DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF NATIONALISM:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ETHNIC
CONNECTIONS, LOYALTIES AND GROUP BENEFITS

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The post communist conflicts among ethnic and national groups in the former Soviet Union came as a surprise to many social scientists(1)

What I want to do in this paper is to lay out a conceptual framework that, if used as a lens for viewing the post communist period, would have made the emergence of conflict less surprising. Further, this conceptual framework should help more generally to account for the rise and fall of nationalist conflicts in various places of the world.

A person defined as a member of a national group can experience the benefits of those groups’ gaining rights without participating in the conflict which will determine the rights allocation between the national groups. In addition to this proposition, “nationality” is only one basis of individuals self – identification (as Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Serbs, Czechs, Croats).

The main body of individuals in a national group constitutes a resource for those persons whose interests lie in success of national group’s right claims. The success will ordinarily, in the absence of an authoritative and enforced allocation of rights, depend on the successful use of force. (2)

The successful use of force will in turn strengthen the self-identification of the members of the national group. For example; Jews in Palestine, after the British left in 1947 and after their success in the Jewish – Arab war, gained a stronger identity as Jews, once the territory was conquered and the state of Israel was formed.

One can easily see how such a mutually reinforcing pair of processes can lead to the strengthening of group identity, whether it be a group defined along national, religious, gender, age or country lines.

But, matters are, however more complex. People who have a potentially common identity may come to have that identity reinforced by being subject to

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common treatment at the hand of another actor.

This is true of a cohort of medical school students who, having had various individual self-identifications, going a sense of common identity when required to jump over the same academic hurdles at the same time, just as it is of Jews in Germany, in the 1930s who, having thought of themselves as Germans, come to gain self – identification as Jews when treated according to this single basis of identity.

But, this is not always the outcome: Treatment as a member of a particular group can be sufficiently harsh that when combined with the offer of escaping the identity, it can lead to extinguishing the group identity. An example is the case of Jews and Muslims who converted to Christianity in fifteenth -century Spain, when subject to the inquisition plus the possibility of converting.

The general phenomenon seems to be explicable in rational terms, as follows: When persons are treated as a group it may be rational to respond collectively because of the spillover benefits of the actions of each of others. But if offered an opportunity to defect, this may be the rational course of action. The result at the level of the system is that two equilibrium are possible, one is that a dissolution of the national group and the other a strengthening of it.

It is important not to forget that under certain circumstances, national groups vanish as national groups as their members assimilate into surrounding groups, or as their members take on a broader national identity. The multitude of ethnic groups who settled the United States have lost their members to a larger “American” identity.

As Eugen Weber points out in his famous book; French was a foreign language to about half the Frenchmen who came of age in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (3)

So, the question remains, however: Under what conditions will new state-generated identities-like Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia, or the Soviet Union, or Canada, or Belgium-overwhelm the narrower and primordially based national identities, such as Czech, Slovak, Serb, Croat, Bosnian, Armenian, Canadian, Walloon, Flemish.

One of these is the degree to which an industrial economy has undercut the strength of the primordial institutions. Another is the number of elements on which the narrower national groups differ from one another (ethnicity, language, religion, economic status) third, is the geographic concentration of the narrower national groups.

But, we can strongly underline the argument which has been presented above is that persons act, individually or collectively, to maximize their returns given the constraints imposed by the allocation of rights. When rights are no longer well-defined and enforced, national identity serves a basis for Collective
action.

How far can ethnic and nationalist identification in politics be understood to result from essentially self-interested behavior? At first thought, plausibly not very far. Nationalism and ethnic loyalty are commonly viewed as inherently irrational or extra rational in the sense that they supposedly violate or transcend considerations of self-interest.

The rational choice account of ethnic, nationalist or other group loyalty will be compelling if it often happens that self-interest and group identification are congruent and if actions that are costly to the individual but beneficial to the group or nation are less likely the higher the individual costs.

How can we plausibly associate nationalist, ethnic, or other strong group identification with self-interest? Surely, it seems, such commitment is beyond the self, it is a commitment to a community of some kind.

Of course, a nationalist or ethnic commitment might be purely ideal or normative in that it might involve only ideal-regarding and other-regarding motivations. But, it might also be strongly correlated with individual interests. Suppose the commitment is to a nation or ethnic group in conflict with others and with a prospect of success in that conflict. Then it is likely that the nationals or the ethnic group members will jointly benefit from that success.

What is the source of conflict? Suppose two groups have formed different ethnic identifications in a society. Each of their coordination's may be innocuous and fully beneficial to beneficial to their group’s members. But coordination of each group provides the basis on which to build many things, including political action against the other group. To a political conflict over allocations, a coordinated group, brings advantages of reduced transaction costs and, often, strong identification and agreement. If two groups seek to achieve collective resolutions of various issues, they may come directly into conflict with each other. (4)

On the other hand, on Gary Becker’s account of it economics, ethnic discrimination in employment discrimination is not efficient and is costly to firms to practice its (5) Ethnic conflict in parts of the former Soviet Union is in areas from which the market is nearly absent. In some of these there may be active opposition to the market for ethnic reasons.

Beside this, when two groups speak different languages, they have in fact each coordinated on a language. If one of the groups going a dominant position in politics or in the economy, it may discriminate against those who speak any language other then its own. This discrimination typically may be. Indeed, it could be driven chiefly by concern with productivity, which is likely to be greater if members of the firm car coordinate more easily with each other and if they can communicate better with the principal clientele of the firm.
Letting the two languages be used without any government regulation in favor either may lead to the disadvantage of the speakers of the minority language. Their job opportunities may two heavily on whether they master the majority language.

To impose rules against racial discrimination can enhance economic productivity. This may not typically be true for rules against language discrimination. To impose such rules might benefit the current generation or two of the minority language speakers. But it is likely to reduce economic efficiency. Language policy is inherently conflicting because different policies differentially affect relevant parties. The current two or three generations of the speakers of the minority language will be losers if their language loses its utility. The present generations of speakers of the majority language will be losers if the minority language is kept viable.

More dramatic differences, such as race or ethnicity, language, or religion, might allow for easy mobilization. Their conflict is one over which there may be perfect agreement: both groups want the same thing, namely, the available resources.

Shortly after Tito’s death, Milovan Djilas said that the Yugoslav system could only be run by Tito:

“Now that Tito is gone and our economic situation becomes critical, there will be a natural tendency for greater centralization of power. But this centralization will not succeed because it will run up against ethnic-political power bases in the republics. This is not classical nationalism but a more dangerous bureaucratic nationalism built on economic self-interest. This is how the Yugoslav system will begin to collapse” (6)

Norms of difference and exclusion can establish in and out groups and thereby ground a conflict of interest between the groups. Having a conflict of interest is not, however, sufficient for producing violence. Ethnic conflicts commonly lead to mere competition, as they may have done to a large extent in the period of economic progress in Tito’s Yugoslavia, when Slovenians and Macedonians did relatively poorly, but no one turned to massive violence to change the result.

Why violence? Many reasons are proposed in varied literatures on ethnic conflict. Many argue with a pro-Hobbesian view that anarchy leaves no institutional banner to conflict so that we all tend to most violent among us.

The Hobbesian view seems to fit ethnic conflicts that have turned violent in Lebanon, Azerbaijan and Armenia, Rwanda and Burundi, Iraq and many other societies, as it fits Yugoslavia.

In a pure conflict, any change that makes one party to a conflict better off must make the other party worse off. It is possible for both to become worse off
in a pure conflict, but not possible for both to become better off or for one to become better off without harm to the other.

Moreover, it is common in the literature on nationalism to assert that the underlying issues are not economic and that the events are not matters of national choice. The real motivators are metaphors and likely false beliefs that define the world. Many strong nationalists suffer the solipsistic and egotistical belief it has a natural tendency to include the further belief that other peoples are inferior, even bad.

Walker Connor seems to hold that it is nationalist beliefs which cause the behaviors associated with nationalist movements and that various economic explanations can be shown not to be "essential prerequisites for ethno-national conflict (7)

Economics issues merely construct the range of possibility of conflict. Violence is there a separate matter that very likely depends is tipping phenomena.

Connor asks, "What is a nation?" He answers that it is "the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties, this group is sometimes chosen and exceptional. This belief can coexist with reasoned national understandings of its irrationality.

A Ukrainian nationalist spirit explains his feelings:
"I know that all people are equal. My reason tells me that.
But at the same time I know that my Nation is unique
My heart tells me so. (8)

Living with contradictions may be especially common for rabid nationalists. Greek nationalists think it only natural that the Greek part of Albania should be made autonomous or part of Greece, but also natural that minorities inside Greece should have no recognition.(9)

The order of beliefs and events is important because the content of the falsehoods of nationalism may be determined or manipulated by their fit with political agendas. The political distortion of history, the distortion of reports from the battle zones, distortion of claimed ethnic and linguistic differences, and distortions of leaders intentions can all be used, especially in a nation with centrally controlled television, to instill an intensity of nationalist commitment that didn't cause the events that brought about such intensity but that may then be put to use in other events.

At least, in part the role of nationalism in war is opportunistic. It can be the great coordination not for collective action by the population so much as for charismatic power for mobilization in of a kind that is especially needed for war. It is simply available as a focus for such coordination and therefore it is used.
So, we can affirm that individuals may find identification with their group beneficial because those who identify strongly may gain access to positions under the control of the group and because the group provides a relatively secure and comfortable environment.

Although there are strong psychological and psycho-social factors which play eminent roles depending person to group identity and giving loyalty to surrounding group dynamics, it is note-worthy claiming there should be talked about economics of ethnic ties.

One particularly effective way to provide a foundation for exchange under many circumstances is to invest in ethnic networks or "ethnic capital". The central feature of ethnic capital is the peculiarity of blood as a basis for network "membership". This gives ethnic networks some advantages as a support for exchange, and partly explains the persistence of ethnicity in modern societies.

The starting point for our analysis consists of two assumptions, which will be maintained, (1) all individuals are rational, in this standard sense of that term in neoclassical economic theory, (2) property rights or contracts are not costlessly enforceable, and sometimes may not even exist.

The second assumption implies that in my exchange there is the possibility that one of the parties will cheat or renge on his or her commitments.

In Markets, this problem was considered by Klein and Leffler (1981) and Shapiro (1983), in the context of markets for high quality goods. They assumed that, prior to purchase, consumers cannot distinguish high quality from low.

Shapiro showed that there are three conditions required for it to be in the firm's interest not to cheat its customers. (a) The prospect of future sales, (b) the firm's past reputation as a seller of high-quality goods and (c) the firm's receipt of a price premium on high-quality goods.

As Klein and Leffler put it, the consumer pays the firm "protection money" in the form of a price premium to ensure contractual fulfillment. In this way, markets can solve the trust or contractual enforcement problem even in the absence of legally enforceable property rights.

Trust relationships are important—indeed, probably much more important in labor markets. The key is to drop the assumption of costlessly enforceable property rights. One way in which enforceability problems can arise is that employees my try to shirk if monitoring their effort level is not costless to the employer.

Bulow and Summers (1986) developed a model in which the economy can be divided into "good jobs and bad jobs". Good jobs are jobs in which monitoring performance is deficient—hence the firm will offer high wages job security, promotion possibilities and so forth, in order to deter shirking. Bad jobs
are jobs in which monitoring performance is easy. Workers with “good” jobs will be tempted to shirk unless the firm can punish them for doing so.

Consequently, wages in the goods sector will have to be increased above productivity in order to provide a punishment mechanism.

For our purposes, perhaps the most important lessons of these models is that once the assumption of costlessly enforceable property rights is dropped, the existence of economic rents becomes a pervasive feature of industrial economics. Rents exist to cement trust relationships in product and labor markets, within firms and in political processes. They are a pervasive feature of modern industrial society. So, from the points of this context, what this individual really wants is a mutual fund. These funds exist, in the form of ethnic networks.

Ethnic networks are often untied to a society’s economic structure. Thus, unlike other kinds of networks, such as professional occupational, social, religious or other networks, are multi-purpose. To illustrate, an Italian moving to Toronto, Canada (where there is a very large Italian community) could use his Italian connections for finding an apartment a good plunder buying a car, getting a job and so on.

This investment process is easy, and the individual will be guided every step of the way.

Ethnic networks are unique in that “membership” is determined by blood, and it is very difficult for outsiders to enter or for insiders to truly exist.

A black man can marry with a white woman, live in a white suburb work for an all-white firm, but he can still find himself in the “wrong” neighborhood.

And also, on individual whose parents are members of an ethnic group will, by the time he becomes an adult, have accumulated a substantial amount of ethnic capital. Some of it is “in the genes” some will have been accumulated through education and forced socialization with other members of his or her ethnic group. Of course, at some point he individual is free to choose a different ethnic identity but in that case he will have to accumulate all of the costs at his own expense. For example; a frenchman who decides that he really wants to be a Pakistani can of course try to do so, but his parents are probably unlikely to help him and he will be thawing away all of his French connections.

On the other hand, parents invest in the ethnic capital of their children by sending them to ethnic school, inculcating ethnic customs and rituals, language and other communication techniques restricting their socialization while young to other members of ethnic group, etc. Parents expect to be repaid for these sacrifices through the obedience of the children in later life to norms of the ethnic group, which presumably include support and attention to their parents in their old age, but may also encompass other aspects of their children’s
behaviour, that they will marry within the group and raise children who will continue to participate within it, that they participate in ethnic cultural activities, rites and rituals, respect and/or worship ancestral heroes, take credit as members of the group for the accomplishments of their forefathers, assume the debts of previous generations, and so on. Children may repay their parents not only directly with support, but also indirectly by making decisions based on their parents wishes or utility function and by participating in the activities or adhering to the norms of the ethnic group.

These events or occurrences are the paramount indicators of ethnic and nationalistic behaviour or approach.

Recently the “reemergence” of nationalism with the collapse of the Soviet empire has surprised many western scholars, although it should not have.

Such occurrences have happened many times before and for the most part along similar lines. A brief consideration of the reemergence of tribalism in Africa at the time of the cessation of European colonialism, or in central Europe with the end of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy or in the middle east after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire reveals patterns which are fundamentally similar. All appear to be responses to a decline in the productivity of formal state institutional arrangements with a subsequent substitution of production by the less formal institutions of tribe and family.

Consistent with this argument, the opposite phenomena tends to occur in states with a well functioning government. During the mid-nineteenth century, the Hapsburg reign of the Austria-Hungarian monarchy generated a period of relative ethnic tranquility.

Moreover, the lessening importance of ethnic forms of nationalism in much of Western Europe and in the United States during the mid-twentieth century appears to be a result of increased effectiveness of formal state arrangement. However, even within well-functioning democratic states, ethnic politics (often termed regionalism, in Europe) remains an important electoral and cultural force.

A cohesive ethnic group is a service producing club with a more or less fixed membership composed of all individuals within an ethnic group. In this respect, ethnic clubs differ from those most closely examined by the economics literature on clubs which generally focuses on club size and individual mobility between clubs. (See Buchanan 1965, Cornes and Sandler 1986) Membership in such ethnic clubs or nationalities is not entirely voluntary in the sense that belonging to a political party or most private clubs is voluntary. Rather affiliation with an ethnic or tribal nation is a consequence of hereditary links to particular groups of families or clans. Ethnic affiliation is less a birth right then a birth consequence.
In a multinational state, the political effort of every ethnic group to obtain preferential treatment for itself tends to threaten the interest of other groups who will be ineligible for preferential treatment.

Consequently, both the groups who expect to join and lose from programs are inclined to invest in the production of political influence. The former attempt to maximize their gains, the latter to minimize their losses. The ethnic conflict thereby engendered by the peaceful, as in well functioning democracies where tribal groups lobby legislatures for particular favors, or may be violent in countries in which government functions poorly or have been captured by an ethnic group and used to exploit others (10).

As we have mentioned above concerning the down of nationalism and ethnical movements in a state or in a multi-national state, although sometimes it turned to be a separations action is an event which appeared a political phenomena belonging to past-soviet union. Obviously it does not meant anybody cannot see or observe an ethnical or nationalistic movement pre-soviet union, but nobody can observe the extensive and sharp ethnical emergence which demand certain rights and also sometimes a right to be separate group or state during the past one hundred years approximately.

The resurgence of nationalism all over the world in the last few years can be said to arise in every case from a lack of congruence between “state” and “nation” while each of these terms is highly complex and controversial, we all know the main difference between them. The state is a political and administrative unit, cleaning the “monopoly of the legitimate use of force” over all the other inhabitants of a given territory.

The nation on the other hand is an imagined community including the dead and the unborn who are bound together by the ties of kingship language custom and shared myths that separate it from other similar collectivities. (11).

Thus, we can have a nation without a state as in the case of the kurds or states that comprise many nations such as the former USSR and Yugoslavia and a nation divided between several states as in the case of the Italians and Germans before unification in the nineteenth century or the two Germanys and two Koreas of more recent history.

The problems of nationalism that are exercising us most today, however, are all the legacy of the collapse of the great empires of the last few hundred years that of the Hapsburg the Russians (first under the Czarsand then the Communists) and the Ottoman in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East and the European Colonial Empires in Asia and Africa in almost no case is there a congruence between state and nation in any one of the successor states of those former empires one exception is Austria the care of the Hapsburg Empire where we have a mainly German-Speaking Roman Catholic nation.
Nationalism is the ideology that animates a people who feel the sense of cultural identity that we associate with the concept of nation.

The most ambitious and stimulating theory of nationalism we have encountered is that of Ernest Gellner (1983). This theory is cast in terms of an evolutionary view of the historical process, in the nineteenth century manner of Comte, Morgan, and Marx, in which the economic system is first based on hunting and gathering, then agricultural and finally industry.

Specialization and the division of labour take a completely different dynamic form in “industrial” society rather than, each worker learning a traditional craft and, practicing for life in a closed guild or castle, as in agrarian society, all workers must be highly mobile and versatile between specialization on the basis of a high common level of general education integration of the economy through market forces take the place of rent and fax payments in kind, requiring the transmissions and reception of complex “messages” over a wide area in some common medium. This we have the development of uniform literary languages for efficient dissemination to a wide public in print. Everyone’s horizons are broadened by this contact and a common “national” culture develops for the whole society instead of the previous diversity of “local” cultures

If all those changes take place within a culturally homogenous society, where “culture” essentially means language and its usual associations of a shared history, all is well and the society can progress in a peaceful manner: contrary to Marx, class differences based on property and income do not lead to revolution and are eventually ironed out by competition in the market place based on merit and achievement.

Rewards are unequally distributed but all have access and opportunity to compete

Suppose, however, that there are two “cultures” in the society instead of one, furthermore, suppose that one of there, the “Hapsburg” or the “Ottoman” one, enjoys on effective monopoly of public offices and access to higher education, both of which are conducted in a language distinct from that of the subordinate “Czech” or “Serbian” culture. Economic development is at such a level that Czechs and Serbs are active participants in the economy, but are deprived of the opportunities for higher public office and education.

Although those unique examples, nations are not “natural institutions; they are fairly recent “institutional innovations” that have characterized the last two hundred years of human history. Before the eighteenth century, wars and dynastic policies (particularly, marriage policies) often determined the composition and the size of political communities; there was no particular feeling of identity with other members of a political community that covered
after speak different languages and share different social customs. In spite of the sense of antiquity or eternity of many nations, the identification of “political communities” with ethic groups, which is the central idea of nations and nationalism, is very recent.

Why, at a certain point in human history, does the “nation, become the “natural” political community? Are there “economic” interests that explain the emergence of nationalism and its reemergence of it today? How is it possible that utility-maximizing individual, who may free ride on so many simple duties of everyday life.

May be ready to die for these imagined communities? And, how is it possible that the same utility-maximizing individuals who are so peaceful in everyday life can then kill the members of other nations? Can economics explain about which orthodox economics has little or nothing to say?(12)

In order to answer these questions we will start by reconsidering the analysis of the division of labor and try to show that nations play a very important role in allowing that division of labor that is associated.

With market economics even though the mutual relationship existing between nation building and the development of the division of labor may cause inefficient institutional equilibrie, nationalism must be included amory one of the possible causes of the accumulation of wealth.

Adam Smith attributed the “wealth of nations” to the division of labor that was, in turn, determined by the extent of the market economy. Smith’s analysis relied on the fact that division of labor would favour learning by doing: The workers could improve their job specific skills if they specialized in one single activity. Nations should eliminate all the obstacles to trade if they wanted to enjoy the full advantages of the division of labor.

In spite of all these benefits, national or individual specialization has the disadvantage that the individuals or nations put all their eggs in one basket. If, as, Smith maintains, the division of labor maximizes the development of job-specific skills, it also implies that one runs the risk of losing much human capital if a particular or occupations become redundant.

On this point maybe we can ask a particular and significant question; does nationalism maximize the wealth of the nation or the rents of nationalists?

Nationalistic investments may have also the result of manipulating the preferences of the working class so that it may even gain some psychological benefits are only obtained at the cost of losing the fruits of unbiased investment projects yielding a higher rate of return.

In these cases, nationalists have an effect that is opposite to that considered by Gellner. (Nations and nationalism, NY: Cornell University press, 1983) Instead of creating cultural homogeneity, solidarity, and market mobility,
they invent “old” traditions that bring about intolerance and discord. In this way, they can break a nation into smaller nations where they can hold the best jobs. They tend to limit, instead of enhance, and market mobility and the positive effects of the division of labor. They do not create or enlarge markets but break them up in order to going some rents that would be wiped out by completion in larger national markets. (13)

Alternatively, recent dependency theorists for instance, Palma (“A formal theory of underdevelopment or a methodology for the Analysis of concrete situations of underdevelopment” world development 6:880-94, 1978) have maintained that the system of free trade does not completely inhibit development. However, according to them this development is functional to the needs of the countries of the “Imperialist centre” It doesn’t satisfy the needs of the nations of the periphery.

According to this approach, economic dependency causes political dependency in the sense originally suggested by Hirshman. (National Power and the structure of foreign trade. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1945)

Even if international trade brings about gains from exchange, the importance of these gains relative to the size of the national economies is asymmetrical and can cause political dependency. In turn, political dependency can cause economic dependency in a self-sustaining vicious circle.

Sometimes nationalists claim that breaking political and economic dependency is strictly related to the end of relation of “cultural dependences” from the “imperialist powers. They mean by cultural dependency that the culture they consume is produced somewhere else and is not tailored to needs of their nations.

However, if the development of local culture has the effect of increasing cultural homogeneity and ethnic solidarity, then it can have positive effects on market mobility and deliver some “Smithian advantages” of the division of labor.

The socialization of the nation and the nationalization of economic policy, which started in the last decades of the last century, show how the state can improve the institutions of national solidarity and the national culture that are the conditions for an efficient division of labor within the nation.

The year 1870 marks the end of relatively “easy” nation building; before that date, new nations could easily be defined either because nation building was attempted where some administrative units pre-existed the formation of the nation or because it was attempted where a high degree of cultural homogeneity existed over a compact territory before political unity.

Before 1870, smaller ethnic groups, dispersed and mixed with other ethnic
groups in the some territory, tried to acquire a status of nations. Nationalism often becomes associated with separatism and intolerance. The inflation of nationalism often tends to break instead of create markets. Rent-seeking explanations become more convincing than wealth-creating explanations of nationalist activities.

Since 1989, nationalism has reemerged with all the terrible ambiguities that have characterized its history. However, "internationalism" and "cosmopolitanism" also are not free from ambiguities. The formation of larger communities can mean that many of the functions gradually acquired through the socialization of nations and the nationalization of economic policy are transferred to wider organizations. These organizations can better perform these functions in a world made smaller by multinational firms, communication, media transports, and pollution and where national wars can mean the end of humankind.

However, the decline of the national state may involve the setting a side of those institutions of national solidarity that gradually emerged after 1870 and that have grown considerably since the Second World War. Those who advocate the decline of the powers of the national state have sometimes a vested interest in the dismantling of the institutions of national solidarity. Other tries to rebuild the some institutions in wider communities.

And finally we will try to answer the question concerning what nationalists do maximize?

Breton (ibid) points out that nationality is a public good. This should imply that each individual should shirk and contribute very little to the production of nationality.

In this respect, it should not be relevant whether the returns of the public good are only the rents gained by the group making the investment in nationality or also the returns generated by the development of the entire nation. If individuals cannot find a solution to the usual free-rider problem they will undersupply investments in nationality.

The free-rider problem should give some hope to those who dislike nationalism. Unfortunately, experience does not seem to support this speculation. Everyday we learn from the media that many people are ready, and often happy, to sacrifice their wealth and their lives for their nations. These sacrifices are not easy to explain for an economic approach where people seek to maximize their wealth.

So, we will try to explain the readiness of people to engage in nationalistic activities by addressing ourselves to the following facts.

First, many people participating in nationalistic activities claim that living together with people of other nationalities is challenging or preventing them
from expressing their way of life and destroying their identity.

Second, sometimes national groups seem to accept “cohabitation” with other national groups only if they have the “power” to rule the country. Third, people are sometimes ready to sacrifice their wealth and life for these struggles for national identity and power.

So, in the light of those expressions, we can infer that a god or a nation that is chosen to maximize our utility is meaningless and is useless to overcome the fragility and the contingency of our lives. This need can only be satisfied if we believe that the god or the nation has chosen us in order to realize its will. Only in this way can individuals believe that they are now part of something bigger that survives their bodies.

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6) Robert D. Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History (New York: St. Martin’s, 1993) p. 75
8) Connor (Ethnonalist who believes his people are chosen by God
11) On the concept of a nation as an imagined community see the influential work of Benedict Anderson (1983)
12) List (1909, 121) pointed out how of the principle of the division of labor also required a confederation or union of various energies, intelligences and powers on behalf of common production. According to list, “Adam Smith well perceives this himself when he states, “the necessaries of life of the lowest members of society
are a product of joint labor and of co-operation of a number of individuals”

13) Breton shows that (ibid) the nationalistic policies carried out by the Quebecois government were not income-creating but income-redistributing in favor of the French Quebecois middle class.