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**Overview on Theories of Nationalism:
Contemporary Shifts and Challenges**[*]

Pro&Contra

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Introduction

The growing interest in studying the birth and (post-)modern evolution of nation and nationalism has been one of the key orientations of social scientists over the last three decades. During this period, scholars have made serious attempts to create a general (or less general) framework of these terms (nation and nationalism) in an effort to understand the role (and the increasing strength) of nationalism today. The study of nationalism has a distinguished pedigree in the social sciences, and new arguments emerging over the last fifteen years have given rise to debate and as well as providing a better understanding of the emergence of nationalist movements. I argue here that the prevailing post-modernist or instrumentalist stance on nationalism demands that we subject contemporary nationalist movements to a more meaningful and heterogeneous analysis as opposed to an essentialist problematization. The aim of this study is to provide an overview of some subsequent problematics of current nationalist movements and/or manifestations.

The first part of this paper is primarily concerned with the dominant approaches to nationalism and the theories of nation which will provide us with some reference points from which to explain the characteristics of current forms of nationalism. Then, *terminological, socio-political, ethnic, economic, and identity* studies will be presented principally within the (post-)modernist argument in an attempt to reveal certain aspects of contemporary debates on nationalism. These examples are utilized to demonstrate the complexity of current nationalist shifts, which require a rethinking of both nationalism and the study of nationalism in its classical form.

A brief historical overview on the notion of nation

Difficulties of how to adequately define the term *nation* come from its semantically (over) saturated nature. In fact, so contested is the notion that the only consensus in the scientific literature on the definition of *nation* is that it cannot be defined. Additionally, the everyday use of this term in the media makes it difficult to adopt an objective scientific approach. However, it is necessary to at least try and formulate a plausible working definition in order to position myself and enumerate the relevant ideas on interpreting the historic use of *nation*.

In general, the literature has applied a terminology of binary codes. The nation's terminological concept, in a simplified and ethno-centric way, can be divided into a "*French*" and "*German*" conceptual model. The *French* concept, in opposition to the latter, is often mentioned as a *state-nation* (*État-nation*) which relies on territorial boundaries (the territory of the French Republic), a common spirit (the idea of a republic, Declaration of the

Rights of Man and of the Citizen, etc.) reflected by state institutions and the prevailing nation-contract. The *German* model can be understood as a culture-nation based on a linguistic community and presumes a common national character manifested in physical, moral, and cultural (myths, traditions, history, etc.) commonalities. The first is in essence an embodiment of a political construction which the society (*Gesellschaft*) of individual citizens is created on the grounds of a territorial-citizenship principle originating from the ideas of enlightenment and the French Revolution. In contrast, a culture-nation is an organic community (*Gemeinschaft*) of individuals of common culture, history and sentiments, resting on an ethnic-genealogical principle and originating from romantic German idealist philosophy.[1] The political-cultural distinction of the concept of nation originated with the German historian, Friedrich Meinecke, who distinguished, after the Prussian-French War of 1870, between a cultural and a political nation. Meinecke's concept derived directly from his historical period and the circumstances of a concrete territorial conflict so this perspective was fixed onto a particular ideological framework.[2] Despite the particular historical background of the birth of this idea, the dichotomist nation-concept has remained the dominant one among scientists and thus has had a great impact on the research of our times. It is perhaps due to the work of Hans Kohn, who extended this original dualist notion, conceived in the French-German context, onto the global stage.[3] According to the conclusions of Kohn, the theoretical distinction of a *voluntarist* Western (French, North-American, British, Dutch, Swiss, etc.) and *organic* Eastern (the rest of Europe and, actually, the world) types of nation reflects a dimensional opposition. This normative dichotomy of Western and Non-Western societies has remained almost unchallenged in the history of research on nationalism. Although there have been slight differences between approaches, these have only been about how to label the types of nations, for instance, Hugh Seton-Watson distinguished "old, continuous nations" and "deliberately created nations,"[4] or the opposition of nations based on *territory* vs. *ethnicity*

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[1] Dominique Schnapper, *La Communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); Louis Dumont, *L'idéologie allemande. France-Allemangne et retour* (Paris, Gallimard, 1991).

[2] Alain Renaut, "Logique de la nation," in *Théories du nationalisme,* ed. Gil Delannoi and Pierre-André Taguieff (Paris: Kimé, 1991), 29–46.

[3] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: a Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1946).

[4] Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism,*(Colorado, Boulder: Westview Press, 1977).

of Anthony D. Smith.[5] As Roger Brubaker posits the idealized model of the nation-state: "(it) is conceptualized in both social-scientific analysis and political practice as an internally homogeneous, externally bounded political, legal, social, cultural, and (sometimes) economic space."[6] However, Brubaker also argues that there has recently been a shift in academic papers to defining the nation-state as a membership association. It is fundamentally a territorial organization, but in certain cases, the frontiers of membership extend beyond the territorial borders of the state.[7]

Composing a globally (as a general notion without depending on a concrete space-time coordinate and a context) applicable ideal-typical concept of nation seems scarcely conceivable primarily because of its symbolic saturation and heterogeneity. On the one hand, it is true that in most cases nations are comprised of a mixture of *cultural* and *political, civic* and *ethnic, voluntarist* and *organic* or *subjective* and *objective* elements; on the other hand, it is necessary to involve specific time factors and other components of a particular context in order to define or re-define a genuine and contextual concept of nation for a given study. Such distinctions as ethnic or civic nationalism can be a useful academic tool for distinguishing various forms of nationhood, but these concepts should not be used in a dogmatic way.[8]

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[5] The binary code, which has been challenged by post-modernist researchers, is grounded in the basis of territory. It has been rejected by Smith who argues for an opposition of *ideal-typical nation* vs. *ethnic community* (*ethnie*). The latter also has controversial elements but it can be used to demonstrate the difference between the terms of *nation* and *ethnic group*. "We propose to define the concept of nation as a "named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties of all members." The concept of *ethnie* can in turn be defined as "a named human community connected to a homeland, possessing common myths of ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of shared culture, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites. [...] All this is rather abstract and theoretical. When we move from ideal-types to empirical instances, we find approximations and exceptions." According to the approach of Smith, these are the *"diaspora nations," "polytechnic nation," "nations within nations"* and *"nations within national states."* Anthony D. Smith, Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 13–15, 39–42.

[6] Rogers Brubaker, "Migration, Membership, and the Modern Nation-State: Internal and External Dimensions of the Politics of Belonging," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 63.

[7] Brubaker, "Migration," 78.

[8] Erika Harris, *Nationalism. Theories and Cases*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 2009), 32.

On the study of nationalism

First, I would like to present the most significant studies and approaches pertinent to this subject in a periodic order. However, since the very beginning of the emergence of the concept of nationalism, it has been a discursive subject, therefore it is important not to simplify the term as possessing a constant meaning. Because of the heterogenic character of nationalism (e.g., over time it has become a fundamental generator of political, cultural, and economic changes), it is necessary to delineate between the various interpretations of the term in different time periods.

1. Phase: birth of the idea of nationalism and its spread across Europe at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries. The most important propagators, promoters and theorists of this idea were philosophers, politicians and statesmen. (e.g. Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Herder, Fichte, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Giuseppe Mazzini, Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, and also historians like Jules Michelet, Ernest Renan, von Treitschke, or Lord Acton).[9]
2. Phase: the problematic itself has only become a subject[10] for proper analysis during the interwar period, primarily by the two so-called "forefathers" of nationalism studies: Carleton Hayes and Hans Kohn (and later Louis Snyder)
3. Phase: sociologists and anthropologists also commence studying nationalisms between 1945 and 1980 by setting the problematic in an interdisciplinary ground (e.g. Daniel Lerner, Karl W. Deutsch, John Plamenatz, Hugh Seton-Watson, Elie Kedourie, Paul R. Brass).

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[9] The primary aim of all studies on classifying nationalism is to provide a general understanding and basic reference points. The difficulty of studying nationalism is that there is no one great thinker who can be credited with being the 'founding father' of the subject. It is a remarkable historiographical feature that authors of maybe the two most influential works on the theory of nationalism share the belief that there is a lack of coherent theories on nationalism, which could have properly interpreted the phenomenon in the golden age of *par excellence* nationalist discourses before the 20th century. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991), 5.; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

[10] The academic survey on nationalism, formulated in the first half the 20th century, considered the phenomenon as a concrete (rational and discrete) subject, which needed to be studied. 'Nation' as an academic subject was a positive fact evolved through history and to social scientists of this era this topic seemed to be a scientifically exciting new field of studies. The pioneers of this scientific group studied the term and history of nations applying comparative methods of analysis and neglecting biological or social-Darwinist ideas.

4. Phase: the classical discussion has been overcome by representatives of new approaches such as the modernist school. This school has raised new questions on the role and function of nationalism in modern political, cultural, social and economic contexts. The most dominant scholars here are Tom Nairn, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Eric J. Hobsbawm, etc., and we should also mention the founder of the ethno-symbolist school Anthony D. Smith.

In light of recent research findings, I should add that there has been a paradigm shift beginning at the end of the 1980s.[11] This transition to a more dynamic and sometimes extremely polyphonic discourse has been expressed by new polemics in the literature on the nature of nations and nationalist movements. Most of the current studies and approaches have become post-modernized and emphasized topics that had been marginally touched upon by the classical debate (e.g. multiculturalism, identity, migration, racism, cultural diaspora, gender, business and marketing, etc.).

The traditional divide of complex theories of nationalism lies in how these theories are fundamentally related to the genetic axis of nation. In other words, how these theories consider the nation: as a modern construction (this approach is the constructivist/instrumentalist or modernist one) or a phenomenon embedded in a sort of ethnic "*longue-durée*" (so-called primordialist/perennalist approach), or a modern entity with an ethnic-core (ethno-symbolists). Thus, three main approaches to the origins of nations can be identified[12] :

1.) *Primordialists* (and/or *perennialists*)[13]: the origins of nations prior to the age of modernity, because nations are God-given, organic entities and not constructions.
2.) *Modernists*: nations are modern and artificial results of fundamental economic, social and cultural changes that transformed traditional societies into modern, industrial communities (so nations are constructions, not organic entities).[14]

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[11] Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction,* (London-New York: MacMillan, 2000), 56; Lajtai L. László, "Trendek és elméletek a nemzet- és nacionalizmuskutatásban: Vázlatos kutatástörténeti áttekintés," *PRO MINORITATE* 24, no. 3 (2015): 119–31.

[12] Ernest Gellner, "Reply: Do Nations Have Navels?," *Nations and Nationalism ASEN 2,* no. 3 (November 1996): 366–68.; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism. A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)

[13] Smith, "Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History", 50.

[14] Gellner brilliantly points out the difference between the two fundamentally important perspectives that nationalism is basically a *Gesellschaft* phenomenon presenting itself as *Gemeinschaft*. In other words, modern nations described as anonymous and dynamic (or mobile) societies pretend to be (or to be seen as) homogenous and comfortable communities. Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London : Weidenfeld&Nicolson, 1997), 63–74.

3.) *Ethno-symbolists*: located in between the two approaches mentioned above; it represents that nations originate from ethnic communities. Through the symbols and myths of these communities, they provide predestinated but shapeable identities to the members of a homogenous community.[15]

The basic argument here is centered on whether the nation fostered nationalism or nationalism created the idea of a nation. The primordialist view of thinking tends to accept (in opposition to the modernist approach) the antiquity of nations, whilst modernists claim that modern socio-economic transformations of traditional communities created nations. Ethno-symbolists agree that nations are somehow modern entities but with essential ethno-cultural roots. This methodological triptych can be divided into several sub-approaches (e.g., within primordialism naturalist, sociobiological, and cultural views can be discerned), but essentially this classification contains the relevant elements of canonized consensus of the literature. However, two historiographical remarks need to be added here. On the one hand, primordialists/perennialists owned the scientific discourse on nationalism without any significant rivals until the publication of the work of Hans Kohn and Carleton Hayes in the first half of the 20th century. That is why it is almost impossible to attach the label of complex theories[16] on nationalism in the 19th century when I mention Fichte or Renan or other thinkers. Nowadays, these classical approaches seem to have all but disappeared, however they remain important to current attempts to find a coherent understanding of nationalism. On the other hand, all current academic researchers (except for Anthony D. Smith and his few followers) consider themselves modernists in their shared belief that there is an epistemological rupture between current theories on nationalism and classical views on the existence of proto-nationalism. The mainstream modernist approaches, however, do not seem to be coherent considering the different measures and emphasis on their explicative basis. Those who see the grand economic change that began in the second half of the 18th century as a key element of the rise of nationalism (e.g. the two neo-Marxist social scientists Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter) work with absolutely different argumentative methods than other theorists, who claim that it was the re-structure process of the authority-political sphere during the age of modernity which generated the birth of nationalist movements. Among the latter, we

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[15] Christophe Jaffrelot, "Les modèles explicatifs de l'origines des nations et du nationalisme. Revue critique," in *Théories du nationalisme*, ed. Gil Delannoi and Pierre-André Taguieff (Paris: Kimé, 1991), 164.

[16] The concept of a theory of nationalism can be only considered as an emancipated and disciplined field of study since the academic sphere has created the first complex models on modern social transitions and transformations.

can mention the name of John Breuilly, Paul Brass, and Eric J. Hobsbawm. These authors share the idea that components of political transformation (the rise of the bureaucratic state, the institutionalization of the principles of people's sovereignty, the spread of the general and secret right to vote, etc.) are also the par *excellence* factors of nationalism. Representatives of another view (Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Miroslav Hroch) agree with the central role played by fundamental political and social changes but emphasize the importance of the impact of these changes on the cultural sphere that transforms pre-modern societies into modern ones.

Nevertheless, from the 1990s new perspectives emerged and challenged the relevance and importance of the arguments that concentrated on how nations and nationalism originated. These approaches did not consider the modernist vs. ethno-symbolist vs. primordialist debate relevant anymore, they rather started to focus on the different representations of nationalisms. The importance of the genealogy of nations seemed to disappear and new methodological tools began to dominate the study of nationalism. The propagators of this perspective (Katherine Verdery, Rogers Brubaker, Daniele Conversy, Craig Calhoun) tend to abandon efforts to create a homogenic and global definition of nationalism and focus on its heterogeneity. According to Brubaker, the current differences between scholars are not based on whether they accept the antiquity of nations or not but between the concepts that accept nations as real entities, *sui generis* substances, and the post-modernists, who try to desubstantionalize the term.[17]

Contemporary Approaches on Nationalism

Numerous social scientific articles have recently addressed contemporary problems (mixing ethnic boundaries, cultural co-existence, territorial boundaries, new nationalist strands, migration, and social inclusion) within the domain of nationalism. A concerted scholarly attempt, then, has focused on providing answers to these new issues, however, only a few perspectives tend to process the problematic themes in their totality by utilizing the many tools the social sciences have to offer. Rogers Brubaker, in one of his recent studies, highlights three key terms (ethnicity, race, and nationalism) that have not been adequately studied because the literature was fragmented along disciplinary lines. He claims that this fragmentation "has generated a new field of study that is comparative, global, cross-disciplinary, and multi paradigmatic, and that construes ethnicity, race, and nationhood as a single integrated family of forms of cultural understanding, social organization,

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[17] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

and political contestation."[18] According to Brubaker's argument, this new field has five characteristics or positions (implicitly and explicitly comparative, global, interdisciplinary, multi-paradigmatic, or a single integrated domain) that determine how scholars study the congruence or distinctiveness of ethnicity, race and nationalism. It is worth looking at Brubaker's categorization on multiple dimensions of distinction:

I.   Categorization and membership
    1. Criteria and indicia of membership
    2. External categorization versus internal self-identification
    3. Identifiability, sharpness/fuzziness, fixedness/fluidity
    4. Naturalization
    5. Hierarchy, markedness, and stigmatization
    6. Transmission and socialization

II. Social organization
    1. Boundaries
    2. Groupness, salience, thickness
    3. Territorial concentration or dispersion
    4. Economic differentiation and in equality
    5. Institutional separation or integration
    6. Reproduction

III. Politics
    1. Identification and loyalty
    2. Social closure
    3. Organization and mobilization
    4. Political claims[19]

I agree with Brubaker on the simplistic nature of this schematic, however, these dimensions demonstrate the complexity of each term and how they sometimes overlap, intertwine, and traverse each other. The greatest benefit of this new field described by Brubaker is that it allows for the study of contemporary and classical themes with a more interdisciplinary, global and multi-paradigmatic perspective.

Another key issue that has been recently studied is the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism originally (and as mentioned above) discussed by Hans Kohn. The

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[18] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 22.
[19] Brubaker, "Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism," 26–27.

dichotomy of Western/civic and Eastern/ethnic nationalism retains some value when scholars intend to categorize nationalism from a primarily substantionalist perspective. However, in its original form (or even with some modifications[20]) the theory is of questionable value, especially when one aims at classifying/interpreting present nation-building and other forms of nationalist processes. Krzysztof Jaskulowsi argues that Kohn's dichotomy has at least two problematic issues. First, it is principally a simplifying typology that tends to blur specifics when characterizing a nation as civic or ethnic. This simplification (by adopting the argument of J. Kilias) may result in a loss of the complexity, diversity, and heterogeneity of social reality, institutions, social actors, and an historical changeability dimension of nation. Second, the distinction suggests that purely civic nationalism lacks cultural elements. Yet, typical civic nationalisms (e.g., the USA) are built on traits of common culture, common values, a common past, shared historic experience, myths, memories, historical representations (monuments), and (national) symbols. These symbols, for example, the flag of the USA, represent the unity of the nation, fulfill a significant cognitive function and go beyond rationally motivated membership. The American flag stands for the nation, which means that "the flag is treated as if it was the nation. The symbol takes the place of an abstract idea it represents."[21] The symbolic relationship between the members of the nation and the nation as an abstraction is primarily a cultural trait. It means that scholars must consider how cultural elements and especially, symbols, contributed to the unity of a nation by creating emotional bonds among the members. It is also a simplification to claim that cultural elements did not have a significant role in the Western-European nation-building processes during the 19th century (e.g., the French monument installation events after the defeat at Sedan or the German cultural festivals from the 1830s).

Aside from the ongoing debate on Kohn's dichotomy, there have been new scholarly perspectives on the discussions of special or current forms of ethnic and/or cultural nationalism. After the disintegration of the USSR, multiple nationalist movements arose developing into a specific form of ethnic nationalism (in this case Russian ethnic nationalism) that cannot be understood from an essentialist perspective. In her recent study, Anastasia Mitrofanova divides contemporary Russian ethnic nationalist movements into three fundamental groups: "1) Orthodox nationalists, who may belong to the Russian Orthodox Church or to uncanonical religious organizations; 2) contemporary Slavic pagans (neopagans); 3) secularists: those who consider religious questions unimportant and do

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[20] Krzysztof Jaskulowski, "Western (civic) 'versus' Eastern (ethnic) Nationalism. The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy," *Polish Sociological Review* 171 (2010): 299.
[21] Jaskulowski, "Western," 300.

not advertise their religious affiliation."[22] Orthodox nationalism is chiefly a religio-ideological trend which emerged during the early 1990s and which is based on "the rejection of the contemporary world, perceived as having abandoned God and fallen under the sway of the Antichrist."[23] The establishment of the rule of the Antichrist decays the world and it is only the Russian people who are able to stop the collapse by preserving the values of the Orthodox enclave. The Russian (or Orthodox) people are the chosen ones with a unique fate who carry the revelation of God. They believe that aside from their chosenness, Russians carried great sin and for their sins Nicholas II and his family had to die. Because of his sacrifice, Orthodox nationalists tend to be pro-monarchists. Nicholas II and his family were indeed venerated by the Orthodox Church; however, the Church does not support the cultivation of the Tsar and considers this view heretical. This phenomenon is one of the core problematic issues of the Orthodox nationalists and as a result they often find themselves in direct conflict with the Church. Even when there are certain movements within the Orthodox Church, which label themselves nationalist, their nationalistic views do not accord with the official position of the Church. Pagans (or neo-pagans), do not have such conflicts, because they do not belong to any Church referring to themselves as "native believers" (*rodnovery*).[24] Their vague definition incorporates different forms of rituals and beliefs. They do not have an authentic pagan tradition; thus, they create or reconstruct certain rituals that they contend to be the "national" religion of the Russians. The various pagan groups (who may have their own worldview and rituals) use the Internet to link their members and groups with each other. The members often participate in martial-arts/sport training and learn the use of firearms. These activities give a para-military characteristic to the political movement, which can also be considered as a sub-culture with its own phrases, dress code, and rules. For secular nationalists, religion is not a significant political or ideological issue, which does not mean that among secularists there are no believers of any faith, or that they do not use religious rhetoric to mobilize people. Their political agenda focuses rather on the "main enemy" of the Russian people, namely, culturally alien migrants. They oppose the majority of migrants who are Muslim, claiming that Islam is an aggressive and militant religion and in opposition to this obscure faith they are rational-thinking people. However, they are also against the migration of Christians such as Georgians, Armenians, Ossetians, and Abkhazians.

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[22] Anastasia Mitrofanova, "Russian Ethnic Nationalism and Religion Today," in: *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, ed. Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud (Edingburgh: EUP, 2016), 107.

[23] Mitrofanova, "Russian Ethnic Nationalism," 113.

[24] Mitrofanova, "Russian Ethnic Nationalism," 121.

Today, the Orthodox and pagan nationalists are ideologically stagnating (the ideological foundations for both sections have been laid down in the 1990s) and are failing to attract more followers (the pagans, in particular, have exhausted any potential social base). The secularists seem to be the most dynamic nationalist group. They have new ideas, new leaders, and their social base is growing, in part due to their use of social media as a tool of propaganda (Facebook, *Vkontakte*). In contrast to the Orthodox nationalists, secularists do not have to face internal conflicts (they have no ecclesiastical issues). They use religious rhetoric to attract sympathizers and to impress the authorities, hence, secularism is more a populist device than an ideological stance.[25]

Another current manifestation of nationalism can be described as humanitarian or economic nationalism. Certain contemporary nationalist movements aim at legitimizing their political actions or their political status by promoting and providing, social services, relief and reconstruction.   For the latter, the humanitarian and recovery assistance of Hindu nationalist organizations after an earthquake in rural Kutch is a remarkable example. In short, the Hindu nationalist political group has gradually gained more and more relevance in the political life of post-independence India. Hindu nationalism represents Hindu values; however, when the political body of the movement, the BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party*) became the governing party in 1998 secular India did not become a religious state. The success of the BJP has recently reached a new level in 2014 when the party gained a landslide political victory in the general elections. As Malini Bhattacharjee states, the source of this victory can be found in the party's "adaptability to the changing sociopolitical landscape," not to mention that it "has adopted various methods, techniques, rituals, and forms of mobilization over the years in an effort to capture the popular Hindu imagination."[26] *The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) founded in 1925, is the cultural and militant body of the Hindu nationalist movement. The *swayamsevaks* (volunteers) provide humanitarian (Hindu refugees after the Partition) and social services (disaster relief) and they also use these opportunities to undertake massive cadre building. In the Hindu tradition the word *seva* means selfless help. The RSS developed a strategy of *seva* for two main reasons: 1) aside from benign help, the volunteers' social service mobilize those who show no interest in that Hindu ideology (*Hindutva*) but support their social welfare network; 2) during disasters when the state is often ineffective in handling emergency relief, the deployment of humanitarian aid can serve as a justification for political intervention. The

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[25] Mitrofanova, "Russian Ethnic Nationalism," 123–29.

[26] Malini Bhattacharjee, "Sevā, Hindutva, and the Politics of Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction in Rural Kutch," *Asian Ethnology* 75, no. 1, (Special Issue: Salvage and Salvation: Religion and Disaster in Asia 2016), 76.

relief and rehabilitation operations of the RSS after the 2001 Bhuj earthquake enabled the Hindu nationalist movement to find new beneficiaries, patrons and contacts with the media, civil society, and the local communities. The reconstruction works provided opportunities to further broaden the social base of the movement and due to their compassionate contribution, their popularity measurably increased.[27]

One of the most fundamental goals of nationalist movements is to construct a collective image of a nation relying on the glorious events of the past. The idea of collecting the characteristic features of a nation in order to represent or symbolize the members of a nation is not unknown. However, the case of Iceland, where the textbook image of a courageous and fearless Viking is believed to depict a successful businessman, highlights some current issues of gender and relations between nationalism and business. Kristín Loftsdóttir argues that nations can be branded (just like companies with their trademarks) on the basis of cultural traits. These brands, nevertheless, project the image of a nation as a community of males. In Iceland the construction of a nation also relied on gendered ideas and "crucial symbols of 'Icelandicness' such as logic, courage, and honor were primarily assigned to males."[28] According to the textbooks, Icelandic history was a story of hard-working men who settled on the island (which reflects courage and the image of a self-made man), defied the Danish colonization, inherited Celtic intelligence and Norwegian inner strength. During the 2000s, Iceland became more visible to the global business world due to the successes of Icelandic businessmen who bought up companies in other parts of the world and extended the operation of their companies internationally. The media and politicians interpreted this economic success by using nationalistic rhetoric. The economic boom was explained as a result of the special characteristics of Icelanders and the achievement of "the Icelandic entrepreneur overseas is expressed in terms such as *útrás* (outward expansion) and *útrásarvíkingur* (Business Viking)."[29] The individual qualities of the successful entrepreneurs were compared to older concepts of Icelanders such as the male-dominated image of a brave, powerful and smart Viking settler. This global economic success enabled Icelandic nationalism to reinvent itself and to promote nationalistic symbols. Unfortunately, the nationalistic political and public narratives on the economic expansion were not enough to prevent Iceland from the crisis in 2008.[30] Economic success can be a powerful device of legitimacy and nation-building when the

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[27] Bhattacharjee, "Sevā," 97.

[28] Kristín Loftsdottir, "Vikings Invade Present-Day Iceland," in *Gambling Debt. Iceland's Rise and Fall in the Global Economy*, ed. Paul E. Durrenberger and Gisli Palsson (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), 5.

[29] Loftsdottir, "Vikings," 9.

[30] Loftsdottir, "Vikings," 10–13.

members of the given community tend to be a part of this glory. Financial expansion can be interpreted as the "expansion of a nation," however, this vague image of unity disperses in case of an economic downfall.

The idea of belonging has a current aspect that challenges social sciences to provide society with an academic explanation. This aspect is migration. As Rogers Brubaker claims, "migration is as old as human history."[31] However, modern nation-states are required to give new answers to current issues because migration (especially cross-border migration) disturbs the congruency between "residence and citizenship, between nation-membership and state-membership, and between culture and polity."[32] The idealized version of modern nation-states is highly problematized by the politics of belonging. Brubaker applies four distinctions to highlight this argument: 1) the main concern of the politics of membership or belonging is that for modern nation-states the question of "who belongs" is still relevant; in other words, the idea of belonging is fundamentally influenced by the current importance of nation-states; 2) certain minority populations have one *formal* state membership, but in such cases, their *substantive* membership, such as their access to substantive rights of citizenship and substantive acceptance as full-members of a nation, is highly contested; 3) the *formal* and *informal* aspects of the politics of belonging both reflect different kinds of membership. Formal membership is legal and administered by an employee of state bureaucracy. Informal, in contrast, does not need an official document to express belonging to a national community. It is rather an everyday practice and the choice of an individual. But this informal membership is supervised by others who decide who belongs and who does not; 4) *Internal* (populations located within the territorial bounds of a state without membership of that state) and *external* (populations located outside the territorial bounds but claim to belong to that state and nation) dimensions of the politics of belonging should be distinguished from each other. The two dimensions are connected in three ways: first, *reciprocally connected between states*, when "a population subject to an *internal politics of membership in one state* may be subject to an external politics of membership in another state"[33]; second, intertwined within a particular state, an ethnic population coming from another state enjoys more citizenship rights than foreign immigrants (or their children) who speak the language of the state better than the ethnic migrants; third, the internal and external dimension can be linked *sequentially*: the "homeland state" induces the immigration of external members.[34] The external politics

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[31] Brubaker, "Migration," 76.
[32] Brubaker, "Migration," 77.
[33] Brubaker, "Migration," 66.
[34] Brubaker, "Migration," 64–67.

of belonging is more emphasized by contemporary social scientists, which indicates new understandings on nationalism such as the struggle of populations to belong in or to a nation-state.

The ways in which the conceptual model of nation-state, nationalism and national identity are interpreted, are shifting towards more complex, interdisciplinary and context-based approaches. The current questions of nationalism have mostly shifted from how *ethnies* were transmitted into modern nations to how modern nations reflect on current socio-economic, cultural, gender, neo-religious, or migration issues. The above examples are far from exhaustive and only cover a small part of current (trans-)formations of nationalism. However, they serve the purpose of demonstrating the wide range of today's challenges to providing a better understanding of nationalistic manifestations and the increasing societal tendency towards the necessity of nation-states. Whether it is a current religio-nationalism, a humanitarian service with political intentions, or a use of the past for marketing and branding reasons, scholarly inquiries should always include classical theories but, at the same time, take all the specifics (religious, socio-cultural, or economic) into consideration and explicitly process all aspects of the given issue.

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