

# On the European Tradition of Nationalism and Its National Codes

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Gertjan Dijkink  
University of Amsterdam\*

*In its mature form nationalist discourse combines three concepts or principles: freedom (or civil rights), territorial unity and international status. This particular combination constitutes the strength of nationalist thought rather than the separate idea of territorial unity (the correspondence of cultural and political unit) alone. This article draws attention on the one hand to the connection between heritage and individual dignity and on the other hand to the role of international relations in the development of nationalist discourse in Europe. National myths in the 19th century appeal to these concepts and usually to more than one at the same time. Nevertheless, the dominance of some themes allows to distinguish between the countries of Europe on the basis of their most salient national myths. The hypothesis is proposed that this distinction can be connected with divergent political attitudes toward supra-national developments (European integration).*

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Most problems in understanding social processes have their origin in either of two circumstances: the personal background (values) of the observer and the theoretical problem of coupling structural principles and social motivations which usually results in emphasizing the one at the expense of the other. The study of nationalism is no exception to this pattern, both sources of misrepresentation have haunted the field. Negative reactions to nationalism in the U.S. and Western Europe, accompanying the political transformations in post-communist Europe after 1989, generally ignored the positive role that nationalism played in the transformation to modernity and democracy in West-European national histories.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand a theorist like Ernest Gellner who proved himself to be highly aware of the role of modernization in nationalism (perhaps because he combined a Central European and Western European personal background), foundered on his strongly functional approach (O'Leary, 1998). This entails a limited value of his views for the understanding of nationalism in non-industrial situations or in newly emerging countries.

In this article I will conceive of nationalism as a hegemonic discourse or belief-system centering on three interlocking principles.<sup>2</sup> The combination of these principles explains the mobilizing power which distinguishes 19th century nationalism

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\* Department of Social Geography, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

from various 'onsets of nationalism' that have been identified with earlier dates. This approach better fits the manifestation of nationalism in Western European countries like Germany and France than Gellner's theory does and it also covers nationalism in countries that do not comply with the structural conditions specified by Gellner (countries not characterized by internal ethnic and cultural oppositions). Because it emphasizes individual values and collective articulation my approach is more akin to the work of Anthony Smith (Smith, 1991) but like other students of nationalism I am indebted to Gellner for his brilliant discussion of the relation between nationalism and modernity (Gellner, 1983).

In the second part of this article I will analyze whether the three principles distinguished can be recognized in the 19th century historical discourses of European nations. This aim actually exceeds the resources of an individual researcher but I have made my work easier by using material collected for the exhibition 'Myths of Europe' in Berlin 1998. In spite of the obvious deficiencies of museum collections, these data still offer a richer empirical account of the nationalist imagination than a mere illustrative approach would do.

## NATIONALISM AS HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE

Gellner's central argument is that the occurrence of nationalism supposes 'a' society which firstly is culturally segmented and secondly undergoes a process of modernization (industrialization) raising a demand for flexible and general skills. Static and culturally segmented (agrarian) societies do not provide such skills, they only know a kind of 'on the job' training fixing the skills for the rest of a person's working life. Skills in industrial society, characterized by permanent change, require mass literacy and mass education, which once more suppose cultural homogeneity. Nationalism, according to Gellner, is the movement that demands cultural homogeneity within one political unit.

The good thing of this perspective is that it connects nationalism with human motivations, at least with prospects of a better life, but the bad thing is that it is not quite clear why individuals should see nationalism as requisite to economic change. Isn't it more likely that political action of individuals will be elicited directly by the humiliating experience of being expelled from 'public' life, of constituting a negligible quantity in society? Because social discrimination in pre-industrial society was legitimized by cultural difference and status, a more realistic challenge in the cultural sphere was to revalue the low culture as one that was both true and ancient. After 1760—the year in which the Scotsman James Macpherson published his 'Fragments of Ancient Poetry' ('poems of Ossian')—the 'discovery' of ancient manuscripts or the 'recording' of authentic folk tales and poetry had become a real hype in Europe. Few people at that time were willing to concede that it was all dreamed up, perhaps with the aid of a few real songs and legends which had been orally transferred from generation to generation. But one should realize that the motivat-

ing idea was freedom and dignity. The basic experience was the discovery of the value of common people and common life, not hate towards other peoples. One of the early German philosophers of nationalism, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), assigned equal value to the popular songs of the Laps, the Scots, the Scandinavians, etc. as to those of the Germans (Thiesse, 1999). This ‘natural’ perspective on the difference between nations constituted, according to Herder, a healthy antidote against the authoritarian conception of states as products of wars between royal dynasties.

In a time when nationalism is often associated with what John Agnew has called the ‘territorial trap’, a dominance of all institutions and values by state (national) interests and aims, these basic roots of nationalism in Western history imply an important message. This message warns against a retrospective history that caricatures nationalism as something that was only inspired by hatred and which prevents us from understanding what people across the border think. As Agnew suggests, literary works like novels have only recently cast off their national dress and started to stage principal characters that are less tied to a national state (Agnew, 1998). But national novels in Europe already received international acclaim during the 19th century and the ‘ancient’ epics of one particular nation could arouse widespread interest in the rest of Europe after 1800. As we know from a contemporary witness one of the walls in Josephine de Beauharnais’ castle was adorned with a painting showing the Scottish minstrel Ossian receiving French war heroes. The nationalist German poet Klopstock was made honorary citizen of the French Republic in 1792. Such events prove what Thiesse calls the cosmopolitan character of early 19th century nationalism (Thiesse, 1999).

Individual dignity and citizenship aroused the initial euphoria of nationalist movements. The ideal was expressed by the major slogan of the French Revolution, freedom, equality and brotherhood, and it is vividly recounted in personal documents like the letters written by a student from Bukovina (current Romania/Ukraine) who took part in the 1848 revolutionary events in Vienna (Frank-Doefering, 1988). He tells how fellow-students from different nationalities within the Habsburg Empire—Italians, Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, etc.—initially fraternized in their resistance against the Ancien Régime. However, after a few months the national groups fell apart because many of them turned to supporting territorial independence struggles in their home regions. So territorial separation on a cultural basis was undoubtedly another salient principle in the turmoil of 1848. But even Mazzini’s ‘Young Italy’ movement (1832–1844) had clearly adopted the fraternization of European peoples as the ultimate aim of its nationalist politics. Similar aims were voiced by national thinkers like Hegel in Germany and Michelet in France (Duroselle, 1965).

The appeal to principles like popular culture and citizenship, however, does not mean that nationalism was simply an expression of the popular will. The 18th century had witnessed the rise of several classes or groups which recognized in nationalism a useful tool for healing their wounded feelings of dignity particularly vis-à-vis the ruling elite. Let me again refer to Gellner’s theory and its flaws in this respect. In

Table 1: Gellner's typology of nationalism-inducing and nationalism-thwarting situations.

	<i>P</i>	$\sim P$	
	<i>E</i>	$\sim E$	
1	A	A	early industrialism without ethnic catalyst
2	A	B	Habsburg (and points east and south) nationalism
	<i>E</i>	<i>E</i>	
3	A	A	mature homogeneous industrialism
4	A	B	classic liberal Western nationalism
	$\sim E$	<i>E</i>	
5	A	A	Decembrist revolutionary, but not nationalist situation
6	A	B	diaspora nationalism
	$\sim E$	$\sim E$	
7	A	A	untypical pre-nationalist situation
8	A	B	typical pre-nationalist situation

Source: Gellner, 1983:94.

Nations and Nationalism Gellner presents a typology of nationalism-inducing and nationalism-thwarting situations (Table 1). In accordance with his theory this scheme contains three dimensions: a distinction between power-holders and the rest (*P* and  $\sim P$ ), a distinction between those who have access to modern education or higher culture and those who have not (*E* and  $\sim E$ ) and a distinction between situations in which the power-holders and the rest either share the same culture (A-A) or represent different cultural groups (A-B). Nationalism is only induced if power-holders represent one culture in a multicultural arena (A-B) and if a society has been affected by a modernization process which has introduced some modern education and knowledge (*E*). The different ways in which access to modern education is distributed between the power-holders and the rest constitutes the basis for distinguishing several types of nationalism-inducing situations. For example: Habsburg (ethnic) nationalism occurs if only belonging to the culture of the power-holders (particularly the German speaking elite) gives access to higher education (and to power). The result is a nationalism that pursues secession. In the development of Western liberal nationalism all cultural groups had equal access to modern education and that enabled the development of a new imagined community that transcended cultural differences while leaving the political unit intact.

There are several problems with this scheme. One of the most urgent questions is what the boundaries of the relevant political arena are. The Habsburg case may be obvious because it was a territorial sovereign state but how do we interpret Germany before its unification? Is German nationalism to be understood only within each separate political unit (principality) as these existed let us say around 1800?

That seems an awkward way to account for the scale of German nationalism. And moreover: what is the nature of the cultural difference that is supposed to lie at the root of liberal nationalism? Was it disdain for the ordinary German culture by German sovereigns and their frenchified court-culture? But why then does Gellner's typology classify the equally autocratic system of 19th century Russia as culturally homogeneous (that means not conducive to nationalism)?

There are two blind spots in Gellner's story which appear to be quite essential if one looks for an alternative explanation of nationalism: the role of international relations in the development of 19th century nationalism and the frustration of groups which although culturally not different from the power-holders are denied access to governmental power. German nationalism was unleashed by international events: the French Revolution and the Napoleonic conquests on German territory. The message of the French revolution was ambiguous. On the one hand it celebrated the 'natural' power of the people which enthused philosophers like Herder and Hegel. On the other hand its message about common sense and majority voting as the ultimate political truth threatened both the lofty ideal of 'Bildung' (a profound submersion in the work of German culture heroes) and the role of German intellectuals as educators and arbiters of taste. This cultural role of the German intelligentsia was important for their identity because autocratic rulers denied them each political role (Kohn, 1967). The message of the Napoleonic wars was more unequivocal. It revealed that a Germany led by autocratic rulers was not powerful enough and that the sovereigns were easily inclined to bargain national interests if they could save their own position. Nationalism offered an answer to this problem which was both logical (after the failures of autocratic rulers the strength of Germany could only flow from the 'Volk') and satisfied the interests of the cultural elite.

Notwithstanding the French Revolution's message about the elimination of class interests and differences, the Revolution itself was no less driven on by interests and frustrations of a specific class than German nationalism was. The bourgeois character of the French Revolution has been often emphasized but as Liah Greenfield suggests it was rather the nobility which in the 18th century laid the foundation of French nationalism (Greenfield, 1992). The absolutism of the French monarchy alienated the French nobility so that they could no longer identify themselves with the power-holder. At the other hand their material wealth was surpassed by the new bourgeoisie whose members were occasionally even ennobled by the Crown. The resentment about such incursions upon their class identity motivated the nobility to search for another status marker. They redefined themselves as a cultural elite (the admiration for German culture among nobility members like Mme de Staël should not come as a surprise) but did not develop this elite character primarily as a distinction with respect to the common French people but in opposition to the identity of Great Britain, a country by which they felt humiliated during several international conflicts. What the nobility detested in British society—the dominance of material interests and its shallow liberalism—happened to be the character traits of the class that threatened them in domestic society as well.

Ultimately the (petty) bourgeoisie would embrace nationalism as well and become its most conspicuous promoter in England, France and Germany. The bourgeoisie was not particularly interested in defining themselves as a cultural elite but appreciated the national state as protector of civil rights and economic interests. This confluence of quite diverse interests in one system of thought is the quintessential feature of each hegemonic discourse or vision. Even if a hegemonic discourse does not serve each social group equally well in the long run, its articulation can hardly be adjusted once certain initial steps are set. Nationalism perhaps started with the recognition of individual responsibility and freedom during the Reformation. But the meaning of freedom essentially changed when culture was going to be used in the 18th century to ground the 'natural' rights and dignity of the common people. And the meaning of culture changed when it became related to an international stage that was to demonstrate the superiority of national values and that could become a sphere of missionary activities pursuing the salvation of mankind (Tismaneanu, 1998) or colonialism (Hall, 1999). This suggests the absorption of three important goals or values in one model of nationalist thought: freedom (or civil rights), cultural purity (within a territory) and international status (prestige or victimization). Nationalism is not simply a bundle of three historic ideals but involves three concepts which can only be understood within this particular intellectual system because they legitimize each other.

An intellectual system can be operative without actively pursuing all its goals. Intellectuals in the 19th century could successfully focus on mere territorial unity (Germany) or on the dissemination of Russian culture among the Giliaks of the lower Amur-region (Bassin, 1994) whereas such actions still derived their galvanizing power from the full framework of nationalist assumptions and promises. Actual citizenship was difficult to accomplish in 19th century Germany and Russia but pursuing other nationalist ideals seemed to serve the goal of individual dignity as well. A quite different escape route for blocked national goals is human fantasy. The Russian painter Ilya Repin portrayed Ivan the Terrible the moment shortly after he had slain his oldest son. The subject had been depicted earlier but Repin painted the tsar without the paraphernalia of his office and with the facial expression of someone who is horrified by what he has done, a homely but terrifying scene. Such super-realistic images representing the emperor as someone everybody could have known himself evoke a feeling of union that could not be realized in a political way. It is no surprise that the Romanovs considered it subversive art.

Table 2 shows this framework of three nationalist concepts and (in the horizontal dimension) the distinction between the two modes of action and invention. In the light of Benedict Anderson's message that nations are always 'imagined communities', this distinction seems somewhat doubtful (Anderson, 1983). However, one can hardly maintain that it doesn't matter if people enjoy constitutional rights or if they are only allowed to imagine the monarch as an ordinary person. A similar distinction applies to the idea of territorial cultural homogeneity. One may define culture as something purely subjective but it is also possible to consider culture as a

Table 2: Goals in nationalist movements.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Invention Examples</i>
Freedom / Civil Rights	Inclusion (legislation)	Romantic realism (art)
	Exclusion	'Ancient' songs
Territorial Unity	Mass education	Invasion stories
International Status	Colonialism	'God's people' myth

people processing institution (education) rather than as an assumed ancient structure of feeling about the world. The distinction between international influence as reality and as myth about ones former or future role in the world doesn't need much comment after this.

It is true that an emphasis on either 'invention' or 'action' makes little difference as for the applicability of the label 'nationalism' but it may be useful in describing different patterns of nationalism. As suggested above, certain regimes or leaders opposed nationalist goals. Statesmen like Bismarck and Napoleon III were on the one hand typical of the old autocratic order that distrusted public sentiments and popular culture but on the other hand, as typical 19th century politicians, they were well aware of the political power of nationalism and the way it could be put to use in international politics. Apart from an official endorsement of nationalism in foreign policy the German intelligentsia pursued cultural goals. The lacuna in the action mode concerned individual freedom and rights. This leads one to suspect that freedom/civil rights may have found expression predominantly in the invention mode in Germany. Indeed romantic realism can be identified in Germany as a form of art that was strongly tied to nationalism. It however did not specialize (like Repin did) in depicting rulers as ordinary people but in somewhat veiled allusions to the wars of liberation (against France) and its fallen heroes. On a series of romantic paintings (1819–1835) of Caspar David Friedrich a couple is pictured (mostly two men, in one case a man and a woman) staring peacefully at the hazy light of the full moon in a wilderness. On the question "what is on their minds"? Friedrich seems to have answered "subversive thoughts" (Hermand, 1982). Here a revolution was simulated rather than social equality.

### THE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL MYTHS

If civil rights, territorial unity and prestige constitute the building blocks of nationalism one should be able to recognize these elements in the way a nation looks at its own history. The subjectivity in writing history (and ones identity) springs from two mental acts: a. the decision to select one historic fact and to ignore another; b. the inclusion of pure fantasy or legend. For the exhibition 'Myths of the Nations' in Berlin (Flacke, 1998) historians associated with national museums in 17

European countries, were asked to select five national myths that had been often alluded to in 19th century illustrations and art. Myth in this context obviously implies a continuum between real historical facts (albeit subjectively interpreted) and completely fantasized events. The 19th century was chosen because it was the century in which the national 'personalities' in Europe became fixed. One wonders if the concept national myth was sufficiently unequivocal in this project and how (or if) the need to collect pictorial material has biased the selection process. However, I assume that the criterion of frequent reference to a historical narrative in illustrations, articles of use or art works was able to eliminate much ambiguity.

The favorite event in national myths is unmistakably the national liberation struggle although this term still covers a bewildering variety of stories. A typical narrative involves a resistance act targeted on members of a ruling elite or their servants followed by a mass uprising. It is important that the rulers can be depicted as foreign, as an occupying force. Since events behind such myths often occurred when the state sovereignty was exclusively connected with dynasties ruling over several non-contiguous territories the concept of 'foreign rule' was not applicable but for the same reason its use was also tempting for 19th century national historians. Consequently one may classify these myths as preoccupied with 'territorial unity'. Classification, however, is not so straightforward since the strength of national myths relies on their openness to many interpretations. The mythical narrative about popular uprisings often suggests a setting in which civil rights were violated as well. This is a typical nationalist interpretation ignoring the real pattern of loyalties to a sovereign and the relative indifference of the lower classes to the nature of the ruling system. Nonetheless 19th century artists were eager to show the participation of all social classes in a liberation struggle.

The Italian myth of the 'Sicilian Vespers' recounts how a 'French' soldier, a servant of the house of Anjou, assaulted the young bride Bianca under the pretext of searching for weapons. The bride's brother and her groom immediately revenged the act of indecency and this became the signal for a great revolt in Palermo in 1282. Many pictures show the initial incident: the bride with disordered dress, relatives with bared swords and a vague allusion to public unrest in the background. The myth links the struggle for territorial independence with individual dignity and family values. Similar ambiguities can be found with regard to other cells in our table. Historical actions that apparently aim at the achievement of territorial unity can sometimes be interpreted as expressions of international status. Tsar Ivan III became a Russian national hero because he resisted paying a tribute to the Khan of Kasan, a Tartar ruler (1480). The proud refusal of Ivan III—pictures show him just after he has torn the writ and thrown it to the ground—expresses both a liberation of the yoke of Muslim tyrants and the capability to threaten other sovereign powers. A reverse example is the battle of Trafalgar in which Nelson died (1805). The myth and battle affirmed Britain's status as sea-power but the vision of French culture as completely incompatible with British culture and the resulting invasion fears (Territorial unity) were stimulated as well (Colley, 1992; Dijkink, 1996).



The Sicilian Vespers and Ivan III myths clearly use the Us-Them distinction but not all myths that somehow legitimize territorial unity deal with the expulsion of foreign influence. Some of them only tell the story of a legendary ancestor or a culture hero like Dante (Italy) or Rembrandt (Netherlands) without any (negative) regard to other cultures. Even battles do not always imply expulsion of the foreign. With the battle of Hastings (1066) the input of a foreign (Viking) element was hailed as a reinforcement of the English national character. This variety of meaningful events that can all be connected with the theme of 'territorial unity' suggests a further distinction between what I will call 'heritage' and 'exclusion'. Heritage concerns all foundation acts of a nation, lives and deeds of culture heroes, events which have decided a nation's religion and character, in short a specification of the nation's genes.

I do not claim that a more subtle classification like the subdivision proposed above eliminates all ambiguity in the interpretation of myths. Openness to different interpretations is the intrinsic value of each myth in the framework of nationalist discourse and this ambiguity will not disappear by closer scrutiny of the myth or its reception. One of the more ambiguous myths, in this respect, is one that I assigned to the 'heritage' category for the comparison of national codes (see below): Martin Luther's burning of the papal letter warning him about excommunication (1520). Luther had been a legendary symbol of individual freedom of speech and opinion already before the dawn of nationalism. This meaning was still held in esteem in the 19th century but Luther's national significance rather became that of one who had raised the status of the German language by turning it into the official religious language (Bible translation). Thirdly the Luther myth may be seen from the perspective of exclusion because he resisted the influence of Rome. In a magazine illustration from 1875 Hermann the Cheruskan (another mythical figure who gained the victory over the Roman army in AD 9) and Martin Luther were placed side by side with the caption 'Against Rome'.

A puzzling event in national myths is the historic battle that ends in dramatic defeat of the nation. The defeat of the Serbs at Kosovo polje (1389) has for obvious reasons aroused much international interest recently but similar myths are fostered all over Europe. A mythical defeat appears to take place in or shortly after a period when the nation or its ancient precursor has reached the zenith of its power or territorial expansion. The Greek myth about the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the Norwegian myth about the lost battle of Stamfordbridge (1066) represent this state of affairs. The commemoration of such fateful events helps to overstep a less successful or even dark period that followed glorious times and helps to reconnect with that tradition. In cases where the comparison between current national life and ancestral power does not yield traumatic feelings a defeat may simply demonstrate the sacrifices ancestors have made in defending the 'country' and the dignity they preserved when facing superior numbers (Vercingetorix against the Romans, France 52 BC).

Thus defeats can be often interpreted as symbols of the 'international status' category. Battles occurring outside the current (19th century) national territory like

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798) obviously belong to this category as well as some rare philanthropic actions. During the French-German war of 1871 the Swiss admitted a unit of the defeated French army (the Bourbaki army) to their territory and gave it large-scale humanitarian aid. This fits the Swiss ideal of acquiring international prestige by means of military neutrality and humanitarian commitment.

Whatever the position of a country in the international system or its conception of mission, myths about external actions should be judged in relation to the complete spectrum of nationalist values. What I mean with this statement is that the 'international status' myth is fostered in order to legitimize exclusion, heritage and civil rights. As I argued in the beginning of this article the dignity of common man was instated by recognizing the value of popular culture (heritage). Heritage can only be warranted in a territorial community that knows the distinction between true and false principles (exclusion). Finally the belief in good principles needs an external world for both application and recognition. This does not necessarily mean an antagonism of 'the nation against the rest'. Actually recognition supposes a belief in the power of judgment of others or in the kinship with other nations. So nationalism ends in a paradox that involves the pursuit of two opposite principles: universalism and particularism.<sup>3</sup> Universalism looks at the nation as savior of Mankind, particularism suggests that the differences with the rest of the world should be safeguarded. The intricacies that follow from this paradox have become very pervasive in the histories of France and the U.S.A.

## NATIONAL CODES

Do national myths reveal any striking difference between European countries? After what I have said about the ambiguity of mythical material, it appears unwarranted to distinguish countries on the basis of only five national myths and three or four categories. Yet, this prudence may also block our view of some interesting contrasts and singularities. The prerequisite for a comparative analysis is that we can categorize myths in a straightforward way without speculating on their diverse reception, that means like content analysis is often carried out. I believe that a procedure using the concepts introduced in this article is possible, provided that we only pay attention to rather general patterns.

In order to apply the categories used above, we will consider as a 'civil rights' myth any reference in 19th century historical narratives to the adoption of a law (constitution) or the implementation of reform measures that have eliminated a tradition of injustice. The Danish 'land reform' from the 18th century, liberating a large part of the Danish peasants from their state of servitude, is an example of the latter. As 'heritage' we will consider all myths about founders of the nation, culture heroes (Dante) and cultural change. Cultural change covers the encountering of different groups which later merged in the national collective (Hastings battle) as well as religious conversions (French myth about King Clovis, 496). 'Exclusion' will

refer to all struggles on the current (19th century) territory of the nation with a power that is later defined as 'foreign' (Sicilian Vespers). Finally the label 'international status' will be attributed to all battles outside the national territory, adventurous enterprises (like the discovery of America by the Vikings, 1000) and forms of external humanitarian aid (Switzerland 1871). This definition allows a classification of the myths of the Berlin exhibition without many in-betweens.

'Civil rights' appears to have the lowest occurrence rate, which suggests considering countries with a positive score on this category as a special type (type 1), irrespective of the scores on other categories.<sup>4</sup> These countries are located on the western fringe of Europe: Britain, Denmark, France and Norway with the exception of Poland and Switzerland. They are often identified with 'civic nationalism' in distinction of 'ethnic nationalism'. This collection of myths seems to affirm this distinction although we miss Belgium and the Netherlands (on the basis of their location) and Sweden in the list. Sweden belongs to a group of countries displaying the complete variety of myths with the exception of freedom/civil rights (type 2). The other members are Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Russia. All of them have been important geopolitical players in the past (which explains their score on the power/prestige category) and they also have assigned much power to the state pole in the individual-state continuum. In the 20th century we might identify this as a form of collectivism (Russia) or welfare-statism (the others).

For the reasons of reliability mentioned above I will not dwell upon each pattern in this comparison (there are 16 possible combinations<sup>5</sup>) but only focus on two other types. One is represented by a group of countries of which the myths are limited to the exclusion and power/prestige category or even only to exclusion: Belgium, Greece and Spain (type 3). Apparently these nations view their history as a gigantic struggle either for freedom or for prestige against world powers. The other group (type 4) consists of countries with myths in the heritage and exclusion categories: Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy. The limitation to 'territorial unity' of their myths is not surprising since these nations were still struggling for independence in the 19th century.

The results have a certain face validity which partly stems from the fact that in objectively defining our categories we had to emphasize the real historical events. So we recognize geographic proximity of countries of the same type (northwestern fringe of Europe, middle Europe, southern Europe) and historical similarities (early state formation, former members of Austrian Empire). There are also some surprises like Poland's variety of myths and Belgium's affinity with the south-European type. It is easy to think of an explanation for such 'anomalies' but that would overshoot the modest aim of our analysis.

A more challenging question is if the differences found have any relation with current political behavior or the political culture of these nations. Nationalism is today not the most conspicuous behavior in Western European affairs but if there is any issue to which national traditions may be important it is European integration. It is probably no coincidence that countries here identified as belonging to the free-

Table 3: Types of reference in national myths with historical dates (AD if not indicated otherwise). Based on myths collected for the exhibition *Mythen der Nationen* in the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin (20 Mar 98 to June 98).

<i>Type</i>	<i>Value:</i>	<i>C. Rights</i>	<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Exclusion</i>	<i>Int. Status</i>
2	Austria		1266, 1515, 1740–	1683	1809
3	Belgium			1302, 1567–, 1813, 1830–	1099
4	Czech Rep.		7th c., 1316– 1415	1278, 1620	
1	Denmark	18th c.		10th c., 1340, 1864	1219
1	France	1789	496	52, 1429	1798
2	Germany		1520	9, 1813	1190, 1871
1	Gr. Britain	1215, 1688	1066		1588, 1805
3	Greece			1821–, 1826	500 BC, 350 BC, 1453
4	Hungary		9th c., 1001, 1443–	1526, 1848	
4	Italy		1265–, 1860	1176, 1282, 1746	
2	Netherlands		1606–	69, 1533–1574	1831
1	Norway	1814	1030	1612	1000, 1066
1	Poland	1791	860	1410, 1794	1683
2	Russia		962–	1440, 1530	1220–, 1672–
3	Spain			133 BC, 718, 1492, 1521, 1808	
2	Sweden		1527	1434, 1521–	1632, 1718
1	Switzerland	1291	1529	1386	1798, 1871

dom/civil rights type (type 1, with the exception of France) have shown most reserves to European integration and passed most criticism on the weak functioning of democracy in the E.U. The collective or statist type (2) consists of countries (Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden) which tend to emphasize the soundness of the institutional framework of the E.U. (finance, social security) rather than the rights of the individual citizen. Then there is a group of countries (type 3) which see the E.U. mainly as a solution for internal and external tensions (Belgium, Greece and Spain).

Their expectations can be summarized in the word 'solidarity'. Finally the group (type 4) which represents the national code 'heritage + exclusion' consists of two prospective E.U. members (Czech Rep. and Hungary) and one original member (Italy). Their national code might be interpreted as one that emphasizes spiritual unity. Intellectual movements in the Czech Republic and Hungary during the communist period have indeed emphasized European ideal (as counterbalance against the Soviet Union, see Kundera, 1984).

These patterns suggest hypotheses rather than firm conclusions. I do not claim that there is a necessary link between the pattern of 19th century national myths and current political strategies aiming at the E.U. Most countries of the E.U. and prospective members have largely the same dominant goal: economic growth. However, I also believe that there are political-cultural features of the 'longue durée' which complicate political unity in the E.U. Probably countries cannot be so neatly classified in types of political culture as this analysis suggests. If there is some truth in these four types they may also represent influences which are intermingled in some countries. France seems to be such a junction of influences rather than a pure representative of the individualist type.

## CONCLUSION

The hegemony of nationalist thought results from the coupling of individual dignity and collective identity and the possibility to switch between invention and reality. The basic formula was discovered in the 18th century when low culture became a reason for pride and a territorial marker. Individual dignity is legitimized by cultural equality or warranted by legislation. The analysis of myths shows that most European countries have either a myth about civil rights or about heritage or that they have both myths (Belgium, Spain and Greece being exceptions). Exclusion, however, is the most favorite image connected with the nationalist idea in the 19th century.

The goal of territorial (cultural) homogeneity made citizens unassailable to the coercion of those who previously appealed to personal distinction or heritage in order to exercise their power. At the same time the sublimation of individual freedom into mass culture removed the institutional setting which so palpably had demonstrated the power of culture in local life. In the course of the 19th century the international system presented a welcome outlet. In the active sphere colonialism suggested the superiority of all classes vis-à-vis the colonial subject. In the invention mode the national culture could be represented as an indispensable tool for the salvation of Mankind. This 'international status' value of nationalism is typically lacking in Gellner's theory about nationalism.

The twentieth century with its two devastating world wars has likely added new elements to the national myths in Europe. International decision making (like in the Kosovo crisis) still bears the mark of Second World War events. According to some

commentators the influence of these experiences has been to discourage nationalist thought. On the other hand nationalism's cosmopolitan core is able to incorporate much of 'global era' politics. A sophisticated approach to its history and versatility is imperative.

## NOTES

1. In 1990 *TIME* Magazine had a cover story about the changes in Central and Eastern Europe with the title 'Old Demon' (*TIME*, August, 1990).
2. Ignore the possible distinction between discourse and belief-system analysis. See for a discussion: Larsen, 1997.
3. Nairn (1990) calls the alternating emphasis on both inclusion and exclusion nationalism's 'Janus face'.
4. A Boolean analysis distinguishing 16 theoretical combinations (see Ragin, 1987) is the most logical approach but would also introduce a misplaced degree of accuracy.
5. See note 3.

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