Jacek Poniedziałek
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3757-2750
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN ETHNICISM IN THE LIGHT OF WESTERN STUDIES ON NATION AND NATIONALISM

Abstract: The aim of this article is to critically analyze the binary concept of civic nations represented by the civic communities of Western Europe and ethnic groups living in Central and Eastern Europe. The works of Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly were selected for research because they have used the indicated concept in their texts, and have become an inspiration for many researchers of national issues. The former represents a deterministic trend of sociological inquiries, the latter – social constructivism. Due to the above, they are representative examples of academic reflection on national issues widespread in Western European thought. The research proposes to reject the binary model in which civil nations were characterized as rational and striving for consensus communities and ethnic groups as irrational communities striving for conflict. The analytical model characterizing nations as political and ethnic communities was proposed instead of it.

Keywords: civil and ethnic nations, nations of Central and Eastern Europe, Ernest Gellner, John Breuilly, studies on nation and nationalism

This article aims to deconstruct the binary concept of nations that is commonly used in Western studies on nation and nationalism. The concept defines, on the one hand, the rational Western European political communities integrated by consensus which were being shaped based on a prevalent formal and legal status of state citizenship, referred to as c i v i c   n a t i o n s or p o l i t i c a l   n a t i o n s. On the other hand, it identifies the aggressive and irrational nations from Central and Eastern Europe, shaped by ethnicity, integrated by internal coercion and external conflicts, referred to as e t h n i c   n a t i o n s. This article critically analyses the work of two scholars, E. Gellner and J. Breuilly, who use the above-mentioned concept. These scholars were chosen because their writings are well known, recognised, and often quoted in sociological studies on the concepts of nation and nationalism. Secondly, they are the representatives of two mainstream sociological thoughts; Gellner being an advocate of social determinism, and Breuilly who represents the paradigm of social constructivism. Their perspectives are, therefore, paradigmatic. The present analysis uses the hermeneutic method, and the subjects of the present study are

the writings of these two authors. The first part of the article presents the concept of two types of nations developed by F. Meinecke, and its modification presented in the writings of H. Kohn, because it was Kohn's concept that became the inspiration for Gellner and Breuilly. Their theories will be presented in the subsequent part of the article, which will be followed by a section devoted to their criticism. The intention of this article is to encourage scholars to revise the prevalent in sociology theory that describe the Central and Eastern European nations as ethnic, aggressive and irrational communities.

Introduction

The dichotomy between the Western, rational and liberal type of political nation shaped by social ties that are based on the legal status of citizenship and the Eastern European model based on the organically defined ethnicity constitutes one of the most deeply rooted and enduring axioms in sociological studies of nation and nationalism. This theoretical approach, based on the above axiom, almost always describes Western nations as having positive features. Eastern ethnicism is thought to be typical of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe and characterised by an irrational sentiment that creates a strong emotional attachment of people to those who they consider ethnically close. Such attachment, in turn, frequently leads to conflicts and aggression directed at the members of other ethnic groups. This happens in areas where these ethnic groups failed to create their separate states because they have historically lived in multinational empires. In civic nations, the ethnic component plays a marginal role. In ethnic nations, the citizenship aspect constitutes a demand, not a fact. Therefore, in these nations, ethnic components constitute the main nation-building factor. The civic nation is more inclusive and less exposed to conflicts because it took shape based on a consensus related to the right to citizenship. The prevailing concept in the ethnic model is the principle of exclusivity which stems from being assigned membership that results from birth and sharing common mythical ancestors (Smith 1998, 192-195).

The scholar who laid the foundation for such typology of nations was Meinecke, a German historian who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, defined the *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation*. The state nation is integrated by political ties, its members identify themselves with it mainly due to the formal and legal criterion of citizenship. Meinecke criticised the political model of civic state by claiming that this type of connection within a nation cannot provide the state with stability and strength. States within which cultural nations evolve are stable and united, and therefore, have the potential to become hegemonic states. In such a nation, ties result from the feeling of distinctness and unshaken validity of culture, the nation's separate language and common ancestry. The states where this model of the nation

developed constitute a more mature and more developed form of organisation of social life. Cultural nations may evolve only within already existing state nations, and Germany was supposed to be the most excellent example of such states. Ethnic groups that do not have their own states will never evolve into cultural nations because they are characterised by cultural and political underdevelopment that hinders such evolution. Meinecke illustrated this providing the examples of Eastern European peoples, including Poles, Latvians or the speakers of Slavic languages (Meinecke 1928, 3).

His works resonate with the philosophy of J. G. Herder and J. G. Fichte both of whom stated that the essence of a nation is its spirit (*Volksgeist*) shaped by the nation's cultural distinguishing features such as a common history, a single language, shared habits and customs (Herder 1962, 423; Fichte 1996, 386). He also made references to the thought of G. W. F. Hegel for whom a human being was primarily *Homo nationalis*, while the nation was an organic community stemming from the nation's spirit, rather than an artificial political construct imposed on people in a top-down manner. Real nations, which are also defined as historical nations, are the main objects of the historical process of civilization development (*geschichte Völker*) that include Western European nations, with Germany cited as the prime example. "Historyless peoples" (*geschichtlosen Völker*) do not have their own states. They constitute a flawed imitation of nations. They include Central and Eastern European peoples (Hegel 1958, 118).

Meinecke's works inspired Kohn who, while studying in Prague shortly before World War I, acquainted himself with the writings of Hegel, Herder and Fichte. Shortly after the end of World War I, Kohn witnessed the re-emergence of states of the nations living in the territories of the erstwhile Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires and the conflicts that accompanied their re-emergence. After emigrating to the United States in 1934, he worked on a theoretical concept to describe the formation of nations and their development into various types. He presented a full-fledged form of his approach in his book "The Idea of Nationalism" published in 1944. Kohn stated that the first forms of ethnic-national consciousness emerged as early as in ancient Greece or Israel, then in France in the thirteenth century and then spread over almost the whole of Europe (Kohn 1944, 28, 79). The notion of a nation in the ethnic sense transformed as a result of the democratic revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which contributed to the formation of the modern West. It was then that the political model of the Western nation integrated by the bonds of formal and legal citizenship was developed (Kohn 1944, 19). The political processes of forming the modern status of citizenship were not the only ones that enabled this development. Nations were also "built through urbanisation, social mobility, rising literacy rates, media exposure and voting patterns" (Smith 2009, 4).

As a result of the aforementioned social changes, the resentments arising from the prevalence of ethnic ties typical of pre-modern communities were replaced by rational law, aggression and conflicts related to the irrationality of the ethnic affection replaced cooperation, and repressions replaced restitutive law. Civic nations became socially united modern communities of citizens. According to Kohn, not only the English and the French but also the Germans and the Dutch exemplified such nations. He claimed that the democratic political revolutions did not spread in Central and Eastern Europe, and hence the model of a democratic citizen was not established there. Moreover, this part of Europe was remained outside the processes of social and economic development related to the industrial revolution and urbanisation. The peoples of this part of the Old Continent continued to be at the stage of development of ethnic communities with all their constitutive features. These were, for example, Poles and Slovaks, Russians and Bulgarians. Kohn concluded that these communities were de facto at a lower level of socio-economic development. Kohn's concept is Meinecke's reversed theory of nations. Kohn's binary typology of nations became widespread in American historiography and political sciences. It established an interpretative canon for the classification of Central and Eastern European nations for decades. A canon that is characterised by evolutionary reductionism and ethnocentrism. The nations of the Eastern and Central parts of Europe are described as being at a lower level of social evolution, and, therefore, primitive, unlike the nations of Western Europe.

1. Ernest Gellner

Kohn's theory inspired a British philosopher and a social anthropologist E. Gellner to study the topic of nations. Gellner, like Kohn, spent his childhood in Prague. He left Czechoslovakia and moved to the United Kingdom in 1939. The inspirations he drew from Kohn's theory were complemented with references to É. Durkheim's sociology and Herder's social philosophy. Gellner claimed that the arrival of modernity, which coincided with the emergence and popularisation of industrial capitalism, created favourable structural conditions for the formation of a nation in the form of a new type of a large social group, a type that was unprecedented in the history of the world. These phenomena also enabled the formation of a political ideology of nationalism that, as Gellner claimed, "is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964, 169). Premodern societies, referred to by Gellner as agro-literate societies, were composed of many culturally and spatially separated groups of food producers, isolated locally and linguistically, integrated internally by the ties of kinship (Gellner 1998).

The emergence of industrial capitalism forced mass migration of people who broke the local, spatial and cultural isolation and began to move in search of work.

Mass production also required new unified symbolic codes that enabled production and trade management. The new conditions necessitated a new type of society composed of people who were able to communicate even when detached from the specific context. Social ties started to be formed through an artificially created common culture that was public in nature, imposed top-down, and shaped by the bureaucratic modern state that used communication technologies and the system of universal education, the army and cultural institutions for this purpose. It was then that the mass communities, i.e., nations, were formed, in which

> homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities [back then – author's note], a situation arises in which well-defined, educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which people willingly and often ardently identify (Gellner 2009, 71).

A common culture is used as a tool for disciplining a mass society in two dimensions. The first one is associated with the control of the processes of mass production of goods. A common code of symbolic communication enabled their management. The second one concerns the improvement of the mechanisms for the management of the then-developing state society, i.e., the community of citizens. One language, shared values and norms accepted by the whole society enabled the processes of social integration in such communities. The bond that united the state with the society under the new conditions was the ideology of nationalism. Gellner thought that "nationalism was not simply the product of industrialisation, but nationalism as a principle of societal organization perfectly matched the imperatives of industrialization" (Antonsich 2015, 304). He wrote:

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the preexisting, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored (Gellner 2009, 72).

Nationalists create nations in the process of inevitable mutual tuning of the state and the culture, and also on the basis of the ideas of rational organisation of manufacturing processes and the ideas invoking the community of citizens united by law. Nationalism and nation constitute new forms of social ties in modern society (Gellner 1996, 98-145). In Western Europe where industrial capitalism developed in the nineteenth century to the fullest and the state became a political institution founded on rational law, the Western type of nation was formed. The symbolic and political culture common to all citizens formed an internally integrated, non-antagonistic and functional type of nation characterised by an inclusive manner of removing potential conflict differences. This was fostered by the state-national socialisation of all the cultural and ethnic groups. Gellner provided examples of France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands of that time (Gellner 1964, 174).

According to Gellner, in Central and Eastern Europe, industrial capitalism was not formed at all or only to a minimal extent and the state institutions functioning there were multi-ethnic empires managed not by a rational state, but by autocratic regimes linked to the ruling dynasties. Consequently, Eastern nationalism created nations by referring to folk components (Gellner 2009, 123). Therefore, it is largely dysfunctional, more aggressive, and irrational by nature. Gellner repeats in this regard the ethnocentric stereotypes, introduced by the aforementioned German philosophers, of the politically and economically well-developed West and the uncivilised and backward East, which results (due to the developmental imbalance) in the existence of the two types of nations that are attributed different values. Not only a slower social, but also slower political and economic evolution contributed, according to Gellner, to the fact that the Poles, the Czechs, the Romanians and the Russians are full of ethnic irrationality and aggression towards everything that they consider foreign because this is the only way in which they can achieve internal integration of their communities.

2. John Breuilly

The second concept commonly used in Western sociological studies of nation and nationalism is the concept of nations developed by the British sociologist J. Breuilly who wrote that nation was non-existent in premodern times. It emerged in the modern era as a result of the actions of nationalists who strove for the integration of state communities. The premodern state as a political institution was patrimonial or estate-dependant in nature. The power that was exercised was perceived not as the emanation of the will of the people, but as a property assigned by Providence to the kings, dukes or selected social estates. The nineteenth century witnessed the arrival and spread of ideologies that started to identify given peoples as specific and separate wholes. Under the new social and political conditions that were developing, a political movement was created which strove for the reconfiguration of power by seizing it. Its representatives started to use peoples, ethnicity, and eventually nations for the legitimisation of the new political order. A nation is, therefore, an ideological fiction created by nationalism, which, for the British scholar, was a political movement guided by a doctrine invoking three main assumptions:

> a) there exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character; b) the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values; c) the nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty (Breuilly 1993, 2).

Nationalism was born out of the feeling of alienation and frustration of the educated elites that searched for a method of uniting the society with the state following the fall of the premodern order. The legitimisation of the developing new states and societies was sought in the philosophy that invoked Herder's vision of a culturally and linguistically coherent community rooted in the past (Kerr 2019, 104). Such a community is an ideological fiction because nationalism

> does not arise from the nation and that it is a specific and effective form of politics under certain political conditions can perhaps help guard against the idea that there is some natural basis to the legitimate state which lies beyond the public realm, that political movements are and should be only the emanation of community feelings (Breuilly 1993, 400).

The nationalist ideology defined this way is always "secondary to politics. It is the political relations and institutions that shape the objectives of nationalism" (Smith 2007, 102). One must always look at the context in which it was created and in which it functions, i.e., at the institutions of the modern state, to consider it in the categories of the political game, the conditions and interests that it serves.

Nationalism as a doctrine and practice serves the political objectives of gaining power, maintaining or consolidating it. It was formed in the nineteenth century that saw the spread of the idea of specific peoples raising their demands for having their own states (Breuilly 2013, 149-175). To seize and maintain power, nationalists began to describe the state society as a culturally homogeneous community according to the criteria set by Herder's philosophy (Breuilly 2017, 11-29). They used for this purpose ideologies, state institutions, myths about cultural unity, and also ceremonies recreating these myths. The British sociologist gave the example of the Unification of Germany thanks to the policy of Bismarck who used the nationalist ideology in his actions (Breuilly 2003, 6-10). To legitimise the policy of the Iron Chancellor, the idea of *Kleindeutschland* was created, which referred to a culturally unified Germany united in a single nation-state (Breuilly 1996). Nationalism as a doctrine and practice created the fiction of a nation by invoking the idea of cultural and ethnic unity. Consequently, the model of an ethnic nation was formed and became widespread in practice.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth-century United Kingdom, the model of a nation was shaped, which invoked territorial and historical criteria (distinctness of history and spatial separation that isolates the British from other nations) as well as political and legal criteria (stability and continuation of the British state inhabited by a community defined as a political community of citizens). According to Breuilly, ethnic criteria complemented it, rather than dominating it, as in the above-described case. A similar territorial and citizen-oriented model was formed, in his opinion, in France after the revolution that took place at the end of the 18th century.

The category of a member of a nation was identified with the category of a French citizen (Breuilly 2016). The civic nation referring to the idea of a community of citizens, complemented with less significant ethnic elements, also started to evolve in Italy in the *Risorgimento* period in the second half of the nineteenth century (Breuilly 2009, 439-445).

Breuilly used Kohn's concept of nations. He claimed that the idea of a nation as a homogeneous community reached Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the diffusion of cultural innovations from Western Europe. In Germany, it was adapted and complemented with strong ethnic components, but the existence of a powerful state regulated by statutory law rationalised the policy of the nation's integration. Due to socialisation measures in educational and military institutions, state institutions assimilated ethnic and regional groups into the German nation that they were forming. They also introduced persuasive measures, convincing the citizens that belonging to the German nation is attractive in cultural, political, and sometimes even economic, terms. This type of nationalism was non-antagonistic and functional because it contributed to the internal unity of state communities (Breuilly 1993, 398).

The idea of an ethnic nation arrived in Central and Eastern Europe from Bismarck's Germany. Nevertheless, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires were inhabited by numerous, large ethnic groups without their own states. In that situation, ethnic factors became the only and fundamental distinguishing features of national affiliation. Language, culture, shared habits and customs, as well as myths and a common history constituted the main elements used by nationalists to shape the feeling of national identity. With the lack of rational law that would have an integrating effect, they started to use the sense of attachment that was based on affection, on an irrational but strong feeling of belonging to a unified cultural group. Competition between nationalists stemming from different ethnic groups who could not invoke law or institutions of their own state led to conflicts, aggression and violence aimed at the assimilation of the minority groups or their spatial, and sometimes physical, elimination. Even after gaining independence in 1918, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe (the Poles, the Lithuanians, the Czechs, the Bulgarians and the Romanians) continued to be ethnic nations, functioning within their own national states.

Breuilly wrote that in Western Europe, nationalism, as a movement that established the nation to gain power, upon achieving its goal, i.e., seizure of power in a state, lost its significance for the policy of the state. It did not vanish altogether but remained one of the ideas that integrated the communities in the state. It was, with increasing frequency, replaced by a sense of attachment to the state, referred to as state patriotism (Breuilly 1993, 398). In Central and Eastern Europe, due to the aforementioned process of political evolution, nationalism invoking ethnicity continued to be the states' fundamental political principle. Therefore, in Breuilly's

opinion, the nations in this part of the world are in conflict with others. They are usually xenophobic and closed. He gave such examples as nationalism in Russia with the accompanying conflicts, the wars in former Yugoslavia caused by ethnic hatred, and the aversion and aggression towards foreigners in Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary. He, therefore, repeated Gellner's aforementioned theory, but he thought that it was not social and economic evolution that contributed to the formation of nations, but the political dimension (Breuilly 2015, 297-303).

3. On the heuristic weakness of the binary concept of civic and ethnic nations

The scholars cited above differ in the identification of the main mechanism that affects the processes of social changes that lead to the emergence of nationalism and the formation of a nation. Gellner's theory, drawing on Durkheim's sociology, assumes that according to the principle of determinism, social processes are generated by endogenous forces resulting from the continuously increasing division of labour. This leads to the growing level of social integration that creates new structural conditions requiring legitimisation and functionalisation. That is where nationalism emerges and constitutes an ideological glue for new social types that evolve into nations. Breuilly, on the other hand, referring to Weber thought that the formation of nations can be explained in the context of the instrumental perspective. In his opinion, nationalism emerged as the new tool for managing state communities of modern states. It became an instrument in the hands of state officials attempting to enforce the feeling of loyalty upon the members of the political community referred to as a nation. Both scholars share, however, the use of Kohn's binary concept of Western civic nations and Eastern ethnic nations.

One of the weaknesses of the concepts explored was equating the state with the nation. The claim was that civic nations existed in places where modern states were formed, while ethnic nations existed in places that lacked modern states. The state is a political institution, while the nation is a large social group. Therefore, they should not be treated as the same thing. The most serious deficiency of both concepts is, however, their ethnocentrism. Based on historical materials, this type of ethnocentric claims can easily be challenged. Indeed, on the British Isles, as early as in the sixteenth century, a territorial and citizen-based nation was formed in England. It was born out of the feeling of belonging to a political community of the Kingdom of England and was additionally integrated by Anglicanism treated as a national religion (Greenfeld 2019, 13-32). Combining the idea of a political community with the English version of caesaropapism resulted in the idea of *nation* that gradually spread through all social strata – initially the elites and, over time, the common people (Murray 2018, 485-495). Shared membership in a people's

nation contributed to bridging the gap between the commoners and the political class and, consequently, strengthened the inclusive understanding of the people as a political community. Before the seventeenth century, the noble elites invoked the myths of origin, making references to the mythology of the Vikings and the Normans, which was supposed to separate them from the Anglo-Saxon commons. Over time, in the second half of the nineteenth century, this model was ethnicised and was built on shared myths of origin, and such ethnic distinguishing features as one language or shared customs to the same extent as on the idea of political affiliation. In the same period, the minorities living in the United Kingdom were intensely, sometimes brutally, anglicised, which, in the case of relations with the Scots and the Irish, often took the form of bloody conflicts (Greenfeld 2019, 31).

Similarly, in France, as early as before the revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, a feeling of belonging to a political nation evolved among the French aristocracy, court elites, and approximately 350,000 nobles. This feeling was connected with the estate rights and privileges. These ties were strengthened by the distinguishing cultural factors, such as the use of the Standard French that differentiated the upper classes from commoners who spoke dialects or other languages. Separate myths of origins of the elites and the common people were also used in the practice of social distinction. The nobility's idea of a political nation "promoted in the eighteenth century the pseudo-historical understanding of the nobility's origin: that it stemmed from the Frankish conquerors, while ordinary people – from the conquered Gallo-Romans" (Baszkiewicz 2008, 298). The philosophical writings from the times of the Great French Revolution and the subsequent period stated that everyone, the elites, and the commons, was a part of *communauté politique* (political community) and constituted, as a group of equal citizens, a single nation. In the nineteenth century, however, an intensive ethnicisation of the political and territorial nation took place, thanks to the process of teaching the Standard French, popularisation of a uniform version of culture, history and national mythology referring to shared Galician origins. Various minorities, including the Gasconians and Bretonians, were subjected to brutal assimilation. Ethnicisation was supposed to remove differences and strengthen national unity (D'Auria 2020, 249-290). In Western Europe, civic loyalty started to be replaced by ethnic criteria, and nations ceased to be perceived purely as political communities and began to be viewed, more and more frequently, as ethnic communities (Böhler 2018, 34).

A similar process can be identified in the case of Poland. In the period between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, an elite type of political and civic nation was formed. Being Polish was described as "a political identity, i.e., the collection of privileges and duties which was created in the Commonwealth and which was adopted by the remaining nobles in the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth" (Opaliński 2004, 105). A dual identity evolved in the awareness of the nobility, which allowed them

to consider themselves as belonging, simultaneously, to a political nation and their own ethnic group. The nation, understood this way, encompassed not only the nobility stemming from the Polish ethnos but also those who described themselves as Lithuanians, Ruthenians or Germans from the Royal Prussia. This is reflected in the statement *gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus* used by the Ruthenian nobility and aristocracy. The members of the noble nation invoked the myth of the nobility's common origin from the Iranian people of Sarmatians who perceived themselves as distinctly different from the Slavic peasantry that was said to originate from the biblical Ham (Burszta 2013, 193).

The process of ethnicisation in Poland was similar to the one that took place in England and France in the nineteenth century. However, due to the lack of statehood, it was not supported by state institutions but was based on the activity of cultural elites. It was also then that serious conflicts with other neighbouring ethnic groups began. Similar processes took place in Hungary where, before the eighteenth century, a political nation of the noble class was formed, which did not include the Magyar peasants or the Croats, the Serbs, the Slovaks, and the Romanians. In the nineteenth century, following the establishment of the Kingdom of Hungary that was part of Austria-Hungary, ethnicisation of the political nation began, which led to the Magyarisation of Slavic minorities, which sometimes led to bloody conflicts (Sima 2019, 12). The case of Russia was similar (Radzik 2016, 57). The above narration shows that, in the processes described above, there are no great differences between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe.

Concerning certain nations of Central and Eastern Europe, which were initially formed based on only ethnic criteria, it is evident that when they gained independence as states, they absorbed certain elements of the civic model. In Romania, following the union of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1863, the Romanian nation, which was a combination of ethnicity and the idea of citizenship, began to be created with the help of state institutions (Roman 2020, 45). From the end of the fourteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, when Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule, Bulgarian elites gradually disappeared and were partly Turkified. Bulgarian ethnicity became the domain of the common class. In the nineteenth century, starting from 1878, when the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria, dependent on Turkey, was established, Bulgarian nation, culture and identity began to take form on the basis of folk ethnicity. After gaining independence, state institutions, law and social practice promoted the idea of civic affiliation, associating it with the elements of Bulgarian ethnicity (Kurina 2020, 28-30).

In the process of the ethnic formation of nations in Central and Eastern Europe, the most important factor seemed to always be ethnic identity resulting from sharing one culture reflected in common customs, values, and norms and one language. In 1918, the Slovene-speaking population constituted 70 per cent of the inhabitants of southern Carinthia within the territory of Austria. Following the collapse

of Austria-Hungary and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, a plebiscite was held with the idea in mind that the Slovenes living in the area would vote for their own (largely national) state. However, the majority voted for Austria (Borodziej | Górny 2018, 500-501). Before 1918, Polish-speaking Warmian and Mazurian people formed 80 per cent of the population of the southern districts of East Prussia. They were similar, in ethnic terms, to Poles. In the 1920 plebiscite, 98 per cent of voters in the region selected Germany over Poland (Dera 2020, 240). Both these examples show that even when the states inhabited by these ethnic groups used their best efforts, including illegal measures, to influence the outcome in their favour, the results of the plebiscites may suggest that the ethnic closeness in Central and Eastern Europe did not necessarily lead to uniting similar ethnic groups into a single nation. State identity predominated in these regions. It can be said that a model of civic nation extending beyond the borders of ethnicity functioned in both of these cases.

The image of Central and Eastern Europe as a region that has continuously been torn by bloody conflicts resulting from the dominance of the ethnic type of nations popularised in the concept of nations described herein, is exaggerated and, therefore, false. During the long "nineteenth century Central and Eastern Europe was not characterized by a constant antagonism of imperial suppression and national insurrection, as the depiction of Habsburg Austria as a *prison of nations* might suggest" (Böhler 2018 35-36). In the multi-ethnic areas of Imperial Russia or on the eastern borders of Germany of that time or in Austria-Hungary, national conflicts were as frequent as in the western part of the continent. Ethnic nationalism emerged in Eastern Europe at the same time as in Western Europe. The Americans, the British, the French, and the Italians oppressed their minorities by stifling ethnic nationalism. They established racist regimes in their own countries (Americans) or in their colonies (the remaining cited examples). At the beginning of the twentieth century and after the end of World War I, Central and Eastern Europe saw the formation of national states (Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland) inhabited by multiple minorities or multi-national states (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia). It was only then that serious, often bloody, conflicts erupted between the dominating nations and the ethnic and national minorities. This was caused, to a large extent, by the borders that were imposed by the Western countries and which failed to account for the unique nature of ethnicity and the spatial distribution of population in the region (Böhler 2018, 55).

Characterising Central and Eastern European nations as ethnic and, therefore, affective, irrational, and aggressive constitutes a false perception of these nations, which does not reflect objective reality, but rather national stereotypes functioning in the awareness of Western European scholars, which arise from the ethnocentric sentiment. It, therefore, constitutes a reproduction of the phenomenon referred to by Maria Todorova as intellectual *Balkanization*. Western European intellectuals see

Central and Eastern Europe as the bulwark of the despotic, wild, and irrational Orient, torn by constant national conflicts, which stands on the opposite end to the civilised and rational European Occident whose functioning is based on the law (Todorova 2008).

The present study proposes to replace the polar opposite models of nations with a continuous model of a political character that is subject to ethnicization and ethnicity that is subject to politicisation. Political nations that were formed within the states established at the threshold of modernity in the nineteenth century used the cultural resources of premodern ethnic groups and, consequently, created a structure of an ethnopolitical (or ethno-civic) nation. Ethnic groups, functioning without state institutions, formed their nations by using the cultural resources of their own ethnic groups but once they gained independence, they quickly incorporated the ideas of civic identity into the process of natiogenesis. This happened regardless of the level of development of industrial capitalism. On the basis of the aforementioned idea, it can be seen that it spread both in highly industrialised states (e.g., England and the Netherlands) and in non-industrial states (e.g., Romania and Poland) (Osterhammel 2013, 533-539).

Conclusion

The binary opposition between political (civic) nations and cultural (ethnic) nations is extremely popular and frequently used when discussing nation-related topics. To a large extent, it does not constitute an accurate description of the facts, but rather a continuous reproduction of the ethnocentric stereotype to which subjectively selected examples are added. Verification of the facts from empirical data indicates that the concept described herein should be at least revised, if not completely abandoned. Nations both in Western Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe were formed by political processes connected with the formation of the institutions of the national state and by socio-cultural processes related to the development of national culture incorporating ethnic factors. These processes were concurrent and mutually defining. Depending on the time and context, sometimes the political factor and sometimes the ethnic factor was crucial but both of them always co-existed in the process of natiogenesis. Modern nations are ethno-political communities, and their relations with other nations are influenced not by their immanent cultural features, but by external political, economic, and social conditions.

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