressive. In particular, by excluding the affairs of the household from the public space, the *polis* reinforced politics as the domain of male citizens. This model did not allow for public discussion of gender-specific questions because of the fact that the intimate could not appear publicly. The feminist slogan 'private is public' stood in clear opposition to the classical notion of politics. However, the interplay between private and public is not limited to oppression. From a phenomenological approach, we can see private as hidden and public as that which is 'on display' or 'transparent'—much as the citizens of Athens were able to see each other when gathered. But it is impossible to think of authority that is completely transparent, or of a private life, which can remain hidden. Arendt's view of politics does not only prevent us from talking about certain kinds of oppression, but also from thinking about issues which are undoubtedly political—such as security or sustainability.

While the danger of Arendt's view of the political is that the concept becomes empty, Schmitt's view of politics poses the opposite danger. As Agnes Heller argues, Schmitt's theory attempts to transform everything into a political thing, thus reducing the abundance of forms of life to one single political form.[47] As a result, in Heller's analysis of Schmitt, his concept of the political is not autonomous, but in fact parasitic. Perhaps Schmitt's theory is most visibly problematic because of the one-dimensional explanation he offers regarding the way the political people are constructed. However, his criticism of the liberal concept of politics is persuasive. Like Arendt, Schmitt believes that the eradication of the distinction between the private and the public, and consequently between a personal and political enemy, is destructive to the concept of politics itself. Having said that, we must remember that the issue of the distinction between the private and public is in fact at the centre of modern liberalism. Without this distinction, individuals can become vulnerable to the abuse of power. But it is precisely the value of private life in the liberal model that is criticised by Arendt and Schmitt. They argue that once we all cease to have the need for public engagement, politics becomes nothing more than a managerial activity.

Both Arendt's and Schmitt's accounts of the concept of 'the political' are perhaps least convincing when it comes to nationhood. They fail to acknowledge the role of the nation in creating a framework for a political community (Chap. 2). For Arendt, it is precisely the notion of the

nation-state that finally threatens the idea of politics as a limited public activity. The relationship between identity and statehood or citizenship is not a straightforward one. However, the assumption that many theorists seem to share that citizenship is created and shared through the state does not seem to pass basic scrutiny. While citizenship as a legal concept is certainly a product of the state institutions, the specific form of modern citizenship—and in particular the universality of it across the population—cannot be clearly attributed to the institutional order, which itself is a product of various socio-economic transformations.

This is why philosophical universalism ultimately remains an abstract concept. Universalism sees the limitation of political community to a specific ethnic or cultural entity as based on prejudice, which rests on an irrational attachment to what is ours[48] and what David Miller calls (and embraces as a fundamental feature of human nature) the ignorance of the outside world.[49] However, language is much more than an instrument of communication. It represents the network of meanings through which people communicate, give themselves a common identity and determine their attitude towards social and political institutions. Social life creates values and norms which articulate and conserve these meanings. Thus, language originates from the way people imagine their bonds and mutual duties; political concepts resemble these images. As Barbara Markiewicz points out, 'if they do not – we become unable to articulate new situations'.[50] Faced with the problems originating from nationalism, terrorism and the risk society,[51] the task of political theory is to incorporate these phenomena into our political language in a way that will enable us to make sense of and debate them, make judgments and eventually express our interests.

In other words, there is no universal language that could sustain a sphere of purely rational discourse. Political rationality is based on sentiments and practices which originate from living together as individual actors within the political realm.[52] The above view does not limit us to a nationalist outlook. The claim about limited rationality can be compatible with a concept of citizenship based on a *formal* rather than a *substantive* relationship. Michael Oakeshott's concept of civil association is a good example here. I explained in Chap. 3 that civil association is a relationship in terms of practice and not in terms of substantive wants.[53] In other words, civil association is an agreement on rules as the conditions of the association but not on specific choices and is understood solely in terms of its own authority.[54] However, even though such a relationship is not based

on a common substantive good or bonds of blood, it is still a bounded view of the political community. This is because the rules that constitute civic association are intelligible to its members only through the common practices and the language of civil intercourse.[55]

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Even if we agree that politics is a bounded activity, this still does not eliminate the normative question regarding the appropriate way of setting limits to political community. Setting the limits of political association according to ethnic or historical boundaries is problematic. In particular, it might seem strange that the benefits of the universality of political action that has recently been achieved in most liberal democracies are not to be extended to all. In the next two chapters, I examine reasons why national boundaries could be defended as both adequate and historically justified conditions of modern political community. I argue that nationality is foundationally political and, in this sense, cannot be understood in solely ethnic or cultural terms.[56] The reason why nationhood has such strong claims defining membership in a political community is that modern citizenship originated from a tension between the particularism of the nation-state and the notion of universal equality that it brings about as a result. Without it, neither universal suffrage nor conscription would be possible. These practices are both central to the development of nationalism and to our understanding of citizens as equals.[57]

NOTES

1. Dominique Schnapper, *Community of Citizens. On the Modern Idea of Nationality,* London, Transaction Publishers, *1994*, p. 73.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
3. B. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age.* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984; R. Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No 1, 1995.
4. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
5. Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003.
6. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998.
7. Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, London and New York, Verso, 1993.
8. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Penguin, 1992.

9. See especially Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, and Frederick Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 2003.

10. Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, London and New York, Verso, 1993; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

11. From ancient Greek 'craft' or 'art'.

12. Eric Vogelin, *The New Science of Politics. An Introduction*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1987, Chapter 1.

13. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999, 038b9–11.

14. Aristotle, *Politics,* London, Penguin Books, 1992, Book I, Chapters 3 and 7.

15. Arendt Hannah, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 20–21.

16. Aristotle, *Politics*, London, Penguin Books, 1992, Book IV.

17. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

18. Aristotle, *Politics*, London, Penguin Books, 1992, Book III, Chapter 4.

19. Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 613e–621d.

20. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 25.

21. *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

22. Elizabeth Frazer, Kimberly Hutchings, 'On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon,' *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2008, No. 7, p. 91.

23. N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961, pp. 95–98.

24. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

25. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London, Penguin,1997; John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

26. Furthermore, Hayden argues that this focus on bureaucratic efficiency created a model of the state underwritten by a 'racist ideology', in which many categories of people both internally and externally became seen as 'superfluous'. Patrick Hayden, 'Superfluous Humanity: An Arendtian Perspective on the Political Evil of Global Poverty,' *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, No. 35, 2007, p. 282.

27. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

28. Ibid.

29. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 71.

30. *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

31. *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

32. *Op. cit.*, p. 26.
33. *Op. cit.*, p. 21.
34. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.
35. Carl Schmitt, 'Ethic of State and Pluralistic State' in: Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, London, Verso, 1999, p. 195.
36. In fact, Schmitt thinks that the era of statehood is coming to an end. See Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1963, p. 10, cited in: Ingeborg Maus, 'From Nation-State to Global State, or the Decline of Democracy,' *Constellations*, Volume 13, No 4, 2006.
37. *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
38. Schmitt Carl, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 19.
39. *Op. cit.*, p. 79.
40. *Op. cit.*, p. 30.
41. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.
42. *Op. cit.*, p. 37.
43. Chantal Mouffee, *The Return of the Political*, London and New York, Verso, 1993, p. 1.
44. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.
45. Schmitt Carl, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 53.
46. Ibid.
47. Agnes Heller, 'The Concept of the Political Revisited,' in: David Held (ed.), *Political Theory Today*, Cambridge, Polity, 1991, p. 102.
48. A more convincing account of universalism, which I also mention in Chap. 8, was presented by Ingram. See: James D. Ingram, *Radical Cosmopolitics. The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013.
49. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000, p. 25.
50. Barbara Markiewicz, *Zywe Obrazy. O ksztaltowaniu pojec poprzez ich przedstawianie*, Warsaw, IFiS PAN, 1994, p. 21.
51. The term 'risk society' is taken from Ulrich Beck's work. I discuss Beck's contribution to the discussion about the future of nationhood in Chap. 9. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge 2006, p. 5.
52. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000, p. 25.
53. Ibid.
54. *Michael Oakeshott, On Human Conduct, Oxford, Clarendon Press*, p. 180.
55. *Op. cit.*, p. 188.
56. By this, I do not mean that I am promoting a civic definition of nationhood or that I am attempting to identify the nation with the state (see

Introduction). I simply mean that the nation, which I understand as primarily a cultural community of shared history, has as such the ability to bring about a political world.

57. The above analysis of nationhood as a form of modern political experience is similar to Beck's claim that nationalism represents a type of syntax, language or outlook. According to him, nationalism as an ideology should be distinguished from methodological nationalism, which simply implies societies in plural. In other words, wherever we look, we see nations and peoples rather than 'mankind' or 'global civil society', the study of which is still often phrased in nationalist language. While Beck thinks this language of nationalism is misleading and problematic, I do not think we can simply try to get 'rid of it' as he does. (Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity, 2006.)

Nationhood and the Political World

Constructing Political Subjectivity: Agency and Nationhood

So far my argument has been focused on situating the idea of the nation within modern political thought and defending the concept of the nation from some of its critics. Defending national identity, even in a limited capacity, has become a difficult task, first, because the burden of proof is on the side of those who defend the *status quo*—and nations still seem to represent it. Contrary to what seemed to be the general feeling in 1970s and 1980s, nations do not seem to be in decline. In fact, there are many new nationalisms, and some of the old nationalist movements have been recently re-invigorated.[1] It is then easy to criticise political cosmopolitanism for being utopian, unrealistic or lacking in detail, since, most transformative thinking is. Second, any plausible defence of nationhood should give an account of the dynamic nature of nationalism, including the changing role of nations in the global era. What I have shown so far is that major critiques of the nation (and particularly the liberal one) manifest a certain deficiency in their understanding of the idea of the 'nation'. This is either because they overlook something about the concept itself (e.g. when they presuppose a radically ethnic view of nationhood) or because they fail to recognise the significance of the framework of nationhood to their own argument (Mill).[2]

Now I move beyond the critical part of my task and show where it has led me. In this chapter, I defend what I call a comprehensive view of the nation. It is an attempt to go beyond the limited capacity in which the concept of the nation seems to be present within mainstream contemporary

(predominantly liberal) political theory. I have already identified the crucial components of this view throughout the earlier chapters of the book. First, I argued in Chaps. 2 and 3 that the concept of the nation refers to a phenomenon that should be understood as neither simply exclusive nor inclusive; instead, it embraces both particularism and universalism concurrently. While nationhood cannot be conceptualised in terms of a purely civic or legal relationship, neither can it be seen as a natural, a political or anti-political identity. In fact, nations provide a crucial element of political power, because they have the ability to motivate citizens to take on burdens they otherwise would not.[3] Secondly, I argued in Chaps. 4 and 5 that the dichotomy within the concept of the nation reflects a similar dichotomy within the modern self. The project of radical autonomy based on the ideals of authorship and absolute beginnings is futile. Modern individualism rests on dialectics between passive and active components of the self. The individual subject is formed through a position of alterity towards common shared institutions. And thirdly, I showed that politics requires a form of bounded rationality which is a necessary condition of politics.[4] This is not only because our political language (which enables us to express our interests) is itself a product of a limited community, but also because politics is a sphere of practical rationality dependent on a set of shared practices and institutions.

Now I want to develop this position further and argue that if we take this comprehensive view seriously, it becomes evident that nations have the capacity to provide sources of recognition and, furthermore, that these can promote solidarity that reaches beyond national borders. While it is not my goal here to assess the impact of globalisation on the role of national identity, I want to show how nations can constructively participate in, and in fact are crucial to, a more cosmopolitan international community. Furthermore, I argue that the very paradoxical nature of national identity, which mediates between universal and particular, allows us to relate to each other both as individuals and as members of a perceived historical community.

The first section of this chapter follows on from my reflections on the bounded nature of political rationality in Chap. 6. I explore why political agency requires bounded rationality. The argument in this chapter builds on my definition of the nation as a form of modern political experience (Chap. 2) to show how nations help mediate the tension within the modern self, which I characterised in the first part of this book, by creating and sustaining public worlds. These public worlds are crucial for the development of

the moral and political agency of individuals because they provide a framework in which the self can be rooted. I draw here on Margaret Canovan's work, and in particular her view of nations as 'mediators'[5] which allow citizens to participate in a 'public world'.[6] This leads in the final section to suggest that in creating the framework for contemporary moral agency, nations have the ability to transcend their borders. It is then possible to think about a universalist nationalism or a rooted cosmopolitanism, which I explore in the next chapter.[7]

Nationhood as a Source of Moral and Political Agency

National identity is constitutive to the way we define ourselves. I do not mean this in the crude sense that we all need to feel particularly attached to being Polish, English or German. Instead, I suggest that this can be understood in two ways: Firstly, nationhood provides a framework for the process of self-creation; secondly, it sets the conditions of recognition of our relationship to others. In this section, I explain why moral and political agency requires a 'self' rooted in a community and why the mediating function of nations is so important for the idea of individual autonomy. I will first define the term agency and explain its relationship to the concept of autonomy. Then, I will show that moral agency requires a bounded community, and, consequently, so does political agency.

One of the fundamental characteristic of agency is that it cannot be assumed. As I have shown in Chap. 3, there is a strong strand within Western philosophy that sees the self mostly as a thinking substance and as such withdrawn from the world. However, the concept of agency refers to a notion of an acting self that is already in the world (because it has the ability to change it).[8] How are these two ideas of the 'self' related? On one hand, thinking and doing are often seen as opposing activities. To be able to think about an action, we need to distance ourselves from that action (this is how the 'subject' is recognised). On the other hand, as MacMurray notes, 'to act and to know I am acting are two aspects of the same experience'.[9] The self is then neither solely a thinking thing nor solely an agent, but becomes instead both. How are moral and political agents constituted?

In the simplest terms, the word 'agent' refers to the self when it is viewed as a 'doer' or, in other words, when we examine the self's capacity to act. Moral agents are 'individual human actors who have the capacityfor

deliberating over possible causes of action and their consequences and then proceeding on the basis of this deliberation'.[10] The concept of moral agency allows us to view individuals as capable of action which can be viewed in terms of 'right' and 'wrong' and who are morally responsible for those actions. Political agency can sometimes be seen as a sub-type of moral agency as it relates to the same domain of practical rationality. In short, the concept of political agency refers to the ability of individual actors to deliberate over their interests and communicate them to other individuals. The capacity for deliberating over possible causes of action and acting on that basis is not something we are automatically born with, but that we need to develop.

Millard and Forsey explain that agency could not be possible without the 'acquisition of language, and through this acquisition we are already laden with certain understandings and prejudgements about the world.'[11] This way of thinking about agency commits us to a view of the 'self', which can be labelled 'communitarian'—meaning that becoming an agent is only possible within a community.[12]

Political agency can be treated analogically to moral agency in the sense that it is difficult to imagine a way individuals could make sense of their own interests or communicate without a coherent narrative about the world in which they live and pursue their goals amongst others. Nations offer much more than a source of solidarity based on a feeling of a shared fate or bonds of kinship. National bonds represent the kind of bounded rationality that enables us to engage with 'the political' through social practices and institutions which make common language accessible. Nations provide the means through which the self-agent can constitute itself in a coherent way in relation to set and tested ways of life. This does not mean that the self becomes defined by some sort of nationalist cliché, but it does mean that our identity can be recognised by others meaningfully only if it is presented in a way that relates somehow to these shared ideas of life. Nations promote the development of moral agency because they offer a framework of bounded rationality through traditions, practices and institutions.

Nations Mediate Between the Self and the Public World

In Chap. 5, I explored the tension within the modern self between the desire to constitute itself as an autonomous individual and the need to belong to a community. I showed that while this tension rests at the roots

of the struggle between particularism and universalism, it is indeed necessary and constitutive to the modern individual, who defines herself precisely through a position of alterity to society. In the context of nationality, this relates to the fact that a Pole or an Englishman does not possess, or even identify with, any of the features that they associate with being Polish or English. However, the process of identification takes place in a dialectic with those features. While it is common to emphasise that personal identities are often defined negatively in relation to other nationalities (I am Polish in virtue of being different from 'Scottish' and 'Jewish'), it is less commonly noticed that on an individual level, national identity can also be framed in opposition to one's own belonging to a national group. For instance, my identity as a Polish immigrant living in the UK is framed neither as acceptance of purely Polish nor purely British, Scottish or English features, beliefs or values. My 'Polishness' is unique, in the sense that, contrary to a stereotypical Pole, I am not a Catholic, do not like vodka and prefer pad thai over bigos.

I also made a related point, that this tension within modern identity is a result of how the modern subject (the active epistemic self)[13] is framed. The duality between the passive (non-reflective) and active (reflective) elements of the subject constitutes the modern self which is always a self-in-the-making. Even though modernity defines the tasks of 'the individual' in terms of authorship, absolute autonomy in self-creation is beyond our reach. The modern self requires a framework of bounded rationality to be able to productively engage in a process of self-creation as a self-agent.

However, while there are alternative languages and groups that can offer a foundation for the modern individual in terms of practices or traditions, it is specifically the nation that successfully combines cultural norms with the ability to create and maintain a public world. I have already discussed this function of nationhood in Chap. 2, where I explore the nation as a 'form of political experience'. I frame the concept of the nation in terms of its three dimensions: that it is a 'non-thing' refers to an ability to create a common world by transcending individual horizons and finally that it is characterised by a principle of universality. I will go a step further here and argue that because of the three above features of the concept of the nation, nationhood creates a public world. By this I mean a realm in which individual actors can participate freely in debating issues beyond their private interest.

Without the capacity of the nation to provide a public world, the tension with the self could not be successfully mediated. We do not have the

ability to define ourselves in universal terms. This is because, as Butler argues, standards of universality are historically and culturally articulated—the very idea of detached self is unintelligible.[14] Nor is a detached 'self' desirable. The ability of nations to provide a bridge between cultural, political, ethnic, religious and practical elements of our identity allows for democratic deliberation and for liberal politics in the sense that nationhood outweighs all other types of group membership and, as a result, creates a framework in which individual interests compete with each other. Within the nation, at least in theory, we are all directly connected primarily as individuals and not as members of families, churches, trade organisations and other partial associations.

There are two accounts of the nation, which help us understand its ability to create and sustain political worlds—David Miller's concept of national citizenship and Canovan's concept of nations as mediators.[15] Miller's account of nationality relates us to a particularist perspective, where 'my place' becomes more valuable than the outside world. This specific version of bounded rationality gives preference to subjective knowledge based on sentiment and practice rather than reason. As a result, the nationalist view produces the distinction between *us* and *them* understood within a framework of what is known and tamed, as opposed to the wilderness of the outside world.[16] Miller sees this distinction as key to producing the kind of community of responsibility that the modern state requires.[17] He distinguishes what he calls the three dimensions of nationality. The first dimension is that nationality is part of personal identity.[18] This is the most evident level of nationality, as it relates to the way we understand ourselves as members of a concrete historical community. The second dimension is ethnic, which means that as far as the nation embodies historical continuity,[19] it is based on a set of shared values or beliefs that broadly constitute an ethnic group. But the third dimension is specifically political and is key to understanding the previous two.[20] It is an assertion that the nation is constituted and maintained by belief and not a substantively understood set of shared features or values.[21] The historical continuity of a political people is mythical and its perception changes constantly throughout history. What constitutes a nation as a political community is then not common identity but a shared attachment to a mythically defined homeland which is linked to a geographical place.[22] This notion of a homeland is the source of the nation's claim to self-determination.

Miller's argument, however, still does not adequately express the political dimension of nationhood. By claiming that a shared national identity is necessary for mobilising people to provide collective goods

(rather than based on an idea of a shared humanity or mutual cooperation), he firmly remains within a contractual understanding of the justification of the state.[23] While the nation can indeed create a community of responsibility, so can other forms of particularistic bonds and commitments such as religion, ideology, class and moral ideals—all of which can generate belonging. And since the nation is not the only source of belonging and political partiality, it is not clear why it is specifically the nation, which can provide the basis for a political identity. Additionally, Miller's account of national identity focuses on the individual who needs a familiar world in order to make practical judgements. However, the nation provides much more than just familiar practices and habits. It also allows us to recognise others as equal members of our community. The weakness of Miller's argument rests then on the extent in which he relies on a certain concepts of the state.

Margaret Canovan, on the other hand, sees the inability to explain the political power of nationalism, as the core shortcoming of liberalism. Liberal politics require national bonds. This is because, as she rightly shows, politics is originally about relations between groups and not individuals.[24] Thus, an attempt to create a theory of the state where the state mediates primarily in conflicts between individuals requires a 'balancing act'. The liberal state has to somehow 'outweigh the bonds of kin, caste, and religion'.[25] This, according to Canovan, is done by the nation, within which all group identities become generalised and diffused.[26] In *Nationhood and Political Theory*, she puts forward her view of nationhood which is an attempt to stop thinking of the nation as either civic or ethnic, natural or artificial, particularist or universalist, it is more accurate to think of it as a phenomenon that holds these alternatives together: 'A nation is a *polity* that feels like a community, or conversely a cultural or ethnic community politically mobilised.'[27] Debates about whether the nation is a cultural or political concept are then futile. What we need instead is a better understanding of how national identity can express different dimensions of the experience of the individual. The mediating function of the nation, for Canovan, enables them to serve as 'worlds'.[28] National bonds constitute political communities by bringing diverse aspects of the life of an individual together.[29] The national world is rich not only because it is a collective of individuals, but precisely because it represents their collective experience embodied in shared institutions, practices and the enjoyment of a common cultural heritage. The resulting 'self' is paradoxically both rooted in a bounded community and gains the ability to detach itself from other identities.

> We are British not in virtue of conforming to some particularly British way
> of thinking but because (either by inheritance or by adoption) we jointly
> own the complex legacy of the nation, from institutions like Parliament,
> and the BBC to less tangible legacies ranging from Shakespeare's plays and
> a history of overseas empire to traditions of gardening and agitating against
> cruelty to animals – all of which are 'our' heritage as British people even if
> we detest the lot of them.[30]

The mediating function of nationhood is indeed crucial to the establishment of the modern liberal democratic state. Without it, modern societies would be collectives of different groups: professional, class, racial, ethnic, religious, to name but a few. However, the nation can help negotiate individual interests over and above these affiliations by providing a shared identity, and creating a realm in which all these identities are recognisable through shared practices and institutions. Hence, the liberal project of making politics a sphere which brings together individuals is only made possible by the particular historical circumstances brought about by the *nation-state* (specifically in the 'West').

Both my and Canovan's accounts of the nation stand in contrast to those that highlight the mediating function of nationhood but limit it to a cultural one (such as Tamir's).[31] Nonetheless, by creating a common world in which all kinds of interests and demands can be stated regardless of class, ethnic background or church affiliation, the nation clearly has a political dimension. The nation as such is not a political entity but rather always strives to political subjectivity—and it is that continuous struggle for political selfhood which gives nations their historical depth and ability to sustain themselves as powerful political projects. This can be either through independence as a nation-state or some other kind or recognition through different levels of regional autonomy or minority representation.

Canovan's account doesn't go far enough in explaining the way in which nations mediate different types of experience to constitute a common political world. A comprehensive theory of the nation needs to include an analysis of the modern self. Nationhood has two main sources of recognition: political community and the individual (discussed in Chap. 3);we need both to provide an adequate account of the nation. While Canovan's notion of nations as mediators might suggest that nationhood is somehow a neutral bridge between politics and culture, ethnicity and citizenship, common sense suggests that this is not the case. Nations do not simply mediate or translate our experience, they can also corrupt or mistranslate it,

which has the potential to result in harmful forms of exclusion.[32] However, by constituting a common world, the nation provides a framework in which we can recognise other individuals as members of the same political community regardless of their membership in other groups.

Nations as Subjects: Adam Smith

The reader might be sceptical about this account of nationhood—and for good reasons. The mediating function, which Canovan assigns to nationhood, has been usually seen (perhaps under different names) as a feature of citizenship—not national identity. We tend to see nationhood as a driver of separatism and citizenship as a unifying force. This is why granting citizenship to conquered populations was one of the most effective strategies of ensuring obedience. One could argue that the European Citizenship is one such mediation project. It is unclear to what extent the success of the EU in creating a sphere of cooperation rests on this political project (which is under attach now), and to what extent it is simply a product of economic integration. A separate methodological limitation is a rather obvious observation that nationality and citizenship often coincide—making it difficult to make any such general statements.

We should note that the separation of the nation from the state is a relatively recent phenomenon. Up until the early twentieth century, the two words could be often seen to be used interchangeably. The history of the term 'state' is quite fascinating. The word was originally used to refer to the common denominator of all the various forms of government—a neutral form that can be applied to talk about any recognised political community. In this sense, 'state' replaces words such as '*regnum'*, '*imperium'* or '*res publica'*. It was John Pocock[33] who first argued that the word which in western languages is spelled 'state', '*der Staat*', '*l'etat*' originally comes from Italian '*lo stato*'.[34] Quentin Skinner offers the first use of the word 'state' to Machiavelli, who used '*lo stato*' to mean a neutral political state that could refer to any government.[35] Skinner claims that the word 'state' originated from the diversity of Italian political entities, constitutions, boundaries and loyalties. The word itself means 'a base', 'ground' or 'foundation', and because of this 'state' can refer to the continuity of existence of a political entity, regardless of changes in the forms of government.[36]

However, the word 'state' did not become popular in everyday usage until the nineteenth century. Even so, the use was strictly limited to describing the institutional arrangements often referring to the polity as

a whole. It is perhaps for this reasons that Adam Smith chose to assign economic agency to nations rather than to states in his famous work 'The Wealth of Nations'. As Barbara Markiewicz points out, the word 'nation' is the most commonly used term in Smith's book, which includes 444 separate occurrences of the term.[37] Markiewicz argues that Smith's insistence on talking about nations rather than states when discussing international trade suggests that the two terms were not meant as interchangeable. Smith does indeed use the word 'state', which always refers to either to the 'society' (understood as a formal association) or to the institutions which make up and govern this association. Smith's political vocabulary is therefore already quite sophisticated. Writing about Ancient States as well as Great States (such as France and Great Britain), as Markiewicz rightly shows, Smith refers to their forms of government. In the economic sphere, the term state refers only to such institutions as central banks, the monetary system or the national lottery. Ultimately, Smith sees the state as being made up by a diversity of individual citizens, rather than a political community.

Political power for Smith is understood in economic, rather than civic or social terms. Power is, as Markiewicz notes, described not through governance, law, authority or institutions but through leadership, sovereignty and what Smith refers to as the commonwealth.[38] This economic approach to politics reduces power to a relationship of forces, which lead to either domination or subordination. Markiewicz's account of Smith is particularly interesting, because it shows how he reverses Plato's analogy between an individual citizen and the political community. For Plato, that which comprises a good citizen can be found by looking (as if by a magnifying glass) at the larger man—the polity. This is because just states, according to Plato, are meant to produce just citizens. However in Smith, the opposite is true. In order to examine nations—one must understand the constitution of the individual:

> Nations, like private men, have generally begun to borrow upon what may be called personal credit, without assigning or mortgaging any particular fund for the payment of the debt; and when this resource has failed them, they have gone on to borrow upon assignments or mortgages of particular funds.[39]

The commonwealth is dependent on the balance of trade, which reflects the economic activity of each individual-national. It is therefore the make-up of

the private affairs or the self-interested individuals, which ultimately becomes the common good. The distinction between private and public in Smith's work reflects the relationship between the nation and the state. A nation is therefore a collection of private individuals—not citizens. This is a fairly classical account of the political community. However, as Markiewicz argues, Smith's critical contribution is in placing the national subjectivity 'above' the state by arguing for the primacy of economy and trade in international relations over the social order.

The moral dimension of Smith's theory is well known under the label of the 'invisible hand' of the market. However, the reason why we can benefit the common good by being essentially egoistic profit maximisers is that we are capable of sympathy with our fellow nationals. Like Herder (Chap. 5), Smith perceived the national community as primarily a community of sympathy. Sympathy is crucial to how we are going to pursue our economic interests. For instance, rules restraining the trade of some goods are for Smith unsympathetic in the sense that they have real human consequences and therefore go against what he calls (in the Conclusions on the Mercantile System) *national humanity*.

Adam Smith's account of political agency and economic cooperation may be counter-intuitive to us. This is because Rawlsians have taken over the 'copyrights' to the liberal account of political community, which they see primarily as a 'scheme of cooperation', and identify with the state. It is the state ultimately, not the nation, in Rawlsian political thought, that is based on an exchange of rights, duties and goods. However, this account of the state, as Canovan argues, rests on a silently accepted assumption that there is indeed a community which allows such cooperation—a community of sympathy.

The historical and ideological role of nations in creating political worlds which allow for democratic political agency and authorship should not be confused with a normative claim to equalise nationalism with democracy or nationality with citizenship. The distinction between the nation and the state becomes even clearer when we consider the different ways in which the two concepts function with regards to questions of political identity. While states provide the institutional foundations for recognition, it is nations which can be seen as communities of authorship. This partly explains why political agency and the ability to mediate different group affiliations by creating a common political world can be assigned to national communities. States are inherently administrators of recognition—from legal and political representation of various groups

(national, gender groups, interests groups, etc.) to passive practices of recognition, like birth certificates and surveys. Consequently, states are also administrators of non-recognition—whether this means omitting a particular ethnic, national or gender identity from a state survey, a referendum or right to defend their rights in their own language. The Polish Law and Justice government, for instance, has recently withdrawn the right of certain national minorities in Eastern Poland to have their language taught at school and to have administrative documents translated free of charge. Such a change has far-reaching implications in terms of recognition. First, it refuses the ability of these minorities to engage with public institutions on terms which acknowledge identities they deeply care about—simultaneously eroding the perceived legitimacy of those institutions. Second, it redefines the terms of recognition of Polish citizenship, which becomes linked more strongly to the ethnic and cultural aspects of Polish identity (not necessarily of nationhood). There is certainly a case of examining the ways in which recognition is distributed—both in terms of the underlying problems of power (domination) and fairness. The former has been explored primarily by Marxists and their critics. The latter has been a very fruitful domain of liberals and communitarians.

While the states are administrators of recognition, nations serve as vehicles of authorship. The inequality, which is always present in state practices, is opposed by the equal way in which we all form a national community. National values, norms and practices are simultaneously dictated to us by others, as well as co-authored by us—even if our co-authorship is limited to neglecting certain practices over others. It is certainly true that nationalism has been and often still is a tool for xenophobia, racism and injustice. We must always remember this. But I would argue that the capacity of nations to open our horizons to others—both fellow nationals and strangers—remains a crucial achievement of modernity, over other forms of identity

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What I attempted to show in this chapter is that if we look at nationhood through the lens of a more comprehensive view, this allows us to understand the phenomenon of nationalism and its role in modern politics in a better way than if we were to simply frame it in terms of national identity or allegiance. In my conception of nationhood, the concept of the nation refers to more than merely ethnic or civic bonds. The nation has the ability to mediate not only between individual and the common political world (Chap. 2) but also different types of identities and allegiances. As a result, the primary political value of nations is that they have the ability to create

public worlds. The act of mediation itself is not morally neutral and should be subject to scrutiny as it can lead to misrepresentation and oppression.

By creating a world in which all fellow nationals can participate on equal terms, nations have the capacity to mediate between different types of experiences within a framework of bounded rationality and create an intelligible world in which moral and political agency can flourish. In that sense, nationhood is constitutive to modern individualism. In the last section, I showed that nationhood has the ability to embrace global and transnational identities and that, in fact, the only viable cosmopolitanism is one based on individuals who are somehow rooted in their communities.

I should perhaps note that the above reflections have intentionally omitted the problem of the boundaries of the state. I do not think that a commitment to nationhood as a basis for a public world has to imply state-hood based solely on national identity. There are new possibilities opened up by the European Union as well as different levels of political existence within national communities. My point is limited to the fact that there is a certain value in a national self as a basis for political community. The appropriate form of such a community is a matter that should be discussed separately.

The reason why nationhood remains central in this process is that, while globalisation means that there are new sources of identity, the nation remains the primary boundary of our political world. Unless we can think of a way in which the 'global' can become 'political' through a similar mediating process as the nation, it seems to me that the 'global' exists only as an abstraction of the 'local'. It is also true, however, that nations themselves have to (and indeed do) re-orient themselves to address new types of identities and transnational challenges. They will however, for the time being, remain the primary political source of our understanding of these issues.

NOTES

1. Hobsbawm takes a different approach. He argues that even though nation-alisms continue to spring, they no longer play the central role they did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While previous nationalisms were linked to modernisation, current ethno-centric nationalist movements represent a regressive sentiment and are not politically useful. Anthony Smith (ed.), *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge, Polity, 1995, p. 51.

2. The argument that nationhood is a tacit assumption of liberal theory was best put forward by Margaret Canovan in her book *Nationhood and Political Theory* (1996) which I discuss later in this chapter.

3. Canovan makes this claim: A modern polity can be expected to wield a great deal of power with very little use of force. Margaret Canovan, 'Sleeping Dogs, Prowling Cats, and Soaring Doves: Three Paradoxes of Nationhood,' in: Michel Seymour (ed), *The Fate of the Nation State*, London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004, p. 21.

4. This claim is explored further in this chapter when I explain why bounded rationality is crucial for the development of moral and political agency.

5. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996, p. 69.

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

7. For a discussion of whether there is, in fact, a difference between cosmopolitan nationalism and rooted cosmopolitanism, see: Simon Caney, 'A Reply to Miller,' *Political Studies*, Vol. 50, 2002.

8. John MacMurray , *The Self as Agent*, London, Faber and Faber, 1956, p. 91.

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

10. Toni Erskine, *Embedded Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 25.

11. Gregory Millard , Jane Forsey, '.Moral Agency in the Modern Age: Reading Charles Taylor through George Grant,' *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 40, No. 1, p. 184.

12. For instance, Alasdair MacIntyre argues that our moral actions are unintelligible unless we place them within a coherent and inter-subjectively available story (it is not enough if that story makes sense only to an individual). Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue – A Study In Moral Theory*, London, Duckworth, 2004, pp. 207–208.

13. See Chap. 2.

14. Judith Butler, 'Universality in Culture,' in: Martha Nussbaum (ed), *For Love of Country*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2002, p. 47.

15. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos, 1996, p. 69.

16. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000, p. 24.

17. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

18. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

19. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

20. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

21. *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

22. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

23. *Op. cit.*, pp. 81–96.
24. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996, p. 39.
25. Ibid.
26. Canovan also mentions two other reasons why liberal theory tacitly assumes the existence of national communities: (1) because social justice has to be that in order to make it possible to redistribute collective resources and (2) because democracy need an ability to act as a people. *Op. cit.,* p. 44.
27. *Op. cit.*, p. 69.
28. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.
30. *Op. cit.*, p. 72.
31. For such an example, see Yael Tamir, *Liberal nationalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993.
32. In the latter case, one could use the example of the position of some ethnic minorities in France who enjoy the status of French citizens only upon assimilating certain political and cultural norms. M. Billing, *Banal Nationalism*, London, Sage, 1995.
33. J. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment : Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975.
34. Barbara Markiewicz, *Panstwo albo stan, czyli o podstawie nowozytnej formy polityki*, in *Panstwo jako Wyzwanie*, Osrodek Mysli Politycznej, Krakow 1998, p. 27.
35. Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Volume I: The Renaissance, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978.
36. J. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975.
37. Barbara Markiewicz, Filozofia Oswiecenia. Radykalizm – religia – kosmpolityzm, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, Krakow 2015.
38. Ibid.
39. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Penguin, London, 2014.

The Ethics of Political Membership: Cosmopolitanism vs. Nationalism

The historical role of the nation in providing a framework of bounded rationality while promoting individual autonomy, which I discussed in previous chapters, faces challenges today. On the one hand, nations continue to stimulate our political imagination, contrary to what the propagators of the 'decline of the nation' in the second half of the twentieth century[1] attempt to make us believe. In particular, globalisation (or the set of processes we generally call globalisation) arguably has not led to an erosion of national politics. Far from it—while it is true that issues such as migration have effectively transformed the rules of access to citizenship and nationality, these same issues have encouraged the growth of regional identities in places such as Scotland, Wales, Quebec and Catalonia.[2] Most recently, we have seen the nationalist debate re-ignite the political imagination across the UK—with the Scottish Independence Referendum as well as the May 2015 general election. Eastern European nationalism, while often seen to be more ethno-centric, has enjoyed a resurrection not contrary to, but fuelled by the desires of many post-communist countries to join the European Union or NATO.[3] On the other hand, the emergence of international norms, transnational identities, migration and the growing awareness of global risks (economic, environmental, etc.) challenges the limitations of citizenship to national boundaries by putting into question the special value we assign to shared national identity. In view of such challenges, we are involved in a common effort to rethink the limits of political community.

In previous chapters, I showed why the concept of the nation was and remains central to modern politics. I argued that national identity corresponds to the tension within the modern self, providing a framework for the development of individual autonomy and democratic politics. Having explored the historical criticism of national identity as a political boundary, what remains is to shift our attention to the ethical aspects of the debate about nationhood. In particular, cosmopolitanism challenges the idea of national boundaries as being morally arbitrary.[4] In fact, some cosmopolitans often perceive the emergence of the new transnational order as a step towards cosmopolitan norms. The nation is either seen as incompatible with that new order—or as an artefact of the past.

In this chapter, I argue that the debate and the alleged disagreement between nationalist particularism and cosmopolitanism are largely rooted limited view of nationhood. That dichotomy fails to acknowledge that while the nation remains the key framework for our political experience, this experience opens up to new transnational and global dimensions. Contrary to some of the assumptions made in this literature, for example in Nussbaum,[5] the dichotomy of nationalist particularism and cosmopolitanism does not mirror the relationship between particularity and universalism in modernity.

Cosmopolite or a High-Flyer?

As a result of globalisation, the way we lead our lives increasingly transcends national boundaries and other local political or cultural identities. This has been recognised in the sociological literature, where 'cosmopolitanism' does not refer to a normative theory but a lived experience of a 'denationalised' self.[6] To be clear, globalisation is neither a component in, nor a condition of, cosmopolitanism, but instead provides a crucial context for cosmopolitanism. Globalisation challenges our views about what defines a political community and facilitates the emergence and protection of cosmopolitan norms. These include not only high-profile norms such as human rights, but also, as Jeremy Waldron notices, various forms of economic and trade conventions, rules and practices.[7] While not Waldorn's example, we could imagine fair trade to be one of many such instances where simple rules of business (including PR) transform our ethical engagement with trade practices across states. This empirical 'cosmopolitanism' is increasingly seen as a fact of ordinary life and often confused with normative cosmopolitanism—a trend that is further reinforced by the body of literature on allegedly 'global' corporate citizenship.[8]

However, the allegedly 'cosmopolitan' lifestyle, which can be experienced in the centres of international trade (such as London or New York), is nevertheless only distantly related to normative cosmopolitanism. The term 'cosmopolitan' certainly does not mean the same as 'global'. However, contemporary globalised culture does have a cosmopolitan dimension in the philosophical sense as well. The term *cosmos* comes from the ancient Greek word for 'order' and referred to the idea of an ordered universe. In that sense, to be cosmopolitan means to seek order within the global processes surrounding us. Cosmopolitanism cannot be identified with the hybrid forms of identity we increasingly experience, but does refer to the world in which people who have these identities interact with each other in a certain way.

The term 'cosmopolitanism', in a relatively broad, modern sense, refers to a claim that a recognisable universalistic moral order exists and places demands on both individuals and polities. The precise nature and status of these demands are debated amongst cosmopolitans themselves. One should note that the universalistic character of cosmopolitanism is somewhat paradoxical. As Nicholas Rengger notes, it relies on an understanding that we are able to recognise certain norms as universal.[9] However, we who supposedly recognise these universal norms can only do so from a specific time and place. The context within which we can imagine the universal is defined both culturally and politically. It is therefore appropriate to follow Samuel Scheffler in making a distinction between 'cosmopolitanism about culture' and 'cosmopolitanism about justice'.[10]

Cosmopolitanism about culture (which I will call cultural cosmopolitanism) can be broadly defined by the *melange principle*—recognition that a cosmopolitan culture can incorporate multiple particularisms. Cosmopolitans about culture perceive the development of a cosmopolitan self as a necessary condition of the individual's capacity to flourish.[11] Specifically, I will look at Jeremy Waldron's interpretation of Kant's Cosmopolitan Right and in the light of the recent sociological discussion about the processes of cosmopolitanisation—in particular with regards to Ulrich Beck.[12] Cosmopolitanism about justice, which is sometimes seen as 'proper' philosophical cosmopolitanism, is defined by its opposition to restricting the scope of the conception of justice to bounded communities.[13] In its political form, cosmopolitanism about justice rests on the claim that there are cosmopolitan norms providing foundations for a global institutional order. Examples of this version of cosmopolitanism include Held's model of cosmopolitan democracy and Benhabib's idea of

democratic iterations.[14] Both make a claim that nation-states provide an arbitrary and insufficient container for democratic citizenship and suggest the need of extending the demos globally.

Cultural cosmopolitanism is particularly interesting, as it does not seem to be easily included either in moral or political models of cosmopolitan thought, but is instead based on the concept of identity relating to both. The claim here is not that globalisation results in a cosmopolitan state. It is rather that globalisation brings out the natural hybridity of our individual selves. We, according to this view, have a natural capacity to create our own identities, to which national borders neither give justice nor provide sufficient space.

Cosmopolitanism About Culture

There are at least two types of cosmopolitanism about culture: (a) methodological and (b) anthropological. Both recognise that the lifestyle of the contemporary individual is only moderately influenced by national boundaries and geopolitical allegiances; consequently, both claim that the current state-centric system is a product of an obsolete outlook. In this sense, the normative question of whether we should have any special duties to our fellow nationals is preceded by what seems to be a more basic question: what is the ontological status of nations? The argument here is that these duties make no sense in much the same way as we cannot have special duties towards elves or gnomes. While methodological cosmopolitanism is a passive response to current global transformations, it does not make a normative claim against nationalist particularism but rather shows national boundaries as having increasingly less explanatory significance when trying to understand social structures and agents. Anthropological cosmopolitanism corresponds to an inherent quality of human interaction. In this view, all social boundaries are, in a sense, artificial. Cosmopolitan norms are simply rules of engagement originating from our interaction with others when they are not our compatriots. Only anthropological cosmopolitanism is cosmopolitan in the normative philosophical sense previously outlined.

Methodological cosmopolitanism is a term most adequately associated with the work of thinkers like Ulrich Beck. This sociological account of globalisation takes the nomadism and instability of contemporary identity as its starting point.

One constructs one's identity by dipping freely into the Lego set of globally available identities and building a progressively inclusive self-image. The result is a proud affirmation of a patchwork, quasi-cosmopolitan, but simultaneously provincial, identity whose central characteristic is its rejection of traditional relations of responsibility.[15]

There are two reasons why Beck's view can be labelled as cosmopolitan, rather than simply a theory of globalisation. Firstly, the new 'liquid' reality means that identities are not only more complex but also less exclusive. This means that cosmopolitan norms can become 'felt more'. Or, in other words, our duties to aliens become less problematic as the opposition between citizen and alien loses its substance. Secondly, the liquidity of modernity means that we recognise global phenomena on a political level as well. This requires political action on a supra-national level.

The globalization of politics, economic relations, law, culture, and communication, and interaction, networks, spurs controversy; indeed, the shock generated by global risks continually gives rise to worldwide political publics… In world risk society – this is my thesis, at least – the question concerning the causes and agencies of global threats sparks new political conflicts, which in turn promote an institutional cosmopolitanism in struggles over definitions and jurisdictions.[16]

However, the idea that contemporary life is more cosmopolitan is ambiguous. On one hand, this idea is often used in reference to a consciously chosen lifestyle. It signifies a way of life to which contemporary man is seen to aspire. Part of this lifestyle is the ability to 'make the world our home'. However, realistically, that type of lifestyle is available only to the wealthy few.[17] For a majority of the contemporary international workforce, mobility is not a result of freedom but is instead a necessity. They are not 'at home', nor are they strictly 'away'. This other face of methodological cosmopolitanism represents the mechanistic response of international institutions and movements to global threats and risks as well as the involuntary movement and mixing of the people.

Even if we do accept that contemporary life is imbued with some sort of cosmopolitan quality, it is difficult to understand what sort of implications this could have for normative cosmopolitanism. One suggestion that seems to flow from this is that an individual who lives a life limited to one culture could not be cosmopolitan. Having said that, Beck's intuition that

new transnational forms of identity and cosmopolitanism are related is justified. But the explanation does not lie in unprecedented globalisation or in the emergence of global risks, or even in global publics. I would rather argue with Jeremy Waldron that the link between cosmopolitanism and the cultural aspect of globalisation is that identity can be defined as 'the way we present ourselves to others in a non-negotiable way'.[18] Cosmopolitan norms both originate from, and are intended to regulate, this encounter. The alleged liquidity and openness of post-modern identities is not cosmopolitan in itself. As Jeremy Waldron notes, many cultures already have a cosmopolitan aspect, and there is something about human nature itself that is explorative in the cosmopolitan sense.[19] This is what I call 'anthropological cosmopolitanism'.

According to Waldron's model, the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism becomes apparent once we cease to understand cultural particularity as based on non-negotiable identities. Conversely, the nationalist framework often encourages individuals to identify inherent differences between cultures by emphasising national uniqueness.[20] These differences, according to Waldron, are not correctly perceived. In fact, most neighbouring cultures should be rather more similar than distinct[21] as they take a lot from each other. (For example, every Polish child is taught about the uniqueness of its country's cuisine. What a disappointment to discover that *pierogi* are equally Russian, *sekacz* German, and most of the Christmas herring dishes are widely served in Sweden![22]) Consequently, Waldron states that: 'there is nothing excusive in culture – dancing, worshiping does not say anything about other cultures, or rather the relationship between the two is problematic.'[23]

Thus, the choice between nationalist particularism and cosmopolitanism is not only a question of norms. It is a decision about how individuals understand and approach culture and, as a result, what principles will apply when dealing with foreign nationals who do not share it. For example, in a radically nationalist framework, my values are non-negotiable. I am monogamous because I am Polish. However, Waldron argues that this non-negotiability is rarely the case. Human beings need reasons to justify claims about who they are. But these explanations, unlike identities, are negotiable. So perhaps it happens that being Polish makes me more likely to be monogamous. However, my commitment to monogamy is not justified by my 'Polishness' but by my belief that monogamy is morally or practically superior to polygamy.[24] The actual justification might take various forms. It might be that I prefer monogamy because of the value

I attach to a particular model of family based on a loving relationship between two individuals that makes their love unique etc. Or, it might be because I do not think that polygamy is particularly time-efficient. Waldron argues that as long as we can provide reasons for our commitment to certain values and norms, moral universalism 'is not an affront to cultural particularity'.[25] To the contrary—for Waldron, culture is crucial when imagining our duties to foreign nationals. This is reflected by the concept of cosmopolitan right, which he defines as the area of law regulating relations between individuals and state in the context of cultural diversity and proximity.[26]

Waldron's account of cosmopolitan right is not without its critics—Benhabib for one argues that the link between cultural diversity and cosmopolitan right is contingent.[27] However, it seems intuitive that cosmopolitan right is not simply a normative idea but, as Waldron argues, responds to an area of human interaction. More specifically, it is an answer to the political and moral question about how to accommodate diversity. Cosmopolitan right, according to Waldron, represents the rules that originate from law-generating practices across cultures and polities rather than some sort of an abstract universal moral order.

Cosmopolitanism About Justice

While cultural cosmopolitanism opposes the idea that closed communities are necessary for the development of individuals and advocated new forms of hybrid identities, cosmopolitanism about justice opposes national particularism on altogether different grounds.[28] It is based on the conviction that national boundaries can, as Nussbaum claims, 'oppose justice and equality' and that 'nation is about morally irrelevant differences that only cosmopolitanism can overcome'.[29]

Now I move to discuss cosmopolitanism about justice mainly by referring to David Held's theory of cosmopolitan citizenship and Benhabib's theory of democratic iterations. Held argues that if we understand democracy as simply the ability of the people to make decisions for themselves, then this cannot be achieved solely within the limits of national boundaries.[30] In his work, Held tries to clarify the difference between international forms of life in the past and present. While it is clear to him that certain forms of cosmopolitan life are not novel, we are currently experiencing the erosion of national boundaries. More specifically, Held argues, our political actions can no longer be limited to one state.

Issues such as security (terrorism, international crime), environment, energy or scientific advances cannot be successfully tackled at state level. This, according to Held, poses questions of legitimacy as our lives are increasingly dependent on decisions made outside the state (whether that is the European Union, United Nations or a result of an action taken by a different country).[31] For instance, country A's commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions can be effective only if countries B, C or D follow the same move. In short, Held claims that nation-states do not make decisions only for themselves[32] and that this creates a deficit of democracy. The only just way to address this problem is to propose an institutional framework that would lead to a broadening of citizenship so that national rights of people are in line with cosmopolitan law.

Benhabib has a different starting point than Held but in a sense she arrives at the same destination. Unlike Held, her primary goal is not to address the political or democratic deficiencies of the international system. This is partly because she is concerned with individuals rather than with states and partly because she believes that 'the democratic' is in a sense secondary to our idea of citizenship. In *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Benhabib sets out her understanding of the status of cosmopolitan norms: (1) Cosmopolitan norms are about the relations between individuals within a global civil society; (2) they exist as neither moral nor legal rights but somewhere in between; lastly, (3) because of their in-between state, they are conditioned on the existence of national communities.[33] This in turn defines the main problems we encounter with cosmopolitan rights. If they are indeed neither moral nor legal, then are they binding? Naturally, this leads readers to question further whether cosmopolitan rights are morally or politically binding and whether they apply to individuals or to states or both. If they are about individuals in a global civil society and they do not originate from our duties to each other as members of a state, then what are their philosophical foundations? Finally, if cosmopolitan rights are conditioned by the existence of the state, then how is that compatible with a global civil society?[34] This dilemma is at the heart of Benhabib's theory[35]: How can we have a global civil society together with self-confined communities? The paradox is that they cannot exist any other way. Benhabib argues that universal claims are integrated into the will of any sovereign citizenry in that the legitimacy of a constitution is conditioned by its adherence to basic human rights.[36] But also, historically, the democratic rights of a particular nation were understood as rights of man. The paradox here is that democracies require borders. In short, democratic rights exist in

a tension between the universal will of the people and the particularity brought about by the self-defining quality of that will.

Benhabib's solution to this dilemma is innovative. She suggests that we mend or at least narrow the gap between cosmopolitan norms and particular politics 'through renegotiation and reiteration of the dual commitments to human rights and sovereign and self-determined nation'.[37] This can take various forms, from linguistic, to legal and political reinterpretations.[38] Thus, the concept of democratic iteration claims to describe an actual process in which the increasingly disaggregated citizenship[39] provides a bridge between cosmopolitanism and particularity.[40] The normative claim is that we should encourage these processes wherever they emerge from opening up citizenship, to transforming the rights of immigrants.

The concept of democratic iterations, while theoretically interesting, does encounter problems. Benhabib wants us to believe that the authority of cosmopolitan norms ultimately rests on 'the power of democratic forces within the global civil society'.[41] Identifying what these democratic forces are and where they are located is problematic. If indeed we accept that democratic iterations are legal, cultural and political,[42] then why are they not also commercial, or anti-political? When Benhabib claims that these norms are neither moral nor political but morally constructive,[43] she does so in an attempt to escape moral universalism. But arguably her attempt fails. It seems, at the very least, problematic to claim that this process is democratic where democracy implies the equal ability to participate, and the seaming of such abilities is so variable across the globe.

Perhaps more importantly, the idea that cosmopolitan norms are in between moral and political norms is difficult to comprehend. If cosmopolitan norms indeed escape such categorisations, how can they be binding? Furthermore, it is unclear how a norm can be morally constructive but not moral in itself. Are then cosmopolitan norms the only example of the former? It seems that Benhabib's solution raises more questions than it solves.

NATIONAL PARTICULARISM

Given the many difficulties with understanding the abstract universal norms, there are those who see this as an unsolvable issue at the heart of cosmopolitanism. I call these thinkers nationalist particularists, which might seem an awkward term to the reader. Isn't all nationalism particularistic?—one might ask. The reason for making this distinction is not to confuse normative of philosophical defence of moral and political value

of national identity from ideological nationalism, which we can often see demonstrated in forms which are thoughtless and crude. There are at least three notable contemporary defences of the case for national particularism: Miller's concept of national identity as a basis for solidarity, Kymlicka's idea of the nation as the 'proper' container for democratic citizenship and Tamir's notion of the cultural nation. All three of the above accept the core assumptions of the cosmopolitan discourse—that is, that certain moral commitments are universal, that individuals should be the primary subjects or moral and political duties and that human beings are morally equal. At the same time, all three authors see national identity as valuable because individuals require a sense of national belonging to lead autonomous lives; and because that government requires the consent of individuals which translates into a right to collective autonomy.[44]

For David Miller,[45] national bonds provide a crucial foundation for social solidarity, which in turn allows people within modern states to participate in providing collective goods.[46] In that sense, the nation plays the role of the missing link in a certain version of social contract theory. In the classical liberal version, as found in Locke, we entrust ourselves to others based on the recognition of a common rationality. In contrast, Miller sees the idea of reason as the basis for social trust as implausible. In *Citizenship and National Identity,* he follows Hume in arguing that sentiment is more important than reason in forming social bonds. The nation, he argues, represents 'my place'. But it also represents the known world,[47] hence everything that is outside the nation seems alien and irrational. For example, it is puzzling for many non-British that most British sinks have a hot and cold tap rather than one tap for both hot and cold water. This type of trivial encounter with otherness illustrates how nationality limits our perception of the world. However, Miller would argue that this limitation is necessary and that a truly universalistic view of the world is impossible.[48]

National identity for Miller is the sentiment that acts as glue for the construction of larger, more diverse modern societies requiring more unity across greater distances. It is an unprecedented phenomenon. Ancient empires were larger in terms of territory but were also based on huge inequalities between social classes and dependencies between the centre and periphery. The nation provides the first framework for social mobilisation based on an imagined equality of the entire populace. The only way to achieve this equality is by constructing an imagined bond based on mythical history. According to Miller, nations represent such bonds, because his understanding of the nation is based on ethnicity.

Kymlicka, on the other hand, focuses on the capacity of nationalism to accommodate ethnic, cultural and political diversity, because Kymlicka has a civic-based definition of nationalism. The key problem of nationhood as a basis of setting political boundaries is that while successful in providing a framework for democratic citizenship and security, it is simultaneously often exclusive towards aliens—foreigners, immigrants and sub-state minorities.[49] But Kymlicka's defence of national identity rests on the fact that, according to him, we are limited to two possible ways out: either we tackle the exclusiveness of national boundaries by building 'post-national or cosmopolitan citizenship' or we reduce the risk of liberal nationhood by diffusing it.[50] Kymlicka notes that both features of modern citizenship, namely rights and responsibilities together with membership in a national community, are very recent.[51]

Kymlicka's argument is a response to Benhabib's analysis of the European Union's model of citizenship. In *Another Cosmopolitanism,* Benhabib discusses the disassociation of social and political right within the EU as an example of democratic iterations leading to cosmopolitan right.[52] In contrast, Kymlicka argues that 'Far from transcending liberal nationhood, the EU is universalizing it, reordering Europe in its image'.[53] What Benhabib sees as disassociation, Kymlicka interprets as one of the strategies of 'taming' liberal nationhood. Through widening access to citizenship and the reasonable accommodation of immigrant ethnicity,[54] the model of national identity can be transformed to a point where it can accommodate transnational loyalties.

Contrary to both Miller's and Kymlicka's theories, Tamir argues for a separation of nationhood from the principle of the political self-determination or self-rule. Instead, she offers a cultural interpretation of the principle, where individuals should have the right to 'express their national identity, to protect, preserve and cultivate the existence of their nation as a distinct entity'.[55] While, for Tamir, nations represent genuine and valuable historical and cultural identities, these are neither the only identities nor the only ones with political significance. They should not be confused with membership in a state. Tamir sees a transformation in the role of nationalism. Nations, according to her, can no longer be seen as homogenous. Furthermore, they have lost their ability to facilitate modernisation and, thus, no longer represent the key motor of progress in contemporary democracies.[56]

However, I agree with Margaret Canovan, who criticises Tamir's view for striding away from a discussion on how nations actually behave.

> The weakest feature of the notion that the problems inherent in the politics of communal identity can be solved by displacing them from the level of the nation-state is the assumption that an overarching political structure without the support of communal identity will be able to contain these conflicts and preside over them with benign impartiality.[57]

According to her, while the state can command authority without being founded on the national principle, historically nations are the main sources of political power in modern western liberal democracies. Furthermore, Tamir's view of the relationship between nationalism and the state is also contestable. Firstly, she does not clarify in what sense nations were ever homogenous. The process of nation-building requires a parallel process of state unification. Most of the successful nationalist movements in which the nation secures power in its own state are not homogenous. Secondly, it is not clear how national identity would be distinguished from other types of cultural, ethnic or religious identities without the drive towards political determination.

Canovan also criticises other liberal national theorists for similar reasons. Both Miller and Kymlicka recognise the dynamic nature of nationhood. Miller's view offers an alternative to a conservative justification of patriotism. Nationality, he claims, can incorporate diverse political ideals and is subject to rapid change.[58] Kymlicka's argument serves a similar purpose, but goes farther in establishing duties to widen access to citizenship to non-nationals. However, according to Canovan, the definition of the nation within liberal nationalism is too vague. While the Scots are a relatively unproblematic example of the liberalisation of nationalism, Yugoslavia is not.[59] Canovan shows how liberal theorists have taken for granted the existence of nation-states, particularly when 'they say that distributive justice is restricted in scope to communities in which citizenship is a matter of birth and not choice'.[60]

While Canovan agrees with Miller that national identity is not fixed but is open to interpretation, she argues that this is not a beneficial feature of nationalism. Nations have always been subject to some kind of ideological manipulation. Canovan mentions Hitler, but that is just one example in which the openness of nationalism to interpretation can be dangerous.[61] On a smaller scale, we always face the danger of the consequences of redefining our own identity through a revision of history or patriotic education, both of which can have beneficial or harmful dimensions.

I agree with Canovan that reconciliation between nationalist particularism and liberal universalism is difficult and perhaps not completely feasible.[62] It is a paradox unique to liberal theory because, as Canovan states, it is the nation that is ultimately supposed to provide the power necessary for the state to administer social justice and guarantee rights. Liberal attempts to substitute national allegiances with patriotism are, according to Canovan, unsuccessful as they either present us with a model of a community that is too weak or 'as congenial as nationalism'.[63] But the liberal response to the problems posed by the nation has to be complex because any attempt at a universal answer overlooks the fact that nations do not exist universally.[64] In the final section, I try to address these concerns by an approach to nationhood that I see as a partial solution to the problems noted by Canovan.

I have intentionally left out the non-liberal defence of nationhood that Margaret Canovan calls 'romantic' or 'collectivist nationalism'.[65] According to that tradition, represented by Fichte,[66] Mazzini[67] and the Polish Messianism[68] (to mention a few), nationalism is a sacred calling.[69] On this view, individuals are bound by a sacred duty to a nation, rather than to each other. 'Nation' is understood as a moral entity, which has an equivalent substance as individuals. This purely collectivist view of nationhood is normatively indefensible and historically inaccurate. Even if humanity did 'naturally' divide into nations (which it does not), nations still remain contingent elements of modern identity. The transformations of modern subjectivity which I outlined in previous chapter are not 'natural' elements of the human condition, but products of a particular framework of the modern mind.

Moving Beyond the Alternative

Even if we accept the most inclusive theories of nationhood, the normative problem concerning the limits of our moral and political duties to others who are not members of our community remains pressing. While questions of national interest and sentiment often require us to make choices that favour the particular, the values nationalism promotes are often perceived as universal. Nationalism has historically promoted individual autonomy by helping to equalise the rights of persons who belong only to the same national group.[70] This is both a moral and a political problem.[71] On the ethical level, the problem is how we can reconcile a

commitment to the nation with recognising the equal moral standing of strangers (individuals out-with the nation).[72] On the political level, this is about the choice between national interest versus an impartial (global) perspective. The tension between duties to fellow nationals and to fellow human beings, as well as between the national community and the global community, is not new but has been highlighted by emergent global problems such as poverty, terrorism and environmental threats. Our awareness of these issues has made questions of the limits of our duties more acute.

One theorist who attempts to reconcile these two extremes on the ethical level is Toni Erskine. Erskine's critique focuses on what she labels as 'ethical cosmopolitanism'[73] and 'international relations communitarianism'[74] as two opposite poles in the debate about the limits of duty. Her argument against ethical cosmopolitanism follows similar lines as Miller's. Erskine argues that ethical cosmopolitans have an unrealistic view of the human condition (specifically of how moral agents are constructed), because people are not simply isolated individuals but are always embedded in groups and allegiances.[75] Erskine defines ethical cosmopolitanism as a position characterised thus:

> What unites these positions is an adamant denial that cultural, national, religious, and ideological divides can demarcate a class of 'outsiders', or a group to whom duties are not owed, to whom considerations of justice are not extended, and with whom solidarity is not shared.[76]

According to Erskine, commitment to ethical cosmopolitanism necessitates an account of moral agents that is both detached and dispassionate. In contrast, she argues in favour of what she calls an embedded self which is a concept of an agent formed by its particular view.[77] It is this concept of an embedded self which is probably the most interesting from the point of view of this analysis, because it addresses the model of subjectivity I have outlined in this book. Erskine borrows the concept from Walzer's communitarianism. However, unlike Walzer, she does not limit the borders of communities to geographical ones.[78] Conversely, Erskine argues that our commitments to groups are often exterritorial in character and often overlap. There are, in her view, many types of communities that are morally constitutive. For example, I belong to the community of Poles, community of academics, community of Europeans, community of atheists and so on and so forth. All these communities have their own languages and customs, norms and ideas related to a good life.

Erskine attempts then to promote a middle ground between cosmopolitanism and IR communitarianism by claiming that it is possible to assign an equal moral standing to all humans while recognising that moral agency requires an embedded self. In other words, we can think of our commitments to universal norms through deliberation between individuals who are rooted in such multiple and overlapping communities. This, according to Erskine, would allow the inclusion of strangers without repression of their differences.[79]

Instead of trying to devise universal principles of justice in an abstract model, Erskine would want them to be a product of a deliberation of individuals representing different communities. Erskine says that, thus defined, embedded cosmopolitanism has the capacity to give an account of principles that grant equal moral standing not only to fellow nationals but also to outsiders or enemies. One example of such principles is that of restraint towards one's enemy,[80] in particular in a situation of war. Ethical cosmopolitanism argues that such principles would be justified because we are all members of humanity. But Erskine's solution abandons this impartialist perspective as implausible. Instead, she suggests that the (transnational) community of soldiers has produced its own set of practice, values and rules. Hence, she imagines that if soldiers came together, they could come up with such principles.

While Erskine's idea of overlapping communities is original, it fails to account for the fact communities can also come into conflict with each other. An obvious example is that every soldier at the same time belongs to a community of soldiers and a state community. This may lead to conflicts of action-guiding principles.[81] Unless we recognise some sort of morally and politically superior community, as Michael Walzer does, then it is difficult to understand how we could solve problems arising from conflicting values of different communities to which individuals belong.

Perhaps more importantly, Erskine's perspective does not account for the special role of the nation as a political community (rather than just one of the other groups). However, as I have shown in the previous chapter, in modernity, it is the mediating function of nationhood that allows it to create a common world in which all our identities can exist on equal terms with each other. It is also the key framework in developing individual moral and political agency. While Erskine is right that it is impossible to have a viable theory of global citizenship without accepting that people are somehow embedded in their communities (an abstract view of individual agents is unintelligible), she does underestimate the political role of nationalism in forming a bridge between different types of group membership.

Having said that, while nations still do organise our lives, the way members of a national community can engage with the political extends beyond the nation. Nations do have an inherent ability allowing us to recognise norms that go beyond national borders. This is because, as I showed in Chaps. 2 and 7, the quality of recognition which nations provide would not be possible without a basic sympathy to those who we share this world with—or what Adam Smith calls 'national humanity'. This does not in itself represent a new paradigm, but rather is a natural consequence of the modern ideal of politics in which the universal has to be mediated by a limited political community. One could argue that, to slightly rephrase Canovan's idea, the concept of the 'self' embedded in a nation is a tacit assumption of liberal cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan outlook is individualistic in the sense that individuals are the main actors and bearers of rights and so on. This is because liberal cosmopolitanism is centred around a concept of individual autonomy which is historically conditioned by the development of nationhood as argued in Chap. 2. Here, I showed that the processes creating the modern concept of individual autonomy are also responsible for the development of the concept of the nation.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The problem that emerges from the debate outlined in this chapter can be described as follows: cosmopolitanism rightly brings our attention to the artificial nature of national boundaries both in terms of justice and in terms of identity. We are increasingly urged to consider our duties to strangers, re-examine the special relationship we might have with fellow nationals and to open ourselves to other identities and ways of life. But, this vision of *cosmopolis* is contested, because it seems that our ability to recognise cosmopolitan norms from a position in which both our power to act politically (institutionally) and individually (as moral agents) is conditioned by the existence of nation-states. Canovan notices this dilemma:

> By generating collective power and thereby establishing islands of firm ground among the treacherous swamps of political affairs, nationhood has allowed Western liberal theorists and publics to develop ideals and principles that are global in scope and to perceive them as projects rather than utopias. But the problem is not only how to build Jerusalem among the swamps. More seriously, we cannot easily reconcile the commitment to build Jerusalem for all mankind with the defence of our own patch of firm ground (which may itself be subject to erosion).[82]

I already established in the first part of this book that the nation is intrinsically political. Nationalism, then, becomes the movement to assume control of political boundaries established by the state. Nationalism is the historical process of modern state formation and is politically exclusive and thus anti-universalistic. However, the concept of organising political communities into nations has proven both practically and theoretically open. This is partially because, as Kymlicka says, national citizenship can be 'tamed' and made accessible. More importantly, however, this is because nationhood expresses an ability for individuals to approach others as equals (see Chap. 3). As I show in Chap. 4, the tension within the modern political subject is crucial to our understanding of individual autonomy.

One could object that it is impossible to separate the historical process of nation-building and the concept of the nation itself. This is partially true. The concept of the nation has undergone various transformations and is not solely derived from nation-building. But perhaps the most important transformation has taken place recently. Philosophers can easily be tempted to disregard the ambiguities of notions originating from the social world. However, as I have shown earlier, neither nationalism nor cosmopolitanism are simply philosophical concepts. Like all political ideals, they spring from concrete and existing forms of moral, aesthetic and political life.

The idea of a world citizen is classically seen as a normative ideal. While membership in political communities developed historically through building loyalty around ethnic and territorial identities, cosmopolitanism often remained an abstract concept. Hence, some authors oppose the 'cold' rationality of cosmopolitanism with 'warm' feelings of national belonging and patriotism.[83] This distinction can only partly hold true. While it is right to say that cosmopolitanism represents a rational order that classically could be thought rather than felt, cosmopolitanism should not be treated as an abstract ideal. In fact, both Kantian and Stoic models of cosmopolitan thought represent a reaction to pre-existing social and political processes. For stoics, this was the experience of legal unification brought about through the Holy Roman Empire and, for Kant, the new realities of colonialism. As Waldron notes:

> [Kant's] convictions in the realm of cosmopolitan right were not just some bright normative idea that he thought up (in the way that a modern political philosopher in New England might think up a new theory of justice).

His work on cosmopolitan right has a positive, expository dimension that addresses norms that he recognizes would exist in the world whatever some philosopher in Konigsberg thinks.[84]

Perhaps for both cosmopolitanism and nationalism, it would be more accurate to draw on observations made by Kate Nash, who argues that recently we can witness the development of 'popular cosmopolitanism' in which we see fellow nationals also as fellow human beings.[85] I would go further to say that this represents an inherent trait of nationhood often constructed within a moral order where 'real' emotions are figured as 'human'.[86] The fact that nationhood has that capacity to universalise our experience is recognised by many thinkers, including Kymlicka and Benhabib.[87] The distinction between liberal citizenship and the concept of national belonging is blurred by the fact that, as Nash claims, nations themselves are becoming 'cool'.[88] Nation-centred outlooks do not have to be opposed to cosmopolitan norms. At the same time, the role of the nation has been changed substantially by globalisation and as a result the language that we use to express our national allegiances is not always adequate.

However, these recent changes should not make as complacent about potential dangers, which are always inherent in particular view of the universal or the local. The openness that the European nations have shown in the process of EU integration stands in contrast to the closure towards the refugees coming from the Middle East and North Africa. There is no simple solution to the problem, but the refugee crisis of 2015 has undermined a long held belief that nationalism has been abandoned as a political ideology in favour of market driven liberalism. The stark contrast between those two manifestations of European nationalism—one universalistic and open, and one that is closed and local—highlights the difficulty faced by any theory of universalism, which, as James Ingram notices, always have to be 'articulated somewhere'.[89] For the very same reason, all universalist projects end up being accused of being imperialist in one way or another—whether these are expressed in the language of human rights, a common humanity or a common political project (global democracy). However, Ingram does provide us with useful tools to defend a universalist account, which is nevertheless consistent with the particular nature of human circumstance—including nation-states—although he does not specifically call this out (and I suspect he would not want to). His solution is that rather than seeking to define a universal order by being blind to difference, we focus our effort on battling particular accounts of inequality.[90] In

the absence of a universal moral or political model, we judge each model in in its own right.[91] The reaction of the European states to the refugee crisis is not simply nationalist or xenophobic from some sort of abstract cosmopolitan viewpoint. It is inconsistent with the European values, definitions of citizenship and rights and with their own asylum policies. The solution therefore needs to be one where either those values and polices are revised, perhaps limiting the current rights of their own citizens, or applied consistently. Nationalism is therefore not a universal model that can provide us with an answer on how to structure our political and moral commitments to others, but neither is cosmopolitanism. Instead, we need an account of nationalism, and other localities which we may not yet see or think significant, which is adequate to the global challenges of today's world and our local communities.

Notes

1. For example: Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, Free Press, New York, 1995.
2. Montserrat Guibernau, 'National identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain,' *Nations and Nationalism*, 12 (1), 2006.
3. Hans Kohn, 'The Origins of English Nationalism,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, No. 1, 1940, pp. 69–94; Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: its Meaning and History,* Malabar, Krieger Publishers, 1982, p. 64, 84.
4. Martha Nussbaum, *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism,* Boston, Mass., Beacon Press, 2002; Simon Caney, 'A Reply to Miller,' *Political Studies*, Vol. 50, 2002.
5. Martha Nussbaum, *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism,* Boston, Mass., Beacon Press, 2002.
6. S. Sassen, 'Globalization or denationalization?' *Review of International Political Economy*, 10, 2006, pp. 1–22; U. Beck, & J. Williams, *Conversations with Ulrich Beck*, Oxford, Polity, 2004.
7. Jeremy Waldron, *Cosmopolitan Norms* in: Benhabib Seyla (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford 2008.
8. B. Szersztnski, & J. Urry, 'Visuality, mobility and the cosmopolitan: inhabiting the world from afar,' *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57, 2006, pp. 113–131.
9. N.J Rengger, *Retreat from the Modern. Humanism, Postmodernism and the Flight from Modernist Culture,* p. 768.
10. Samuel Scheffler, 'Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism,' *Utilitas*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1999, p. 255.
11. Ibid.

12. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge 2006; Jeremy Waldron, 'Cosmopolitan Norms' in: Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford 2008.
13. Samuel Scheffler, 'Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism,' *Utilitas*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1999, p. 256.
14. Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford 2008.
15. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge 2006, p. 5.
16. *Op. cit.*, p. 15, 16.
17. C. Calhoun, 'The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,' in D. Archibugi (ed.), *Debating Cosmopolitics,* London, Verso, 2003, pp. 86–116.
18. Jeremy Waldron, 'What is Cosmopolitan', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*: Volume 8, Number 2, 2000, pp. 230–1.
19. *Op. cit.*, p. 231.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 232.
21. *Op. cit.*, p. 231.
22. One should note that the opposite can also be persuasively argued. In general, there simply does not seem to be any reason to think that neighbouring nations are inherently culturally similar or distinct.
23. *Op. cit.*, p. 233.
24. *Op. cit.*, pp. 234–5.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 235.
26. *Op. cit.*, pp. 235–7.
27. Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford 2008.
28. One should note that cosmopolitanism about justice and cosmopolitanism about culture are not mutually exclusive and can in fact be related.
29. Martha Nussbaum (ed.), *For Love of Country*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2002. pp. 4–5.
30. David Held, *Democracy and the New International Order* in Daniele Archibugi and David Held (ed.), *Cosmpolitan Democracy. An Agenda for a New World Order*, Cambridge, 1995.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 102.
32. *Op. cit.*, p. 99.
33. Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford 2008, p. 20.
34. *Op. cit.*, pp. 25–6.
35. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.
36. Ibid.
37. *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
38. *Op. cit.*, p. 48.
39. *Op. cit.*, p. 45.
40. *Op. cit.*, p. 50, 70.
41. *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

42. *Op. cit.*, p. 48.
43. *Op. cit.*, p. 72.
44. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
45. I discussed Miller's approach to national identity in Chap. 4. In short, for Miller, nations are groups of people who share a belief in a common history expressed in a public culture and tied to a specific territory. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge 2000, p. 3, 28, 29.
46. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge 2000, p. 31.
47. *Op. cit.*, p. 23.
48. *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
49. Will Kymlicka, *Liberal Nationalism and Cosmopolitan Justice* in Benhabib Seyla (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 129–30.
50. *Op. cit.*, pp. 130–1.
51. *Op. cit.*, pp. 128–9.
52. Seyla Benhabib, 'Democratic Iterations: The Local, the National, and the Global,' in Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 46–47.
53. Will Kymlicka, *Liberal Nationalism and Cosmopolitan Justice* in Benhabib Seyla (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 135.
54. *Op. cit.*, pp. 136–7.
55. Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 72–73.
56. *Op. cit.*, p. 165.
57. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996, p. 118.
58. David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge 2000, Cambridge University Press, p. 32.
59. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996, p. 11.
60. *Op. cit.*, p. 116.
61. *Op. cit.*, p. 123.
62. *Op. cit.*, p. 13.
63. *Op. cit.*, p. 114.
64. *Op. cit.*, p. 125.
65. *Op. cit.*, Glos 1996, p. 5.
66. Johann G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Chicago, Open Court, 1922.
67. Giuseppe Mazzini, *Essays: selected from the writings, literary, political, and religious, of Joseph Mazzini*, London, Walter Scott, 1887.

68. Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs Throughout the Ages*, Boston, Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 128.
69. Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, Glos 1996, p. 6.
70. Arguably, the same function can also be assigned to citizenship (T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950). However, while citizenship carries a universalising impulse in theory, Andrew Vincent argues that empirically citizenship is a 'technique of exclusion'. Andrew Vincent, *Nationalism and Particularity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 79.
71. One should note that local allegiances are not logically contradictory to universal ones.
72. One should note that assigning equal moral status to strangers does not mean that we automatically have to accept that there are not any special duties towards fellow nationals. We can still argue that we have additional moral duties to those who we have more connections with. See for example: Charles Beitz R., 'Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment,' *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 80, No. 10.
73. Ethical cosmopolitanism believes that all human beings have equal moral standing, regardless of their group affiliations.
74. IR communitarians limit the equal moral standing to members of a particular community.
75. Toni Erskine, *Embedded Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 20.
76. *Op. cit.*, p. 2.
77. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
78. *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
79. *Op. cit.*, p. 41.
80. *Op. cit.* p. 182.
81. However, such conflict is not necessary if national military organisations act in accordance to transnational norms.
82. *Op. cit.*, p. 139.
83. See: Kate Nash, 'Cosmopolitan Community: Why Does it Feel so Right?,' *Constellations,* Volume 10, No. 4, 2003 or Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge 2006.
84. Jeremy Waldron, What is Cosmopolitan, The Journal of Political Philosophy: Volume 8, Number 2, 2000, p. 94.
85. *Op. cit.,* p. 510.
86. *Op. cit.*, p. 509.
87. Will Kymlicka, *Liberal Nationalism and Cosmopolitan Justice* in Benhabib Seyla (ed.), Another Cosmopolitanism, Oxford 2008, pp. 128–130; Seyla

Benhabib (ed.), *Another Cosmopolitanism,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 35–40.

88. Kate Nash, 'Cosmopolitan Community: Why Does it Feel so Right?', *Constellations,* Volume 10, No. 4, 2003, p. 508. Further discussion of the transformations of the psychological experience of national and cosmopolitan identities can be found in: J. Clifford, 'Mixed Feelings' in P. Cheah and B. Robbins (eds.), *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation.* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

89. James D. Ingram., Radical Cosmopolitics. The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013. p. 147.

90. *Op. cit.,* p. 87.

91. *Op. cit.,* p. 174.

'Self' Under Scrutiny. On 'Post-national' Thought

The analysis in earlier chapters has shown that the nation is both a historical and a contingent phenomenon. This begs the question whether the form of political identity represented by nationhood can continue or if it is desirable to offer the framework for participating in a public world (Chap. 6). The place and status of national identity has become problematic as a result of globalisation and response to it. Recent social and cultural changes have led to a new critique of the concept of the modern subject. Globalisation, migration, multiculturalism and the alleged decline of the nation-state[1] have all led to the erosion of traditional sources of identity. A significant part of this was played by the critique of subjectivity by authors such as Foucault and Deleuze, who accused modern thought of constructing a concept of self that is 'ahistorical', 'fleshless', 'male' and 'oppressive'. In this debate, the subject is often identified with the Cartesian *Cogito* which became both a historical reference to Descartes and a metaphor of a broader theme within modern philosophy where subjectivity is conceptualised as an empty, transparent space.[2]

But this wave of criticism had its sources in the intellectual movements at the turn of the twentieth century. The end of modernity saw a sudden retreat of some of its core principles. Theorists such as Nietzsche,[3] Freud,[4] Heidegger[5] and Marx[6] identified the same paradox of modernity: that the concept of the autonomous self coexists with increasingly stronger frameworks of moral, social and political institutions. Those philosophers used

varying resources of modern thought to criticise this contradiction in the name of the same core values of modernity that produced it. They did not discard the concept of the 'subject' or self all together; in fact one could argue that the idea of selfhood was of central concern to them. Nietzsche tried to defend the idea of the self from the unifying forces of Christian middle-class morality.[7] Freud described the oppressive influence of culture on the self.[8] Heidegger identified '*das man*' as the greatest enemy of the self—because '*man*' stands for what 'one does'.[9] Finally, Marx's criticism of capitalism was written equally in the language of exploitation as well as dehumanisation through alienation of the self.[10] These authors argue that the concept of the 'subject' is both in a submissive and oppressive position because it relies on the assumption that human beings are purely rational agents and it puts us in conflict with what romanticism calls 'nature'. In other words, they saw a rift between the concepts of individual freedom on one hand and family, nation, class and mass culture on the other.

What these two waves of critique of the modern 'subject' have in common is that they both see the modern self as entangled in a struggle between two opposite cultural forces: universalism and individuation.[11] The former represents an intellectual attempt to establish norms and rules reflecting the universal laws of reason. Individuation mirrors the desire to strengthen and develop personal and collective identities. Rationalisation ultimately leads to sameness and a state of standardised normality, while individuation is guided by difference and exception. While at the turn of the twentieth century, criticism was mainly directed at the concept of reason and rationality, late twentieth-century philosophy sees the concept of the self as equally deceptive and problematic.

As a reaction to these intellectual transformations, described in Chaps. 3 and 4, there seem to exist at least three theoretical positions: (1) traditional particularism, (2) progressive universalism and (3) post-modern particularism. Traditional particularism encompasses those theories which oppose the diffusion of strong, substantive identities, personal and collective and believe that we should protect them. Progressive universalists believe that the process of rationalisation will finally overcome our attachment to identity; they celebrate the decline of nation-state, family and other traditional sources of social roles and identities.[12] Finally, post-modern particularists (and I use the term post-modern very loosely here) also perceive the diffusion of traditional sources of identity as a process of emancipation of the individual. However, they are equally sceptical about the ability to adopt new universalist or cosmopolitan identities as the traditionalist. This

is because they see all identities as oppressive at some level. However, I do not believe that any of these attempts to accommodate the modern subject are successful. In particular, the third position seems to ignore the possibility that the perceived conflict between cosmopolitanism and nationalism is not embedded in a post-subject world but is precisely a debate about the nature of modern political subjectivity.

I begin this chapter by introducing the critique of the subject. Drawing on a strand of Foucauldian thought, I show how the emergence of the subject is conceptualised within this critique as a result of specific practices and in particular power relations within a state.[13] This is important to our investigations because the post-national world is primarily one in which 'the subject' in politics lost its ontological position of primacy. However, as I shall argue, the attempt to free ourselves from subjectivity is an illusion because the void this attempt conjures cannot provide any sort of grounding for political action. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss the emergent nature of the current global order in which national boundaries become diffused. I give examples of two post-national theories: Hard and Negri's 'Empire' and Beck's 'Cosmopolitan Outlook'. In the third and final part of the chapter, I argue that none of the above views are entirely persuasive as they rely on an assumption of an inherent contradiction between nationhood as a form of political identity and individual autonomy.

I show that while it is true that individual identity has become less rooted, this is not a contradiction, but it is rather a logical development within the modern subject. Unless we recognise this distinction, we risk misrepresenting the real processes within our society where national and global outlooks become increasingly fused and dependent on each other. Perhaps more importantly, we risk confusion as to how do these changes affect our reasoning about the moral challenges in a globalised world. Ultimately, I claim that there is nothing revolutionary about the transformations described by post-national theorists. In fact, theories can be better described as a radicalisation of the process of modernity which brought about the nation.

CRITIQUE OF SUBJECTIVITY: FOUCAULT AND HIS DISCIPLES

In his analysis of the history of punishment, Foucault offers an explanation of how a genealogy of political practices can lead us to an examination of the individual self. Foucault's analysis shows how the subject was formed in a tension with disciplinary power expressed in the changes in penal

practices. The study of the prison becomes a study of practices that came to be seen as a natural and self-evident part of the modern idea of the penal system—the most immediate and barest expression of state power.[14] For Foucault, the purpose of the new administrative techniques used by the state to classify and document the activity of its citizens, such as birth registers, statistics, school exams and medical examinations, is to control the individual to an extent that was not possible in earlier times.[15] The ultimate goal of the penal system, according to his argument, is no longer retribution but re-socialisation. Punishment is used as a subject-forming tool aimed to produce a bad conscience.[16]

Foucuault's work represents a refusal to limit the understanding of the subject to either abstract theories of the self or to a pure theory of power. Instead, he attempts to trace specific modes of being a subject, that is to say, he discusses subjectivity with references to fundamental experiences of the self. He extends his analysis of the subject to three types of subject-forming practices: language and science, power and care of the self.[17] These practices reflect the way the self directs attention to itself. In particular, in Foucault's later work, we can find the analysis of techniques relating to 'the care of the self', which he analyses by looking at the status of bodily pleasures in his *History of Sexuality*.[18] For example, Foucault shows how the principle of restraint from excessive bodily pleasures in ancient Roman thought was not the result of a universal ethical principle but a particular value attached to practising care of oneself. According to him, the principle of self-restraint was considered here not universal (and thus did not require legal status), but one that differentiated oneself from those who lead a life as throngs.[19]

The goal of Foucault's genealogical work is then to critique a metaphysical and ahistorical notion of the subject and expose techniques of subject formation in order to open up new possibilities of being a subject.

> 'The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state's institutions but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.'[20]

The modern self needs liberating, because it is precisely the modern idea of individual subject, which is responsible for the ability of the social to interfere with our freedom. Mahon explains this in his account of Foucault's

approach to subjectivity. He argues that the formula of Descartes' *cogito* not only allows us to think of ourselves as calculating animals but has also made us calculable: 'They were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, coordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their 'consciousness', their weakest and most fallible organ.'[21] The weakness of understanding ourselves primarily in terms of 'consciousness' lies in the way it makes us vulnerable to the disciplinary power of the state. It is through analysing this type of disciplinary power we understand that it is not individuals who bring society together, but that society produces a totality.[22] There is no true liberation from this total power of subject-generating state according to Foucault, because both freedom and will are elements of the very same subjectivity. Instead, in 'Subject of Power', he insists that:

> 'Rather than speaking of an essential freedom, it would be better to speak of an "agonism"—of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle, less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation.'[23]

Foucault clearly focuses on the disciplinary power of the state as a subject-generating force for the modern self. This makes sense, because it is the state that became the new 'subject' of politics post-Westphalia. Which is why Foucault's can take advantage of the ambiguity of the word subject, which means both 'subject of someone's control' and 'tied to his own identity'.[24] This is why, as Michael Clifford argues, the French Revolution could be at the same time perceived as an act of freedom and yet constitute a totality (the nation) that transformed everyone into subjects. Thus, for Clifford, the emergence of the subject is inseparable from the emergence of the modern nation-state.[25]

> The nation delimits a space of political subjectivity; it gives subjects an identity by virtue of their identification with the nation: as an American or German, as Japanese or Bengali. It is a place both real and ideal: real to the extent that it designates fixed or disputed geographical boundaries, ideal in that it is a place whose boundaries are defined less by fences, rivers, or mountains than by political subjects who share what Walker Connor calls an 'essential psychological bond.'[26]

The Foucaultian 'subject; appears to be a product of either the disciplinary power of the state (Mahon) or the discourse of threat created by the nation (Clifford). Consequently the very concept of the 'self' stands for a

modern paradox where the feeling of freedom and autonomy we experience as subjects equipped with rationality and individual identity is, at the same time, a condition of strong and oppressive group identities.

However, the idea that by deconstructing the subject we will be able to somehow resist the powers that form it is misleading, as subjectivity is the only strategy of resistance available to us. Freedom from continuity and substantive identity is a promise as dangerous as it is unrealistic. One author who attempts to show the paradoxes of post-modern thinking about subjectivity is Agata Bielik-Robson, who, in her book *Inna Nowoczesnosc* (*The Other Modernity*), addresses the post-nietzschean critique of subjectivity.[27] Robson argues that a key dimension of subjectivity is the reflective engagement with ourselves as beings-in-time. In this sense, we experience ourselves as subjects, especially when we feel the passing of time—in a special type of relationship that individuals have with their own history. We look into the past with pride or regret, experiencing guilt or pride. But it is 'melancholy', or an attempt to hold on to that which is already lost, that for Bielik-Robson is the exclusive experience of the modern subject. Without melancholy, she argues, we would not feel the need to remember the dead, nor would we be able to fight for the honour of our ancestors. Nonetheless, it is precisely melancholy that presents itself as a burden to the modern subject. It was Nietzsche who, in *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, famously reflected:

> Observe the herd which is grazing beside you. It does not know what yesterday or today is. It springs around, eats, rests, digests, jumps up again, and so from morning to night and from day to day, with its likes and dislikes closely tied to the peg of the moment, and thus neither melancholy nor weary. To witness this is hard for man, because he boasts to himself that his human race is better than the beast and yet looks with jealousy at its happiness. For he wishes only to live like the beast, neither weary nor amid pains, and he wants it in vain, because he does not will it as the animal does. One day the man demands of the beast: 'Why do you not talk to me about your happiness and only gaze at me?' The beast wants to answer, too, and say: 'That comes about because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say.' But by then the beast has already forgotten this reply and remains silent, so that the man wonders on once more.[28]

The post-modern remedy to the oppressiveness of modern subjectivity expressed in melancholy, or what Deleuze calls neurotic subjectivity is 'ecstasy'.[29] Ecstasy is an escape from the monotony of being a continuous self, a rebellion from repetition. In this sense, post-modern identity is at constant

war with any type of 'heaviness', seriousness or boredom.[30] Contemporary society, in Bielik-Robson's view, is tired of memory, history and the concept of time in general; individuals within that society desire the lightness of ahistoricity which offers an escape from the limits of ordinary existence.[31] This is why 'the postmodern self lives most intensively, when in a moment of ecstasy it places itself outside of time and far from herself, from her self-image, from everything that it wrongly thought to be a defining part of its identity – in an utopian and ephemeral imaginary place'.[32]

But for Bielik-Robson, 'ecstasy'—the essential desire of post-modern subjectivity—is a false remedy. This is because the opposition between heaviness and lightness is itself a misleading discrepancy, as brilliantly described by Kundera in his famous book *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.[33] The lightness of forgetting about our place in time intuitively seems to offer an escape from the order we find ourselves in. Without memory, the individual self cannot be in danger of carrying the weight of her decisions. However, both for Kundera and Bielik-Robson, the lightness of ahistoricity is misleading. In fact, it is boredom that becomes an inescapable feature of the post-modern society, which is tired of ordinary life. Unlike melancholy, boredom does not result in any type of self-reflection, because self-reflection requires engagement with the past.

Post-modern Particularism: Two Models of Post-national Thought

Hardt and Negri's Empire

The deconstruction of a rigid, 'essentialist' view of the self and identity necessarily led to de-ontologisation of the nation-state as a model for political subjectivity. The emergence of new, hybrid forms of identity and political membership, multiculturalism, the lack of clear borders between political, economic and cultural phenomena and the non-territorial character of the new world order all have a bearing on contemporary political thought. Bauman describes this as part of a wider process of fragmentation of contemporary life[34] by noting that

> The passage from 'solid' to a 'liquid' phase of modernity: that is, into a condition in which social forms (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that guard repetitions of routines, patterns of acceptable behaviour) can no longer (and are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them, and once they are cast for them to set.[35]

The post-national critique can be seen as an attempt to deal with the descriptive inadequacy of the old, state-centred political language. Nationhood becomes historicised and 'stripped of its inner necessity'.[36] When identity ceases to be a significant source of moral obligation, the cosmopolitan project of rationalisation naturally goes forward. As a result, the idea of having special duties to fellow nationals is undermined. The relationship between the post-modern critique of subjectivity and cosmopolitanism is ambiguous. On one hand, without a global post-national outlook, we would not be able to, as Bauman says, dip 'freely into the Lego set of globally available identities' and build 'a progressively inclusive self-image'.[37] On the other hand, the resulting new identity is only passively quasi-cosmopolitan. While drawing on a number of formerly exclusive identities, it remains provincial in character. In that sense, even though living in a multi-cultural environment involves being opened up to the world in a broad way, it does not lead to a universalist perspective. The post-modern, post-national outlook is, at heart, particularistic—even in its own fight against specific forms of exclusion.[38]

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are, for instance, two thinkers whose book *Empire* presents a modern critique of globalisation.[39] The decline of the nation-state does not have to signify a beginning of the 'road to freedom'. Both authors draw a vision of Empire understood as a new, post-national (and post-imperial) model of sovereignty. The global order that emerges from the UN Charter is, according to them, no longer international, but it is instead defined as a supranational legal and ethical order, which originates from a rationalisation of relations between states.[40] It is perceived to be a teleological process perpetuated by the necessary progress of mankind. This new world order, which Hardt and Negri call 'Empire', aims to establish global peace through a unified legal order which becomes identified with 'justice'.

> In Empire there is peace, in Empire there is the guarantee of justice for all peoples. The concept of Empire is presented as a global concert under the direction of a single conductor, a unitary power that maintains the social peace and produces its ethical truths. And in order to achieve these ends, the single power is given the necessary fore to conduct, when necessary, 'just wars' at the borders against the barbarian and internally against the rebellious.[41]

But Hardt and Negri's thesis is that the opposite is true. Due to the diffusion of borders and democratisation of global space, power achieves its total stage. Unlike in modernity, it is no longer bound by the principles of

sovereignty which also establishes the 'ground rules' of legitimate power. On the contrary, the new global bio-power is based on the ability to determine the state of emergency, that is, an event that requires intervention.[42] In Hardt and Negri's view, Empire does not lead to wars as there is nothing external to Empire. All types of force become internal; they come to be understood as domestic conflicts, humanitarian interventions or a policing action against the murderers, criminals and terrorists. Ultimately, the nature of the global bio-power of the new Empire is not so different from that of the modern state. Like the modern state, Empire still retains the power to identify an enemy, though all enemies become internal enemies. This new form of order can take political, social, or even cultural forms as Empire is an order that administers the production of identity and difference.[43] This pessimistic diagnosis seems to leave little hope of resistance. Because of the total nature of bio-power, any opposition against the Empire is doomed to fail, as Empire automatically consumes any type of difference and opposition represented by any of the identities within.[44] According to Negri and Hardt, so far, the only successful resistance to the Empire has been individual: activities such as 'radical mutation' of our bodies through piercings and tattoos[45] have served as a way of 'fighting back' against the homogenising force of the emerging global order.

Hardt and Negri's work represents a warning against a world without subjectivity. The new political order exists in a vacuum where there is no recognised political leadership and, consequently, no authority able to grant citizenship.[46] The oppressiveness of the Empire is then inherent in its structure. It signifies political authority and a system of redistribution without a recognised class of right-bearers.

The goal of the authors of *Empire* is then to promote new ways of resisting by promoting citizenship.[47] As there is no global state, Hardt and Negri introduce the concept of the 'multitude'[48] which represents the global class of subjects. The multitude does not have a legal status, but it has been recognised through a series of revolutions and solidarity of those revolutionary groups against the market.[49] The empowerment of the multitude, according to Hardt and Negri, requires three postulates to be met: recognition of global citizenship, the right to free movement of people and a global social wage.

While Hardt and Negri try to convince us that they are describing a substantially new type of exploitation—take away bio-power, and their analysis seems to be using a language we know all too well.[50] Even the account of bio-power in *Empire* seems to be problematic as by losing the

distinction between state and economy, the Marxist categories of production suddenly seem blurred.[51] However, surely the way we perceive and understand the global order depends on the linguistic toolkit we decide to apply. While Hardt and Negri's proposition is certainly an interesting one, it lacks the kind of detail that would allow us to assess the usefulness of their model. It seems to me that precisely at a time when the nature of contemporary political subjectivity is being heavily debated, Hardt and Negri are too reductionist in their analysis. I tend to agree with Beck that the emergent 'cosmopolitan' order requires a new syntax[52] or, to put it in other words, new political categories. However, the search for these is immensely difficult, especially as there is still little clarity and much confusion as to our relationship with modernity.

Post-modern Particularism: Beck's Cosmopolitan Outlook

I will now examine an alternative 'narrative' to that offered by Hardt and Negri. The assault on the World Trade Centre in 2001 represents a change to intellectual discourse. The idea of a 'War on Terror' has undermined the classical understanding of conflict. At the same time, we observe new ways of thinking about the 'national' and the 'global'. One such example is Beck's theory of 'global risk society'. In Beck's own terminology, the adjectives 'global' and 'cosmopolitan' are closely linked, and in this section, I use these in the above meaning, rather than in the philosophical one (Chap. 7). Beck's approach to cosmopolitanism is closely related to his work on risk. Beck's engagement, as a social theorist, with cosmopolitanism is largely focused on the distinction between the former and cosmopolitanisation (a dimension of globalisation).

> The globalization of politics, economic relations, law, culture, and communication, and interaction, networks, spurs controversy; indeed, the shock generated by global risks continually gives rise to worldwide political publics. In world risk society – this is my thesis, at least – the question concerning the causes and agencies of global threats sparks new political conflicts, which in turn promote an institutional cosmopolitanism in struggles over definitions and jurisdictions.[53]

Beck sees the emergent nature of global risk as a key factor in constructing a global public sphere which in turns leads to a process he calls cosmopolitanisation. It is thanks to these changes that the 'human condition has itself become cosmopolitan'.[54] Naturally, Beck is aware of the recent

revitalisation of nationalism and sub-state nationalism in Eastern Europe, Canada, Scotland and elsewhere. Nonetheless, he claims that there is a significant difference between modern nationalism and its current post-modern form. While in modernity, political identity is formed in opposition to that which is 'alien' or 'other', contemporary national identities do not seem to be necessarily exclusive in the same way.[55] Thus, it is possible to be both Polish and German. Moreover, Beck claims that these new forms of nationalism develop in response to (and perhaps even opposition to) the globalised world. For Beck, the era of xenophobic, particularistic nationalism is over.

> [...] identities which are perhaps too quickly labelled as 'neonational' but which, in contrast to the explosive fascistic nationalisms of the twentieth century, do not aim at ideological and military conquest beyond their own borders. These are introverted forms of nationalism which oppose the 'invasion' of the global world by turning inwards, though 'introverted' here should not be confused with 'harmless.[56]

In that sense, contemporary nationalism develops in an already globalised, cosmopolitan world. However, unlike the old cosmopolitanisms of Marcus Aurelius[57] and Immanuel Kant,[58] cosmopolitan life is no longer a matter of 'cold' reason. Beck describes the process as an increasing spring of cosmopolitan empathy.[59]

So why is this link between emergent global factors such as risk (or perceived risk) and the cosmopolitanisation of contemporary life important for a political theorist? The answer is twofold. On a philosophical level, Beck's analysis is critical because, firstly, it implies that the opposition between normative cosmopolitanism and nationalism is historical, rather than theoretical; while recognising that society becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, Beck's argument avoids a naive model of cosmopolitanism.[60] Secondly, as far as social theory is concerned, the distinction that Beck makes between cosmopolitanism as a normative view and the empirically observable cosmopolitanisation is useful as it provides an alternative understanding of the relationship between increasing internationalisation and cosmopolitanism. It also avoids antagonism between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. The problem of subjectivity is only hinted at in Beck's writing and mostly in so far as he discusses the notion of identity.

However, let me first briefly reconstruct what Beck calls the cosmopolitan outlook. He focuses not on the institutional aspect of globalisation nor

the increasing need for international cooperation in policy-making. He lists five principles of the cosmopolitan outlook. These are (1) the experience of crisis in world society, (2) recognition of cosmopolitan differences, (3) cosmopolitan empathy, (4) the impossibility of living in a world society without borders and (5) the melange principle.[61] The first principle refers to the perception of global risks and threats which, thanks to the widening of international public opinion, help shape our understanding of a common 'human' fate. The second and third principles are related in the sense that they represent the idea that since we recognise that we think in the same way and know how others think,[62] we are capable of respecting difference without defining it in terms of otherness or exclusion. Finally, the melange principle refers to the liquidity of contemporary identities and the increasing multiculturalism of our societies, both of which result in the world being much more 'colourful'. The melange principle means in practice that we perceive mixings of cultures, races and cultures as inevitable elements of contemporary societies.

All of these principles are defined in terms of social perception rather than an immediate political phenomenon. Arguably, however, these cannot be so easily separated. In Beck's view, the transformations of our perceptions of national and transnational forms of life does, in fact, affect both policy and normative thinking. One example Beck gives is one of a Brazilian footballer playing for a Bavarian team. Even though we recognise the player as being Brazilian, he still manages to ignite a patriotic spirit amongst Germans.[63] Beck takes this as evidence that the cosmopolitan outlook does not replace national sentiment but can coexist with and in fact strengthen it.

Beck's account is contestable. While we observe a variety of processes which could loosely be termed 'globalisation', 'internationalisation', 'cosmopolitanisation' or the diffusion or de-aggregation of identity, these are accompanied by a counterforce of reignited nationalism, anti-globalisation movements and the intent to defend or even create strong local and specifically national communities. The allegedly cosmopolitan world is not equally hospitable to everyone. While high-profile professionals may find it easy to move and find their places in various communities, most migrants feel uprooted and homeless.[64] So is Beck's diagnosis one-sided?

This is where Beck's distinction between normative cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitanisation (or the cosmopolitan outlook) becomes crucial. While normative cosmopolitanism requires active participation through the recognition of cosmopolitan norms, a cosmopolitan outlook represents the

passive self-awareness of the global masses of an emergent world cosmopolitan order.[65] Beck claims that even though forms of life become increasingly cosmopolitan, our understanding of them is limited by a nation-centred worldview. Methodological nationalism, says Beck, implies societies in plural[66] and, consequently, forces us to make choices that become less and less meaningful. If cosmopolitanisation is only passive, then as such it does not necessarily mean an expansion of human freedom.[67]

> Really existing cosmopolitanism is deformed cosmopolitanism. As Scott L. Malcomson argues, it is sustained by individuals who have very few opportunities to identify with something greater than what is dictated by their circumstances…A non-deformed cosmopolitanism, by contrast, results from the sense of partaking in the great human experiment in civilization – with one's own language and cultural symbols and the means to counter global threats – and hence making a contribution to world culture.[68]

This opposition between deformed and non-deformed cosmopolitanism is, in my view, very weak. First of all, if we understand non-deformed cosmopolitanism in terms of participation in the 'great human experiment' and the 'ability to contribute to the world culture', then there are very few of us who could potentially fit in that image. Beck's view of 'non-deformed' cosmopolitanism is highly idealised and vague just as his definition of nation not always consistent. For instance, when Beck says that, in a cosmopolitan model, recognition of difference should not imply sameness or affirmation of difference,[69] he does not provide the reader with a positive definition or guidelines on how this could be achieved. While it is true that, as Beck says, the nationalistic outlook is essentialist,[70] there is not enough in Beck's theory of cosmopolitanism to show that this essentialism could not be part of the cosmopolitan outlook.

Transformations of the 'Self'

While Beck's approach comes from a very different place to Hardt and Negri's, both these strands of post-national thought attempt to recognise the larger community of humanity through depoliticising difference. However, their diagnosis is only partially true. The contradiction between individual autonomy on the one hand and national belonging on the other is a historical, not a logical, one—as I have argued in previous chapters. One author who understands this is Cornelia Klinger who in her work 'The Trajectory of the Modern Subject' describes the transformations of

the tension between freedom and identity as two sources of subjectivity. She argues that the idea of an autonomous 'self' developed largely thanks to the way in which the subject had to maintain an alterity towards the rules and mechanisms of modern society (see Chaps. 3 and 4).[71] While the modern subject embraces the ideals of autonomy and self-determination, it also seeks to give itself direction in the idea of a community of fate. In fact, according to Klinger, both the individual and the collective 'self' have to assume a position of alterity to be fully formed.[72] However, as Klinger explains, due to the decline of family, class and the nation, traditional sources of identity became weak and this, in turn, led to a paradoxical crisis of a self that is simultaneously free to define itself and lacks the resources to do so. According to Klinger, this leads to a no-win situation, as the very subject that was supposed to enjoy the newly achieved freedom to shape life disappears.[73] Her argument attempts to address a problem where identity itself becomes a product, both because it can be manufactured and because it can be acquired. This leads to the dilemma where the subject is neither beyond its choices nor can it find itself in them[74]: 'When the production of meaning is commercialised the division of functions between the sphere of subjectivised meaning and the rationalized sphere of instrumental reason as the sphere of means is abolished.'[75]

This explains why the diffusion of the nation-state as a source of substantive identities is accompanied by ambiguous feelings of both freedom and melancholy[76]: 'Modern subjectivity is torn between the impulse to rejoice at the loss of the fetters of origin, tradition, and conventional wisdom of all kinds on the one hand, and the urge to re-establish certainty, orientation, and solidarity on the other'.[77]

Klinger's analysis provides a valuable perspective on the debate between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, because it highlights the dangers of freedom without subjectivity and subjectivity without freedom. Hardt and Negri's proposition that we could oppose the forces of the 'Empire' by acts of self-differentiation is in this sense hollow. The same could be said about Beck's forms of individual resistance against nationalism—although Beck does not have the same issue on the methodological level.

Much of this book has been devoted to the concept of the modern self, and yet we must remain conscious its roots lay in the political world. As such, the self is always 'a self-in-the making', and therefore one has to acknowledge its historical and dynamic nature. Kate Nash makes a similar point when she states that national identity can and often does have a universalist dimension. The old opposition between 'hot' national sentiment

and 'cold' rationalist cosmopolitanism is now becoming obsolete.[78] Nash argues that national feelings are based on personal emotions and understood as common to all humans.[79] Hence, we are able to sympathise with foreigners in times of crisis. Nash gives the example of the 9/11 attacks. She claims that the global response was so strong because 'In some significant cases at least, national feeling is constructed within a moral order in which 'real' emotions are figured as 'human'.'[80]

Perhaps it would be easier to herald the death of subjectivity—especially as the language of subjectivity is being challenged by more fluid models of selfhood.[81] It is, however, too early to talk about a post-subjective or post-national world. The alleged transformations within the contemporary self are indeed significant, but they are not revolutionary. There is no thick line separating modernity from the contemporary, post-modern society. In fact, it can be argued that the contemporary self is a radicalised version of its original project, what Klinger calls 'radicalisation of modernity'. The conceptual place of nations within this framework has certainly changed. It does not mean that nations are becoming weaker, but that they are adjusting to the transformation within our own conception of the political self. Because we increasingly have the ability to recognise ourselves through abstract features rather than particular ethnic or cultural differences, national identity itself becomes universalised.

Notes

1. Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, Free Press, New York, 1995.
2. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human sciences*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp. 352–353.
3. Frederick Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.
4. Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, London, Penguin, 2002.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, pp. 165–167.
6. Karl Marx, *Essential Writings*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1972.
7. Frederick Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.
8. Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, London, Penguin, 2002.
9. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, pp. 165–167.
10. Karl Marx, *Essential Writings*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1972.
11. This classification draws on one provided by Cornelia Klinger in her paper 'From Freedom Without Choice To Choice Without Freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations*, Volume 11, No. 1, 2004,

which I also discuss in the last section of this chapter. However, I prefer to use the term 'individuation' rather than her choice of 'subjectivisation' as this is consistent with my terminology in which subjectivisation is seen as a sub-category of individuation.

12. Ulrich Beck is of the most well-known public intellectuals representing this line of thought. Apart from his academic work on Risk Society and Cosmopolitanism, he is also the author of numerous newspaper articles that call for a 'cosmopolitan education and upbringing'. For example, he suggested in *The Guardian* that the number of history lessons in the curriculum should be reduced as history (understood as history of nations) is divisive. Instead, pupils should be offered lessons in cooking and Mandarin (Ulrich Beck, *The Guardian*, Friday, 13 July 2007).

13. Power is only one of the three ways of constructing subjectivity that Foucault identifies alongside scientific discourse and self-constituting practices (history of sexuality). Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1982, p. 779.

14. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London, Penguin, 1991.

15. *Op. cit.,* pp. 170–177.

16. *Op. cit.,* pp. 73–135, 149–151.

17. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1982, p. 779.

18. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality 3: The Care of the Self*, London, Penguin, 1990.

19. *Op. cit.,* pp. 40–41; further elaboration of practices of care of oneself can be found on pp. 45–47.

20. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1982, p. 785.

21. *Op. cit*, p. 216.

22. Michael Mahon, *Foucault's Nietzschean genealogy: truth, power, and the subject*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 132.

23. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1982, p. 790.

24. *Op. cit.,* pp. 780–781.

25. Michael Clifford, *Political Genealogy After Foucault. Savage Identities*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 58.

26. *Op. cit.,* p. 58.

27. Agata Bielik-Robson, *Inna Nowoczesnosc. Pytania o wspolczesna formule duchowosci*, Krakow, Universitas, 2000.

28. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, NuVision Publications 2007, p. 1.

29. Agata Bielik-Robson, *Inna Nowoczesnosc. Pytania o wspolczesna formule duchowosci*, Krakow, Universitas, 2000, p. 63.
30. Ibid.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 64.
32. *Op. cit.,* p. 80.
33. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, London, Farber and Farber, 1995.
34. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 3.
35. *Op. cit.,* p .1.
36. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity 2006 p. 17.
37. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 5.
38. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity 2006 p. 54.
39. Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000.
40. Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
41. Hardt calls this process of rationalisation a continuation of the project of 'Perpetual Peace'. Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 10.
42. *Op. cit.,* p. 48.
43. *Op. cit.,* p. 59.
44. *Op. cit.,* p. 62.
45. *Op. cit.*, p. 216.
46. *Op. cit.*, p. 394.
47. Jonathan Havercroft, 'The Fickle Multitude: Spinoza and the Problem of Global Democracy,' *Constellations*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2010, p. 112.
48. Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 394.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 395.
50. Hardt and Negri's style of theorising also seems to be much closer to traditional Marxism than they willingly admit as suggested in: Gary K. Browning, 'A Globalist Ideology of Post-Marxism? Hardt and Negri's Empire,' *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2005, p. 194.
51. Paul Thompson, 'Foundation and Empire: A critique of Hardt and Negri,' *Capital and Class*, No. 84, p. 77.
52. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 19.
53. *Op. cit.*, pp. 22–23.

54. *Op. cit.,* p. 22.
55. Ibid.
56. *Op. cit.,* p. 4.
57. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, London, Wordsworth, 1997.
58. Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
59. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 5–6.
60. This is not to say that cosmopolitanism must necessarily be associated with naive universalism. I have already discussed examples of a more balanced view in Chaps. 5 and 6 (Erskine, Appiah).
61. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 7.
62. *Op. cit.,* p. 8.
63. *Op. cit.,* p. 11.
64. C. Calhoun, 'The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,' in D. Archibugi (ed.) *Debating Cosmopolitics,* London, Verso, 2003, pp. 86–116.
65. Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity, 2006, p. 21.
66. *Op. cit.,* p. 27.
67. *Op. cit.,* p. 19.
68. *Op. cit.,* p. 21.
69. *Op. cit.,* p. 29, 58.
70. *Op. cit.,* p. 30.
71. Cornelia Klinger, 'From Freedom without choice to choice without freedom: The Trajectory of the Modern Subject', *Constellations*, Volume 11, No. 1, 2004, p. 124.
72. Ibid.
73. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
74. *Op. cit.,* p. 131.
75. *Op. cit.*, p. 132.
76. *Op. cit.*, p. 126.
77. Ibid.
78. Kate Nash, 'Cosmopolitan Community: Why Does it Feel so Right?', *Constellations*, Volume 10, No. 4, 2003.
79. *Op. cit.,* p. 512.
80. *Op. cit.,* p. 509.
81. Zygmunt Bauman, 'From Pilgrim to Tourist-or a Short Story of Identity,' in Stuart Hall and Paul de Gau (eds.), *Queestions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage, 1997.

Conclusion: 'National Humanity'

I began this project by laying out the relationship between nationhood and the modern self. The purpose of this excursion to the history of ideas was to show that 'nation' plays a key role in developing the epistemic and moral framework crucial to the formation of our political world. I also looked at the three traditional critiques of national identity, which I laid out in the Introduction, focusing on the relationship between nationhood and the self, identity and political community. I then moved to proposing an understanding of the nation as a community of authorship and argued that it is this ability of nationhood to facilitate political agency that allows us to imagine others as equals. The last two chapters engaged with two strands of contemporary debates regarding national identity—the cosmopolitan debate and post-structuralism. Here I conclude my argument by looking at implications of this view of nationhood to our understanding of the roles of nations in politics today.

Throughout this book I argued that one of the key reasons for a superficial treatment of nationhood by political theorists is that nationhood is primarily conceptualised as a type of identity. However, this does not allow us to account either for the central role of nationalism in the processes of modernisation or the fact that nations themselves play a role in the development of our concept of the self (Chaps. 4 and 7). Instead of focusing merely on national identity, I introduced the reader to the development of the modern self. The three main features of the modern self are (1) that it is secular in the sense that it originates from the decline of the theistic

order, (2) it exists in a tension between its passive and active elements and (3) it supports a type of identity which is both individualistic and collective at the same time. This being the case, it was important for Chap. 7 to offer an alternative understanding of the nation as a unique form of political experience. This makes nations both historically contingent and politically valuable to the modern liberal state. In the final two chapters, I addressed the changing role of nations in an increasingly global world which often contests national limits of political or moral duties in favour of cosmopolitan norms.

My goal was to expose the superficial way in which the concept of the nation is often opposed by theorists, primarily, but not only, of liberal cosmopolitanism, based on the notion of individual autonomy. While much of liberal political theory has traditionally viewed the nation as an obstacle on the road to modernisation, my analysis of nationalism has shown that nationhood and the moral value of nation-ness is at the heart of the modern self. Therefore, the first macro finding is that the boundedness of the modern 'self' shapes the way we perceive political community and that the nation represents a politically meaningful boundary to the self.

The second key finding is that the nation is not only a boundary for the self, but it is the primary political boundary for the self. Having examined how nations have the capacity to mediate individual experience within a framework of bounded rationality (Chaps. 2 and 7), I show how they consequently have the ability to provide the self with the means to participate in a common world. Through offering a model of bounded rationality in virtue of a shared relationship to a national non-thing, nations allow individuals to recognise others as equal moral and political agents. They offer access to a common space in which all co-nationals are recognised in such a way that they can relate to each other as co-authors; this explains why nations permit the formation and support of individual autonomy. Through nationhood, political agency is derived from an inclusion in the nation rather than in a 'mere' state, where citizenship is derived from cultural norms.

A question arises on whether the type of social cohesion and unity that nationhood brings is desirable. It is true that national unity is at the heart of some of the most corrupt and malicious totalitarian policies and ideologies of the modern world. While I accept that members of political communities need a notion of a common world, it seems that nations provide more than just that. The sense of unity created by belonging to a national community is often portrayed in terms of natural features (ethnical, cultural and physical). The naturalising of identity and difference can lead

to dangerous forms of exclusion. However, as I show further in Chap. 4, the nature of the political world is such that we need a certain degree of solidarity and unity. Political decisions are not merely immediate administrative corrections, but have long-term consequences. This is why the concept of political community has to extend to those future generations which will be affected by our decisions. Nations provide the idea of a community of fate that allows their members to mobilise themselves towards a perceived common good and look after current and future generations.

Lastly, and critically, my work illuminates the fact that, while global identities are increasingly important, the nation remains the primary political boundary for the self. In Chaps. 5 and 7, I show that the borders of both states and nations are already challenged by new forms of postnational identity and global politics. However, this does not necessarily undermine the political role of the nation, as we are increasingly able to define ourselves as subjects in terms of abstract features rather than ethnic differences (Chap. 7). This universalisation of national identity does not represent a completely new paradigm, but should be perceived as a radicalisation of the modern ideal of politics in which the universal is mediated by a limited political community (Chap. 4).

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In the course of this book, we have moved from a historical and descriptive analysis of nationhood and the self to a critical, and eventually, a normative one. While nationhood has been the primary subject of my research, it is questions about the modern self which motivated it: What is the subject of modern politics? What resources are available to us as subjects and agents? The majority of philosophical study of nationhood has neglected those questions, which in turn meant that so many visions of global justice or global citizenship either neglect the agency which is needed to bring such world into existence or directly work to erode it. The primary goal of this book was not to defend nationalism as an ideology or a way of setting limits to our moral or political horizons. In fact, my hope is that the role which nations play in our political lives will continue to decrease. However, I hope I have shown that the inability to engage with nationalism as a source of the modern political framework can be dangerous.

Neglecting nationhood as a source of political agency can lead to practices and agendas, which (1) are unfair or biased (while seemingly neutral), (2) reduce the public engagement and legitimacy and (3) fail to provide us with a language that can adequately account for the core issues of the neoliberal nation-state (and perhaps other types of polities as well). Ad. (1) The political language of the French Republic can be seen as an example

here. While being 'French' is defined through citizenship, not nationality, the French state has been notorious at failing to provide a model of political membership, which would be open to all. The intentional omission of nationality, including in official polls and registers, has not led to inclusions of other nations, ethnicities or races in the French public life. The inability to properly frame the inability of the French citizenship to be deemed nationalistic—as it is defined in nation-neutral terms—has been seen as one of the key reasons behind the oppressiveness of the state.

Ad. (2) We can see that failure to recognise sub-state national communities can indeed lead to diminishing of public engagement and legitimacy. This is the voice that we hear when some Scots say that they refuse to be governed 'by Westminster'. Devolution has in that sense helped the UK government to retain the legitimacy of its make-up and keep Scots on board. However, it is clear that had the national question not been addressed, the erosion of public support for British political institutions would continue at an accelerated rate.

Ad. (3) The recent electoral success of the right-wing Law and Justice party in Poland has been labelled as a victory of nationalism by the opposition. There are of course deeply rooted historical reasons why nationalism has remained a pejorative term in the Polish dictionary—while 'patriotic' and 'pro-independence' have always been seen as positive adjectives—even though they denoted the same social and political movements. And while I do not support the current ruling party, I attribute the victory of the Law and Justice party not to a particular vicious nature of Polish nationalism, but the inability of the liberal elites to debate and address the core issues which were indeed affecting the Polish state. The rise of right-wing nationalism is therefore the result of the systemic avoidance of debating and remembering key imaginings of the Polish community—ultimately undermining the perceived legitimacy of the Polish state, which became synonymous with private interests of agents of the neoliberal economy.

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The intention behind my analysis is not to say that nationhood should somehow become a political or moral priority to us. However, we need to make available a language which will allow us to discuss national membership in a way which is open and consistent with the global norms and values we subscribe to—understanding that nations will remain the primary political driver of these norms. Perhaps the most controversial implication of this understanding of nationhood is, however, the view that nations can promote solidarity not only amongst fellow nationals but also beyond the

borders of the particular national community. In Chap. 1, I argued that nations provide a source of solidarity which allows us to engage with others in building common institutions. This is also a moral principle in the sense that in order to show solidarity with others, we have to commit to the principle that we will not leave them to fend for themselves in time of need. But why would this principle extend beyond national boundaries themselves?

If, as I have suggested, nations are primarily communities of authorship, where we are imagined as equal, we have the ability to transform and open these bonds to others. Authorship is not merely a state, but a process of reinterpretation, of which a crucial element is the illusion of starting anew. And while it is an illusion, as none of us can indeed start truly anew, it is the community that provides the resources for own self-reinterpretation. What we need more of is then what Adam Smith called 'national humanism'—the ability to co-create a community of self-interest (from Latin *inter esse* to be amongst others) based on sympathy to others through a shared humanity. This model of national community is not only consistent with certain versions of cosmopolitanism but also the only political model for global solidarity. The choice between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is therefore a false one. Nations have the capacity to create bonds of solidarity based on a perceived shared history and heritage rather than short- or medium-term goals. However, the ability of nations to create those bonds is not necessarily limited to the boundaries of the state. This gives us hope that as the processes of globalisation become stronger, so are the foundations of global solidarity—which, rather than based on an abstract universalist order, can be built on the grounds of expanding and embracing existing identities.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by "n" denote end notes