Facing Nationalisms
in the European Union

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By

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

In political discourse, 'nationalism' is equal to the belief in the distinguished position of a particular nation, usually at the expense of all others. Its effects include attitudes toward them responsible for social and international relations disorder. However, in popular discourse, 'nationalism' is often understood as an attachment to a people's ethnic or national identity. Such attitudes are usually based on specific beliefs regarding one's own ethnic or national group that has often been made the core of political programs leading to an ideological form of nationalism. Efforts to reach people's minds and sentiments to reject 'nationalism' are futile at the start. I want to argue that such steps are also unnecessary. In the EU, the aspiration for increased European identity does not need to involve the elimination of national sentiments. After all, we want to wipe out not national identity but hostile or even unfriendly attitudes toward others.

I need to stress that the focus of this book is not on nationalism; that has already become the topic of thousands of publications. This book suggests a policy of the European Union toward nationalism of the member states that should deserve the attention of politicians. I concentrate on just one important distinction: the distinction between the ideological and non-ideological sense of nationalism. To approach nationalism only in its ideological meaning is to miss another important aspect. However, it is a practice that is, at present, common. My thesis is that ideological - xenophobic and exclusivist - nationalism can be successfully marginalized by EU policy protecting or even promoting member states' sentiments around their national culture and traditions.

The texts included in this book are based on my research in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. They are all focused on the problems of nationalism in the European Union and its social and political background. I believe these texts well support the main recommendation coming from the book. Most of them have already been published in their initial form. In the present publication, they are re-edited and updated.

In chapter two, I have used a few pages of my comments published in the book edited by J. Fomina and J. Niżnik, "Europe on Test. The onus of the past", PAN, Warsaw 2020. Chapter three has been published in the Polish Sociological Review, 2/2017, pp. 127 – 139. Chapter five was first published in Zeszyty Prasoznawcze, UJ, Kraków, 2017, Tom 60, Numer 2 (230), pp. 257-264. Chapter six is based on the text entitled "Are There Positive Effects of Euroscepticism?" that appeared in the book edited by Alina Bârgăoanu, Loredana Radu, and Diego Varela, "United by or Against Euroscepticism? An Assessment of Public Attitudes towards Europe in the Context of the Crisis", Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, pp. 208 – 222. Finally, chapter seven appeared in the book edited by Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska, "In search of a European Public Sphere. Challenges – Opportunities – Prospects", pp.2-24, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle, 2020.

I want to express my thanks to all editors and publishers for their consent, allowing me to present these texts in a concise book.

INTRODUCTION

Entering the third decade of the twenty-first century, nationalism is commonly understood as a destructive factor responsible for the most dangerous social phenomena and political processes. It is blamed for various ills, from a lack of respect for minority rights to other nations' hostility. Also, nationalism is perceived as an essential barrier to developing cooperation among states. Therefore, it has become one of the most severe threats to a peaceful future. Although such fears are present globally, Europe has its specificity.

In this regard, Europe's specificity is linked both to its history and the current, unprecedented international undertaking – European integration. The subsequent stages of which, up to the creation of the European Union, gave birth to an entirely new type of economic, political, and social entity based on shared values and the rules of international governance. The European Union's governance set a precedent that led to a new political form. It is a supranational political system consisting of 27 nation-states that have preserved substantial amounts of exclusive competencies. Multilevel governance, with dispersed power and the principle of subsidiarity as its self-imposed limitation, created new conditions for the member states and their centuries-old attributes, with the idea of sovereignty at the top of the list.

Although the concept of sovereignty remained one of the most cherished ideas, its practical meaning changed radically due to various reasons. Among them, probably the most important are globalization and European integration. Therefore, European integration became a new context for traditional political concepts, attitudes towards the idea of a nation-state, and experience of national identity. After all, part of such

identity is now membership in the European Union. Moreover, the European identity, which was dormant for centuries, has, in various ways, reached most Europeans' consciousness (Fomina and Niżnik 2020).

As a result, the Europeans could look anew at the history and traditions of their countries. However, this possibility also allowed politicians to offer rival narratives about the history of particular states and neighboring countries. With time, such an opportunity to use historical politics became an effective way to attract the electorate, although in many cases, at the cost of demolishing social cohesion in the member states and the EU as a whole. Looking at historical politics, we can easily find nationalism as its primary justification. The nationalist revival – as this phenomenon has been described by some authors (Judis 2018) – became the most dangerous factor in the whole European project. And it is hazardous for all member states in the current global situation.

However, there is no reason to believe that national uniqueness, which appears to be the most stable feature of a collective identity, cannot be accommodated within the European Union's supranational community. Although national specificity usually goes along with specific political and legal contexts and traditions, this does not mean that those contexts are inseparable from the experience of national identity. The culture of the nation does not need to be tied with the political form of its polity. For example, we have many historical cases of monarchies that became republics while preserving the main elements of their cultural identity. Therefore, we can imagine nations united in one polity and following common political principles while – at the same time – maintaining their national uniqueness expressed in their history, language, and culture. The European Union seems to be the perfect example. It is united around the principles of liberal democracy and the common rules of coexistence and cooperation that led to the distinctive form of governance. The cases of Victor Orban's Hungary and Jarosław Kaczyński's Poland that have tried to violate those principles

provoked a reaction from the EU. Although the EU's response was far from an immediate retort, it signaled that shared values and the rule of law are still the foundation of the Union's unity.

It is pretty common, especially among some nationalist leaders, to blame the European Union for undermining member states' national distinctiveness. However, the case of those multinational European states that are part of the EU may suggest the opposite. They show that membership of multinational states in the EU is the best way to maintain their cohesion with national identities untouched. A good example is Scotland after the UK decided to leave the Union. Scots voted to stay within the UK just a few years ago when Britain was still an EU member. After Brexit, Scots started again to consider their independence. This example shows that European integration can be a political condition that favors national uniqueness.

The discourse about nationalism appears full of misunderstandings and simplifications. The term 'nationalism' varies from neutral, descriptive, theoretical concepts to evaluative, exclusivist, ideological forms. Such forms have found practical implementations in the past and are still finding their applications at present. We can see them in the most devastating political programs that result in social and political attitudes and movements. What is especially dreadful is ideological nationalism, which inevitably leads to xenophobia and the exclusion of various categories of people who are "different". Talking about ideology, I consider it in a broad definition going beyond the classical concept of Marx and Mannheim. In this meaning, ideology responds to the human need for an absolute (Niżnik 2006; 79). In the case of ideological nationalism, we can see the idea of a nation elevated to the position of absolute. In some extreme instances, 'race' or even 'blood' may also appear in such a position.

Every kind of nationalism responds to the primary mental needs of human beings. These are the need for identity, attachment to a collective, the cohesion of a symbolic universe, or the need for an established content of memory. Ideological

nationalism can also efficiently serve precisely those needs, although in an exclusivist way that opens the way for hostility to others. To respond to such needs, ideological nationalism exploits various theories and concepts, such as e.g., the idea of nation-state sovereignty. One can imagine a different form of nationalism serving the exact needs without its ideological features, a nationalism that works in theoretical reflection just as a purely descriptive instrument, even if equipped with some emotional load.

There is no doubt that a simple rejection of the concept of nationalism in publicly accepted discourse is no solution to the problems linked to this phenomenon. Deprivation of people's national identities and sentiments is not possible and is not necessary. However, no supranational undertaking can avoid confrontation with the accusation that this is its aim. The European Union is in an incredibly tricky situation due to Europe's history of bloody wars and a strong feeling of uniqueness among most of its nations. What is needed is a kind of "national policy" of the EU that would promote and appreciate the European countries' national differences and achievements while rejecting xenophobic, exclusivist, hostile attitudes toward others. This strategy, however, may appear very difficult to implement. The reason for this is an intense politicization of the concept of nationalism in the everyday political discourse.

Currently, in most common use, the idea of nationalism has still been attached to political sovereignty understood in an outdated manner. In many countries worldwide, such an understanding happens to be very useful in attracting a substantial part of the electorate. It is especially effective in Central and Eastern Europe in post-communist countries that have only recently regained their independence. Poland is probably the best example. With a rich, thousand-year-long history of statehood with periods of spectacular political significance, it lost its independence for more than a century. During that time, almost every generation tried to restore the

Polish state in bloody – mostly unsuccessful – uprisings. The national fight for independence found its place in Polish art and literature and became the core of national education. The world underwent radical global changes, Europe started its integration process, but the tone of the teaching of young Poles remained the same.

Nationalistic sentiments accompanied all the most important political changes in the Central European post-communist world. People in this part of Europe perceived joining NATO and accession to the European Community as the way to escape from Russian dominance. However, soon after, membership in the EU became a handy reference for nationalistic politicians fighting for power in their now free, democratic states. For those political players, "national" started to mean "politically independent", and membership in the EU was pointed to as a new form of dependence. While globalization, overwhelming all sides of life, became a real threat to the nation-states' sovereignty, in the political discourse of ideological nationalists, European integration was presented as an offshoot of the same process.

The developments described above imposed on the concept of nationalism a negative flavor and simple political meaning. Nationalism became opposition to both globalization and European integration. In this way, a significant difference between those two processes has been lost. Although current global changes, e.g., protectionism in trade and a new political polarization, may look like factors limiting globalization's impact, there is no reason to expect it to be stopped. Also, all globalization's threats to national uniqueness will remain as strong as before. The only way to save the wide national variety of European countries is through European integration and a well-designed national policy of the EU. To make such an approach persuasive, we need to change the meaning of nationalism and its role in political discourse. National sentiments of the EU member states must be channeled toward cultures and traditions. At the same time, the idea of sovereignty

should be moved to the level of the political dimension of the European Union. Nowadays, the centuries-old meaning of sovereignty has become just an illusion but has remained an unquestioned value. However, there is a chance that the national policy of the EU could successfully attach this value to the concept of European sovereignty. In this way, the rise of nationalist sentiments could support European integration instead of being an obstruction to it.

The following chapters address some aspects of nationalism policy that still make this phenomenon an inevitable ingredient of any supranational political and social construction, including European integration.

In the *first chapter,* I answer the question of why national identity is a significant individual experience and a compelling instrument of collective identity. In t*he second chapter*, I search for the answer to the question of why in the current situation, characterized by the overwhelming impact of globalization, we observe the rise of nationalism. It seems correct to notice that it is precisely globalization that is responsible for the growth of national feelings. European integration could be the best way to save what is the most valuable in nationalism if this process is not identified with globalization. Identifying European integration with globalization is sometimes a spontaneous (although incorrect) view. However, it is often the deliberate work of political players who want to profit in their nation-states' fight for power. They impose on the public discourse a narrative dominated by ideological nationalism. Some authors believe that there is a way to escape from the framework of ideological nationalism thanks to developing a "nationally rooted cosmopolitanism," as U. Beck and E. Grande have called it. This kind of cosmopolitanism was hoped for in the United Nations 1995 report entitled "Our Creative Diversity". At the time of the growth of nationalism, this publication deserves remembrance and reflection. One of the conclusions of the chapter two is that the best way to strengthen

the European identity is institutional protection by the EU of the member states' national uniqueness.

The third chapter brings arguments and illustrations for the thesis that European integration has some bearing on the contemporary form of nationalism in EU member states. It is because membership in the EU became part of the identity of those states. This chapter shows how European integration affects the collective memory of the member states' societies and their perception of space and symbolism. In effect, Europeanism became internalized in the citizens' experience, although they are very often unaware of this fact.

Chapter four discusses sovereignty, the concept most effectively used by advocates of ideological nationalism. It concentrates mainly on one historically developed meaning of sovereignty. The focus is on its sociological rather than its political aspect. It is this concept that often leads to xenophobia and hostility toward other ethnic groups. Nationalist leaders of some of the EU member states usually refer to the idea of the people's sovereignty. With the progress of European integration, the notion of European sovereignty appeared. It has a good chance to replace the traditionally understood state sovereignty idea, whose origins go back to the seventeenth century.

We have more and more examples worldwide where especially one political phenomenon favors ideological nationalism and leads to elimination of nationalism's neutral, positive significance. It is a populist style of making politics that abuses ideals of democracy and promotes its corrupted form. *Chapter five* discuss this case. In integrating Europe, common, shared values form the principal defense line against the consequences of populism. The EU confrontation with populist governments, especially in Poland and Hungary, shows that this defense can be a highly complex task.

The crucial argument of populist governments relates to the defense of national interests. *Chapter six* deals with this issue. The main problem identified in this part of the book is the absence of European interests in the European discourse.

Although national interests do exist in the European Union's interplay of various interactions, their perception depends on the proper identification of the interests of the whole Union. The lack of this category in the European discourse is one of the factors responsible for developing the Euroscepticism that nourishes ideological nationalisms in the EU member states. Although the rise of Euroscepticism helped unify all pro-European parties in the European parliament, it has remained a background for those who have wanted to use nationalism against integrated Europe.

The "poly-crisis" which troubles the European Union, with ideological nationalism at the forefront, seems to destabilize the whole process of European integration. Some analysts even warn about the possibility of EU disintegration. In *chapter seven,* I argue that such bleak forecasts go too far. Despite the loud advocates of ideological nationalism, we have enough signs of a new pan-European common way of thinking, crossing national borders, and creating a new European mentality. Therefore, amid the cases of aggressive nationalism in different member states, we also observe the slowly emerging European public sphere.

In the *concluding chapter,* I stress that Europe has no better future than the social and political community with its member states' rich, differentiated cultures. Such a community should defend its collective sovereignty, cooperation, and governance based on shared values. One can point out that the global context, with the deepening polarization between the West and East (without clear boundaries), should serve as the main encouraging factor for such a development. Facing the current growth of ideological nationalism, the European Union has to intensify its institutional care of the member states' national specificity, including national cultures. There are good reasons to believe that such a policy will substantially weaken the supporters of ideological nationalism.

CHAPTER 1

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Nationalism seems inevitable because it is tied to the most crucial identity dimension: identity with the unique social environment, which is empowered by strong symbolism and evokes emotional attachment. This kind of identity is a national identity. As crucial as it is, nationalism can take various forms, starting with simply identifying with one's ethnic group. If we add some emotional engagement, this concept is close to the idea of patriotism. This meaning is precisely what makes it so useful for political application, including its ideological use. That is an ideological nationalism that evokes xenophobia and its supporters' exclusivism. In effect, the term 'nationalism' may indicate a suspicious or even entirely unacceptable phenomenon and social attitudes.

The rise of nationalism in the EU member states seems to be one of the most critical disintegrating factors. The current spread of nationalist ideas and ideologies in the member states' societies became a kind of alarm that did not allow neglect of this phenomenon by European leaders and institutions. Whether we like it or not, nationalism will remain an important, powerful social fact in the EU member states and most likely will grow.

However, the very nature of national sentiment does not itself imply its negative impact on supranational political arrangements. Such an effect results from specific policies of the member states or radical nationalist organizations that mobilize the public in favor of national particularism presented as a national interest. How can the EU effectively cope with such a challenge?

In the following part of the analysis, I argue that the EU can and should mold nationalist sentiments into a pro-European force. A properly designed EU strategy will deepen integration thanks to the protective measures introduced by the European Union's policies and institutions on behalf of the member states' national traditions. Such action can lead to the exposition of European history's uniting aspects rather than its numerous conflicts and wars. It can demonstrate that European heritage exists only as a contribution by specific individuals and collectives who always had some national or ethnic origin. Instead of opposing national and European identity, we should notice that European identity is an inevitable part of European societies' national identity.

A favorable context for such a policy's success has been created by the growing global threats and challenges that render the traditional instruments for defending nationalist ambitions ineffective. While it is true that the current rise of exclusive, nationalist movements in the EU member states is for pro-European citizens of member states quite discouraging (even for those who view nationalism positively), some recent publications advocate a different approach to the phenomenon of nationalism. They tend to expose the positive aspects of national sentiments while stressing that European heritage and European identity reside within the European nations. However, the impact of those publications – whether on the theoretical debate or the pragmatics of politics – has not (yet) matched their potential (Niżnik 2012; 67).

A problematic question?

The suggestion formulated above may strike some as irrational since, for most authors, the success of European integration depends on supplanting nationalism with Europeanism. Quite unexpectedly, help can be found in *Foreign Affairs*, where Robert Sapolsky, the Stanford University biology professor, published an article entitled "This Is Your Brain on

Nationalism. The Biology of Us and Them" (Sapolsky 2019). The article seems to argue in favor of a genetic basis of nationalism but also points out the possibility of overcoming its onus. Sapolsky shows that humans share an attachment to their group with chimpanzees, and this tendency has a solid biological basis. However, unlike chimpanzees, humans are pretty flexible in defining who are 'we' and who are 'they'. Although this flexibility usually is beyond our everyday experience, it leaves room for a promise of success in dealing with nationalism's exclusivism. To be honest, I have to cite the final sentence of Sapolsky's article, for his conclusion is: "The worst of nationalism, then, is unlikely to be overcome any time soon" (Sapolsky 2019;47).

The strength of nationalism comes from its potential to secure national identity, probably one of the most formatting kinds of identity. This concept deserves more consideration, including some philosophical examination. To understand the significance of national identity, we should start with reflections on identity in general.

The question of identity has accompanied philosophy nearly since its beginnings. A considerable share of philosophical examination goes beyond the abstract understanding of identity and is directed towards man's characteristics. It has been well underlined in many philosophical works. Barbara Skarga refers to some of them in her book devoted to the issue of identity. Skarga considers Parmenides' reflection almost classical in this respect (Skarga, 1997). The significance of this issue transcends metaphysical discussion, and even in her "metaphysical essay," the author reaches for arguments that direct our attention to man's social life. "Absence of one's own identity means transforming into an object for others, one that is easy to manipulate, one that does not resist and often gives in to another strong hand whenever this hand gives it some form of being", writes Barbara Skarga (Skarga, 1997; 12). Further we read that "the category of identity becomes something more than a logical principle of thought; it is also a principle of world order, of our

own existence, the continuity of the existence of our culture"
(Skarga, 1997;12). Within such a perspective, national identity
receives a distinctive role that is hard to replace.

It is evident that the question of identity cannot be
contained within the hermetic discourse of a single discipline. It
also belongs among the problems faced by every individual and
every social group. From a theoretical point of view, the concept
of identity is undoubtedly one of the basic categories that plainly
make us aware that man's human world is precisely a *human*
world. However, there is no doubt that philosophy turns out to
be a type of reflection that is particularly needed. It reveals to
man that the basic theoretical categories identified during the
intellectual "taming of the world" are landmarks of his symbolic
universe and a particular framework of his social references.
Thus philosophy shows that the separation of man's intellectual
sphere and material existence in the world is an artificial
distinction. Hence regardless of the discipline in which we
reflect on this category, identity remains a philosophical concept
and, at the same time, a paramount personal experience of each
human being.

Still, it is worth noting that the human experience of
identity is characterized by great ambivalence. For, while
constituting a key landmark of the human world, the field of
human consciousness is devoid of the experience of identity's
universal dimension: man's identity as a human. Quite the
opposite is true. As indicated in the anthropological and
sociological records, group identity has two components, one of
which ensures group cohesion, while the other differentiates it
from the others. Philosophy has not devoted enough attention to
the actual dominance of the latter component that, in many
cases, has developed into ideological nationalism. The notion of
man's identity as a human being appears most of all in the great
world religions. Still, here too, there is a far-reaching
inconsistency between the doctrine and its implementation in
real life. In practice, it often turns out that only the followers of
our religion are fully human.

Barbara Skarga pointed out some of the central philosophical observations regarding the concept of identity (Skarga, 1997). In its quest for certainty, philosophical reflection out of necessity usually equated the thinking mind with the individual, thinking "I". It suffices to recall the Cartesian *cogito* or Kant's conception of "inner sense by means of which the mind contemplates itself" (Kant, 2015; 56). Only sometimes can one presuppose that underlying this individualism of philosophy was an implicit assumption about man's identity as a species. More often, such a presupposition is problematic. According to Skarga, the philosophy of dialogue seems to be most consistent in maintaining man's individualism while at the same time attempting – unsuccessfully – to overcome this dilemma. The appearance of the "Other" as a philosophical category, however, did not bring the identity of "man as a human being" closer in any way because the Other only confirms the autonomy, separateness, and – as Levinas put it – "the irreplaceability of the uniqueness of the Self" (Levinas, 1998;362). Emmanuel Levinas emphasizes that "A term can remain absolutely at the point of departure of relationship only as I" (Levinas, 1998;22), while "the Other is a Stranger" (Levinas, 1998;26). Thus in European thought, identity understood mainly as a guarantee of separateness has remained the dominant value that, no doubt, also has its imprint on the phenomenon of nationalism.

The concept of "humanity" invariably has the features of a purely theoretical category, not excluding those contexts in which it is entangled in fundamental, as it seems, moral norms. It suffices to analyze, for example, the idea of "crime against humanity" dealing with normative measures of a legal nature, the necessity of which clearly demonstrates the absence of the experience of human identity in its basic form, i.e., the identity of the man as a human being. It can be thought that the lack of this fundamental experience of identity made dramatic social conflicts possible in the past and makes them possible today, all the way up to the cases of genocide.

However, while pointing to this primary, anthropological dimension of identity and the related problems, I do not intend to understate the significance of the experience of identity in narrower ranges. This experience appears in the understanding of individuals and largely determines their social coexistence.

In modern times, the problem of identity is gaining additional significance due to the unprecedented transformations of the forms of organization of human societies. For a European, two phenomena of the current times seem particularly important: globalization and the process of European integration. Both processes compel the formulation of fundamental questions concerning identity. Although this is not always consciously so, these questions refer to matters as essential as the perception of the nature of human societies or the issue of the place which particular individuals occupy in them. In the past, identity was occasionally perceived as a problem primarily within philosophy and literature. Today, it is becoming a problem experienced by average members of society.

In individual experience, identity most often appears as a strictly personal fact, indisputable, problem-free, and permanent, while also "multidimensional". I am a man, and I am Polish, I am European, etc. The scholars, by nature inclined to complicate simple things in ordinary reception, turned identity into a problem. For they point out that occasionally there are people for whom identity is neither problem-free nor permanent; that there are situations in which our identity is shaken, or there are social groups that question it; that, in fact, identity is not a state but rather a process. It is also pointed out that it is a process that is strongly entangled in our social existence. As a result, identity is a spectacular example of a phenomenon that gains meaning only through social references while experienced as personal or even intimate. The identity of 'a man' is based on the social division by gender that is entangled in various cultural and social consequences. The identity of 'a Pole' implies not only the existence of a specific ethnic group but also a thorough knowledge of "Polishness" and a whole inventory of emotions

and values transmitted in the process of socialization. The identity of 'a European' refers to the idea of Europe that goes beyond its geographical sense. However, the scope of freedom in constructing this idea is enormous and depends on historical, social, and cultural conditions (Delanty, 1995). It is not surprising that Peter Berger considers identity a problem in the sociology of knowledge: "Identity, with its appropriate attachments of psychological reality, is always identity within a specific, socially constructed world" (Berger, 1970; 381), he writes. Such positioning of this issue makes it possible to extract in full its "dialectics", for which the idea of Berger and Luckmann provides an excellent theoretical framework: broadly understood knowledge defines the boundaries of our reality and is a tool that allows us to function between objective and subjective reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

In the current consideration, I am interested in national identity, a specific form of identity. Some classical works regard this kind of identity as inevitable and the most natural form. Amitai Etzioni cites Joseph de Maistre, who expressed this idea in the following way: "There is no such thing as a man in the world. In the course of my life, I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, etc.; I know, too, thanks to Montesquieu, that one can be a Persian. But as for man, I declare that I have never met him in my life; if he exists, he is unknown to me" (Etzioni 2019; 8).

Still, there is no doubt that when combined with reference to the concept of a nation, the issue of identity seems to become more problematic, as the concept is continuously a source of controversies. The aspects of a national identity of interest to me are, to a significant extent, a consequence of these controversies. Discussions associated with the concept of a nation have already become a separate field that cannot be responsibly used in these very preliminary considerations[1].

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[1] The Polish thought devoted to this issue not only has its specificity but also makes an important contribution to international discussions. See, e.g., Jerzy Szacki, Ojczyzna, naród, rewolucja, PIW, 1962, J.Goćkowski

However, to whatever extent my further remarks will be burdened by this artificial separation of the issue of a nation and the subject of national identity, it is evident that when taking a stand on the latter, I inevitably have to make choices regarding the resolution of the former, namely the understanding of the "nation." For there is no doubt that various aspects of national identity derive their meaning from specific, though often dissimilar, concepts of the nation. It also seems that the phenomenon of national identity inevitably has the negative component I wrote about earlier; at least potentially, it brings not only the experience of ethnic or cultural belonging but also the experience of separateness.

This very brief characterization already indicates that the phenomenon of interest to us – national identity – is multi-faceted by its nature. Only some of its aspects can be discussed here, and merely in an introductory manner. On the other hand, however, both our thinking and our social actions that refer to this type of identity typically arise from assumptions about its unambiguity. Hence, particularly in the situation of radical political and social change forming the current context of the European integration process, the question of national identity can be both a source of misunderstanding and quite deliberate social engineering measures consisting of manipulating political discourse. Therefore, it turns out that although complete independence of different aspects of national identity is impossible, its various forms can serve different functions. Some aspects of national identity form oppositions, adding drama to the whole matter.

Let us consider two pairs of such oppositions which seem to be the most obvious and causing the most substantial controversy:

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and A.Walicki, Idee i koncepcje narodu w polskiej myśli politycznej czasów porozbiorowych, PWN, Warszawa 1977, as well as A. Walicki, Idea narodu w polskiej myśli oświeceniowej, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2000, (published in 1994 in English as: 'The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood').

a) National identity as an experience of an individual and as a social fact,

b) National identity as a mental fact, a specific experience, and as a symbolic construct.

On its face, these two oppositions seem to symmetrically represent the same aspects of the phenomenon we are interested in: national identity understood as an experience of an individual is a form of a "mental fact", while understood as a social fact, it is a symbolic construct. However, the matter is more complicated as these oppositions belong to distinct logical orders, each characterized by different aspects.

The concept may support a completely different argument depending on what aspect of national identity is becoming an element of discourse. We should also note that while the first of these oppositions concerns "substantive" issues that deal with the "nature" of the phenomenon, the second draws attention to its methodological dimension. Let us now take a closer look at each of them.

a) National identity as an experience of an individual and as a social fact

We have already stated that national identity is both an individual psychological fact and a social fact. The value of this identity's personal experience is based on its supra-individual grounding in the specificity of an ethnic group. It is not surprising, then, that this coexistence of the individual and collective aspect of national identity raises theoretical disputes surrounding the concept of collective consciousness or even the idea of a "collective soul". It suffices to recall the distant reflection of Stanisław Ossowski on this subject (Ossowski 1987; 139). Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined community" is a compromise of a sort (Anderson 1986; 15).

One should agree with Antonina Kłoskowska that identity only makes sense as a phenomenon of individual

consciousness (Kłoskowska 1986; 103). On the other hand, the fact that the members of an ethnic group share the experience of national identity makes it an influential factor of group cohesion and social value.

There is no doubt that individual biography and the individual's overall experience mark how national identity is experienced. The psychological, personal aspect of national identity opens a space for specific variations of this experience that cannot be reduced to shared group experiences and values or treated as an unequivocal product of socialization efforts. For example, it is hard to deny that in the years of communist enslavement, even the officers of the party apparatus - or at least some of them - experienced their Polish identity. However, it seems equally sure that their experience of Polishness was different from the national identity of the system's opponents. After all, they referred to other symbols, different national heroes, and different traditions. And it was then that the so-called "progressive traditions" were being discovered.

Similarly, the national identity of the representatives of different social strata differs, at least in the way it is experienced, depending on the discourse used by the particular strata. What are the consequences of this individual diversity of national identity? The sociology of language provides enough arguments for this. They partially explain the various positions on such vital societal issues as, for example, the role of religion in the state or the prospect of membership in the European Union. Considering the above, one might ask where the function of national identity as a social binding comes from. What is the essence of the national community capable of reconciling individual differences? In other words, how is the social, collective aspect of national identity possible that causes society to display behavior that prompts some observers to attribute to it a common national identity? As suggested above, socialization, which creates a community of culture and values, does not explain everything.

At this point, I would like to move on to the second of the two oppositions formulated earlier.

b) National identity as a mental fact and as a symbolic construct.

Just as any experience of identity, national identity is most of all a personal, individual experience. However, as I have suggested before, this statement leaves many important questions unresolved. We can answer many of them by pointing out that national identity is a specific symbolic construct that may be the result of the work of intellectuals and lead to the phenomenon of nationalism. Most concisely, though using a mental shortcut, this can be expressed in Ernest Gellner's words, saying, "It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round" (Gellner, 1983; 55). However, we should clarify that Gellner's concept of "nationalism" has various meanings, and none of them reflect precisely my present intentions. Neither nationalism perceived as a political principle "which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983;1) nor nationalism as the mythology that provides the social group united by common interests with a new rationale needed to appear as a political and then also a cultural whole, i.e., as a nation (Gellner, 1983; 57).

Let us, therefore, stay within this chapter's framework and speak about national identity. Is it not so that the efforts of intellectuals creating tradition or artists writing national mythologies lead (contrary to previously formulated arguments) to the formation of collective consciousness, which the concept of a nation reflects? In that case, the national identity's individual experience would only be participating in something, by its very nature, non-individual or supra-individual. In Gellner's thought, however, one should say that these measures activate only specific sentiments that are indeed non-individual. However, only the internalization of these sentiments creates a sense of identity, which in turn translates into identification with a group

achieving the rank of a nation. Thus, national identity can be understood as a process for which the symbolic products of specialized officers creating social reality and caring for its coherence are decisive.

The literature indicates that national identity at first was usually shared only by some members of a society that – after many years – turned into a nation as a whole. In historical terms, this process accompanied the transformation of the idea of the state and the emergence of a modern sense of citizenship. However, in many cases, including those observed in Europe, national identity resulted from intellectuals' creative output. It seems that this was the case, for example, with the birth of the national identity of Slovaks or Ukrainians (Pynsent, 1998). In Gellner's tale of the fictional nation of Ruritania, it looked like this: "The nationalist intellectuals were full of warm and generous ardour on behalf of the co-nationals. When they donned folk costumes and trekked over the hills, composing the poems in the forest clearings, they did not also dream of one day becoming powerful bureaucrats, ambassadors, and ministers" (Gellner, 1983; 61). The tribal communities of Africa and Asia are slightly different cases. Only the state administration's deliberate actions, supported by the local intelligentsia, made it possible to cultivate the seeds of national identity.

In the fall of 1999, I had the opportunity to talk to the Malaysian Minister of Science and National Unity at a UNESCO conference. This office is quite open about its ambition to create conditions for a national identity binding the state together. The combination of science and national unity in one ministry is interesting. It could probably also be called the Ministry of Science and National Identity. Some of Gellner's descriptions of nationalism sound almost like a description of the tasks of such an office: "It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication" (Gellner, 1983; 57).

Thus, national identity as the work of intellectuals, politicians, or artists seems to provide unique individual experiences with a social dimension. It is precisely thanks to the sphere of symbols and national mythologies that national identity becomes one of the most important social values. After all, it refers to what is shared and, at the same time, remains something most personal. This is how the complementarity of these two aspects explains the strength of national identity. It is an irresistible force available for use, whether by politicians or publicists. Hence, the catchphrase of a threat to national identity due to European integration has become one of the most critical issues in election campaigns in the EU member countries and those aspiring to membership. An excellent example of this was a German publication warning the Germans of losing national identity, among other things, due to giving up their currency in favor of the Euro (Schwilk, 1997). Effective use, especially in a power struggle, of the catchphrase of the threat to national identity depends on the extent to which different aspects of national identity can be presented in the political discourse as autonomous entities or to what extent their inevitable complementarity can be hidden.

The analysis in this part of the study shows that nationalism is a phenomenon that is too fundamental to be easily discarded. On the contrary, a better strategy would be to turn it into a positive attitude while rejecting its ideological, xenophobic forms.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM VERSUS ITS CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS

When discussing nationalism, we have a problem not only with perceiving its cultural, social, and political basis but also with the very concept. Nationalism can be conceived as a synonym of patriotism, usually understood as a positive, emotionally-laden attitude toward one's country. The essential distinction necessary for any contemporary debate about this subject is between the ideology of nationalism and nationalism understood as a kind of sentiment. Of course, every ideologist counts on the relevant emotions to support their ideological construction. It is also worth remembering that the word 'nationalism' is just a conceptual instrument to talk about the specific social and political phenomenon thus labeled by the scholar, journalist, or politician. Therefore, it is relatively easy to formulate overstatements and otherwise misuse this word when employing it. Sometimes this happens deliberately, for political reasons, as when used in an accusation against a political rival.

From the neutral meaning to the political nightmare

Although I do not aim to present various meanings or theories of nationalism in the current text, some basic theoretical approaches may be helpful. Most authors defining nationalism draw upon Max Weber's writings on the concept of a nation: "A nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence a nation is a