

## THE IDEOLOGICAL PRACTICE OF NATIONALITY

Fernando Lopez-Alves\*

\* University of California at Santa Barbara, EEUU. E-mail: Lopez-al@soc.ucsb.edu

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**Resumen:** En este ensayo, propongo que la ya clásica pregunta “Que es la Nación?” no puede ser respondida sin considerar seriamente el desarrollo de una *práctica ideológica* semiautónoma que *conceptualiza*, mas que *imagina*, la nación. La pregunta de si los individuos que componen la nación realmente comparten una definición/imagen consensual de su nacionalidad es una vieja y crucial interrogante que debe ser resuelta para explicar lo que llamamos “identidad nacional”. La mayoría de los trabajos sobre identidad nacional y el nacionalismo asumen que, en cada nación, existe un consenso social acerca del significado de este concepto así también como de qué significa la “nacionalidad”. Sobre este consenso, se dice, descansa la idea de unidad nacional. La escasa evidencia empírica que poseemos, sin embargo, indica que los miembros de una misma nación pueden no estar de acuerdo acerca de lo que definiría su identidad. Es más, también sabemos que en general aunque la gente difiera en cuanto a qué signifique su nacionalidad, es de todos modos muy nacionalista, y que la gran mayoría de las personas en el mundo hoy creen pertenecer a una “nación”. La formación y desarrollo de lo que yo denomino una *práctica ideológica de la nacionalidad* (IPN) hace que estos datos que parecen contradictorios no lo sean.

**Palabras clave:** Nación, Nacionalidad, Modernidad, Estado, Identidad nacional, Burocracia, Ideología

**Abstract:** In this paper I argue that the archetypical question, “What is the Nation?” cannot be answered without serious examination of a semi-autonomous “ideological practice” connected to the *conceptualizing*, rather than the *imagining*, of nations. The paper claims that this contributes to resolve a number of puzzling paradoxes that lay at the core of research on the nation and national identity. The question of whether members of a nation share a consensual definition/image of their national community seems crucial to explain nationality. Literature has assumed that this is definitely the case and that such consensual view binds members of a particular nation together. This argument, however, overlooks important empirical evidence. Research shows that members of the same nation can in fact harbor serious disagreements as to the meaning of their national identity. People can believe that they share the same nationality but still envision “the nation” in very different ways. In addition, while people can disagree as to what to be a member of the nation may mean, they can still worship flag and country all the same.

**Keywords:** Nation, Nationality, Modernity, State, National Identity, Bureaucracy, Ideology.

### 1. WHAT IS THE NATION?

To inquire into this classic question at the present time is timelier than ever. If one were to chart the evolution of global

consciousness about belonging to a nation as well as people's beliefs in their nation as a living entity during the last two centuries, one would have to draw an unstoppable climbing curve. The same can be said about national identity. It is a fact that more than ever in recorded history in the twentieth first century collective national identities are linked to individual identities to the point in which people around the globe believe that their personal welfare depends on the wellbeing of their nations. Consciousness about national identity and the existence of a "national community", however, has not emerged spontaneously and its endurance is not fortuitous<sup>1</sup>.

I differ from current theories that claim that present day globalization has weakened national identity. While --depending on the region-- one can identify some brief hiatus in identity building, one can confidently argue that during the last two centuries the process of national identity consolidation has progressively gained momentum. Globalization, if anything, has accelerated the consolidation of nationality and the idea that individuals belong to nations. The increasing interests of governments around the world in consolidating national unity and encouraging nationalism is not a backlash against globalization. The backlash theory assumes that starting in the 1990s globalization and neoliberalism demoted and diminished the importance of national sentiment worldwide. In a more globalized world, it claims, differences in terms of identities and culture are becoming obsolete and so is nationality. The business community, especially, has championed this position. In the twentieth first century, however, nationalist fervor surpasses that of the WWI era, a time that has so far been considered to represent the topmost time of nationalist zeal.

As stated in the introduction to this volume, most states in the global system today are busy buttressing nationalism and redefining

the notion of "national community". The challenging superpowers of our time, China and Russia, have made the construction of state nationalism and the rejection of "separatism" a priority. Japan has done likewise, although in a lesser aggressive tone. In the United States, conservatives and liberals alike have resorted to stronger nationalist discourse about the defense of the American Nation. This is also true of middle powers like India or Brazil, while in the European Union nationalist voices that defend national values, ways of life, and local cultures are louder than even, with France and Germany, the two major crafters of the EU, leading the way.

Furthermore, countries like Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, or Pakistan and in some ways Turkey, have declared that they represent "new models" of integration into the global system. These new "models", however, are like most others in terms of their investing in the strengthening of national sentiment, as do Chile, Nigeria, Peru or Viet Nam, Philippines, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia. In the Middle East and Africa strong nationalism is mixed with ethnic and religious conflict. Indeed, ISIS's desire to create a new Caliphate in Iraq/Syria represents an aspiration to go back to an old model of the nation. These developments are not the unintended consequences of globalization. As we shall see they are, rather, rooted in the bureaucratic modernization and institutional differentiation of the modern state.

To revisit this venerable question ("what is the nation?") implies to reexamine an even older problem: what is the state? I cannot of course fully answer these questions in the following pages. I can, however, offer a theory of the nation that addresses why and how it emerged, why its importance has increased overtime, and why it is a global phenomenon. At the time of this writing to theorize about the nation also implies to theorize about the state. Thus, this paper not only proposes a different angle from which to study the nation but also the modern state. The argument that it advances is part of a larger theory that I

<sup>1</sup> I understand "national identity" to mean the consolidation of some degree of self-consciousness about belonging to a larger community called "nation". Nationality is built upon the emergence of that collective consciousness as well.

develop further in a book manuscript now under review<sup>2</sup>.

The definition of “nation” has taken perhaps too many different intellectual twists and turns and therefore it is not possible to analyze its long conceptual trajectory here. Despite an ongoing intense debate, however, most authors have concurred that there is a strong connection between states and nations. As we shall see, the state and its bureaucracies play the role of what I call *guarantors of meaning*, that is, these are institutions that maintain and manage evolving concepts and meanings connected to the ideas of “nation” and “national identity”. Precisely because the state and its bureaucratic apparatus became modern institutions and function within the parameters of what Max Weber called “rationality”, these bureaucracies are in a privileged position to act as guarantors of meaning over long, sustained periods of time.

This should not come as a surprise. Institutions and the ways in which societies adopt different types of “social organization” have traditionally been connected to the notion of “nation”. This notion has been claimed to be essential to the functioning and maintenance of both institutions and societies. Writing in the 1660s and in the midst of formulating a theological analysis of Scripture, Spinoza repeatedly mentioned the existence of “nations” and their importance for social organizing, not to mention their salient role in world affairs. He argued that without nations, i.e., ways in which societies organized themselves (laws), people’s ways of interacting with one another would have been chaotic. International relations (relations among nations) would have been almost unthinkable. Nations expressed either effectively or deficiently organizations of society. Successful nations were those able to institute laws and customs that encouraged respect for the law, the right morals, and “civilization”. According to Spinoza, individuals (leaders) create nations, and thus the characteristics of nations are con-

nected to the personality and skills of their founding fathers. Very importantly, nations depended on the performance of public institutions. As many of his contemporaries, he was interested in the Hebrew “nation” and used it repeatedly as an example of a nation that combined powerful political and religious leadership with obedience to the law.

He concluded that education, skill, and the direction of “far-seeing and careful men” who crafted efficient institutions created different kinds of nations. He proposed organization and efficiency as a criteria to rank nations: “Reason and experience show no more certain means of attaining this object than the formation of a society with fixed laws, the occupation of a strip of territory and the concentration of all forces ...into one body, that is the social body [...] Nations, then, are distinguished from one another in respect to the social organization and laws under which they live and are governed; the Hebrew nation was not chosen by God in respect to its wisdom nor its tranquility of mind, but in respect to its social organization and the good fortune with which it obtained supremacy and kept it so many years”<sup>3</sup>. Thus, as early as the second half of the 1600s, institutions (the state), efficient leadership and organization, as well as the rule of law were identified as shapers of nations. One can argue that Spinoza’s definition of the nation is already “modern” in the sense that institutional frameworks and social organization are the major variables that he uses to classify nations. His definition also offers a criterion that enables to distinguish nations from one another as different groups of people, a question that still puzzles authors in the twentieth first century.

In the eighteenth century a series of important social and political “revolutions”, in Thomas Kuhn’s sense of the term, took place and that radically affected the notions of nation and nationality. More specifically, during those decades a number of events further consolidated the association between “na-

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Lopez-Alves, “Semantics, Bureaucracies, and Nations: National Identity in Europe, South America, and the United States Compared, 1750-1950”.

<sup>3</sup> Spinoza, Benedict de (2007) *Theological-Political Treatise*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Jonathan Israel, Cambridge: University Press, “On the Improvement of the Understanding”, p 122.

tion”, state institutions, and type of social organization. It goes without saying that the American and French Revolutions stood as breakpoints. The latter, in particular, created a “before and after” in terms of how nations were defined, imagined, and worshiped by both elites and the population alike<sup>4</sup>. This started as urban phenomena, and Paris became the center of a conceptual and political revolution about the nation. Soon the idea of “nation” acquired more state-centered connotations in England, Germany, and Spain, not to mention the European colonies in the new world that will soon create very different nations but under similar guidelines.

Types of nation were also associated with wealth and poverty; good nations were able to progress and thrive while bad ones were condemned to stagnation and a marginal place in the international system. It is no wonder that in 1776 Adam Smith published *And Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, thus using the word “nation” not only to mean people and laws, but also territory, natural resources, and trade relations. International relations among nations were seeing in the light of what Smith called “comparative advantage”. In the free trade world that he envisioned those comparative advantages contributed very much indeed to nation making.

By mid nineteenth century Napoleon and the Napoleonic wars had further reinforced the linkages between nations and states. By marrying the French nation to a renewed, stronger French imperial state Napoleon materialized a long lasting European aspiration going back to Antiquity: the Imperial Nation, that is, a nation that absorbed and dominated other nations imposing its laws, culture, and ways of life upon them. Like in the past, this in time provoked the rise of nationalist movements all over Europe. Those movements redefined their nations and sought the roots of nationality in different cultural and ethnic characteris-

tics that had been washed away by French imperial policies. In other words, they wished to undermine French influence by redefining the notion of national identity once again<sup>5</sup>. These definitions and redefinitions reinforced the idea that nations and states were indissolubly united.

Therefore, a crucial feature of the process of modernization is that the concept of “nation” consolidated as an indispensable ingredient of the definition of the modern secular state itself. The state was soon defined according to the characteristics of the nation or nations to which it was attached and upon which it ruled. Emerging definitions of citizenship generated new laws and rights that added to a secular vocabulary that increasingly connected nations with states and understood them as part of the same entity. Evolving semantics associated to nationality framed the way people described and felt part of a nation, and connected it with state institutions and legal systems. While the marriage between nations and states had already an important history -- especially the work of English and Spanish philosophers who had linked nations with states and the Law— this nonetheless crafted a different discourse in which notions of nationality and identity at a larger scale became part of common parlance used by both upper and lower classes, rulers and ruled. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries what Max Weber called the “rationality” of modern state bureaucracies further connected nations to states.

Of course nations are also defined by conflict and war and, as has been abundantly pointed out, especially by “our right” to defend our life styles and “our values and culture” against those of our enemies. Therefore, the definition of “nation” has long included the right to wage war for the purposes of self-defense. After the sixteenth century the defense of the nation therefore became one of the state’s major duties and obligations. Thus the right of

<sup>4</sup> One of the best sources on the construction of a different concept of the nation in France at the time of revolution is Bell, David A. (2003). *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800*, Harvard University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Napoleon and his imperial rule have inspired literally thousands of books. To my knowledge, one of the most complete account of Napoleon’s life, policies, errors and accomplishments is the recent book by Andrew Roberts (2014). *Napoleon: A Life*, New York: Viking Penguin.

nations to self-determination and to wage war against other nations became a fundamental piece of International Law enforced by most Western states. This assumed that national communities were linked to states that could guarantee their rights. Among other philosophers of the early nineteenth century Hegel, for instance, fervently asserted such right in a collection of lectures delivered at the University of Berlin from 1821 to 1831 and published under the title *Philosophy of History*. According to him, the right of nations to self-defense goes beyond defending values, cultures, or ways of life. Both in these lectures and in his *Phenomenology of Mind* the right of nations to defend themselves meant something deeper. Nations had not only the right but also *the duty* to defend themselves in order to achieve their purposes as manifestations of Reason and Freedom. A nation “is moral, virtuous, vigorous, while it is engaged in realizing its grand objectives and defends its work against external violence during the process of giving to its purpose objective existence”<sup>6</sup>. We can conclude that if nations do not assert their rights they may very likely vanish.

Hegel was not alone in making this point. The right of nations to self-defense (part of the chart of the United Nations today) became sacrosanct all the way to our own days. Many nations or groups that aspire to become or are at this point nations (Kurds, Catalans, Irish, Scots, indigenous communities in Latin America and the United States and Canada, etc.) have based their claims on these rights, which they consider a basic human right, too. In the early twentieth century Max Weber had followed a similar line of argumentation when he claimed that in the modern world nations without states could not possibly survive.

Indeed, Weber’s dictum that groups sharing some sort of identity are nations only if they seek to form their own state, is plain enough. Yet Weber does not make a Hegelian argument. These two thinkers took different intellectual routes to arrive to a similar conclusion. In Weber, national identity has nothing to do with the evolution of a historical and meta-physical inevitable force (Spirit) but, rather,

<sup>6</sup> Hegel, Georg (2009). *The Philosophy of History*. IAP, Scotts Valley: CA-USA p. 84.

with a “sentiment” which, he suggests, comes from sentiments of prestige “...which often extend down to the petty bourgeois masses of political structures rich in the historical attainment of power-positions...(that) may fuse with a specific belief in responsibility toward succeeding generations”<sup>7</sup>.

There are at least two aspects in his definition that call for clarification and that directly connect to my argument about the nation as an ideological practice. The first is that the roots of this emotional “sentiment” that develop into national identity are related to, but not exclusively the result of, economics. Rather, nationality is tied to “prestige”, “pride” or the “imperialistic” aims of the upper classes. The second is that national identity requires a sense of obligation that needs to be imposed upon the “masses”. The state and the elites (upper and middle classes) have something to gain from imposing such sense of obligation and therefore the nation represents, in a way, the interests of the elites and of the “intellectually privileged”. According to Weber, these are the groups that have something to lose if unity breaks down while “what the poor can lose is close to nothing”<sup>8</sup>. In other words, the nation results from the conviction (held by some powerful “circles”) that the polity represents, for the most part, what they themselves are<sup>9</sup>. The identity of particular groups, therefore, grows into something bigger like national identity. And of course the state is the instrument without which this goal cannot be achieved.

## 2. NATIONS, MODERN BUREAUCRACIES AND IDEOLOGY

Somewhat along the lines of Hegel and Weber, my argument takes the works of the modern state as a major independent variable in explaining the rise of national identity and the emergence of a collective consensus regarding the existence of a “national community” in large multicultural and multiethnic set-

<sup>7</sup> Weber, Max (1946). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated, Edited and With an Introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> Weber, Max, 1946, op. cit. p. 172.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 172.



tings. Unlike most arguments that have taken the state as a key factor in the formulation of theories of nationality, however, *I emphasize the structure of state administrations and the rise of an ideological practice focused on nationality in order to explain why people started to believe that they belonged to the same larger whole.* I claim that nation making is one of the major ongoing processes that has created modernity. I combine two very different bodies of theory that have rarely, if ever, worked together to resolve issues connected to the nation, nationalism, and nationality. One is, as stated, the work of Max Weber on the process of rationalization of state bureaucracies. The other is the contribution of Marxists like Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar on the role of ideologies as social practices. I submit that this approach enriches current theories of the nation and contributes to undertake a number of unresolved puzzles.

The way I use the term “modern” goes back to Max Weber’s definition of the works of the modern state as a process of “rationalization”. This, according to him, differentiated the modern state from pre-modern forms of ruling. I use rationalization, in the sense used by Weber, to explain why modern states worldwide have established similar ideological practices of nationality (IPN). Weber argued that “rationalization” displaced prior structures of thought and institutionalization. He associated “rationality” with the achievements of Western civilization: the application of a particular kind of scientific knowledge and systematization of conduct to the state apparatus.

While every human action can be “rational”, Weber’s notion of rationalization remained tied to the rise Western capitalism, the functioning of the firm, and the impact of capitalism on the organization of public bureaucracies. The reorganization of a firm or a state is “rational” when it is done in order to achieve maximum efficiency in the attainment of specific goals. Rationalization is connected with the maximization of profit (a general rule of business) and the maximization of results regarding the use of resources and the effectiveness of policy (a general rule of govern-

ment)<sup>10</sup>. It is clear that “rationalization” is a method that characterizes Western institutions. Weber indeed claimed that while China and India were ancient powers with large institutional structures they lacked a “rational chemistry” and did not qualify, therefore, as modern states. Such chemistry, Weber submits, “has been absent from all areas except in the West”<sup>11</sup>. This “chemistry” shaped IPN.

When discussing rationality in Weber’s argument Talcott Parsons made a claim somewhat similar to the IPN argument that I am submitting here: “No single act can stand by itself on the value of its own merit alone, but only in terms of its bearing on a whole system of conduct”<sup>12</sup>. IPN is not about “single acts” standing by themselves but rather about collective ones within the framework of an organized ideological structure, which bears on conduct connected to nationality and the ways people conceptualize their nations. The rationalization of bureaucratic practices includes the state’s capacity to arbitrate meanings of nationality.

More efficient taxation, the formation of central armies, the establishment of a national educational systems, the creation of a civil service, the launching of systems of merit, and the expansion of public facilities contributed to strengthen collective consciousness about nationality. Like elsewhere, in the West religious and ethnic differences created tensions and conflict, not to mention that “rational”

<sup>10</sup> See an extensive discussion of the notion of rationality in Weber as well as the philosophical background of this debate in the Introduction to Stanislav Andreski’s book on Weber (1983). *Max Weber on Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Religion*. London: Routledge.

<sup>11</sup> He writes: “Machiavelli, it is true, had predecessors in India; but all Asian political thought lacked a systematic method comparable to that of Aristotle, and was, indeed, deficient in rational concepts”. Weber, Max, “The Uniqueness of Western Civilization” in Andreski, Stanislav (1983). *Max Weber on Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Religion*. Routledge, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Weber, Max, (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons. Edited with an Introduction by Talcott Parsons. New York, the Free Press, p. 80.

state growth did not always benefit the poor. Unlike other regions, however, in Western Europe and the Americas these frictions did not undermine the steady development of a comprehensive ideology of nationality that in time captured the majority of the population<sup>13</sup>.

In the Old and New Worlds public bureaucracies paralleled the rise of lobbies, political parties, and party systems. Notions of nationality emerged in this complex institutional arrangement. The formation of lobbies that worked together with the state in policymaking, and the political campaigning of political parties (which invariably used a lexicon connected to the nation and nationality) shaped the Western version of IPN. Complex semantic contexts and a constant process of negotiation between the state and civil society regarding the meaning of the nation and national identity were incorporated into an ideology (more immediately below) with the individual citizen at its center.

National consciousness became both a consciousness of individuality and of the connections of the individual with a larger whole called "nation". The case of the United States has usually been cited as an example. Individual freedom and the capacity of persons to alter the structure of power became ingrained into the conceptualization of the nation. This strong individualism did not undermine national identity or nationalism, with many authors indeed arguing that the United States stands as one of the most nationalistic countries in the world<sup>14</sup>. I argue that the consolida-

tion of an ideological practice of nationality made this possible.

States across the Atlantic surely differed. States in the Americas and in Europe varied in terms of their timing of institutional differentiation and the establishment of more or less open democratic systems. Not all of Latin America (El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, Venezuela, or Paraguay) or for that matter Europe (Spain, Italy, Poland, Germany) followed exactly the same Liberal formula. What united them, however, was that in time most of these states adopted similar negotiating mechanisms with civil society with the goal of creating unifying notions of nationality.

### Nations as Ideological Structures

My emphasis on the *conceptualizing* rather than the *imagining* of nations differentiates my definition from that of Benedict Anderson's already famed and clever characterization of the nation as an "imagined community". According to Anderson, in such community members "imagine" that they belong to the larger group<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, a nation is "an imagined political community –and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign...It is imagined because members of even the smallest nations will never know most of its fellow members, meet them, or even herd of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community"<sup>16</sup>. Imagining and conceptualizing, however, are different things and it is the latter that makes the former possible. In other words, imagining requires conceptualizing and *imagining* the existence of a larger community alone does not suffice to create nationality.

Self-consciousness about the nation (however defined) embodies what members think that they share, have been persuaded that they

<sup>13</sup> It goes without saying that entire populations were almost driven to extinction and that the nation was not necessarily equalitarian and inclusive. Yet discrimination and genocide were also a characteristic of non-Western societies that, at the end, could not successfully accommodate or negotiate meanings of nationality.

<sup>14</sup> Lieven, Anatol (2004) *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*, Oxford: University Press. In terms of how individuality became part of the national identity of the United States from a different perspective, see, among others, Lind, Michael (2009) *Land of Promise: An Economic History of the United States* HarperCollins

<sup>15</sup> See Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. For additional nuances on this argument, see as well his (2005) *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and Anti-Colonial Imagination*, London: Verso

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities...*, op. cit. p 5.

share, or forced to believe that they do. Such consciousness stems from some degree of conceptualizing and defining that allows individuals to conceive of the larger whole of which they believe to be a part. “Communities of nationals” or what have been termed “communities of horizontal solidarity” did not emerge spontaneously<sup>17</sup>. Imagining a larger community that reaches beyond our family, friends, and close surroundings, depended upon the degree to which people could conceptualize and define their nationality in the first place. To put it differently, “what we are” or believe we are requires an act of defining that becomes a necessary precondition of what we think distinguishes us from other groups. In order to know who we are, therefore, we need to define other groups of peoples as being different from us.

I concur that members of the nation are compelled to do some “imagining” in the way described by Anderson, and that this contributes to the existence of nations both as concepts and daily life behavior. Yet the idea of “nation” requires a particular type of conceptualizing and defining that is framed by the state. This distinguishes nations from other types of communities that are also imagined. It is the state that establishes the conceptual framing in which this particular conceptualizing and imagining takes place. This makes the idea of a “national community” different from other communities that do not possess a comparable engine of identity creation.

For different reasons than my own, Yael Tamir has suggested that Anderson’s definition of the national community is precisely the weakest point of his work. Most communities, Tamir observes, can be considered “imagined” and there is no clue in Anderson’s as to what differentiates a nation from other kinds of imagined communities. More precision is needed. Anderson disagrees. He writes that what differentiates nations from other communities, rather, is the “style in which they are imagined”. Tamir claims that this does not

seem to settle the issue<sup>18</sup>. My take on this is, again, is that public bureaucracies structure and sponsor a process of *accumulation and ritualization of meaning* that allows for this specific conceptualizing and defining.

Anderson’s important contribution, of course, cannot be reduced to his emphasis on imagining. As Christopher Hill has put it “Anderson ...takes economic evolution as the base line of his theory, although this aspect of his book has often been neglected because of narrow engagement with the phrase of its title”<sup>19</sup>. Hill also reminds us that Anderson connects an economic narrative with an anthropological approach and that this allows to incorporated race and ethnicity in the analysis of nationalism<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, Anderson has elegantly showed that studies on the nation as a “cultural construct” do need to pay close attention to the evolution of economic systems, markets, and communications<sup>21</sup>. To my mind, however, one of the most significant findings in Anderson’s work is his emphasis in the role that Latin American bureaucrats played in creating what he calls a “modular” notion of nationalism<sup>22</sup>. Bringing to our attention the characteristics of postcolonial administrations is one of his most often forgotten but fundamental contributions.

My emphasis on an ideological “practice” associated with nationality goes along the lines of the contributions of a Marxist school of thought that, despite its speculative nature, made a valuable addition to the study of ideologies. Permeated by the enthusiasm of the

<sup>17</sup> Anderson, Benedict R., op. cit. makes the case for nations as imagined communities of horizontal social solidarity.

<sup>18</sup> Tamir argues that Anderson does not show evidence for these different styles of imagining either; “The Enigma of Nationalism”, *World Politics*, v. 47, no 3; p.p. 421-423; see as well his *Liberal Nationalism* (1993). Princeton: University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Hill, Christopher L. (2008) *National History and the World of Nations: Capital, State and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp. 36-37.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, page 37. Hill offers a sound critique of Anderson’s argument regarding the geographical emergence of his modular notion of nationalism as well.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, Benedict, op. cit. pp. 3-7.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, ibid. p. 63



May 1968 student upheaval and the biggest workers' strike in French history (not to mention similar events around the globe especially in the rest of Europe and Latin America), Louis Althusser's notion of an "ideological practice" connected to the functioning's of the state's "apparatus", however, offers a valuable viewpoint from which to look at the nation and nationalism at a large scale. Ideologies are, for Althusser, complex social practices rather than abstract constructions that falsify social consciousness. His argument about ideology therefore differs from that of the early Marx. For Althusser, ideologies are not the abstract expression of false consciousness but, rather, concrete "practices" that need not to be necessarily "true" or "false" to work as social norms that guide behavior, that is, Althusser grants that ideologies can be instruments of deception but claim that are as real as social material structures. They may be intrinsically deceiving but they are not abstract; rather, they shape the material world. Ideologies generate rituals that confer sense to individual action and shape group behavior: harvest celebrations, football matches, political party summits, religious worship, parades, and so fourth. Students of nationalism are indeed very familiar with these rituals and know that their importance does not rely on verifiable truths. Althusser and others argued that they have a coherence of their own because they are segments of ideological structures that unite them into a tense but coherent whole.

There is much more to ideologies than their manipulative nature. In *Reading Capital...* we learn of the existence of a number of different but connected "practices" that conform the capitalist system and that are connected to different phases in the evolution of the mode of production. These are the economic practice, the ideological practice, and the politico-legal one. While these practices are autonomous to a degree, they do connect to conform a larger whole, the so-called "social formation". Althusser and Balibar claim that a "dialectical relation" unites these practices conforming the whole. Such "dialectical relation", however, is nowhere clearly defined and, as a result, in their argument the lines of causality uniting independent and dependent variables get rather confusing. This is particularly the case when they tried to connect the-

oretical practices with material ones. They resolved the conundrum of the linkages between "theoretical practices" and the "material practices" (that conform the "infrastructure" of the capitalist system) claiming that a "dialectical relation" unites the "ideological superstructure" to the dynamic and fast paced "economic base"<sup>23</sup>.

I propose a different, more unidirectional chain of causality, and I am only interested in ideological practices associated with nationality. State bureaucracies are the engines of both the "material processes" and the construction of this particular ideology. The ideological practice of nationality (IPN) is thus a byproduct of bureaucratic western "rationality" and the expansion and differentiation of modern public institutions. Without the latter the former would not have emerged as an articulated and yet flexible semantic network associated with notions of nationality and identity. In other words, the specialization of state bureaucracies devoted to build identity in a "rational" manner, created conceptual networks that overtime elaborated and regulated the shifting meanings of notions like "nation", "national identity", and "nationality". These bureaucracies established elastic parameters within which people could defined and conceptualized their nations and their national identity even if they did not adopt identical conceptualizations of the nation.

These kinds of concepts and definitions cannot semantically endure over long periods of time without being parts of a larger ideological system that unites them all. Rational ruling required a sense of unity that evolved into nationalism, thus an *ideological practice of nationality* sponsored and maintained by the state that materialized into social behavior. Althusser and Balibar claim that "ideological practices" are not just a theoretical and intellectual exercise. Ideologies create social roles and rituals that become essential for the functioning of society as a whole and, specially, for the maintenance of structures of power. I find these notions useful for the analysis of the formation of national identity and the rise of

<sup>23</sup> Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar (1968) *Reading Capital*, London: Verso.

individual consciousness about the existence of larger and encompassing “nations”.

Definitions both of the nation and national identity can stand as isolated and small pieces of national consciousness that do not necessarily produce self-consciousness about the existence of a larger whole (the nation). Yet starting in the XV century and especially in the XVIII with the adoption of more modern rational bureaucratic practices the ideological practice of nationality expanded beyond the confines of individual consciousness into what was called national states. In the case of Althusser and Balibar’s argument, ideological systems are needed as part of a bourgeois-sponsored institutional system that promotes oppression and manipulation in order to consolidate bourgeois domination<sup>24</sup>. Althusser claimed that ideology structures social practices and therefore exists “in a material form”; ideology is therefore ingrained in the institutions that shape the “social apparatuses”. In my view, the kind of ideological practices that interest me here emerge from long processes of negotiation between the state and civil society that go back to the origins of modernity. Althusser argued, as I do, that the state is the generator of diverse ideological practices that organize social spheres, social dynamics, and the articulation of demands about the organization of society as a whole. His definition of the state, however, remained too simplistic and his focus was not on concrete bureaucratic structures.

### 3. THE HISTORY OF IPN: NATIONS AND THE MODERN WESTERN STATE

I am arguing that since the nineteenth century, and in some regions and countries as far back as the eighteenth, the major *conceptualizer* of nations has been the modern state. The Western state’s way to conceptualizing nations, however, differed from other regions (Asia, the Middle East, and most of Africa). Conceptualizing nations in the way I define the process here means that the state sets the

<sup>24</sup> The “ideological practice” and the “political practice” are, in Althusser’s, a part of the “ideological apparatuses” of the state. These practices are structured by a “bourgeois totality” that exerts power through state institutions.

needed semantic parameters and conceptual networks of meanings for national consciousness to emerge. Defining nationality through concepts such as “nation” or “national identity” would not be possible, however, without maintaining some basic semantics consistent overtime. If this precondition is not met, these notions will soon tend to vanish and group self-consciousness connected to nationality will not emerge. The state, more than any other modern institution, is in a privilege position to effectively maintain semantics and meanings.

The state needs to sponsor unity through commonly held beliefs about origins, ethnicity, founding fathers or mothers, glorious wars, and so fourth. Because these myths are needed to provide legitimacy to rulers, in time the state becomes dependent upon maintaining identity to properly function; close connections between state bureaucracies and civil society were needed. This was particularly true of Western states ruling over large heterogeneous populations. Historically, in Europe and the whole of the Americas (as well as parts of Asia and Africa that were ex-European colonies) this process transformed the pre-modern state into a modern one. Collective national consciousness about the nation and nationality in multicultural, multiethnic nations (the majority of nations today) could not have been possible without the modernization of public bureaucracies and their key role as *accumulators of meaning*.

Pre-modern nations, if they can be labeled that way, were indeed very different. They remained as groups that shared a sense of sameness due to religious, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural bonds. Some authors regard them as the real “true” nations, that is, they define nations as smaller, more homogeneous groups united by ethnicity<sup>25</sup>. Rather, modern nations are larger, multicultural, multiethnic communities.

<sup>25</sup> On ethnic nations as the only possible incarnations of the concept of “nation”, see Connor, Walker (1987) “Ethnonationalism” in Myron Weiner and Samuel Huntington (ed.) *Understanding Political Development*, Harper Collins, pp. 196-221; see also his 1994 *Ethnonationalism*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

In the West (Western Europe and the Americas) modernity meant that ethnic, racial, and religious differences continued to exist but they neither vetoed nor obstructed the formation of larger “nations”. That is, dissident groups could not or did not wish to thwart the construction of bigger encompassing national identities. States succeeded at constructing larger unifying nations. Contrastingly, most states in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East took a different route when making theirs. Modernity in these regions remained linked to, and dependent upon, ideas about nationality very closely connected to what literature has called pre-modern nations. This does not mean that these regions did not modernize in the broadest sense of the word or that they necessarily remained less developed than their counterparts in the West, like those of Latin America or Australia which, at times, reached even lesser levels of development. Rather, it means that they took a different path to modernity where the notion of national identity remained associated to the characteristics and behavior of smaller competing groups tied by ethnicity, language, and/or religion.

In close connection to the consolidation of capitalism the Western modern state developed a “rational” *modus operandi* (in the sense coined by Max Weber), which, among other things, installed collective memories of nationality that went beyond ethnicity and religion. This strategy was tied to the modernization of bureaucratic structures regardless of levels of development and thus institutional diversification took similar forms in different parts of the West. This translated into comparable processes of national identity construction. As bureaucracies modernized, Western states soon started to elaborate and accept definitions of “national community” and “national identity” that while not necessarily identical were akin to one another when compared with Asia or the Middle East. As the nineteenth, and especially the twentieth century state expanded and diversified, its bureaucracies penetrated the regions and were forced to deal with powerful groups entrenched in civil society. States had to accept more democratic systems of decision-making and a long process of semantic negotiation about nationality took place. The Ideological Practice of Nationality in these Western states

started to share basic definitions of the nation and the rights of those nations defined as conglomerates of individuals. At the end, the concepts of nation and nationality acquired similar semantics and an ideological system with enough internal semantic coherence emerged.

Groups in civil society of course differed as to how to describe and conceptualize nations. The state tried to define the nation in way that would appeal to these different sectors of the polity. In Europe, the process became longer and included protracted periods of interstate conflict; in the Americas, less so, but both sides of the Atlantic shared a similar set of conceptual notions associated to nationality. Professional bureaucratic agencies devoted to deal with nationality emerged. Stronger Asian states did the same. Yet the “rationalization” that characterized Western institutions was different and states were forced to create more encompassing notions of nationality that included a majority of sectors in the population. The aim was to build large nations encompassing most people under the state’s jurisdiction. Those groups who in the nineteenth century were left behind or not included into the nation (indigenous groups, African Americans or Africans, as well as other immigrants who provided cheap labor) were considered “minorities”. The inclusion of diversity was used as a tool to avoid conflict. The very nature of Western capitalism made this inevitable and possible. Surely the struggle and the collective action of those who were not included into the nation contributed to create policies of inclusion as well. Indeed, the evolution of capitalism alone did not guarantee it. Yet what was particularly different about the West was that nation building became a struggle for groups to be included into a larger and encompassing nation, rather than a struggle in order to being recognized as smaller nations within a larger one. Attempts were made. In a handful of countries, deals were made as well in which identities were recognized as nations on their own (Spain, England). An overwhelming majority of states, however, were for the most time able to involve different ethnicities and cultures within one nation. Up until the late twentieth century this was more the rule than the exception, the discrimination and exclusion of indigenous or racially

excluded groups notwithstanding. It has been only recent that in Latin America a different model of one state/many nations could be emerging.

Thus a similar ideological network of meaning grew and developed among Western states. It supported the notion that state and nation ought to be closely connected and that the nation was one and indivisible; the nation's center of gravity remained the individual under the protection of the state. State bureaucracies worked from these premises and were able to create meanings of nationality that appeal to most. They also instituted social rituals to maintain these notions alive. Nation building centered upon the practice of recruiting individuals into a unifying nation rather than binding people together under the same ethnicity or religious beliefs into different nations. Historically, in non-Western states divide and conquer was an accepted strategy of nation building. By contrast, in the West unite and conquer became the most common formula. While "the nation" could be defined in different ways by different peoples living under the jurisdiction of the state, different bureaucracies made sure to promote common semantic meanings palatable to all groups, making it possible for individuals to feel connected to a larger whole. By late twentieth century, the Western model (the creation of IPNs in which disparate meanings could nonetheless operate as unifying conceptualizations of identity) became world standard. Today, a majority of states in the world have developed similar ideologies or nationality and it seems that the Western model has won the day. Many non-western states, however, still remain only partially successful at imposing encompassing notions of national identity. All these points beg for some clarification and this takes us to a discussion of the origins and development of IPN.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT AND ORIGINS OF IPN

What are the origins of IPN? Opening in the 1800s and in some cases (France, Spain, England) state bureaucracies institutionalized functions and protocols negotiated both the meaning of national identity and definitions of

the nation<sup>26</sup>. In the late 1800s the West had already made some important inroads in this direction. By that time, it had developed Republican institutions or consultative monarchies in which Kings, Queens or Emperors ruled together with Parliaments or other representative bodies. Bureaucracies became more autonomous and civil services larger and more ubiquitous. This allowed state institutions a more effective penetration of the regions and more direct contact with the population. In part as a result collective national consciousness about the nation-state became stronger. War, of course, helped the process. Yet we need to remember that colonial and post-colonial wars in the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire or post colonial Africa for the most part ended up consolidating fragmented nations that soon divided further. In the West, the growth of "rational" bureaucracies and their interaction with individuals and groups contributed, more than anything else, to mindfulness about the existence of a larger community embracing individuals who shared something in common.

I am not arguing that the modern Western state exercised full control upon the imaginary and conceptualizing of nations. The state cannot possibly engulf and control the totality of symbols, cultural contents, and myths associated with national identity. As indicated above, what distinguished Western states was precisely the constant bargaining over the meaning of nationality that took place between its agencies and a variety of non-state actors. This negotiating process regarding meanings generated the foundations for the rise of the particular kind of IPN that prevails today. In this specific sense, since the nineteenth *the globalization of nationality* following a Western IPN model has continued unabashed to this day

By the end of WWI major problems connected to the negotiations of meaning had been re-

<sup>26</sup> In France, the process started with Louis the XIV. In Spain, it goes even further back, the state issuing protocols and strengthening its presence in the regions since the sixteenth century. The two countries however differed in terms of the pace of modernization and the ultimate results of state centralization.

solved. By the 1940s state bureaucracies and elites succeeded at framing the discussion about nationality in Western societies. Communities' efforts to assert their individuality, severe from the state, claim their particular rights to nationhood or create their own set of institutions, acquired meaning precisely because they represented struggles taking place within a larger semantic and institutional whole structured by the state and its institutions in the first place. States in Asia --and parts of the Middle East-- obviously created consciousness about the nation, too. Yet non-Western states' approach to the sponsoring of collective national consciousness took a different route. The relations that these states developed with civil society, the way Asian, Middle Eastern and African states conceptualized nationality, and the resulting types of nationalism differed from Western Europe and the Americas.

## 5. IDEOLOGY AND NATIONALITY

IPN is an "ideology" because it is a system of abstract concepts that operates as part of the same family of meaning, a comprehensive vision that can contain inner contradictions but that can successfully create social consciousness about identity. Ideologies map the social and political world and organize it according to our own preferences. They organize the way one reads facts. Marx and Engels long argued that ideologies were deceiving structures of thought. Their famous dictum, that in all ideology "men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura", indicated the deceptive nature of capitalism and the manipulative nature of bourgeois society. The role of ideology was to hide contradictions and make them appear as normal and necessary.

They therefore associated ideology with class manipulation. It was really Georg Lukacs' work on class-consciousness that added needed sophistication to the analysis of the connections between ideology and class interests. He also enriched the definition of ideology as a product of class struggle by going into the specifics of reification<sup>27</sup>. What is important to

<sup>27</sup> Lukacs, Georg (1968) *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. The MIT

retain from the Marxist treatment of ideology for our particular purpose here is that ideas can order the social world and legitimate or delegitimize social practices. Ideologies may not reflect social reality but they can create a reality of their own that affects behavior. I use the term *ideology* here in that sense; ideologies are interpretative maps of reality that can unite disparate concepts into a coherent whole.

Thus, this can explain why in order to feel integrated into the same national multicultural-multiethnic community individuals do not necessarily have to agree about what defines their nation and determines their identity. They can, rather, just relate to a few concepts of the mosaic of possibilities contained in IPN. They can do this separately or in clusters (my nation is my land, my flag, my soccer team, my political party, my culture, my country, my cuisine, and so fourth), and still feel that they are a part of a consensual larger whole. This flexibility is ingrained into the structure of IPN. As a result, individuals can relate to dissimilar notions of the nation as if it they were unifying concepts. As Karl Manheim pointed out, ideologies are not just false consciousness, but structures of thinking that cannot be reduced to the views of concrete individuals; they generate, by definition, collective views<sup>28</sup>.

IPN is a "practice" because it generates its social rituals and repeats. It integrates disparate collections of concepts and nuances into practices, which despite their variances, connect to a unifying notion of nationality. Thus, IPN is a semantic framework within which the nation and nationality are conceived and practiced and within which different semantics can make similar sense to different individuals and institutions. At the time of this writing the consolidation of IPN as a model of nation building at a global scale explains why most states worldwide, regardless of whether they are more or less democratic, authoritarian, or collectivistic, have developed alike ways of thinking about nationality. In other words,

Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts. See especially his treatment of reification, p.p. 83-120.

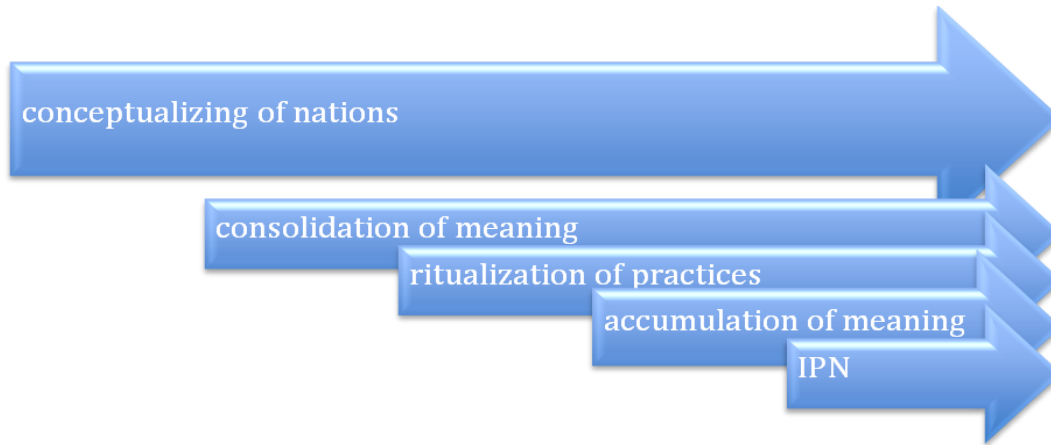
<sup>28</sup> Manheim, Karl (1936) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt. Inc.



they have resorted to similar networks of meaning and they have been able to successfully sustain them overtime. While ideologies emanating from groups in civil society also gained momentum at particular historical

conjunctures, in the long run they were either absorbed into IPN or eliminated altogether. In other words, groups or individuals lack the capacity of sustaining meanings over long periods of time, while the state does.

**Figure 1: Represents the forging of the ideological practice of nationality**



The state is the originator of the conceptualizing of nations and the sequels of meaning. Thus the emergence of “practices”, that is, concrete ritual engagements and routines of meaning at a larger scale. What I call the “consolidation of meaning” makes it possible to compile a rather stable repertoire of concepts and connotations about the nation and national identity overtime (“accumulation of meaning”). The modern state becomes the major registrar of meanings connected with nationality. It creates the circumstances under which this repertoire of connotations remains stable and resilient (IPN).

The disparate concepts that conform this lexicon share a belief in the superiority of what is “ours” vis-à-vis what belongs or characterizes “others”<sup>29</sup>. IPN makes it possible for individuals to think of these connotations and definitions as something that belongs to them, as part of themselves. The large number of concepts that the scholarly community has coined in an effort to study the nation and national identity offers a sample of the richness and confusion that

may surrounds nationality whenever one attempts to study it. “Nation”, “nationalism”, “national identity”, “the nation-state”, “the national-state”, “patriotism”, “country” and psychological dimensions of national identity such as the “national character”, “the national sentiment” or “national idiosyncrasy” are part of the scholarly repertoire. More often than not the semantic boundaries that separate them are ill delineated and debates about their meanings have ranged for more than a century. To this day social psychologists or students of religion continue to confuse terms like “nation” with “country”, “party” or “nationalism”<sup>30</sup>. Yet as part of IPN they generate consensual practices overtime.

Definitional obscurity has not gone unnoticed. In comparative literature Eric Hobsbawm and Liah Greenfeld, among others, have wrestled with these complexities and contributed to conceptual clarification<sup>31</sup>. Yet again while in

<sup>29</sup> Among other concepts or connotations: “Territory”, “national heroes”, “golden pasts”, “privileged natural resources”, “freedom nation”, “our culture”, “our way of life”, “our values”, “our religion”, “common histories” “our traditions” “our country”, and so fourth.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Koeningsberg, Richard (2008) *The Nation: A Study in Ideology and Fantasy*. Charlotte NC: Information Age Publishing.

<sup>31</sup> Hobsbawm, E.J. (1990): *Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Greenfeld, Liah (1992) *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Harvard: University Press. Also see, by the same author,

theory these disparate meanings generate debate and justified scholarly concern, in practice and as part of an ideology they do not undermine the ties that binds individuals who belong to the same nation with one another. This is what ideologies do: they do not focus on semantic contradictions but rather on conceptual mappings that guide action; in this case, that action is *nationalism*.

Lastly, I must point out that my thesis about IPN differs from Hobsbawm and Ranger's famed argument about "invented traditions". I place a strong emphasis on modern state bureaucracies as arbiters of meaning and facilitators of IPN. Hobsbawm and Ranger, rather, highlight plain elite manipulation. In addition, in Hobsbawm and Ranger's the makers of invented traditions include a huge variety of groups, individuals, associations, institutions, parties, movements, and nationalism itself. I have argued likewise. Nonetheless, in my analysis it is the state that provides the framework in which all these traditions finally become definitions of the nation. In other words, in the last instance, the state remains the most important agent capable of setting up the basic structure of nationality within which these traditions, invented or not, operate<sup>32</sup>. It is the state and its bureaucracies that by sponsoring some group's interests and blocking others creates the conditions under which some practices and traditions of nationality tend to fade away, remain in the background, or assume subaltern status, while others do not.

They write: "Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented"<sup>33</sup>. My point is that old ways can be "alive" only because the state perpetuates meanings through IPN; by the same token, the state undermines the traditions that do not survive<sup>34</sup>.

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(2003) *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth*, Harvard: University Press.

<sup>32</sup> Like most other ideological constructs meanings do not completely disappear. Most of them make comebacks. The state, however, contributes to create the conditions under which some conceptualization remain part of the stuff of national history and the public sphere while others do not.

<sup>33</sup> Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Most of the traditions studied in the volume represent successful cases of inventing. In my argument, since the late ninetieth century those "tradi-

## 6. THESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

My thesis about nationality and the nation has several components: the advent of the modern state and the development of its bureaucracies, the conceptualizing of nations, the institutionalization of meaning (that includes the structuring of IPN), and the formation of national identity and nationalism, that is, the rise of self-consciousness about belonging to a nation. These components are not to be thought purely in terms of a chronological and straightforward causal sequence. The conceptualizing of nations and the rise of collective consciousness about national identity have an effect upon the institutions of the state, too. Nonetheless, I propose a clear line a causality in which the rise of the modern state and the development of its bureaucracies trigger a complex process that leads to our collective and individual consciousness about belonging to a nation.

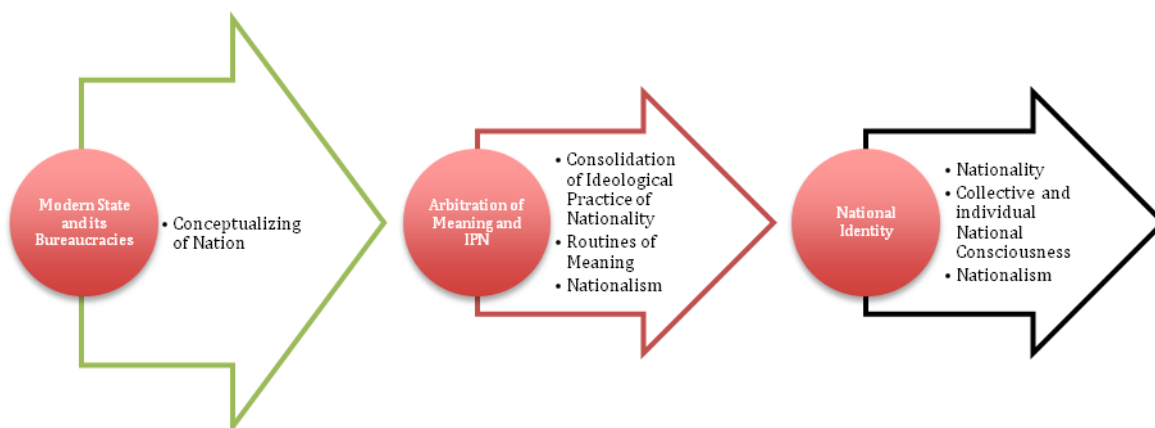
Without collectively defining and conceptualizing the nation as well as institutionalizing meanings associated with it, national identity and nationalism could not have emerged as a social and political reality. In Figure 2, nationalism is dependent upon the conceptualizing of nations, and it emerges together with the *consolidation of meaning*. Does this mean that before the rise of the modern state groups were not nationalistic? In a way, yes, they were. At least we know that many people believed in defending their territory, that they felt loyalty to king and country, and that they fiercely thought that their Church and religion should be safeguarded from others. Elites, of course, benefited the most from these loyalties and did their best to encourage them<sup>35</sup>.

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tions" are conceptualizations of the nation that conform a whole. None of them totally die.

<sup>35</sup> To different degrees, many scholars have focused on elite manipulation as part of nation building. See for instance Bell, David (2003) *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800*, Cambridge: University Press; Hill, Christopher L. (2008) *National History and the World of Nations: Capital, State and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States*. Durham and London: Duke University Press; Hobsbawm, E.J. (1990): *Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and his (1983) "Inventing Tradition" in Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University

**Figure 2: The Thesis: Constructing Nationality**



Yet this proto-nationalism was very different from the nationalism that emerged as a result of IPN. The process pictured in Figure 2 is neither a spontaneous historical phenomenon nor the solely result of elite manipulation. Rather, institutional differentiation and the growth of state bureaucracies in tandem with pressures from civil society added key independent variables. When it came to conceptualizing the nation and defining national identity economic elites and others slowly became reliant upon the decisions made by bureaucrats, grass root organizations, and pressure groups. National collective consciousness, therefore, stems from a long historical development in which the modern state took a leading role. Figure 2 suggests the importance of public institutions as *arbiter of meaning* in regards to nationality. Most work on the nation state has overlooked this crucial development. A simple reason, as indicated, is that this literature has been more concerned with the state than with the nation or with the manipulative role of elites in regards to patriotic feelings and nationalism<sup>36</sup>.

It has been shown that governments fervently urge nationalism, allegiance to the nation, and national unity by fomenting emotional attachment to nationalistic symbols like flags, constitutions, historical sites, founding fathers, and the like<sup>37</sup>. As Figure 2 shows, I am interested in something different, i.e., how diverse state bureaucracies with different degrees of autonomy define the nation, arbiter meanings, and

Press, p.p. 1-14; Jusdanis Gregory (2001) *The Necessary Nation*, Princeton: University Press, and Mallon, Florencia E. (1995): *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>36</sup> See, among many others, Centeno, Miguel Angel, (2002). *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation State in Latin America*. The Pennsylvania University Press; Lopez-Alves, Fernando, (2000). *State Formation and*

*Democracy in Latin America, 1810-1930*, Duke: University Press; Skocpol, Theda (1979) *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge, MA; New York: Cambridge University Press, and Tilly, Charles, (1992) *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell and his (1993) *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, and Turchin Peter, (2007) *War and Peace and War: The Rise and Fall of Empires*, Plume Books: Penguin

<sup>37</sup> Alvarez Junco, José, (2013). "Spanish National Identity in the Age of Nationalisms", in Centeno, M. and A. Ferraro, Eds. (2013) *Republics of the Possible*, Cambridge: University Press; Anderson, Benedict R. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, and his (2005) *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and Anti-Colonial Imagination*. London. Verso; Anna, Timothy, (1998) *Forging Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, and Mosse, George (1975) *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*. New York: Howard Ferting.

structure an IPN, which, in turn, preserves and supports national identity.

In Figure 2 one can see that the state commands IPN but at the same time interest groups, intellectuals, indigenous communities, immigrants, grass roots movements, business lobbies, political parties, and so fourth are included in the negotiation over meaning. Not surprisingly, civil society actors defined the nation in accordance to their own interests and exercised a divisive influence. Indeed, the nation was often defined in opposition to the state. At least in Western Europe and the Americas, however, the state became an arbiter of subtexts. This turned out to be a much more effective way of creating national identity than forcing narrower agendas of identity upon heterogeneous populations. Strong, authoritarian, and non-democratic states tended to eradicate challenging versions of the nation and promote the worshiping of strong state nationalism. Republican states that emerged in the West tended to seek unity by favoring more encompassing and less rigid versions of the nation.

In short, I have submitted that the modernization of the Western state and its rational bureaucratic differentiation placed the state in a position from which it became an arbiter of meaning. This materialized into IPN, which greatly contributed to accomplish the ultimate goal of the state: national unity and nationalism. IPN, however, developed a dynamics of its own and some degree of autonomy from the state. It also created practices and rituals that became ingrained in the social fabric, rising consciousness about the existence of a particular community called "nation" to which most individuals could relate. If one were to strip away the modern state's capacity to define, coordinate, ritualize, and maintain practices associated with nationality as well as its capacity to manage this disparate network of meaning as a coherent whole, we would not be able to recognize a modern state when we see one.

We can think of the modern state as a bureaucratic apparatus that, in order to survive as a political unity ruling over heterogeneous populations, needed to create IPN. A major point that I have made is that Western states succeeded at this task in a different way than other states did. Arbitration, incorporation, and sub-

altern meanings of the nation characterized the West. Contrastingly, in Asia and other regions forced assimilation of identities into strong state nationalism or the coexistence of different nations within a larger identity promoted by the state characterized nationality.

I have also indicated that a most important aspect of the process that created nationality was the establishment of routines of meaning. Let me go further and suggest that states that have not been able to effectively control and implement a stable IPN have become either failed states or states in increasing peril. In other words, states that failed at creating an effective IPN weakened, tended to loose legitimacy, and could not perform effectively. IPN is a needed function of the state because it creates the familiar and resilient array of meanings and connotations that connect people's day-to-day existence to a larger community called "nation" and, thus, the state.