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From nation-states to nation-regions

The evolution of national identities facing
the dawn of the global era

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Note: Japanese and Chinese names will be reported in respect to the custom of writing the surname before the name; Japanese and Chinese words will be presented either in their English translation, either in their Romanised version, with the Chinese character version in brackets, along with the remaining version. For Chinese words and names will be preferred the *pinyin* transliteration, but where other version are more used, they will be reported that way, with Chinese characters in brackets along with the *pinyin*. The same pattern will be maintained, where possible, for other languages.

Sintesi Introduttiva

La globalizzazione è stata l'indirizzo fondamentale di sviluppo delle società politiche a partire dalla fine della Guerra Fredda in Europa. Il crollo dell'Unione Sovietica ha creato le stesse pre-condizioni della cosiddetta *Globalizzazione Lunga* finita con la Grande Guerra del 1914-18: con l'assenza di un antagonista forte nella lotta al dominio politico, economico e militare, e grazie all'impulso pronunciato dell'apertura dei mercati (con la conseguente nascita di una "Globalizzazione di mercato"), il mondo ha conosciuto un periodo di progressiva integrazione economica e, parallelamente, delle società.

Alcuni illustri osservatori della società nascente da questa globalizzazione hanno supposto la fine, o quantomeno il tramonto, di quel sistema di relazioni fra stati-nazione che aveva segnato lo sviluppo del mondo fino a quel momento. Eppure, le tesi affiliabili a quella della "Fine dello Stato-Nazione" di Ohmae Kenichi hanno dovuto fronteggiare, in qualche modo, la persistenza dell'attore principale del sistema internazionale: lo stato-nazione non solo non stava tramontando, ma si stava, e si sta tuttora, trasformando, dando prova di vitalità.

Questo studio si propone di analizzare il tema dell'identità nazionale. Partendo dalla base del fenomeno, cioè la nazione, ha lo scopo di osservare come le diverse identità nazionali abbiano visto la luce nel periodo che è culminato con i nazionalismi forti e distruttivi che hanno così fortemente influenzato gli esiti delle Guerre Mondiali del secolo scorso.

Quello di "nazione" è un concetto relativamente recente, ma che ha radici etimologiche antiche; la parola "nazione" ha conosciuto nel corso della storia una mutazione senza pari, per motivazioni politiche, economiche e di sicurezza. Facendo leva su necessità di ordine psico-biologico di identificazione nelle popolazioni, statisti e filosofi hanno potuto adattare il concetto di nazione alle necessità della competizione fra economie ed eserciti, in Europa e nel resto del mondo.

Gli approcci al tema della *realtà* della nazione variano considerevolmente, in particolar modo fra quegli studiosi che assumono la natura effettivamente storica della comunità nazionale, e quelli che ne denunciano l'artificialità. Ciò nonostante, l'opinione che il nazionalismo, inteso come progressiva integrazione degli obiettivi di interesse delle élite di governo e quelli supposti della nazione, abbia dato frutti considerevoli in termini di politica di potenza, è fuori discussione.

Se la cosiddetta "Età delle Nazioni" è avviata verso il declino, stesso discorso dovrebbe valere per il nazionalismo. Immaginando un approccio razionale alle evoluzioni politiche delle classi di governo mondiali, si dovrebbe prevedere una forza di politiche di stampo "inter-nazionalista" pari a quello della globalizzazione, ma la realtà mostra tendenze differenti. L'Europa assiste alla rinascita di movimenti di stampo più o meno dichiaratamente nazionalista, ma che rispetto all'apertura progressiva e irrefrenabile proposta dalle organizzazioni esplicitamente "anti-nazionali" come il *World Trade Organisation*, hanno posizioni altamente critiche. Il caso più in vista è probabilmente quello del *Front National* in Francia, ma non è l'unico. Stessa cosa vale per paesi extra-europei che hanno "importato" nazione e nazionalismi dal Vecchio Continente: alcuni giornali parlano addirittura di Guerra Fredda fra Cina e Giappone. Qual è, quindi, il nodo centrale nella comprensione di queste contraddizioni?

Questo studio si propone di analizzare due differenti scenari. Il primo scenario considerato è quello dell'Europa, patria della nazione, luogo di origine delle dottrine nazionali; il secondo è lo scenario dell'Asia Orientale, intesa come spazio di diffusione della cultura di stampo cinese. Per ogni scenario, sono stati scelti due attori di rilevanza storica, economica e militare.

Lo scenario Europeo considera Francia e Germania. Sebbene nessuno dei due sia stato il primo luogo di diffusione dell'ideale di nazione, intesa come società-popolo, vengono considerati come due soggetti di importante analisi delle dottrine del nazionalismo. La Francia ha potuto creare, in particolar modo in

seguito alla Rivoluzione del 1789, una forte identificazione nazionale dei suoi cittadini. Questo le ha permesso di costruire non solo una società forte, ma anche un'economia e un esercito che hanno toccato il loro apogeo sotto il dominio di Napoleone, che unificò, seppure per breve periodo, il Continente sotto il suo dominio. L'applicazione politica del tema della nazione ha trovato, nella costruzione della *Grande Armée*, un punto di svolta e la definitiva celebrazione della sua efficacia. Questa forte identità nazionale ha conseguentemente permesso, grazie a processi di imitazione e contrapposizione, la creazione di altre forti identità in Europa, in particolar modo per la Germania. La Prussia pre-Germanica trova nella competizione con la Francia – o nella sconfitta a Jena – il motivo fondante per costruire la propria identità militare ed economica, in parte imitando la Francia, in parte la Gran Bretagna, che si dimostrò già per la Francia un modello importante. La rivalità franco-tedesca, giunta all'apice con la Guerra che nel 1945 sancì la fine del Reich, trova oggi nell'ideale dell'Unione Europea uno spazio di evoluzione pacifica. Questa nuova sfera di collaborazione, e progressiva interazione, trascina con sé la formazione di una nuova identità: l'identità Europea.

Il secondo scenario ha come centro l'Asia Orientale, e in particolare due identità forti: Cina e Giappone. Il concetto di nazione, inteso nella sua accezione europea, non è autoctono in Asia Orientale; il primo attore a farlo proprio è il Giappone, che quando si trova a fronteggiare un mondo progressivamente sempre più aperto agli scambi, ancora impreparato. E' con la Restaurazione Meiji che il concetto di stato-nazionale giapponese si fa largo, fra politici e intellettuali dell'arcipelago, intrecciandosi con concetti etnici e storici già presenti in Asia Orientale. Portatore di una società ancora di tipo feudale, il Giappone del 1868 riesce a dotarsi, in poco tempo, di un'industria e di un esercito forte, tali da poter competere con le potenze cosiddette *bianche*, grazie all'implementazione di politiche fortemente indirizzate dal nazionalismo. La Cina, la cui civilizzazione ha

radici storiche paragonabili a quelle dell'Impero di Roma, riesce a creare allo stesso modo un suo approccio al tema della nazione, adottando inizialmente una forma di governo dichiaratamente nazionalista con la formazione della Repubblica di Cina in seguito alla caduta dell'ultimo Imperatore cinese nel 1912, mantenuta fino al 1949. Anche in questo scenario la diffusione del nazionalismo segue lo schema di isomorfismo e contrapposizione presente in Europa. La differenza sostanziale con il primo scenario, è che la contrapposizione delle due identità forti in termini nazionali della regione non ha ancora trovato un punto comune di collaborazione per trovare una soluzione alla rivalità forte imposta dal nazionalismo. Un primo, fallimentare, tentativo di unificazione delle nazioni dell'Asia Orientale e Sudorientale fu l'ideologia della *Grande Sfera di Co-Prospertà*, utilizzata nella Guerra del Pacifico dal Giappone come giustificazione del proprio espansionismo.

Questo studio si propone, infine, di osservare lo scontro delle identità nazionali contrapposte alla Globalizzazione di mercato intercorsa fra la fine della Guerra Fredda e l'inizio del periodo delle guerre ai terrorismi iniziato con l'attacco alle Torri Gemelle del 2001. In che modo è possibile far incontrare la necessità di identificazione di una società con un mondo la cui ideologia globale si fa portatrice di una progressiva eliminazione delle differenze fra i popoli? L'osservazione che qui viene proposta è legata alle teorie della globalizzazione-arcipelago.

Il periodo seguente la globalizzazione di mercato ha portato alla contrapposizione fra un mercato con settori ancora fortemente globalizzanti, con catene di produzione estese su scala globale e quasi del tutto aliene alla sfera di influenza dello stato-nazione, e un acuirsi della conflittualità fra culture differenti, come quella eclatante fra quella che Huntington definisce la *Civiltà Cristiana* e l'Islam. E' nella contrapposizione fra questi due fenomeni che si viene a creare uno spazio intermedio a quello globale e quello nazionale, che qui è definito della

Regione, intesa come area di diffusione di una cultura con punti di comunione adatti alla creazione di un dialogo meno problematico rispettivamente a quello globale, ma allo stesso tempo più ampio di quello nazionale. Quando all'interno di una stessa Regione è possibile la creazione di un'identità regionale, che qui viene definita Regione-nazione in opposizione allo stato-nazione, è possibile assistere ad un minore vigore delle identità legate allo stato. Questo meccanismo potrebbe trovare una conferma nell'indebolimento dell'identità europea dell'Unione in seguito al fallimento di alcune sfide poste dal periodo di crisi economica iniziato nel 2008, e nel contemporaneo riaffermarsi dei movimenti nazionalisti interni ai singoli stati. Parallelamente, l'assenza di un'identità comune nella Regione dell'Asia Orientale ha lasciato aperte le porte ad una conflittualità crescente fra Giappone e Cina, che stanno assistendo negli ultimi anni all'adozione di politiche nazionaliste di forza progressivamente crescente. La conflittualità nella Regione trova conferma non solo nelle dispute fra Cina e Giappone riguardo alla sovranità delle isole Diaoyu/Senkaku, ma anche nella struttura dei *Dialoghi a Sei* volti alla gestione delle tensioni sulla penisola coreana.

Questo studio è frutto del lavoro di ricerca svolto presso la Scuola di Studi Superiori in Scienze Sociali (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*) di Parigi. La complessità dell'argomento, e le molteplici indagini che richiedono di essere svolte per raggiungere una parvenza di completezza nella trattazione, spingeranno questo lavoro a crescere e modificarsi nel tempo. L'attualità del tema richiede la costante attenzione alle notizie che ogni giorno offrono nuovi spunti e punti di vista inediti rispetto al tema dell'identificazione nazionale. Non soltanto i quattro attori presi in considerazione, ma molti altri meritano di essere analizzati: in primis il Regno Unito, che fu la culla in cui il concetto di nazione vide la luce già nel sedicesimo secolo; gli Stati Uniti, che importarono il particolarissimo tipo di nazionalismo inglese e lo svilupparono, in un ambiente privo dalla rivalità con la Francia e dove poté intrecciarsi con temi di matrice illuminista; e ancora la

Russia/Unione Sovietica, la cui identità è ancora oggi divisa fra la San Pietroburgo europea e la Vladivostok asiatica oppure la Corea, dove la Guerra Fredda non è ancora finita. Questo studio si pone come il primo passo di un progetto di ricerca su uno dei temi chiave dello sviluppo politico delle società nel secolo appena iniziato: la speranza è quella di dare forza alla costruzione di una *Terza Via* fra la Fine della Storia di Fukuyama e lo Scontro delle Civilizzazioni di Huntington.

I. Nation - the name and the idea

1. Fundamentals: etymology and definitions of “nation”, theories of identification.

« In our time everything is democratic or totalitarian. In the civil world of the 19th century everything was “progressive”. In the 18th century everything was “national”. How did it become so fashionable? »

Zernatto, G. (1944)

Let us imagine, borrowing a metaphor from Hobsbawm’s work *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1992), to meet an alien who has just landed on planet Earth, determined to study human societies. The alien sociologist will be struck by the major role played, in what is called *The Global Age*, by the system of international relations. Its bigger agents are called international organisations, and are built and run by other another kind of actor, the state. Following considerations are likely to be related with concepts such as inter-national communication and cooperation. And going further in the analysis: what is, actually, a “nation”, and why is it so important to human beings?

The definition of the core meaning of “nation” is a high goal, aimed at by several scholars belonging to the fields of sociology, political analysis, history, economy and even psychology. This study will attempt to give an introduction to the fundamentals of the concept of “nation”. The first step it takes is to trace the etymology of the word, to understand how the notion has developed through history. The second step will propose an overlook on the many attempts to achieve a universal definition of the word. The third step will deal with identification

theory, which is central to the study of nationalism, and belongs more to the domain of psychology than to political studies. The three steps will lead to a discussion on the constructions that rely on these fundamentals.

I - *History of the word.* The word “nation” has known many usages across history. The etymological origins of the word can be traced back, with a set variety of meanings, across the centuries. Yet, the concept of “nation” in common sense is relatively young. A remarkable work of study on the semantics of “nation” is the one proposed by Guido Zernatto in 1944, in the article *Nation: the history of a word.*

The first appearance of “nation” is to be dated back to the age of Imperial Rome, where it had the bare meaning of “being born”, from the Latin *natus*. *Natio*, simply “that is born”, was the name for those who dwelled in the ports of the empire, who were not Romans, nor *cives*, citizens. They lived in port towns, usually clinging together to seek shelter and mutual comprehension, in groups that though generated the derogative term *nationes*. Yet, “a word is like a coin (...) fashionable words always become - like a much used coin - very much worn and flat” (Zernatto, 1944). The meaning of the word has come to different uses during history, and has arrived today totally changed.

In the environment of medieval French universities, students from all around Europe organised their inter-faculty societies in clubs divided mainly by linguistic origins. It followed that *nationes*, when used to define those groups, was used with a new meaning, that of “community” (e. g. the *constante nation de Germanie* welcomed students from Germany and England; the *honorable nation de France* had French, Italian and Spaniard participants, etc.). By such use of the term, *nation* gained the meaning of élite, and has been extended to church councils, where it defined groups of contenders who often represented the interests of princes or

kings from their geographical areas. It is in this meaning that the word nation is used by Montesquieu, in his *Esprit des Lois* (1748):

(...) la nation, c'est-à-dire les seigneurs et les évêques : il n'étoit point encore question des communes. ("the nation, that is, the lords and the bishops: the commons were not yet thought of") (Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des lois*, 1748, p. 136).

He states clearly that the people, the commoners, were not to be considered: it is in this acceptation that the term was used when the representatives of the "nations" of aristocracy and of bishopric reunited in Paris. They called themselves the *États Généraux* and represented (or at least, claimed to represent) the whole of the kingdom's community. "Nation", still, had the elitist meaning of a small group of people. The *leitmotiv* was still that of the sharing of conditions: belonging to an élite, a shared point of view on matters of common interest, and so forth. Being part of a nation became more or less like belonging to a political party, or a lobby. More, while "nation" had lost part of its derogative meaning, "people", *populus*, *populatio*, were still used in a disparaging way; the idea that a uniform and large group of inhabitants, could have some claims on civic, political rights was still a chimera. Zernatto reports in his research of a monk in then Transylvanian Parliament, trying to defend the rights of the "Walachian Nation", and being laughed at by the audience for "there is no Walachian nation (...) there is only a Walachian *plebs!*" (Zernatto, 1944, p. 362).

The situation was, however, more variegated than the one proposed by Zernatto. Within the common use, the meaning of nation began to be broadened: it was coming to a definition closer to the modern one. Within the same period as Montesquieu's work, the *Encyclopédie* published by Diderot and d'Alembert

showed a broader sense for those entries: “Natio” continued to remain an epithet for the Goddess of birth, and consequently linked to the bare act of being born. Differently, since its first entry in the Dictionary, “nation” had a meaning which is closer to the current usage of the word (showing, therefore, an avant-garde for the period):

“NATION - S. f. (Hist. mod.) collective name used to address a remarkable amount of people, living in a particular area of the country, with defined borders, and who obey to the same government” (*Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société de Gens de lettres*, 1751, translation mine).

The following meaning is as interesting as the second, for it includes *stereotyping*: it states that every nation has a peculiar behaviour (e.g. “mild as a French”, “sombre as a Spaniard”). The examples proposed in the text can also be read as an indication of existence of already established nationalities (the French are a nation, as well as the Spaniards). Yet, what is missing is the comprehensive feature of “every” inhabitant of a particular place.

After the events of the French Revolution, the *Ancien Régime* was overthrown, and the aristocracy could not be the only élite to claim to be *nation*. As remembered by Zernatto, Alphonse Alouard in his *Histoire Politique de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1901) defines the nation coming out of the Revolution as “composed of the lettered and the rich of France” (p. 25). The Parliament of the French revolutionaries was doubtful about adopting the name *Assemblée Nationale* or *Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple Français* as proposed by Count Mirabeau (*Archives Parlementaires* of 1787/1860, vol.

5/5/1789 - 15/9/1789, from p. 109), but choose the first, also due to the persistence of derogatory traits around the term “people”, therefore proving that “nation” and “people” were different things. Although agreeing on the fact that the real winning class of the French Revolution was *not* the people as a whole, but above all the city-based *bourgeoisie*, the *Révolution* had the power, and in some sense the merit, of broadening and deepening the foundations of political rights. From that period, everybody who could claim political representation, that is, more specifically, whoever could read and have stable and (relatively) prosperous incomes, was considered part of the nation. The eighteenth century saw the word becoming increasingly fashionable: “national” issues could not have a different destiny.

Yet far from being at service of the *peuple*, governments saw the basis of their political legitimation expanding from below, to cover a wide portion of the population recognised as “citizens”. Nation and citizenship became more and more intertwined matters. With the implementation of policies aimed at mass education and the industrial revolutions providing to the lower classes a stable remuneration, “people” lost almost completely its derogative meanings and came to be used in a more neuter way, looming progressively that of “citizens”.

The meeting of the two concepts of “nation” and “people” casts some light on the functioning of mass-societies which came to life in early nineteenth century. “People”, in its meaning of geographically defined human beings, and “nation” have come as close today that nationality has become an “inherent attribute of humanity” (Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, 1983).

It is yet not clear when and where, precisely, the meanings of “nation” and “people”, intended as those people who could read no Latin, nor could be defined as “rich”, reached a widely shared, common point of signification. There is actually a “big-bang theory” proposed by Liah Greenfeld, according to which it

happened for the first time in England, already in sixteenth century. According to the scholar, there has been a

“momentous linguistic event, which (...) helped the members of the new Henrician aristocracy to rationalise their experience of upward mobility which made no sense in the terms of, and in fact contradicted, the traditional, feudal and religious, image of reality. By the same token, it symbolically elevated the mass of the population to the dignity of an elite and redefined the community of the people as both sovereign – the embodiment of supreme authority – and as a community of interchangeable individuals, each with a generalised capacity to occupy any social position, or, in other words, as fundamentally a community of equals. The word ‘nation’, therefore, acquired its modern meaning of a sovereign people consisting of fundamentally equal individuals, while the community defined as a nation inevitably began to be restructured as such a people. It was the definition of an *earthly community* as sovereign which focused attention on this world and on humanity, exiling God beyond its confines and creating an essentially secular consciousness. In its turn, the secularisation of the world-view reinforced the effects of the principles of popular sovereignty and egalitarianism which between them define the modern concept of ‘nation’” (Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the mind*, 2005; emphasis added).

One might ask why this study stresses so much on the importance of words. The understanding of concepts requires, most necessarily, a certain degree of

mental discourse, forcing then the thinker to use words. The choice of a word instead of another is relevant, and it is through words that understanding of abstract concept is reached. For this reason, understanding a concept like “nation” passes by the analysis of the word representing it. As a consequence, and for the geographical dimension of this study, it is equally important to see how the concept has been put into word in those languages using the Chinese Characters system.

For “state”, the traditional *hànzì* in use is “國”, read as *guó* in Chinese and *koku* in Japanese. Graphically, it represents a spear 戈 and a mouth 口 (i. e., people), within a closed box, a “boundary”. It is remarkable that the combination of spear, mouth and a single stroke representing the concept of “one” (一) had the original meaning of “region”, as a representation of both the population and its security dimension. “State” is graphically generated, therefore, as a region within a boundary, whose inhabitants have some degree of armed security. There are variants to the above reported character; a simplified version, which is the one most used in common current language, is “国”, where “region” has been replaced by “jade” 玉 and, beyond the concept, “king” 王. From a merely graphical point of view then, to those readers the Chinese characters, the concept of “state” appears presented as a well-defined boundary, in which one can see either a region, or the ruling authority of those borders, or again the richness that that border contains.

Starting from the conception of “state”, other words have been created to express the meaning of “nation-state”: the Japanese Empire refined the concept of “*kokka* - 国家”, the “state-family” or “state-house”; meanwhile Republican China considered herself “*mínguó* - 民国”, “state-people”; the communitarian “nation”, on the other hand, is rendered with “*mínzú*, or *minzoku* - 民族”, and comprehends the concept of “ethnicity”, being literally “the people-family”. The vocabulary

related to concepts of “ethnicity” and “race” is reported in the second part of this study, along with the analysis of nation-building in East Asia.

II - *Definitions of “nation”*. In 1882, at Sorbonne University in Paris, a conference speech about the meaning of “nation” has been held by Ernst Renan, who was an historian and philosopher. His lecture had the title “*Qu’est-ce qu’est une nation?*” and has been used as a starting point by a large majority of the books on nations and nationalisms. In his speech – which was held before the age of violent nationalisms and does not take into account such abominations – Renan at the same time deconstructs the concept of nation as a transcendental element of history, and affirms the necessity of nation-building, typical of that period, remarking the usefulness of such a construction. In Renan’s perspective,

“[a] nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. (...) A nation, like the individual, is a long past of endeavours, sacrifice and devotion. (...) A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation existence is, if you will pardon me the metaphor, a *daily plebiscite*, just as an individual existence is a perpetual affirmation of life” (Renan, 1882; emphasis added).

Renan stresses the importance of the *will* (“a daily plebiscite”) as a constituent of the nation-group; Professor Ernest Gellner in his already recalled

work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) quotes and comments Renan, adopts the same starting point adding the importance of identification, stating the importance of the cultural, voluntaristic basis of the creation of a nation. Gellner is, in turn, a starting point for another scholar of nationalism and his student, Anthony Smith. In his work *National identity* (1991) Smith describes the nation as a combination territorialism, participation, citizenship and civic education. This lineage led to the *Warwick Debates*, held at the London School of Economics in 1995, where the two scholars made a reciprocal effort to read and comment the other's work. It is in this debate that the fracture across the conceptions of "nation" as primarily a historically constituted phenomenon, or a more recent, rational construction has come clear, resulting in the creation of two separate schools. Gellner – and the "creationists" of the nation, the "modernists" – believe that the cultural and ethnic basis of nations can be, in some cases, acceptable but they stress the relative poor relevance of the heritage of the nation, when confronted to the refined, rational construction of the whole architecture of the nation-state. On the other hand, Smith – and the "evolutionists" of the nation, the "primordialists" – want to point out that the proto-popular, pre-industrial nationalism of peoples in territories where the rational construction of the nation has a less relevant role in the game of international relations. They postulate that nations have roots that are independent from the intelligentsia that have actually created the nation-state in his current aspect. The debate between the two scholars brought a clearer distinction of the two approaches, and permitted to understand better the ambiguity of the works following 1995.

"Nation", as summed up by Pierre Nora in the dictionary, edited by François Furet, of the French Revolution Ideas (*Dictionnaire critique de la Révolution Française - Idées*), stresses the importance of the historical meaning of the nation. He also distinguishes three meanings for the same word:

“The social meaning: a body of citizens who is equal in front of the law; the juridical meaning: the establishing power facing the established power; the historical meaning: a collective of men united by continuity, a past and a future.” (Nora, 1992)

This pattern (a combination of social, juridical, historical issues) is the key point in others definitions of “nation” in the post-modernist, “evolutionist” area.

Even though nationalism is often connected to capitalism, the study of the concept of nation has attracted political scientists and scholars of Marxist and, generally, socialist domains. Gellner opens his work *Encounters with nationalism* (1994) with the encounter between Marxism and nationalism, postulating Friedrich List prescience on the dismantlement of nations imagined by Karl Marx. He postulates that the *national road* to capitalism, or to socialism, is the only efficient road. Both capitalism and socialism require, as a precondition, *national industrialism* and the two ideologies are presented as variants of it (a deeper analysis on the connections between nationalism and economy is proposed in part two of this study). The centrality of the nation for Marxism can be observed in the precise, accurate definition of nation proposed by Iosif Stalin, in the work *Marxism and the National Question*:

“A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and *psychological make-up* manifested in a common culture.” (1913; emphasis added)

By adding the feature of psychological make-up, Stalin's definition allows the enquiry to deepen in the social, behavioural domain: under what circumstances, two persons can be defined as part of the same nation? What kind of identification process is going on between them? The answer proposed by Gellner (1983; 1994) is, when they share a similar relation with the surrounding society regarding a variety of themes of everyday life. The two belong to the same *High Culture* offered by the educational system provided by the same nation-state. To sum up, sharing a nation is like sharing a culture, a way to communicate (and yet, according to the author, not necessarily a language); a certain belief in particular symbols or standardized behaviours. Mutual recognition of the other as part of the same nation is, coincidentally, fundamental for the creation of that society.

III – *Identification*. The feeling of shared identity is perhaps the main point in building national identity and, thence, in nationalism. The adherence to a nation offered by nation-building has proven to be a powerful tool, able to create strong ideologies implying deep identificative processes. Bloom (in *Personal identity, national identity and international relations*, 1990) offers an explication for such a success by turning to psychology: the roots for national identification rest on biological needs in the depth of human mind. Identification theory, subject which is closer to psycho-biology, has a valid implementation also to the study of political sciences. "Identification" – the inner mechanism of human mind that leads to internalise behaviours and attitudes of significant others – is a biological imperative inscribed in the earliest infantile need to survive (Bloom, 1990). It is not just an attitude; it is a dynamic of the psyche that proves active during infancy as well as during adulthood. Moreover, during the lifetime of an individual, several identifications may stratify and accumulate, depending on the environments and situations of need she or he has passed through. What is more important, though, is that the individual may act to *enhance* or *protect* the

established identifications or make new ones. Bloom, by the analysis of works from Freud, Parsons and Erikson, shows how a satisfactory synthesis of identification is crucial for achieving a sense of psychological security and well being (ibid.).

As the social role of the individual gains intensity and s/he enters more fully into society, identification occurs not only with the first, main objectives of attention, the parents, but also, with different subjects – may them be concrete or abstract. According to Jürgen Habermas (*Legitimation Crisis*, 1973) the individual searches new models in what he calls “identity-securing interpretive systems” (p. 16); a system of ideologies and “meaningful others” apt to reinforce the structure of the society. Inasmuch as a group of people shares a common identity, it is not only possible, but also, likely that the group will choose to act in a cohesive way, to protect and enhance that shared identity which is felt as a matter of survival.

Liah Greenfeld, who works on the comparison among different nationalisms, turns to the Durkheimian concept of *anomie* to introduce new approaches to the study of nationalism. In one provocative article signed in 2005 (*Nationalism and the mind*), she remarks how tendencies to *anomie* – the feeling of instability of traditional values, culture, rules of society – would be a built-in feature of the modern nationalist societies. The absence of a strong social-law can result in a feeling of danger to the identity keepers, who will react, though, to protect it. Any organisation, or state, seeking prosperity, stability and continuity will need its adherents to be in a state of integration, and loyalty. Most of the nation-states were born on the effort to achieve an economic and social “catch-up” with the other already industrialised countries, and as a proof those nation-states often depicted their own image stressing concepts like unity, prosperity, loyalty. The need for transforming the inhabitants of a territory into loyal citizens of a nation-state passes consequently through a process of identification, and thence the necessity to make the adherence to a nation look *profitable*, became of central relevance.

The process of making national identification “appealing” is resumed by two fundamental steps (Bloom, 1990):

- a) The individual must *actually* experience the nation, in the form of nation-state;
- b) The experience must inspire, or require, identification.

The internalisation of behaviours and sets of attitudes presented as winning and fruitful, enhances the overall feeling of security of the community, and national identification becomes effective. A major role is played by symbols, which help to sum in an easy, highly recognisable way the experience and/or the abstract concept of nation.

IV – Symbols. Symbols will be therefore presented in situations of perceived threat, synthesising and recalling the appropriate attitude to follow; they will be as a consequence perceived beneficently by individuals (Bloom, *ibid*). The perhaps most outstandingly “national” symbols are flags, official logos and anthems (Hobsbawm, 1983; Cerulo, 1995); yet other symbols are more subtle and imply/offer a deeper identification: censuses, museums, and maps (Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 1990; see below).

Properly “national” symbols, such as flags, anthems and coat-of-arms are perhaps the most used and recognised ones. Their design is central in the work of Karen Cerulo *Identity designs* (1995). Despite the scholars assuming that national identity and its designs are the product of a peculiar culture perpetuated throughout history, she postulates the centrality of a *syntax* of national symbols, and therefore their artificiality. As Walzer states, the nation is

“invisible; it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolised before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived... these images provide a starting point for political thinking.” (Walzer, 1967 cited in Cerulo, 1995, p. 3).

National symbolification is a product of communication between an élite and a mass. The senders, be they political élites or nationalist movements, address messages to the recipients of their ideas, populations of the governed state or the world population. Every flag, every anthem, coat-of-arms, motto, is a synthesis of those behaviours and attitudes that constitute the *text* to be internalised by the upcoming nation, as well for the already established one. Their difference from those symbols that are actually result of a cultural production (e.g. a popular song, local cults) becomes showing where the latter ones need no particular form of protection or enhancement, while national symbols are often, on the contrary, strictly protected and managed by the élite; the monopoly on symbols is strictly connected to the monopoly of power. Consequently, if it is true that

“(...) devotion to normal symbols occurs on a largely voluntary basis. In contrast, respect toward deviant symbols is generally mandated by law” (Cerulo, 1995, p. 137),

they are not product of indigenous characteristics, as they are commonly publicised, with invented legends about their creation, neither

“can these designs be solely credited to specific, perhaps unique sociopolitical events that surround a symbol’s adoption.” (ibid., p. 2)

National symbols are often treated with the respect due to religious and sacred symbols, as it easily shown by the highly relevant respect (or, in some occasions, disrespect) paid to certain flags, or monuments (e. g. episodes around the United States’ flag, Saddam Hussein’s statue in Baghdad, or also the constant vigilance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier etc). Still, there are symbols that may act in a less direct way on the individual’s “psychological make-up”.

Although being different by nature from flags and anthems, the museum is of crucial importance for national identity reinforcement; as nations, characteristically, present themselves as historically based, a museum has the specific role of showing their glorious past. As observed by Hobsbawm in his works (1983, 1991, but also Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 1991) a nation will always put her historical (and cultural) uniqueness in foreground; this did not occur only for the first nation-states to emerge, but also for the “latecomers” of nationalism. The modern museum has become more and more important in the nineteenth century, in parallel with the diffusion of ideologies about nation and its heritage, and thence trailing subjects like archaeology (the search for glorious pasts) to vogue. From Europe to newly born nation-states in Asia (the Tokyo National Museum was established, significantly, in 1872, together with the reforms in educational field), museums became increasingly relevant to affirm one country’s historic backgrounds.

In the same period, censuses gained an increased popularity; questions about ethnicity led to the creation of curious, and often meaningless groupings of inhabitants of geographical areas that had little or nothing in common (Anderson,

1990). The growing relevance of surveying, and classifying, the population arrived with the increasing attention paid to questions of ethnicity and race, especially in Europe. The confrontation with societies that had developed having little or no contacts with the Western World resulted in colonisation, and with the scientific analysis of those societies. The attempt to classify human populations according to the new approaches to evolution brought by the Darwinian revolution in nineteenth century has close relations with the sub-categorisation of human beings in races, or ethnicities. In 1920s, the culmination of these theories constituted the philosophical column of the Nazi subdivision of human beings in four main categories: the whites, or Caucasians, which included the Aryans; the yellows, or the Mongolians, which included several Chinese populations of Asia; the other populations were grouped in the “browns”, and the “blacks”, with reference to natives of Africa, Asia and the Americas (Banton, *Ethnic and Racial Consciousness*, 1997). Classification went further, into the attempt of a pseudo-scientific classification of all the ethnic societies of colonised countries. Such classifications were pivotal in turning Darwinism, which referred to scientific analysis, into political science using “social Darwinism” as a tool for justifying imperial expansionism with nationalist rhetoric.

A third element of the complex universe of symbolisation of the nation is to be searched in maps and ethnic geography. Jacques Ancel in 1938 wrote about the “linear illusion” of cartography (*La géographie des frontières*, 1938, pp. 91-114). Ancel answered to the introduction of “aerial” view of regions, with imaginative borders that in the horizontal dimension had often no consistence. Anderson in his book *Imagined communities* (1990) brings in the case of Siam, where maps had a horizontal view, and borders were conceived in terms of rivers, or mountains. Ancel remarks how borders should have a *cultural* nature, while the “coloured lines” on maps responded more to imperialist necessities than to the will of mapping the world to understand it. “Vertical geography” had an explicit imperial

dimension; the application of administrative borders claiming to be “natural” to maps can be regarded, in conclusion, as the parallel of employing Darwinism in demography.

Those symbolifications are all aimed at strengthening identification, resorting also to mechanisms of confrontation with diverse realities: the world in the nineteenth century knew a period of opening and interaction among societies that were not in communication before, thanks to new means of transport and to the commerce resulting from them. National identification took advantage from the natural reaction of populations in front of alterities: it is a dynamic that has relied on, and has fed from, a “pertinent human weakness”. Society had become, forcibly, an inter-national society. In this regard, Gellner writes:

“It may be that, as Immanuel Kant believed, partiality, the tendency to make exceptions on one’s own behalf or one’s own case, is *the* central weakness from which all others flow; and that it infects national sentiment as it does all else, engendering what Italians under Mussolini called the *sacro egoismo* of nationalism.” (1983)

Nation-building is a process taking advantage of this binomial: as the individuals seek identification in a mass, nation-building offers the opportunity to identify in an exceptional group, different from the others and superior to them, whose claims are of sovereignty and freedom. Nationalism is, by concept, a way to offer to an established nation a relative, unique and sovereign nation-state; within the frame of the nation-state, the nation has to adhere to the law and respect the order offered by the national government. In turn, the governments provide sets of secured models of behaviour, collected and synthesised by *national identity*.

Though simplified, this kind of Rousseauian social contract is the base for any and every following national construction.

2. Constructions: nationalism, nation-state, national identity.

In the already mentioned Warwick Debate, professor Gellner faces the argument of the origins of nationalism with the metaphor of Adam and his navel. Being Adam the first man created by God, he reasonably could either have no navel, for it is the sign of the pregnancy he had not been subject of, or he could actually have one, putting therefore creationism in question. If one considers nationalism having its own navel, like Smith does in his works, it would be the sign that nations did exist before nation-states; Gellner says that it is rather the contrary, and that the evidence of no proved nationalism before its modern outburst in the political society is the proof that nations were created along with nationalism and nation-states. The Egyptians, Gellner considers, although being without any doubt a civilisation having a relevant historical background, never considered themselves as a “nation”, nor did the inhabitants of Athens or Rome. The question whether nationalism made nations, or if on the contrary nations evolved throughout history to form nationalism and nation-states is as interesting as hard to solve, and will be object of discussion in the conclusion of the current work.

According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (updated in 2010), nationalism can be either an attitude, or a set of actions of a group of individuals, recognising themselves in a “nation” and seeking the protection and/or reinforcement of such identity. It also differentiates between *wide* and *strict* nationalisms, the former being referred to also as “patriotism” and focalised on

civic actions, and the latter directly connected to the claim of sovereignty of a group that can be the “nation” intended also as an ethnically homogeneous group.

In the recent, already quoted article by Greenfeld (2005), she makes the provocative statement that nationalism is damaging to the human mind. She writes:

“Nationalism, in short, is the modern culture. It is the symbolic blueprint of modern reality, the way we see, and thereby construct, the world around us, the specifically modern consciousness. The core of this consciousness is the image of meaningful reality which the pictogram of the globe with people attempts to express. Being a pictogram, it can only express its immediately visible features, or outlines; even so, it captures the essential characteristics.” (Greenfeld, 2005, p. 326)

Central to Greenfeld’s work is the essential democratisation of the social life due to the introduction of the concept of nation. Empowering the people and elevating them to a status of general élite-ness, the destruction of the previously existing élites has led to the emergence of (apparently) new ruling classes. The emphasis put by nationalist propaganda on the “self-made-ness” of its leaders (e.g. Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini were of modest social extraction) resulted in the spread of a sense of social *anomie*. Writes Greenfeld,

“As was recognised already by Durkheim, *anomie* is the fundamental structural problem of modernity (...) [it] may occur in all types of societies, but in modern society *anomie* is a built-

in feature. One cannot have nationalism without *anomie*.” (ibid., p. 332)

Greenfeld arrives, therefore, as far as defining nationalism as a process that “inhibits the formation and normal functioning of the human mind” (ibid, p.333). For Greenfeld nationalism, which has its origins in the necessity to organise a society, cannot exist in an organised society, and is immoral as a result. A different analysis on national self-identification, seen as a fundament for nationalism, is proposed by Margalit and Raz in 1990 (*National Self-Determination*). They produce a list of six features that a group willing to call itself “a nation” must undergo in order to be able to claim self-identification, and though result morally acceptable. A social group, for Margalit and Raz (1990), must:

- 1) Have and perpetuate to the generations to come a common character and a common culture that define multiple aspects of life; therefore
- 2) An individual growing in such group will develop the peculiar character and customs;
- 3) S/he will recognise other members of the group as effectively part of the community; consequently
- 4) Find that recognition in the group is essential in the process of self-identification;
- 5) Be a member of the group as an individual *belonging* to the group and not as an achievement (“To be a good Irishman, it is true, is an achievement. But to be an Irishman is not”);
- 6) Not be a “face-to-face group”, i. e. not being a small group.

According to the authors, who agree then with the theories collected by Bloom, self-government is intrinsically valuable. Membership in the group would

be essential for the maintenance of the well-being, both psychological and physical, of the individual. The nation would be in duty to strive for political participation of its components, promote it through manifestations aimed at enhancing public-life, and the right to claim the extension of the political governance inside the group to the outside.

With this definition of the nation that *could* afford to be nationalist, the two scholars attempt to define what could be addressed as “moral” nationalism. In the same article, nevertheless, there is the assumption that “not all religions and racial groups did develop rich and pervasive cultures. But some did and those qualify.” (p. 447). According their this study a nationalist movement must – in order to be “qualified” as morally acceptable – be established by a nation of rich and pervasive culture. They conclude that the right to self-determination is neither absolute, nor unconditional: it must be subjected to “other vital interests” in the considered territory (and though driving back the concept to the special dimension). Given in their work the absence of regulatory mechanisms – excluding then international organisations such as the UN, or military alliances – the interest of a “vast majority” of the inhabitants of a chosen territory is recognised as one among the most important human rights, and consequently can be entrusted to form a government for that group.

Nation-building processes seem to be nevertheless a fundamental step to be undertaken by societies for achieving modernity. The concept of “nation” passed through several modifications, adaptations, until it has found application in the science of governing populations. Most certainly, its evolution has not ended: the force, the effectiveness of the ideal of the nation are at the core of the system that is being used to manage world societies. Will the contradictions, the abominations carried by nationalisms be taken into account too?

II. Building nation-states

«The nationalist dream of organizing the world into a series of states that provide a roof for each culturally defined people, to use a Gellnerian metaphor, has come close to being realized. History, however, refuses to ever come to an end. It represents a trail traversed in the past, not a compass to determine its future direction. Generations to come will certainly imagine other communities than the nation and reshape the world's political landscape according to the tectonic principles that we cannot possibly imagine today»

(Wimmer, A. and Feinstein, Y., 2010)

After having enquired the origins of concepts such as nation, national identity, nationalism, with their relative shades and legitimate or illegitimate moral claims, this study will proceed with their application to the domain of political institutions. The question is why, at a certain point in history, the political élites in Europe and in other industrialised areas have reached the conviction that there was a need for the state to assume national characteristics? Was it really a natural persecution of the historical path of the populations? Or was it rather a rationally engineered and completely new process to gain strength and wealth for political élites?

Charles Tilly, in his work on the origins of the nation state (*The formation of National States in Western Europe*, 1975) starts with a simple, yet controversial, statement: the current political configuration of most part of the world is based on the European model of state, for it is considered the best model to achieve prosperity and peace. Yet, this belief might rely on wrong, or misconceived,

assumptions on the development of the European nation-state. Tilly points out very clearly three points that should be reconsidered:

1. The European political development is often considered as a *continuum* of rational choices, aimed at broadening the political substrata of governments and pacify the new, powerful political unit of the industrial era, the mass;
2. Following from (1), Western experience is never considered a “lucky shot”, but the only rational path to follow to achieve a “modern government”;
3. Consequently, there is a natural assumption that New Worlds – the Americas, Asia, Africa – will follow or should follow the same path, trying their best to look like the Old World. (Tilly, 1975)

One might observe that, excluding some features of earlier nation-building processes such as those occurred in sixteenth century England and France, most nations have been accompanied in their development by the finely engineered work of policy makers, philosophers, artists, and writers. A useful example is offered by the three industrial latecomers of the nineteenth century, Germany, Japan and Italy. It is hardly debatable that they did politically control their national identification process into the creation of a state able to face the already industrialised neighbours and commercial rivals. Nation-states had already proved far more efficient on the field of industry and security sectors and – therefore – on the inter-national political arena. This, accordingly to the theories on *isomorphism* defended by Meyer et al. in the work *World society and the Nation State* (1997) seems to strengthen the clarifying hypotheses proposed by Wimmer and Feinstein the their article of 2010 (*The rise of Nation-State across the world*). Summing up their analysis, it results that as nation-states are being established throughout a given area (both in terms of territorial and cultural/societal space), there are high chances that the political units that have a different outline will change their

established governing systems to adopt a national one (hypothesis 1, 11 and 12, Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010). More than a *domino effect*, which is a metaphor that works better for socialism, this spreading process is more similar to the *escalation* observed during the Cold War in the production of nuclear armaments between the USSR and the US. Consequently, as observed by Meyer et al. (1997), nation-states show a high degree of isomorphism in their power-managing structures and policies, and improvements are likely to be copied by the surrounding nation-states. This is particularly true for the fundamental distinctions of powers, following the Montesquieuan differentiation of Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers; through Enlightenment they were diffused in all over the world, and even representing a division engendered in West Europe, they have been adopted by the most diverse countries. The tripartite division of power was adopted also by the Republic of China, where there was already political expertise of centralisation of power. In the Chinese case, the tripartite division has been adopted *and* adapted, adding to the three Montesquieuan powers the Confucian powers of Examination and Control. Isomorphic processes can be found also in the nation-state creation projects. The first step is the creation, construction and/or awakening of the national identity; the maintenance of that identity and the effort to legitimise it in front of powers of different nature make part of the following steps. Whether it had been moved by actual threats or by *Machtpolitik*, competition has a role of “fuel” for the development of the nation-state.

Tilly’s analysis of the creation process begins with the study of the pre-existing conditions for the creation of such entities: states do not appear as nation-states, but often start their existence as a personal property and are then subjected to nationalisation processes; this is an essentially European model. States were created on the quest for more power and more land from monarchs, and on the effort to resist and preserve the conquered territories; the nation-state model was implemented as the lowering legitimation of monarchs clashed with a growing

population, whose richest classes claimed political representation and, therefore, more power.

Before the emergence of national divides, Europe in the fifteenth century had a high degree of cultural homogeneity, which could have been rivalled only by that of the Chinese Empire (Tilly, 1975). This homogeneity was extended to three domains of the life on the continent. First, the Roman Empire had left some convergence in language: Latin, understood and used by the bureaucratic élites around the continent, was backed by a variety of *sermones vulgares*, limited to the oral use. The peculiarities of the “European common culture” which travelled with the Latin language were then the heritage of the Roman law, common agricultural techniques, and a centralised church which had a relative dominance on the spiritual life on the continent. Second, the prevalence of peasantry as the condition of the majority of the population tightened people to the land, favouring the creation of a “complement, or parasite, (...) small but widespread class of landlords” (ibid., p. 19). Being typically connected to the *Lex Salica*, power became the link between a territory and blood. Cities grew along the commercial routes as centres of communication, administration, manufacturing and trade, making Europe “more urban than China and nearly as urban as Japan” (ibid., p. 20). Third, political power was decentralised, but relatively uniform; there was a widespread resistance to central powers, and local deliberative assemblies were of central importance in the balance of power. State-making was aimed at the dissolution (as in the case of the Germanies) or absorption (in France) of town courts and smaller powers. Further resistance to state-makers came from other rival for sovereignties, namely the small and variegated cosmos of bishoprics, principalities, but also from other illegitimate powers, like brigands.

According to Tilly, the quest for modernity could have resulted in different outcomes. Given the political landscape of pre-national Europe, the nation-state was not the only way to achieve a higher degree of organisation of society,

sufficient for capitalism to develop. The Empire model represented by the former Roman Empire, with a weak central power and high local autonomy was also an opportunity, as well as a theocracy led by a centralised Church. Another possible outcome could have been a headless, fluid, intense trading network, or even, as proposed by Strayer in *The medieval origins of the modern state* (1970, cited in Tilly, 1975) a continuation of the Feudal system. Yet, the organisational model that has prevailed is that of the nation-state. Tilly provides three causes for its success. First, the effectiveness of the organised system provided by the centralised model, with structured bureaucracy, providing a better allocation of resources (e. g. easing the success in war as well as better agricultural, industrial productions). Second, the presence in European periphery of the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim world, which on the one hand put pressure on the political balance in Europe, and on the other left open the frontier on the Atlantic, encouraging the relatively small European powers to create an empire of their own. Having empires on two thirds of the European periphery, with the remaining third open for conquest, they had the chance to grow without being dominated by other entities. Third, the key role of stimulation and innovation played by early capitalism, regarding the former two points. Both the will of merchants to commerce and gain prosperity and the will of cities to save their autonomy, have played a major role in establishing a bureaucratic resource-collection system and in finding new ways to control the growing population (Tilly, 1975). The not too big, not too small size of the nation-state permitted to the central organisation an effective power, unity of the political institutions; the size and the extension of the available territory in Europe enhanced though the rivalries among the most powerful élite of the landlords, leading to the segmentation of the continent which has lasted until today. In regard to the formation of nation-states, Hobsbawm (1992) reports the debate around the eligible criteria for a nation to claim a nation-state of its own. In addition to a “minimal size”, acting as a pre-condition, the establishment of a

functioning nation-state required the “historic association with a current state, or one with a fairly lengthy and recent past”. Additionally, a “long-established cultural élite”, and the third criterion, “it must unfortunately to be said, was a proven capacity for conquest” (1992, p. 38) To use a Gellnerian maxim, there was simply not sufficient land surface in Europe for every nation to have an effective state of its own, and confrontation was to become inevitable.

Contemporary nation-states are regarded as a natural, purposive, rational actor in an almost completely anarchic inter-national arena. This statement, borrowed by Kenneth Waltz’ 1979 work *Theory of International Politics*, is the basis of the realist analysis on the nature of nation-state proposed by Meyer et al. (1997). In their structuralist analysis, they show how the process of formation, and institutionalisation, of the nation-state, is essentially, as said above, *isomorphic*. National policies and institutions are established according to recurrent outlines and standards: nation-states would not be, consequently, the outcome of a historical process of development of the nation (as they often present themselves). They would rather be a *reaction* to a world-wide, pervading culture – the one referred to by Greenfeld as nationalist *and* anomic – that leads the various communities to adapt, to intensify isomorphism rather than resist to it (Anderson, 1991). The standardised models include “appropriate” institutions, as described in the paper by Kim and Jang quoted in the article by Meyer et al., and in following study by Drori, Jang and Meyer (*Sources of Rationalized Governance: Cross-National Longitudinal Analyses*, 2006). Ministry structures, policies, public goals, data systems and also constitutions seem to obey to international standards more than the previous normative systems of the nation-states that have adopted them. Nation-states are, in Anderson words, “theorized or imagined communities drawing on models that are lodged at the world level” (1991).

Nation-states are subject to external pressures to adopt “proper” policies according to “international standards” (for example, the *Human Rights*) both by

other nation-states and from international organisations. Resistance to such demands is difficult, for the demanders, be they local actors or not, often rhetorically summon “legitimacy myths” (Meyer et al., p. 160) such as democracy, freedom, equality. Nation-states’ choices and cultural/moral external pressures would derive from the same “overarching institutions”, which also include the so-called *World Culture* of the nation-state, enhancing isomorphic phenomena.

1. Why building nation-states?

The adoption of the model of the nation-state, as showed above, has allowed European élites to establish a functioning, effective, powerful system for controlling the growing population, broadening the political fundamentals of governments and maintain their economies in a situation of stable growth on the long period. A powerful state could give the population a proper education, making it suitable for industry and therefore easing their access to labour market. Moreover, adopting the good of the nation as a new, civic religion, the establishment of a compulsory conscription system for armies became possible. The analysis here proposed will treat the reasons that drove the nationalisation of the state, showing the most relevant achievements produced by the nationalisation of the state in the domains of social system, economy and security.

a) Cultural, social and educational reasons.

According to Gellner’s studies (1983; 1994), the central point in nationalism is culture. The shift in the cultural domain of the state from an agrarian old regime to a nationalist, industrial society is summed up by Gellner as “[a]n absolute doctrine for all and a high culture for some, becomes an absolute culture for all,

and a doctrine for some.” (1983, p. 76). Nationalism is born where a *High Culture* is shared and transmitted by institutionalised schools; High Culture is taught using a national language, and lives through symbols and representations. However, there are nationalist currents that assume the *ethnicity* as the basis for nation (accompanied or not by a common language), like Smith’s *ethnosymbolism*. Ethnicity can be highly relevant for populations being fragmented among different states, and though speaking different languages: an example is the Jewish nation, who spoke, before the adoption of the Hebrew language, a variety of languages, from the Judaeo-Spanish to the Yiddish Language. There are nevertheless other factors of unity. Religion is one: although speaking very similar languages, Croatians, Bosniaks and Serbs consider themselves as different nations for their religions are respectively Catholicism, Islam and Orthodoxism.

When studying the creation of culture and society of a given nationalism, observations change according to the division between the two main approaches presented in the first part of this work (the “modernists” and the “primordialists”). In the modernist approach culture is seen as well engineered, accurately structured; symbols are alike; for primordialists both culture and symbols are the result of the inner cultural production of the nation. What they agree on, still, is that national education is aimed at the homogenisation of the population and to enforcing the feeling of shared identity. By the implementation of nationalist policies on education, the *populus* could stop being a mass of individuals subjected to a central power and has become, finally, a *nation*. Those who are considered as “others”, are likely to be exposed to a process of assimilation, or – in the ferocious, extreme nationalisms of the first half of the twentieth century – elimination.

Pre-nationalist Japan had borrowed from the Chinese tradition, as ordinary subdivision of its population, a four-party system, synthesised in a four-character idiom which reads as “warrior-peasant-worker-merchant” (士農工商, *Shinōkōshō*).

The inhabitants of the archipelago, excluding the nobles and the clergy (who were not *populus*) were divided according to their productive category; due to this distinction, and to the inheritance of category from one's own family, society has remained crystallised for centuries. There was little or no mobility among classes and education, where provided, was strictly sectorial. One of the first reforms of the Meiji period, the “nationalist restoration” occurred in Japan from 1868 to 1912, was the abolition in 1871 of class divisions, and the creation of a transversal, homogenous class of “normalised people” (平民, *Heimin*) to group the labour force. This homogenisation of the population was aimed at the shift from an agricultural society (in which the peasants were revered as the second class in order of importance, after the samurai élite) to an industrial one. Forced assimilation occurred also for the annexed territories of the Ryūkyū Islands (annexed formally as Okinawa prefecture in 1879) as it happened for the Ezō Island (become Hokkaidō in 1869). With the reformation of the education system of 1872, Japan made the first steps towards industrialisation.

As Gellner remarks, “[t]he transition from agrarian to industrial society has a kind of entropy quality, a shift from pattern to systematic randomness” (1983, p. 62). Agrarian society, with its relatively stable institutions, had a systematic order which preserved stability. An industrial society required higher mobility rates, less specialised and more educated individuals. In the shift from the first system to the second, education played a major role. The introduction of a compulsory elementary education was aimed at preparing the population to feel ready to protect their community, and to make it more prosperous: indoctrination, knowledge of the ideologies, passed through state schools, propaganda, books, newspapers. New subjects were introduced, together with the teaching of the national language: national history and geography became of highest importance. For example, in the nationalising Prussia, children studied *German* geography and

history, instead of focalising on Prussia, creating a shared feeling of pan-Germanism among young Prussians.

Some criticisms could be made, when stating the importance of having an educated population to make their administration more effective. An uneducated, unlettered population should be easier to manipulate, and therefore rulers willing to keep their power should, as a consequence, prefer to keep the ruled in ignorance. It is legitimate to ask why, then, élites improved the educational systems of their states, while transforming it into a nation-state, and preferred not to leave their ruled in ignorance and uncertainty. The answer to the question is going to meet answers in paragraphs b) and c). The transformation of kingdoms and federations of principalries in nation-states has been the “road to modernity” adopted from the eighteenth century by political entities all around the globe, not just in Europe; the outcomes of the process are the two ideologies which have served as the foundation for the following two centuries: capitalism and imperialism.

b) Economic reasons.

The opening quotation of this study’s first part, borrowed from the 1944 article by Zernatto, remarks that everything became “national” in the eighteenth century, “progressive” in the nineteenth and “either democratic or totalitarian” in the twentieth. The shift from “national” to “progressive” in its industrial, capitalist sense are the central theme in the work *The Spirit of Capitalism* by Greenfeld, but have been part of the study on nations and nationalism also by Gellner and Hobsbawm.

In Gellner’s analysis (*Nations and Nationalism*, 1983) capitalism and nationalism have a relationship of reciprocal endorsement. His point of view stands on the observation of educational process in industrial economies: a low

specialisation at the base was necessary for the formation of the labour force aimed at perpetuating economic growth. Class mobility and great adaptability of the labour force, and constant turnover, were the important features of an industrial state; school became of crucial importance, and with education, also the nation's identity. Gellner points out a general distinction between agricultural societies and industrial societies: the former, usually, arrested its evolution on tribalism, while the second engendered nationalism:

“Modern industry can be paternalistic, and nepotistic at the top; but it cannot recruit its productive units on the base of kin or territorial principles, as tribal society has done.” (1983, p. 84)

An industrial system required then different labour forces than an agricultural, tribal one. Nations, in Gellner's standpoint, engender naturally capitalism and industry as a way to achieve development. Hobsbawm (in *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780*, 1992) proposed instead that capitalism has played a role of legitimation for nationalism, for the necessity of having a unified, homogeneous class of workers matched with the interest of the state to expand economy and promote a more efficient production. In the first part of his work Hobsbawm presents an analysis on Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Although the title focused on nations, Smith reserved only little place for the intervention of bigger entities, and concentrated on the single enterprises. Through the allocation of resources operated by the market, the interests of the individual and that of the group (in this case, the nation) would have matched; the nation-state was just a category to which stick, but would have no direct role in the economic formation of the state, and the dimension of economy still maintained a different dimension. Smith's critical point on state intervention was proven wrong with the coming of

the nineteenth century; the intervention of the state in the economy became as strong as, to quote Hobsbawm,

“no economist of even the most extreme liberal persuasion could overlook or fail to take account of the national economy. Only liberal economists did not like to, or quite know how to, talk about it.” (1992, p. 34).

To prove his thesis about how nationalism had received an endorsement by liberalism, and though affirming that it was economy to create and live nations, Hobsbawm reports the propositions made by the US citizen Alexander Hamilton, first US Secretary of Treasury in 1789. Intended at developing the “germ of nationality”, Hamilton argued for the foundation of a big, national bank; for protection of the domestic products by imposing fees on imported goods, and for the liability of the state for debts (and, subsequently, the opportunity of *national debt*) (ibid). Hobsbawm develops all along his book the idea that industrialism created the nations. He also observes how, in 1913, the industrial sectors had reached a high degree of organisation, around big, nationalised groups; they played a key role not only in the outburst of the war, but also in its development, and in the following critical period (ibid, p. 157). The strength of economy and the will to have a more solid, empowered industry required help by the state, and though a more centralised and legitimated power by the government. To summarise roughly a first approach on the connections between nationalism and the development of economy, it has been observed how the development of economy engendered, or at least endorsed, the later creation of nationalism.

A very different point of view is proposed by Greenfeld, in her second work on nationalism with the significant title of *The Spirit of Capitalism*. Recalling on Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976), she

emphasises the intimate connection of capitalism and culture, mind and will. While Weber, however, assumes that capitalism had drawn efficacy by the rise of Calvinism, for Greenfeld (2001) it was the idea of “nation” to be central for the expansion of economy. Differently from the previous scholars that considered early forms of capitalism as a sort of “pacer” for nationalism, she postulates that, on the contrary, it was *nationalism* giving birth to capitalism as we know it. A strong commitment to the national cause and the will to expanding, belonging to the inner strata of nationalist thought, and the consequent anomie engendered to keep it standing, would have created the *vacuum* in which capitalism – as long as liberalism – have rooted. She writes:

“The sustained orientation of economic activity to growth, the characteristic “spirit of capitalism” which makes modern economy modern, owes its existence to nationalism. In general, this “spirit of capitalism” is the economic expression of the collective competitiveness inherent in nationalism – itself a product of the members’ investment in the dignity or prestige of the nation.” (2001, p. 473)

The hypothesis proposed by Greenfeld is perhaps controversial. The attempts by the United States to export democracy and liberalism to prevent nationalism would be proved to have erroneous premises. Nevertheless, it is also possible to consider that more capitalism requires, and produces, more nationalism. That has been the case for Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, even the Soviet Union, where nationalism has preceded the access to capitalist economies. One could even observe that the Chinese Communist Party has witnessed a nationalistic impulse to its policies as Deng prepared the domestic market to open to world economy, and that in 2013 Japan political nationalist rhetoric has

preceded a return to inflationist measures to give a bust to a stagnating economy. But assuming that the Soviet Union, which was per definition “super-national”, has known a proper nationalism, could be, on the other hand, quite risky; nowadays Russia is anyway a multi-national state and the ascribing of the regime to nationalism can be object of controversy. The same thing can be assumed for China, where processes of centralisation and de-centralisation, whether connected or not with nationalist causes, have being implemented for longer periods and that of Nationalist China, or the nationalisation of the policies provided by the Communist Party, might be regarded as merely an episode of a cyclic phenomenon.

c) Security reasons.

In an analysis which is parallel to the ones presented for economy, Posen’s work *Nationalism, the Mass Army and Military Power* (1993) posits that militaristic competition had a fundamental role in boosting the spread of nationalism throughout Europe. His theories of isomorphism in the military domain find validation in Kenneth Waltz’ *Theories of International Politics*, where he states that:

“[c]ontending states imitate the military innovations contrived by the country of greatest capability and ingenuity. And so the weapons of the major contenders, even their military strategies, begin to look the same all over the world.” (1979, p. 127)

Late eighteenth century Europe saw the ideas of the French Revolution spreading with Enlightenment, but, much more relevantly in Posen’s view, it saw the spreading of the first mass army, the *Grande Armée* which marched through

Europe. The mass army had not only a relevantly increased size to make it more effective, compared to the previous mercenary armies. It had also the chance to maintain a remarkable manpower also in conditions of rigor, keeping desertion to low rates. Soldiers of mass armies could be easily replaced, could be manoeuvred from long distances, and proved to be more loyal and motivated. Political motivation – and ultimately, literacy – played a key role for developing a mass army.

Nationalism proved to be effective also in this domain: by constructing the conscience of belonging to a greater community – the nation – men could accept to be called for compulsory conscription to be ready to protect the “utmost good” represented ideally by the prosperity and the safeness of their community. As for women, they played a less significant role in the security sphere, at least in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In his contribution to Alan Collins’ *Contemporary Security Studies* (2013), Paul Roe proposes his approach to understand security for societies (*Societal Security*, pp. 176-190), using as model society the nation-state. National identity is recognised as one of the central factors in directing the security policies of a nation-state. The *balance of power*, which can make policies lean toward armed confrontation or peaceful co-existence, includes three main elements. National identity is central: it is also to protect their identity that individuals accept identification within a nation. The other two elements regard the practical possibility for the state to protect or intervene in favour of the nation, and about the legitimation that the government has on the ruled population. As the two latter elements of the balance are especially linked to economy (the construction and maintenance of infrastructures, or the availability of adequate instruments) and culture (with the key role of education, in creating loyal citizens) the third is the more intimately connected to security issues. Threats to security may affect identity, but might also ignore it, as for the Nazi expansion in Europe: it was

aimed at erasing the Polish identity in 1939, but had in the end little or no damage on the French identity.

The *Copenhagen School* of security studies has created a three-point-model for studying menaces on societal security, aimed at threatening identity:

- a) Horizontal competition: when the society has to modify identity in response to pressures from other groups (such as the “Russification” policies imposed by the Soviet Union on Latvian, Ukrainian, Kazakh identities, just to name a few);
- b) Vertical competition: when the society is forced, by state failure or by the globalising impulses of *World Culture*, to open to wider identities or to segment into narrower ones (a case showing the dangers of vertical competition is the Yugoslavian failed state);
- c) Immigration, with particular attention on the perceived “dominant” ethnicity of a society. (Roe, in Collins, 2013 ed.)

Response to those threats could be armed, but also cultural, or economic. The continuous alternation of periods of peace and of threat has shaped national identities as are proposed to world society today – and the identification process is likely to continue, at least for the near future. Similar threats have engendered economic nationalism, cultural nationalism and a more political, territorial nationalism. Each security response to a menaced identity constitutes a reason for building strong and committed armies, and has been used as such by nation-building states. The *security dilemma* (ibid) is intimately connected to identification processes. It is through the understanding of national identity of the opponent nation-state that the responses vary from armed to non-armed ones. The two features to security dilemma in forming nation-states, as observed by the *Copenhagen School*, have been “ambiguity” and “uncertainty”. While ambiguity relies on the nature of the opposite armaments (for example, the stock of weapons

perceived to have attack purposes), uncertainty regards directly the expectations on the behaviour of the opponent state. Being about the nature of an actor, uncertainty requires an exercise of extrapolation from the past behaviours of the opponent, and requires though the consciousness of national identity.

Cultural nationalism is not to be regarded as a milder form of response. It has been the ideological fundament for the abominations perpetuated by nationalist regimes in the past centuries. When the national cultural identity is endangered, in the three different perspective proposed by the *Copenhagen School*, cultural nationalism can prompt responses such as genocide, culturecide and ethnic cleansing. These are the three most violent responses to threats to cultural identity. It is important to remark that the three praxes are not exclusive of the far past, but have occurred also in the near past (the dissolution of Yugoslavia is an example). Nevertheless, cultural nationalism is not necessarily linked to armed responses; there are examples of discourses on cultural autonomy that respond to an endangered national identity by stressing the territorial bonds of culture, meant as local language, local habits etc.; those discourses are nationalist as well, and should not be underestimated.

2. How to build a nation-state. Case studies

This study will now try to follow the evolution of four nation-states, to show how the theories and hypothesis presented so far do find historical confirmation. By focussing on the development of national identities, this study will show the national roots of the inter-national relations of the selected states, therefore aiming at understanding how identities have developed and what are their current peculiarities. This is not an exercise on stereotyping: it should be read as a study on the perception of national identities, based on historical processes of identification. Hence two scenarios will be proposed. The European scenario will deal with two main powers in the continent, France and Germany. Another set, the East-Asian scenario, will propose as case of study Japan and China.

Both Europe and East-Asia are regions in which the complexity of international relations cannot be understood by the bare study of two main actors; the main influences from external actors and from other actors in the same area will be considered in the case studies.

European Scenario

As already considered in the previous pages of this study, Europe presented a peculiar environment that allowed the formation of the nation-state as a model of political organisation. Though considering that the possible outcome of the process of political development could have resulted different (Tilly, 1975), the nation-state presented itself as a winning model and has spread through the continent. Isomorphism, anomie, industrialisation, militarisation become keywords for succeeding in the western part of the continent; in particular, the rivalry among the most powerful political units encouraged the adoption of nationalist policies for achieving those goals.

The rivalry between France and Germany can be considered as one of the most ancient rivalries on the European continent: frictions between the Gauls and the Germans are reported by Julius Caesar already in the *De Bello Gallico*. Nevertheless, the modern opposition between Prussia and France had originated in 1756. The *Diplomatic Revolution* resulting in the Seven Years' War re-designed the balance of alliances in Europe: on one side, Prussia, backed by the United Kingdom of George II Hannover; on the other a coalition of France, Austria, Russia and Spain. That was also the period when the support to French bourgeoisie by the aristocracy of the *Ancien Régime* proved to be insufficient in fighting commercially against the maritime power of the United Kingdom. Adopting a nationalist/internationalist political divide as a looking-glass in observing this historical period, the necessity to change the economic and social environment in eighteenth century France becomes showing. French merchants, who were gaining wealth, had neither political power nor representation, while the aristocracy was involved in expensive wars. On the other side, the Germanies were divided in a cosmos of small political entities among which Prussia, under the rule of Friedrich II, was proving to be the most powerful, and was aspiring to construct a greater German state, therefore invading Bavaria and the Silesia. Through a mechanism of innovation and imitation, France and Prussia/Germany had begun to prepare the soil for the following era of conflicts on the European continent.

France

In his work *Citizens: a chronicle of the French Revolution* (1989), Schama stresses the importance of culture in the construction of French identity. His study of the process begins with a remarkable event occurred in the eve of the Revolution. In his narrative analysis of the construction of French identity,

Schama illustrates the high symbolic value of the cultural modifications seen in France in the decline of the Old Regime. Two of the symbolic phenomena he considers as relevant are the balloon of M. de Montgolfier and the popularity of the Opéra.

“On September 19, 1783, at around one in the afternoon, to the sound of a drum roll, an enormous taffeta spheroid wobbled its way unsteadily into the sky over the royal palace at Versailles. (...) [A]s many as 130,000 spectators were said by one account to have witnessed the event, and most reports put the number at 100,000” (p. 123)

The *globes aerostatiques* invented by Montgolfier broke the ordinary, and they showed to the crystallised, semi-feudal society of Old Regime France that there were dimensions not yet discovered. With the extraordinary idea of a hot air-filled balloon, allowing those who were in the basket placed below it to rise from the ground, Montgolfier realised the inner human dream of flying. The episode illustrated in Schama's work is about the first fly of a sheep, named for the event *Montauciel*; having the King struck by the sight of a flying sheep was more than just the occasion. It was eventually the dawn of a new category of men, who proposed themselves as *adventurers of the sky*. “On the ground it was still, to some extent, an aristocratic spectacle; in the air it became democratic” (ibid, p. 125): highly symbolic, the dimension of the sky still belonged to the domain of the sacred. With the possibility for men to rise from the ground, a barrier was broken and religion started to lose its grip on the people. The audience had been, for the first time, variegated and disconnected from horizontality: while on a flat dimension there could be a hierarchy made of seats, with the displacement of the

show in a vertical dimension, everyone had had the same chance to see what was seen by the very King's eyes.

Aeronauts became popular in short time. One of them, the former soldier, former innkeeper, Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier, who learned physics in Paris, was one of this class of pioneers. Only twenty-six-years-old, he died after two years in the first air crash of history. The “middle class” of the French Kingdom had in Pilâtre de Rozier a hero, who with Montgolfier and other “citizens-balloonists”

“[s]ucceeded in establishing a direct and unmediated relationship of comradeship with enormous multitudes of people. The crowds of spectators who ran the gamut of unconfined emotions while watching them behaved exactly as crowds were not supposed to do in the old regime” (ibid, p. 131).

The Old Regime had its own hierarchies, and distance between the ruled and the rulers could be understood as “very high” if analysed by the “cultural dimension theory” provided by Hofstede (Hofstede, Hostede and Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations*, 2010). Thence, the charisma of those physicists and adventurers helped shortening that distance. Nevertheless, aerial heroes were not the only overturning factors of the Old Regime *status quo*.

The *opéra*, as well as the hot air balloon, was attractive for people from every class and census, and had many different manifestations in the pre-revolutionary Paris. In boulevard theatres, where it was “difficult if not impossible to maintain any kind of formal distinction of rank” (ibid, p. 136), as well as in the prestigious halls of the *Comédie Française*, it was possible to find people from each and every extraction. The *parterre* places were not expensive and there was a

number of students and law clerks who attended the shows; as for balcony places, access was mandated by wealth, more than nobleness. Schama reports of a fight between an aristocrat and a commoner, a proctor of the Parliament, occurred in 1872 for the right to access to the same balcony, where the nobleman did not want to recognise the right for the clerk to seat by himself (ibid, p. 138). Although the aristocrat had the commoner removed, he had his behaviour recognised as wrong by the Court in charge of judging the case.

Although not representing the effective naissance of French nationalism, these apparently irrelevant phenomena had engendered both anomie and a sort of liberalism. The possibility to arise from ground was literally a revolution in a period when the Assumption of the Vergin was the most famous (and probably the only) event of that kind. It generated the perception that laws as transcendental as the impossibility to reach the sky could be actually broken; moreover, the new dimension of the show, being it the flight of a balloon or a theatre piece, allowed potentially anyone to see it – and to participate, as for the physicist de Rozier. It produced the environment that, in Greenfeld's comparative examples, is necessary for the development of nationalism and for modernisation. In the same way, the potential access to a balcony at the Opéra for whoever could afford it, along with the attendees from the *parterre*, generated the feeling of the existence of a trans-class society, never seen before.

The analysis of the cultural construction of the citizen for Revolutionary France proceeds with Schama's innovative perspective on Rousseau's works. Though recognising the importance of his works on politics and human rights – in particular, *The Social Contract*, he stresses the impact on society by his writings on morals and feelings, notably the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and the *Émile* (1762). Although being the first more exactly a roman, and the second a “narrative treatise”, the works gained a great popularity among the readers. The *Émile*, in particular, had great response before the uprising, when it was banished, as well as

during the Revolutionary period, when it became an inspiration for reforming the educational system. Writing on personal virtues and morals of the individual, Rousseau helped shaping the idea of shared identity:

“(...) he provided a way in which the torments of the ego – an increasing popular past-time in the late eighteenth century – could be assuaged by membership in a society of friends. In place of an irreconcilable opposition between the individual, with his freedom intact, and a government eager to abridge it, Rousseau substituted a sovereignty in which liberty was not alienated but, as it were, in trust. (...) The impossibly paradoxical nature of this bargain was to be revealed too brutally during the Revolution itself. But for Rousseau’s acolytes in 1780s, visions opened up for possible societies that might be capable of integrating the imperious “I” within the comradely “We”.” (1989, p. 161)

Personal, individual morals became associated with *public* morals (p. 168). Already in the eve of the Revolution, a number of men found a renewed passion for an ancient praxis of the public and political life: the oration. Men like Héroult, Robespierre, Danton, showed an outstanding passion for the Republican Rome, in the attempt to emulate the *homines novi* designed by Cicero. Simon Linguet, one of those pioneers of the Revolutionary dialectics, had the power to cast a new, powerful light on the bar at which he spoke. It was in 1775 that he publicly stated, at a public discussion at the Parliament, that *public opinion* was the Supreme Judge to which other tribunals are subjected. Contrarily to the centralisation of power established by Cardinal Richelieu in the 1620s, which took power from local aristocracies to the ministerial centre in which the cardinal acted as a semi-

dictator, light had been cast on population and power became a multi-polar dimension. The origin of legitimation shifted from the absolute authority of the king – during the first period of state-building (Greenfeld, 1992, p.113) – to public opinion (Schama, 1989, p. 170) proper of the nation-building process.

The concept of “People” had then been created by speeches, and not vice versa. The usage of words such as “nation” (as seen in the first part of this study) had, if not the precise address of creating a community that did not exist before, at least the chance to give community identity a new meaning. Public diction, Schama poses, became public power. Orators gained soon popularity and during the Revolution, being unable to deliver a successful public speech could even result in death.

The power of words became in Revolutionary France a major factor of success. Late eighteenth century France had a literacy rate higher than twentieth century United States: in the fashionable, yet popular, rue Saint Honoré, Schama reports literacy rate was at 93%, while in artisanal rue Saint Denis it scored at 86% for men and 76% for women. In the eve of the Revolution already, literature of all sorts, from books to journals, began to proliferate; during Revolutionary period, thanks to an initial absence of censorship, newspapers became more and more common and the inhabitants of Paris became more and more interested in reading them. Public speeches, newspapers, and songs, too (*la Marseillaise*, but also the *Carmagnole*) created a text available for all sorts of people, and postulated that the coming of a “society of brothers” had replaced that of the *Ancien Régime*. It was proposed as the dawn of a supposed society of equals, where whoever sufficiently brave and cultivated could not only fly on hot air balloons, but also claim political rights and citizenship.

Progresses in education were, most probably, at the base of the new French State military success. France had been at war with almost all Europe in the years following the Revolution of 1789, and even more significantly after the arrest of

Luis XVI in June 1791. The patriotic, revolutionary new identity of France had the chance to be reinforced by the hostility of the surrounding, Old Regime kingdoms which feared the expansion of such a subverting ideology. Particularly, the Proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick of 1792 put on a feeling of danger the new identity of the progressively forming nation-state. It intimidated the release of the king and incriminated all the members of the National Assembly; it allowed instead the Revolutionaries and the people to reinforce their endangered identity, reaching higher levels of identification, and succeeding in stopping the Austro-Prussian army at Valmy.

When the *Republique* declared war to United Kingdom and Netherland in 1793, it had to face a coalition of Prussia, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Kingdom of Sardinia and Kingdom of Naples. The French Revolution had nevertheless created a new way to make war: its Revolutionary Army, in which Napoleon built his fortune, was revolutionary not only by name. The French population was deeply involved: thanks to the reforms, soldiers were mainly Frenchmen, politically indoctrinated, and numerous. Highly committed to the national cause, the Revolutionary Army could count on the strategic power of the *tirailleurs* (or skirmishers, men in charge of preceding armies to harass the enemy's front), and on highly motivated troops.

“The French Revolution gave Europe its first modern mass army. This mass army depended on nationalism for its combat power. Those who subsequently imitated the mass army were also forced to imitate its nationalism.” (Posen, 1993, p. 92)

The new Army succeeded in merging the identity of the citizen and that of the soldier. Constantly at war, Revolutionary France needed to improve her education system, and with the goal of forging men ready to fight, created strong

emotional bonds between the citizen and the nation-state, and between the soldiers and the civilians. Patriotic songs were sung everywhere, and more were created under request of the *Assemblée Nationale*. The power of words and discourses was exploited in journals and newspapers, and in books distributed to soldiers in office, on the frontlines. Posen reports that the high-water mark of this efforts was touched in 1794 (1993, p. 94). Barriers to promotion relying on class extraction were largely eliminated, further shortening the power-distance factor observable by Hostede's paradigm. Instead of class extraction, literacy was a factor of success in military career, and in 1794 elementary education became compulsory for becoming an officer. Merit and literacy became key elements for achieving promotion to the grade of commissioned and un-commissioned officer, and high standards for performance and sacrifice were required to all soldiers. When he became First Consul in 1799, Napoleon could count on a high-standard, efficient and motivated army having no equals in Europe. The "perfect French" had, finally, a shape: he was an adventurer, but also literate, politically involved, and strongly committed to his national community. S/he followed the guide of a charismatic leader, which impersonated by Napoleon was the symbol of the State and the guide of the Army. Where in past there was a *Roi très Chrétien* as the overarching symbol of France (Greenfeld, 1992), made her appearance *La Marianne*, personification of *la Grande Nation*, bearer of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

This new wave of nationalism in French society had remarkable effects on economy, too. Rivalry in this domain is to be searched with the United Kingdom, rather than with the Germanies (Greenfeld, 2001). France was not merely a state of army and heroes: it ought to have an economic sustain, a "spinal column" sustaining the expansion of its nationalist policies. At the time in which Colbert became the first Minister of the Navy, in 1669, commerce was not regarded as a "noble" activity. During the Colbertist period a "handbook of the good merchant"

appeared, written by Jacques Savary (*Le parfait négociant: ou Instruction générale pour ce qui regarde le commerce des marchandises de France, & des pays étrangers*, 1675), with the aim of creating a space for a renewed image of the merchant, and providing it with a higher moral value. The very Smith's opera sees its fourth book as a complex of criticisms of mercantilism and underlines its "mean and malignant" origins. Nevertheless, mercantilism is regarded in Greenfeld's work on capitalism as the first interpretation of economic nationalism, and in this perspective it could be asserted that it led to the creation of an additional feature of the national identity. The capitalist class, which could not rise in France until late eighteenth century, emerged out of the bourgeoisie, but also from the nobility: "it did not cultivate collective memory that would emphasise its genetic lineage; there was a break in continuity" (Greenfeld, 2001, p. 148). It was indeed a new social class, and had to wait until the Revolution to gain some independence from the previous categories. It suffered by a historical "Anglophobia", fuelled by *ressentiment* and by the positions of intellectuals; Linguet, Mirabeau, but also Rousseau, all shared a highly critical position towards capital and capitalists, seen as more attached to money than to their *patrie*. Napoleon, during his exile in St. Helena, is accounted by his doctor in 1822 with the famous phrase "England is a nation of shopkeepers" ("*L'Angleterre est une nation de boutiquiers*", as quoted in Delannoi, *La Nation*, 2010, p.89), remarking the pejorative meaning of being merchants.

The economic identity of French nationalism had been shaped in contrast to the English economic identity (Germany did not have an economic system to which compare the French one, in the period in which it has formed). The United Kingdom was the most genuine interpreter of mercantilism, which constitutes a primary form of capitalism. France did develop a colonial empire, but with the persistence of an "ambivalent" approach to business. It was with nationalism that

provided a late encouragement to business sectors, due to competition with Germany:

“it is certain that this ambivalence retarded the spread, if not the rise, of the spirit of capitalism in France. It slowed down the development of that aggressively competitive mentality which historians find lacking in French “entrepreneurial psychology” and was at least partially responsible for the somewhat disappointing economic performance of France in the nineteenth century” (Greenfeld, 2001, p. 153)

Germany

The construction of German identity had to follow a different path than the French one. While the construction of French identity was aided by the actual presence of a French state, the Germanies were a fractioned territory, with many and different political centres. In 1815, Germany was divided in 38 microstates, politically dominated by Austria and Prussia. The creation, in that year, of a German Confederation had rendered nothing but a loose military alliance, which maintained economic – and even religious – relevant divides.

The first political appearance of “nation” is due to the change in name of the Holy Roman Empire which, after the councils of Constance and Basel, gained the specification “of the German Nation” – where the term had a mere meaning of “élite”. The introduction of the term had been used, nevertheless, to strengthen the power of local princes, more than creating a unitary Germany.

Professor Harold James' analysis on the construction of a German nation (*A German identity*, 1989) is concerned with the importance of economic development and the faith in a powerful nation, led by far-sighted statesmen

whose policies, more than equal or patriotic, should have been *effective*. Although led by Prussian patriotism more than a German one, this early German national identity looked around for models to follow. The attempt to design a new society required, in parallel to the French one, to develop two parallel identities for security and economy (no wonder that for James national economy is a result of “Mars and Mercury”, as he entitles the related chapter of his book). The development of both identities started in Prussia, involving isomorphism and competition with, among other models, France and Great Britain.

The creation of German identity had been undertaken, most relevantly at first, by intellectuals. The *liaison* with the French Enlightenment and French language was limited to the elites that could afford the studies. Economists looked across the English Channel for a standard on which build their own industry; some intellectual (mostly Romantic) looked at Greece and Rome as the ancient models on which shape their own concept of nation; the main idea was, in any case, that Prussian/German nationalism should have been – at least partly – self-sufficient and self-sustaining (James, 1989). It is also posed by Greenfeld (1992) that the inherently German ideologies of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, i.e. the *Aufklärung* (roughly translatable with “Elucidation”, a German version of Enlightenment), Pietism and Romanticism, played a major role in shaping the *Bildensbürger*, “constructed citizen”. Nationalism in Germany, although arriving at a later period than the other nationalisms in Europe, drew from those deeply-rooted philosophies the power and the strength which allowed it to take the “leap forward” and become one of the most potent, active and dynamic nationalisms of the European continent.

The economic paradigm with which Prussia approached the study of economy in the eighteenth century was *cameralism*. The word, from the German *Kammer*, referred to the Prince’s cabinet, as economy was intended mainly as branch of administrative sciences; it was more or less a “managerial” science.

However, as the *Wealth of Nations* became more and more fashionable, German intellectuals provided a new approach to economy, closer to an interdisciplinary subject of study, translating literally the Greek *oikonomos* (οἰκονόμος, “rules of the house”) in the German *Hauswirtschaft*. Prussia – which, in search for models to follow to build her own German identity, turned to classical civilisations of Rome and Athens – approached the study of the discipline remarking the central role of the *Haus-Vater*, the “house father” or the *pater familias* who was in charge to properly conduct the household, and therefore identifying it with the Prince, the leader of the *Kammer* (Greenfeld, 2001).

In 1805 two books appeared in reaction to Smith’s criticisms of mercantilism, one by L. H. Jacob and the other by F. J. H. von Soden. Though not being the first two works drawing from Smith’s ideas, both had in their titles the key to the newer approach to economy, brought in by competition with Revolutionary France: *Grundsätze der National-Oekonomie oder National-Wirtschaftslehre* (“Principles of economics or national economics”) and *Die National-Oekonomie* respectively. The peculiarity of the new approach, remarked by the word *Oekonomie*, introduced a difference between the purely administrative, managerial, cameralist *Hauswirtschaft* and the new perspective which included universal principles of economy and the presence of independent factors that went beyond the power of the Prince’s cabinet (Greenfeld, 2001). This change prepared the road to the concept of *Gewerbefreiheit*, the right to commerce freely, forecasting the dismantlement the old guilds-system and allowing information and knowledge to flow across social levels. These changes in the economic attitude of the forming German nation arrived in the eve of decisive events: the defeat of the Prussian Army at Jena, in 1806, hit strongly the Prussian state and pushed it into a period of nationalist reforms aimed to a revolution in the building of the national army and national economy.

The Frederician state has been defined as a "machine state, in which the individual was to function as a cog in a mechanism (...) a mere means to an end, and his moral energies were suppressed." (Holborn, 1964, p. 393). The pre-national state failed, with its cameralist approach, to convince its population of the necessity of change, in a rise of productivity. From the point of view of security discourse, it was a failure of securitisation of economic issues (Collins, 2013, ch. 10). The evidence that there is a parallel between economic failure and identity failure becomes showing when analysing the fragility of the Prussian economy and the public response to the events of military defeats, such as the after-Jena. Mostly apathetic, the Germans perceived the defeat mainly as a failure of the king, and accepted the French invasion with resignation (Greenfeld, 2001). With the change of pace due to nationalist reforms occurred between 1807 and 1819, "the individual's free development was proclaimed one of the government's fundamental objectives, as was his education for participation in public life." (Holborn, pp. 393-94), pushing the Prussians to react more fiercely in 1814.

It was impossible, according to Posen's study on National Armies (1993) to compete with the French Army without copying the French nationalist army reforms, and consequently French nationalism. The catastrophic defeat of the Prussian army at Jena, and the humiliating peace treaty imposed by Napoleon, boosted the process of reformation imposed by King Frederick William III. He reformed the education system to provide the Prussians not only preparation on German (more than Prussian) history and geography, but also adopted a pan-German perspective, giving more and more importance to the role of *Volksschule* in forming "proud Prussian men" whose horizon was a pan-German state. The recruitment of foreigners in the army was banished, along with corporal punishments (Posen, 1993). Already in 1808 a Reorganisation Commission was established and in 1813 universal conscription was implemented. The army was reorganised to form a *Landwehr*, a local militia that pledged all able-bodied males,

and a *Landsturm*, which had a regional base. The availability of soldiers for the reformed Prussian Army grew from 60,000 men in December 1812 to 130,000 in March 1813, and to 270,000 by the fall of the same year (ibid). These measures did not meet universal acclaim, but nevertheless

“(…) there is reason to believe that the combination of technical reforms, broader recruitment, and the fact of political rebellion against external domination provided the Prussian Army of 1813-15 with motivation and combat power that was vastly increased over its predecessors of 1806.” (Posen, 1993).

When France abandoned her standards with the abolition, in 1814 of the compulsory conscription, Prussia maintained it: the victories of 1866 against Austria and 1870 against France are proof of how efficient was the new educational system and how powerful became, consequently, the newly constructed Prussian national army. It is true that in schools, loyalty was (at least until 1870) more addressed primarily to the King and then to the nation, but the concept of an army made up of local men with a common goal instead of foreign mercenary professionals proved again to be successful and forged the commitment of the Prussians to the German case.

Radical changes occurred also in the economical domain. The appeal of Great Britain had caused the reaction to *Smithianismus* developing *Nationaloekonomie*. Therefore a new passion for liberal theories and for the *Gewerbefreiheit* pushed for a series of reforms totally reshaping the concept of “liberty”, going beyond the mere economic discourse. The poet Heinrich Heine wrote, in 1828:

“(…) it cannot be denied that the Germans love freedom, but it is in a different manner from that of other nations. The Englishman loves freedom as his lawful wife, and if he does not always treat her with peculiar tenderness, yet he thoroughly respects her, and knows how to defend her honour like a man. The Frenchman loves freedom as his bride. He glows with fire for her, he throws himself at her feet with the most exaggerated protestations, his heart beats for her in life, and, he has persuaded himself, in death also, while he commits a thousand follies for her sake. Now the German loves freedom as his old grandmother.” (quoted in *English Fragments from the Oerman of Heine*, 1880, p.250)

This fragment is relevant for two features. First, the simple, almost naïve, declaration of love for liberty from the point of view of a German; second, for how liberty (and, to some extent, liberalism) in other countries was perceived: Germany (it is possible to refer, to some extent, to “Germany” since the creation of the German Confederation in 1814) was still looking for models for her own capitalist project. The myth the Germans were looking for came along with industrialisation and the technology imported from Great Britain.

One imaginative symbol for German industrialisation is the power of the steam locomotive (James, 1989). The first railway in 1834 – of about six kilometres, from Nuremberg to Furth, in Bavaria – carried Germany in the modernity of high-speed transportation, enhancing ideologically the idea of unity. Commercial unity was to become political unity, “brought about by the very nature of things” (Heinrich von Treitschke, quoted in James, p. 60). As the second half of the nineteenth century was approaching, and Romanticism was substituted by Realism, nationalism became progressively intertwined with *Realpolitik*.

Rochau, a Saxon journalist from Brunswick, stated that, simply, “for Germans, unity is basically a pure business affair [*eine reine Geschäftssache*]” (quoted in James, p. 63).

It must be reminded, nevertheless, that in nineteenth century Germany there were other forces at work. It would be proof of naïveté to forget that in 1867 the first book of *Das Kapital* was published. Marx initiated an even more innovative approach to economy and society, which has had a variety of connection with the building of national identities in and outside Europe; on the other hand the many connections and mutual influences between the two subjects of Marxism and nationalism would require an entire study of their own (for a summary of the theme, see Ernest Gellner’s *Encounters with nationalism*, 1994).

The superiority of Prussia to Austria-Hungary was definitively proved with the creation of the North German Confederation in 1866-67. The new identificative community of the “Northern Germans” (in opposition to Austrians) had in baron Otto von Bismarck its charismatic leader. His insight into the identification processes that were undergoing in that part of Europe allowed him to transform Prussia in the German Empire. From Enlightenment through Romanticism to Realism, having a strong army and the first state-led welfare system, Germany had finally caught up with the other European states. Champion of the *Realpolitik*, for Bismarck

“it was possible to buy anyone: foreign states (through premises of assistance or of territory), liberals (through German unification), conservatives (from 1870s through tariff protection) and socialists (through welfare legislation).” (James, 1989, p. 66)

The creation of a German nation-state, assuming the shape of the *Kaiserreich*, had succeeded. On the contrary, the German average man had still no definite German identity. While in France the shaping of national identity has led to a revolution, requiring the participation of the bourgeoisie, in Germany this never happened. The deep economic crisis of the Weimar Republic loosened the connection between the materialist perspective of “effectiveness” and the political legitimation of the élites. It pushed on the same side nationalism and socialism, as rivals of realism and materialism. The *Nationalsozialismus*, once in power, continued shaping the German identity adding traits depending on ethnicity – the myth of the Aryan – and on social Darwinism. The Nazis claimed to have finally allowed the evolution from a *Gesellschaft*, a society of individuals, to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a popular community of the German people, and represented the bourgeois impulse that had been lacking before.

East Asian Scenario

Nationalism and, more generally, the nation are concepts that have come to light in Europe and have developed following a “European style” culture (as for the case of the United States of America). Those concepts and others, deriving in last stance from European philosophies, were indeed alien to East Asia until the arrival of European merchants and missionaries. Nevertheless, as observed in the first chapter of this work, identification is a recurrent element in human mind, and the inhabitants of this area made no exception in adhering to collective identities.

Here, East Asia is considered to be the variegated environment in which it is possible to find, as a cultural substratum, the usage of Chinese characters for writing and a certain adherence to Chinese-rooted philosophies (i. e. Confucianism, and to some extent Buddhism, considering the sutras of Chinese production). The main cultural, political, identity centre of this area has been the

Chinese Empire, which civilisation is the more ancient and from which the others cultures, through mechanisms of differentiation, competition and imitation, have originated. This study will consider the two main centres of political and identity production of East Asia, China and Japan. The Korean peninsula is not less important, and the same can be said for other the identities in South East Asia; nevertheless, China being the first chronologically, and Japan the most active centre of nationalism in the continent, have been chosen as items of comparison with the two European subjects, France and Germany.

The Chinese Empire can be compared to the Roman Empire in Europe for achievements in cultural proliferation and social organisation. The Chinese character system, developed in the Bronze Age, became of common use in the Chinese territories, as well as in Korea, Vietnam and Japan, and with it scripts, sutras, books of medicine. Confucianism constitutes a common basis for the regulation of society; a unitary Chinese empire including the many population of mainland China was the centre of political stability in the area. The very Chinese word for China, 中国 *Zhōng Guó*, means “the central state”, and the Chinese Emperor received a “Mandate of Heaven” to rule it peacefully. Other political entities, such as the near Korean Peninsula, Japan and other smaller Reigns were tributary societies, and were subordinated to China. Differently from a much more conflict-dense European scenario, the Central State was usually more concerned with the maintenance of peace along its borders than with expansionist policies. Japan played a significant exception in the area, having its own Emperor, with his own Mandate, and differently from the Chinese Emperor, the Japanese one could not be overthrown by the subjects to his will. Differences between the two models of empire will be shown in the following case-studies.

Japan

While France knew her momentum in the development of the concept of nation after the Revolution of 1789, and though in the initial period of the industrial age, Japan's isolation has postponed the construction of its national identity for almost a century, until 1868. Before that symbolic year, Japan had a feudal society, reinforced by a period, lasting more than two centuries, named *Sakoku* (鎖国, “enchained country”, 1641-1853) of strong restriction of contacts with world outside the archipelago. In 1868 the old feudal regime was dismantled and the Meiji Restoration began (明治維新, *Meiji Ishin*, 1868-1912): previous to the reforms, the Japanese society was divided in four categories, according to the Chinese Confucian traditions. Exemplified in the idiom *shi-nō-kō-shō* (士農工商, warrior, peasant, worker, merchant), it also included other categories to be considered “separated”: the aristocracy, the clergy, and a cosmos of outcasts including the *hinin* (非人, “non-human”). The formal division in classes was abolished with the beginning of the Meiji reforms in 1869, and by 1871 also the *eta* (穢多, “multitude of filthy ones”) were formally reintegrated in the new social class of the *heimin*, which intended to be transversal (平民 “plain people”, “commoners”). The beginning of the nationalist reinvention of the Japanese society started from the homogenisation of the people; the binding agent to keep the population together in only one class was found in race.

It has been shown in the first part of this study how there is not a literal translation for the word “nation” in Chinese letters. Absence is as relevant as presence when studying societies, and remarking again this lack of terminology is not hazardous. Nationalist Japan has produced a rich literature associated with *Japaneseness* (translated by the Japanese *Nihonjin-ron*, 日本人論), which had indeed no clear distinction between the three core concepts of race, ethnicity and

nation. The concepts were expressed in terms of *minzoku* (民族, “family-people”). Nevertheless, there is a word for “race” in its pseudoscientific meaning, which is *jinshu* (人種, “human type”). The construction of the Japanese identity had its centre in three essential components: blood, a shared culture and collective consciousness (Weiner, *Discourses of Race and Nation in Pre-1945 Japan*, 1995). The presence of a discriminatory condition such as blood, moreover, denotes the difference of the Japanese identities from the others, such as the Chinese and the French ones, which were more open to inclusion.

The preconditions for the creation of a national identity were significantly different for Japan, considering the example of France or Great Britain. It lacked the bourgeois ferment that had characterised the French Revolution, and the role played by the state

“appears essential for filling the vacuum not yet filled from *below*. (...) Japan blew the occasion to bring into question the Confucian view of the state or the divine legitimation of the political power.” (emphasis added, translation mine) (Caroli, *Razza, etnia, nazione. Alcune considerazioni sull’identità collettiva in Giappone*, 1996).

In addition to isomorphism, it is the contrast with other already industrialised, nationalised societies that has prompted the Japanese experience of the nation-building. A central role has been played by the intellectuals adhering to the current called *kokugaku* (国学, “state studies”). In 1879 a Japanese translation of the study by Thomas Huxley’s *Lectures on the Origins of Species* appeared and, as a consequence, also the study of social Darwinism gained reputation. Among the many four-character idioms used as slogans by the nationalist propaganda, two were used with the main goal of reinforcing the racial identity of the Japanese

people: “struggle for survival” (生存競争, *seizon kyōsō*) and “survival of the fittest” (優勝劣敗, *yūshō reppai*), of clear Darwinist derivation (Gluck, 1985). Consequently, in order to legitimate the Japanese imperial expansion, it has been stressed that the Japanese race was intrinsically superior to other races in East Asia, and that other populations could have achieved a proper social and political development only by the adoption of Japanese features, such as the use of Japanese language. Industrial development and technological achievements were seen as the essential factor of development, and the signal that civilisation and enlightenment could be reached. The island of Ezo, in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, was inhabited by a nomadic population, the Ainu. It was already under informal control of the *han* (i. e., feudal domain) of Oshima, but was annexed to the Japanese state in 1869. The Ainu population, described as completely uncivilised, was compared in racial terms to Native Americans by the Japanese historian and politician Kume Kunitake. He had participated to the Iwakura diplomatic mission of 1871, which travelled through Europe and the United States. Comparing the American “Indians” and the Japanese *senmin* (賤民, “lowly people”) he wrote:

“the assertion by those who comment on the rise and fall of *jinshu* that the blond-white-skinned *shuzoku* (race) will flourish while the Indians, Ainu et al. will become extinct is no exaggeration.” (Kume Kunitake, *Kyūjunen kaikokuroku*, “A record of my ninety years”, 1935, vol. 2, p. 238, as quoted in Dikötter, p. 108)

According to the work by Weiner, it is in the colonial rule of Hokkaidō, Korea and Taiwan that the Japanese nationalisation of society had reached the full maturity. The populations of those countries were considered inferior to the

Japanese race, along with Chinese people and the Ryūkyūan people. In the *Jinruikan* (人類館, Hall of Mankind) hosted at the International Exposition held at Osaka in 1903 those populations were depicted by the curator of the Hall, Tsuboi Shōgorō (who was an anthropologist) in what was defined their “natural setting” (Weiner, 1995), in the will to show them as ridicule. This kind of treatment provoked the tough reactions of the represented populations, particularly from China, whose civilisation had roots that went deeper in the past than the Japanese ones.

Japan had adopted a peculiar attitude towards race matters. It is possible to isolate two distinct and contrasting behaviours. On the domestic side Japan had strong point in stressing the superiority of the supposed Japanese race in contrast to the others in East Asia. In 1885, an interesting writing on the necessity to distinguish the Japanese from the other peoples of East Asia appeared, written by Fukuzawa Yukichi. The editorial, “On the detachment from Asia” (脱亜論, *Datsu-A Ron*) postulated that Japan had the need to remark its different nature in order to be considered as a peer by the industrialised countries. It concludes as:

“(...) in order to think of a modern strategy, our country has long waited for the civilisations of the neighbouring countries to rise. We will not wait for a joint development of Asia any more. Instead, detaching ourselves from that company, we will advance in association to the western civilised countries; for if we associate with China, or Korea, without any peculiar concern about them just because they are our neighbours, it is certain that we will receive the same treatment as they did. *Those who associate with bad companies cannot avoid having a bad reputation as well.*” (Fukuzawa, 1885; emphasis added, translation mine)

Japan took advantage of many and various means to disparage the other populations in East Asia. Particularly the Chinese, who were described in a variety of ways; as an object of example, in the comic-strips of Nora-Kura, who represented the “common soldier”, the Chinese enemies were presented as pigs. The name of the rivalling country was sometimes also reported as *Shina* (支那) from the Sanskrit name of China, taking away the meaning of “Centre” that is inscribed in her common name in Chinese letters.

On the other hand, Japan had more ambiguous positions on racial identities when talking in the inter-national environment of the League of Nations, of which signed the Covenant in 1919 to withdraw in 1933. During the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Japan demanded for the introduction of racial equality among the members of the League, but such request was rejected by United Kingdom and Australia (Lauren, *Human Rights in History*, 1978) due to possible immigration problems in Australia. Human population was indeed divided roughly in white, yellow, black and brown peoples, and the Japanese, considered as yellow, were put on the same level of the other peoples in East Asia. It is not, then, an incomprehensible behaviour: it is possible to read it as an attempt to delineate a trans-racial categorisation of humanity in civilised/industrialised and barbarian nation-races, finding again the attempt to recreate an “anomic” feature similar to that proposed by Greenfeld as auxiliary to nationalism. For itself, Japan saw the high mission of civilising East Asia, proposing the slogan “Expansion of Culture” (文明開化, *Bunmeikaika*), a Japanese response to European Enlightenment. Japan stressed the family-like structure of the *Nippon Kokka* (日本国家, Japanese family-state) and the sacrality of the Japanese language (*Kokugo to Kokka to* - 国語と国家と, “national language, national family” was the name of a work by Darwinist Ueda Kazutoshi published in 1894; cf. Weiner in Dikötter, 1997, p. 103). Japan presented its society as homogeneous, although it was not; in these

attempts to enforce and protect the racial development of its population, Japan presented the Emperor as the head of an extended family embracing the Japanese people, the former *hinin*, who were called also “the Emperor’s children” (Weiner, 1995), and progressively the other peoples of East Asia.

The priority of spreading the Japanese culture throughout Asia required not only a well-established international reputation, especially in the scenario in which Japan had more enemies than allies. To protect and enhance the Japanese superiority in East Asia, which was of supreme importance in the maintenance of identity bonds based on racial superiority, the Japanese élites adopted as a main slogan that of “rich state, powerful army” (富国強兵, *fukoku kyōhei*) In 1941, a U.S. doctor in Political Sciences wrote an article in which Japan was presented as having a “military pattern of life” (Colegrove, 1941). It was partly true for that Japan had witnessed, during the *sakoku* period, a properly military government, whose institutions were strictly linked to the military. Nevertheless, with the abandonment of that vision of society, and the reformation of the *samurai* class approaches to military changed radically (in 1876, the *samurai* were banned from carrying swords, their identification symbol par excellence).

“Between 1895 and 1945, the international face of Japan was the military”, says Lone in his work *Japan’s first modern war* (1994). “If say that modern war requires first an idea (...), then an identifiable enemy (...), it also of course requires massive forces”. (ibid, p.19) Japan did not have, in the Meiji Restoration period, such massive forces. Drawing example from Prussia-Germany and also from France, Japan introduced in 1873 a law for universal male conscription; competition with foreign powers was not just a matter of status, but also of economic survival: Napoleon was taken into great account for his “keen understanding that ‘competition is the basis of progress,’ which only the individual’s strong will and health body could withstand” (Gluck, 1985). The introduction of conscription was revolutionary for Japan which had had, until the

abolition of the four-class system, a class of specialised warriors, the *samurai*, which on the other hand never amounted for more than 7% of the population (Lone, 1994). The grievance of the former *samurai* class led to a most famous rebellion in Satsuma province, led in 1877 by Saigō Takamori. Apart from the romantic view offered by the rich cultural production around the famous dissident, the event is relevant for its symbolic value. Saigō, hero of Japan's traditional values, fought against the establishment, but not against the Emperor who was at its head.

Initially, participation to the army encountered strong resistances among young men. Many tried to avoid conscription: some moved to Hokkaidō, others looked for medical reports to be appointed as physically unfit (ibid). The system, nevertheless, had categories of exemption modelled on the French example, though adapted to a Confucian population: apart from higher students, also eldest sons were not required to go to war for their primary duty was to care about family and maintain the family name; there were nevertheless also exemption for those rich families who could afford to pay for an exemption charge. The weight of the compulsory military service fell then on second and third sons from peasant families, on the so-called “excess agrarian population” (ibid). Although after a revision in 1883, the system became more and more demanding for the Japanese population.

In the 1894-95 war with China, the Japanese National Army came to the attention of the Western powers, and it gained even more respect after having defeated, thanks to the alliance with the British, the Russian Empire in the war of 1904-5. In contrast to the Chinese armed forces, which were regarded suspiciously by the “white nations”, the Japanese had a reputation of “western-ness”. It was considered “expectable” to be hurt by Chinese soldiers when crossing in their zones; differently, the British observers during the Russo-Japanese war were so admired to the Japanese army that they proposed it as a model to invigorate their

“national efficiency” (ibid). But such a good image of civility is not to be regarded as ever-worthy:

“if one accepts the image of extraordinary discipline among the Japanese forces in the wars of 1890s and 1900s, then indeed one must account for the difference just a few decades later” (Lone, p. 143)

The discipline of the army was to last less than previewed. In 1878 a Military Inspectorate was created, and the first and foremost instruction of the bureau was to instil a total and unquestioned obedience to the superiors. With the growing power of the military, whose control over the government became more and more strict, also the reputation of the Japanese army changed. Massacres such as the most famous at Nianjing in 1937 and the one in Singapore in 1942 are proof of this “double” nature of the Japanese army.

Competition with foreign powers, and isomorphism with respect to the “modernity” of Western civilisation was reflected in many four-letters slogans. Beyond the already quoted “prosperous state, powerful army” (富国強兵, *fukoku kyōhei*), the old idiom “Chinese wisdom, Japanese spirit” (和魂漢才, *wakon kansai*) was re-oriented to the Euro-American technologies “Western wisdom, Japanese spirit” (和魂洋才, *wakon yōsai*). Achieving modernity had passed for centuries through Chinese texts of medicine, philosophy and sutras; in the age of the “detachment from Asia”, such goal was to be obtained through importation of foreign technologies and techniques, and adapt them to the Japanese economy.

The Japanese takeoff in national economy issues required a long process of accumulation of capital and knowledge, and does not represent a “miracle” as it is often presented; the same argument can be proposed for the Japanese exponential economic growth in the second half of the twentieth century. The Tokugawa

society was indeed a “womb” for not only Japanese nationalism, but also for capitalism. The society of the four-occupations system not only crystallised social mobility, but permitted therefore a certain accumulation of capital (Moulder, 1977). The upper samurai class had had the time to study and become a cultural élite; the lower class of the merchants had begun earning money from the progressive opening to international commerce. Both the classes had funds to invest, but did not have the “entrepreneurial expertise” or “business mentality” that had, for example, middle classes in Germany and Great Britain. In the case of Japanese industrialisation, the State played a major role in creating pilot model industries and in selling them later, at symbolic prices (ibid). The true debate, for the Japanese economic identity, has been the friction between protectionists and liberalists, which could be simplified in “nationalists versus internationalists” (although conceding that, even in the case of the “internationalists”, they had nationalists slogan in mind). Foreign banks (especially US’ J. P. Morgan & Co.) put strong pressures (外压, *gaiatsu*, “exterior pressure”) on the Japanese government and strongly pushed for the adoption of the Gold Standard to welcome Japan in the Western economic system. The collapse of the internationalisation of Japanese economy, due to the 1927-29 crisis, gave the nationalist-militarist political ideologies more power, endorsing the escalation of militarism in East Asia.

China

With reference to the construction of the Chinese identity, due to the length of the Chinese history, and the substantial changes in the communist period, this study will mainly consider the nationalist policies implemented between the end of the Qing Empire and climax of the rule of the Kuomintang (國民黨, *Guómíndǎng*). This period is being considered for the aim of this part of the study

is to make some comparison in the first approaches to industrialisation and technological, mass armies.

“Concept of Chinese and non-Chinese as the Chinese perceive them are complicated. The single English word *Chinese* not only misses certain meanings but may cause confusion” (Cohen, p. 159)

The *Chinese-ness* is a concept that proves rather hard to be understood by not using Chinese words. There are many different terms for the concept, and each one reflects a different meaning, though the boundaries among them can be sometimes blurred. For instance, *Zhōngguòrén* (中国人) is the term for an inhabitant of the “Middle Kingdom”, whereas *Zhōnghuá Mínzú* (中華民族) refers more to a concept of “Chinese nation”, borrowing the Japanese translation of the second concept. There are also terms referring to a “Chinese individual who lives among non-Chinese”, like *Huáqiáo* (華僑). The necessity to construct a westernised conceptualisation of the Chinese-ness came along with the age of confrontation with Western powers, in the same way as for Japan. It is in effect difficult to explain the creation of the Chinese national identity, in the meaning referred to by nationalism, without recurring to a parallel with then Japan.

The Chinese ethnicity – which is usually identified with the *Hàn* (漢) ethnicity – had always kept in consideration the other ethnicities inside and outside the Empire. The main four non-Chinese ethnicities included in the concept of Chinese people, were referred to as “barbarians”: the Manchurian *Mǎn* (滿), the Tibetan *Zàng* (藏), the north-western Islamic population of the *Huí* (回) and the Mongolians *Méng* (蒙). In the early Republican period (starting in 1912), the *Zhōnghuá Mínzú* was the sum of the five races, even though the *Hàn* had a cultural

central role. The word *hànzì* (漢字 or 汉字) is used with reference to the Chinese characters, from which came the Japanese *kanji*, the Korean *hanja* and the Vietnamese *chữ Hán*; it means literally “letter(s) of the *Hàn*”, and they were imported and used by the other cultures in East Asia, creating a sort of “information highway” permitting the spreading of knowledge, as mentioned before in this study.

Initially at least, *Chinese-ness* was not an exclusive concept like *Japanese-ness*. Being Chinese was more connected to the respect of tradition, which is conceptualised in the word *lǐ* (禮 or 礼). Being one among the highest expressions of Confucianism, respecting the *lǐ* was the most important feature of being Chinese, and it included both a specific ritual and a general *etiquette*. Cohen (1991) asserts that the *lǐ* “was indeed a civilising force”: people who did not belong to the *Hàn* ethnicity could become all the same Chinese, provided their willingness to “become civilised” and respect the *lǐ*. The Chinese, inhabitants of the “Middle Empire”, and the *Hàn*, at the centre of the centre, had the role of “head” in their vision of the world. The Chinese Emperor, who had a Mandate from the Sky, was the benevolent father of all the populations, expected in turn to act with filial piety towards the benevolent father and to know their place. It is remarkable that the last dynasty of Chinese Emperors were not *Hàn*, but *Mǎn*.

Things changed relevantly with the arrival of the Westerners. They carried technologies that proved to be more powerful than the Chinese ones: they were strong with their industry, and had powerful armies; their arrival led to a major crisis in the Chinese self-identification. Similarly to the Japanese who reacted with the Meiji Restoration, the Qing dynasty made a similar effort, the so-called Tong Zhi Restoration (同治中興, *Tóng Zhì Zhōngxīn*, 1860-1874) but it resulted in a failure (Westad, 2012). Nevertheless it brought some parallels with the Japanese approach to the West. Thanks to the works of the Confucian scholar Feng Guifen, the *leitmotiv* of Tong Zhi modernisation attempt became “Chinese essence,

Western form” (中体西用, *zhōngtǐ xīyong*), and later nationalists of the Kuomintang used as a slogan “prosperous and strong” (富强, *fùqiáng*). There was a diffused feeling that the fight against Japan was highly dangerous: Japan wanted indeed to eliminate the Chinese centrality (and therefore her identity), as it became clear in the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese war. Japan wanted to be the new centre of a “modernised” East Asia, and appreciation for those attempts was not alien to Chinese intellectuals. Japan’s effort to modernise its society were regarded as a good model, and many keywords of the industrial era – economy, law, society (respectively, 经济 *jīngjì*, 法律 *fǎlù*, 社会 *shèhuì*) – were created in Japanese language and then imported in the Chinese as calques, reversing a process that had been opposite until that period. While it is common to think of the Republican China as a Westernising society, it would be more correct to look at her (with all the due remarks) as a Japanising society. As Westad puts it in his work *Restless Empire*:

“To some Chinese, the Japanese model was in a perverse way validated by its victory: What should not happen and therefore could not happen in a Confucian world – that a younger brother beat and denigrate his older brother – had happened nonetheless. It was visible proof of China’s decline and decadence. For people from Korea to Burma, the war redefined power in their region and turned the known order of the world upside down.” (Westad, 2012, p. 101)

It is possible to observe, in the construction of the Chinese *modern* national identity, the same processes of isomorphism and competition that are showing in the other cases. Both in the economic construction of a modern nation-state, and in the building of an army, the Chinese followed the “road to modernity” offered by

western nationalism, after having learned from Japan how to make it more “Asian”.

Japan and China had arrived to the introduction to industrialisation about in the same period, but whereas for Japan it has been a success, for China it has been mostly a failure. The starting weak points in creating an entrepreneurial, industrial identity for their societies were more or less the same. China too had insufficient capital to invest in building a heavy industrial system, but China represented a much more interesting market for Western industries, and therefore did not have the same chance as Japan to re-discuss the unequal treaties. When Japan won the Sino-Japanese war, the imposition of heavy war reparations made the equilibrium of power in East Asia move in Japan’s benefit. With a considerable amount of gold going out of China, she had to find other financing sources. European and American banks were less interested in borrowing money to make Chinese industry develop, for such industries would have made a relevant concurrence in Chinese markets. Japanese loans became available, together with Japanese control of the industries developed thanks to their loans, in prevalence connected to those raw materials that were lacking in Japan (Moulder, 1977). State-created, merchants-led firms (官督商办, *Guāndū Shāngbàn*) represented the model Republican China had attempted to develop. Nevertheless, they had to cope with structural deficiencies (the lack of capital, unequal treaties) and with what Hsü defined as “the usual bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and nepotism” (quoted in Moulder). China had, moreover, a higher level of public expenditure: in the second half of the eighteenth century there were debts to pay for the Opium Wars, for the costs for wars against France (1844), Japan (1894) and the relative indemnities, to which were to be added those for the Boxer and Taiping Rebellions. Having such a limited access to credit, having no power to impose custom barriers, and with little or no negotiating power in international economics, protectionist policies were merely a chimera. Even when the Chinese government

forbade the establishment of foreign industries, to build railways on the Chinese sole, or to dig mines to exploit Chinese raw materials, their voice remained unheard, as it had been ignored when it forbade the import of Opium. The failure of creating an identity for China in economy during the “age of nationalisms” – an identity which, in 2014, is of undeniable strength – might have depended on the already established Chinese identity, which has arrived in Europe with the myth of the “good” Chinese penned by Voltaire in the *Essai sur les Mœurs et l’Esprit des Nations* (Essay on the Morals and Spirit of Nations, 1756). It has long been believed that China was, at that period, *too bureaucratic*; a strong bureaucracy would have, nevertheless, empowered a part of population, and would have been able to promote the building of an entrepreneurial identity for the Chinese, or at least, for part of them. The truth is, in Moulder’s perspective, that

“China was *not bureaucratic enough*, Japan became a modern bureaucratic, national state; China became increasingly decentralised as it was incorporated in world economy. Despite this, efforts were made to achieve national industrialisation. That they failed is not surprising, giving China’s subordinated international position during the time undertaken.” (Moulder, 1977, p. 197)

Due to China’s weak identity, and to the general assumption of her remissive nature, was incorporated in the inter-national arena as a satellite, as a colony, where Japan had not. A strong, centralised government has had the power, in the second half of the twentieth century, to build a totally new identity, in inter-national society as well as in its economy and security domains.

The weakness of Chinese economic identity reflected also in her security identity. The construction of a mass army for the then Republic of China proved to

be a hard task. The Chinese Empire had not an aggressive reputation and the imperial army (as it was proven in the Sino-Japanese War) was poor of new technology and power. Both the National Revolutionary Army (NRA; *Guómín Gémìng Jūn* 國民革命軍) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA; *Zhōngguó Rénmín Jiěfàngjūn* 中国人民解放军) were shaped on a Soviet model, and looked very similar to the Red Army (although the similarity is more evident for the PLA). The NRA – which undertook the highly symbolic Northern Expedition to end the Warlord Era, and thence created a central and unitary government for China in Nanjing – confirmed to be the leading force in the triptych “Party-Government-Army”, the “Three Principles of the People” (三民主義, *Sān Mǐn Zhǔyì*) that represented the way Republican China intended her government. For constructing the NRA after the purge of the Soviet elements, followed to the 1927 dissolution of the United Front, China asked help to the Weimar Republic, but active cooperation arrived with the change of regime. Nazi Germany proposed to change the structure of the NRA, to promote the adoption of a European style troop division but, due to the resistances of many generals, resulting in an excessive decentralisation of military power, the project was never implemented.

The war with Japan is, according to Westad, “the founding history of modern China’s international history” (2012, p. 247). As mentioned before, the diffused perception that Japan was indeed to delete China’s identity has really played a major role in shaping the Chinese identity. The very creation of the Manchurian state (*Mǎnzhōuguó* in Chinese or *Manshūkoku* in Japanese) in 1931 has helped, if not to unify Chinese hearts, at least to unify the Chinese armies. The effects of the war “broke the back of GMD, which had represented Chinese nationalism for thirty years” (ibid, p. 249) and prepared the road for the second attempt to establish a national state in China, which gave very different results.

II - Building nations. Comments on case studies.

Isomorphism and confrontation

France, though not being the first nation-state to rise, has provided an important model not only for bourgeois revolution, but also for the construction of a modern army. Studying the history of the international relations between France and the European nation-states, it is possible to observe how France has been caressing for a long time the dream of making Europe a “French continent”, exporting her ideologies, the Enlightenment in first stance. That dream has not fallen with the failure of the Napoleonic political reorganisation of Europe, but has persisted. Great Britain – adopting a geopolitical view as proposed in Carl Schmitt’s *Land and Sea* – is essentially a maritime power, and has shown less interest in making Europe a “British continent”. The rival for French hegemony on the European mainland was, therefore, Germany, who is as interested as France in hegemony over Europe. France and Germany are, ideologically, two empires for one continent: their nationalisms, their goals, created two rival identities that are far from resolving their competition. Nevertheless, after the end of the European Second World War, a divided Germany seemed to have lost her identity, and France – along with other minor nation-states – welcomed her in the European cooperation community. The poor appreciation for a reunited Germany was no mystery for both François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher.

France shaped her nationalism thanks to the aid of British models, but never adopting them merely as they were. Later, Prussia constructed herself, and later Germany, looking to French and British models, but introduced substantial differences as well. The French did not absorb completely the British

industrialisation, arriving later to the entrepreneurial dynamism recalled by Greenfeld analyses. Germany, in the same way, looked at France but never adopted the same model for inclusion – being German was a matter of *ius sanguinii*. The construction and modification of the two identities are helpful to understand the development of later nationalisms.

The situation over East Asia offers a good object for similar analysis. China constituted for centuries the heart of identity in that region, and Japan shaped her early identity – with many innovations – on a Chinese model. Both the Japanese and the Chinese Emperors were intended as governors of the whole world, but the Japanese Emperor was not under the menace of being overthrown as the Chinese was. The absolutely sovereign nature of the Emperor of Japan gave Meiji leaders the legitimation to re-create Japanese identity, inventing traditions: the official state religion, the *Shintō* (神道, “Sacred Way”) was a creation of that period, although being a collection of ancient popular narratives. The Japanese Emperors lineage was traced back until the reign of Jinmu, the first Emperor of Japan, who in 660 b. C. is credited with the statement that he would have reunited the “eight directions of the world under a same roof” (from which, the slogan *Hakkō Ichiu*, 八紘一宇, literally "eight extensions, one roof"). Japan’s chosen model for modernisation was, above all, Prussia, who had an Emperor as Japan did, a monarch that had proved to be able to re-create his state as Japan was to do. France, Italy and other models were also chosen for different purposes, but Prussia/Germany was pivotal to the creation of Japanese identity. The first approach to national economy showed some affinity between Japan and Germany. Both for German and Japanese statesmen, the first ideals were closer to management than to entrepreneurship. In late Tokugawa period, the state had to manage resources, and was asked to do it with methods that, in Germany, would have easily been defined as cameralist: improvement of agriculture and mining techniques, proper management of land registers, and the like. But also the very

conception of Japanese race also presents interesting analogies with the German, and perspectives on immigration are similar as well. It is object of Study in the last essay offered in Dikötter's edited work, penned by prof. Yoshino Kosaku: when asked whether being more Japanese an individual of Japanese descent, but born and grown up in Brazil, or an individual of Korean descent, but born in Japan and who spoke only Japanese, the majority of the interviewed answered for the former, arguing that Japanese blood is *necessary* to fully understand the Japanese identity, culture and language (Dikötter, 1997, p. 211).

Being French is not – on the contrary – matter of blood, but of habit. In 1983, the Senegalese Leopold Senghor has been admitted to the *Académie Française*, being the first African. Being French is about being able to communicate with other French people and, as for being Chinese (at least in Confucian culture), communication, civilisation and assimilation are intimately connected. Communication requires the knowledge of both language and culture, which can be learned; blood, ancestry, kinship and ethnicity are concepts that stand, on the contrary, as exclusive features that cannot be acquired by individuals not belonging to that particular group.

European integration

European identity is still under construction. According to the data collected by the European Barometer in 2013, almost half of the citizens of the European Union felt that their personal identity attached to “their own country as well to the EU”, scoring 49%, increasing of 6% comparing to 2012. Those who ascribed their identity as belonging to “their country only” were decreasing, 38% in 2013, with the same variation on the preceding year. The feeling of belonging to the European

Union was stronger among students (58%) and executives (61%), and the prevalence of the double identity is higher in Euro-zone countries (54% on 33% of mere national identity) than in non-Euro countries (47% and 42%). In addition, European identity was more felt among men than women (40% and 35% respectively).

One question posed by the *Eurobarometer* on the development of the European identity was about the change on perception to belonging to the European Union in the preceding ten years. Germany saw herself more European than before (52% answering “more European” and 15% answering “less European”). France, on the contrary, felt less European than ten years before (36% and 40% respectively). A rise in Germany’s influence on Europe has resulted in a stronger feeling of European-ness for the Germans, and the lowering in French attachment to the Union shows that the competition for hegemony is still going on. Proposing a comparison with the country that has suffered more from the 2008 crisis, Greece, it was possible to observe the highest peak of de-Europeanization of identity (half of the people answering “less European” and only 18% answering “more”, almost specular to Germany).

European identification presented itself as a process aimed at running effective economies, without taking into account the other aspects of building identity on a national model. It lacked of a common welfare system, which was perceived by 41% of the Europeans as the strongest possible method to enhance identification; more or less the same percentage (42%) believed that European identity was at that point connected above all with the sharing of a common currency. Europe seemed to be building her identity more and more on concepts like *technique* and *effectiveness*, with the main focus on economy: this might explain the success of Germany, which had already undergone a similar process in building her own identity, and consequently explain the perceived “Germanisation”

of the Union. The progressive detachment of the French from European identity could eventually be regarded as a result of that process.

Where European identity fails, “state-nationalism” arises, showing some degree of continuity between the two identities. Greece, showing the most relevant decrease of identification with the Union, was seeing the re-emergence of violent nationalism, of which the *Popular Association of the Golden Dawn* (Λαϊκός Σύνδεσμος – Χρυσή Αυγή, Laïkós Sýndesmos - Chrysí Avgí) was one interpreter.

East Asian confrontations

There is currently no East Asian identity, nor does it seem that there will soon be one. The analysis on the construction of national identities in the scenario of East Asia has highlighted how, although being there some cultural media for communicating between the different peoples of the region, there has never been an established and common identity for China and Japan; on the contrary they shaped their nation-states within a highly confrontational environment. Japan’s detachment from Asia still persists today, though not completely. Japan still struggles between two identities, that are on the one side the West-oriented US-Japan security alliance, and on the other the growing perception that the Japanese should not pose themselves on a too strong contrast against the other East Asian countries.

In contrast with Japan’s double-ness in identification processes showed in the inter-national relations, China seems to know well her place in Asia. The so-called *Chinese Dream* (中国梦, Zhōngguó mèng) is oriented at the establishment of a Chinese sphere in East Asia, proposing itself as aimed at peace and development for China and the whole world, as a contrast to American and European Dreams.

The failure of establishing a real cooperation in East Asia suffers from the clashing identities of the two main countries of the scenario, resulting from the early attempt by Japan to create an Asian identity. The *Great Sphere* imagined by Japanese nationalists had as its first aim to contrast Western colonialism. It has not been an only-Japanese project – Sun Yat Sen (in *pinyin*, Sūn Zhōngshān, 孫中山) also spoke in 1924 of East Asia as a Confucian Space which had to resist to Western powers. Nevertheless the Japanese version can be regarded to as an Eastern Asian version of the Monroe Doctrine, promoted by the United States in the nineteenth century (according to which, the US could have claimed a pre-emptive right on South America). Starting with the work of Tarui Tōkichi “On the unification of East Asia” (大東合邦論, *Daitō Gappō Ron*) as an anti-imperialist project, it ended up as a justification for Japanese militarist colonialism, creating though a precedent. It can be generalised that other East Asian countries still regard Japan as potentially imperialist – and Japan has never reached a change in identity like Germany did after the end of war in 1945. The Emperor, though disempowered, is still an important symbol of Japanese identity, untouched by the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. The Japanese ruling class, and with few exceptions, does not try to show any significant change. There are still debates around historical revisionism – lately some disputed territories have started to be talked of in official history books as explicitly Japanese territory – many Japanese Prime Ministers, including the incumbent Abe Shinzō, pay official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, where twelve class-a war criminals are buried. Those visits are highly symbolical, for in the adjacent Yushukan Museum Japan is depicted in according to a nationalist narrative, typical of the war period, describing it more as attempting to free East Asia from colonialism than as an imperialist force. Due to the persistence in Japanese identity of nationalist traits, it is easily understandable how the diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries – primarily the Republic of Korea and China – maintain some tension.

III. Inter-national relations

«Nations, like Peter Pan, cannot grow up»

James, H. (1989)

1. Communication among nations

Nation-states are the basic constituents of the inter-national society: it is not an *inter-state* society, for it was not intended to be a community of mere juridical elements. International relations have, then, to take into account the different identities of the nation-states – considering therefore the nation, and not only the state. The system of communication among nations is pivotal in the definition of national identities that shape, and grow, in that environment. The inter-national arena, which is object of the international relations studies, is the proper environment in which states move, and act, according to their peculiarities. It is constituted by international organisations, alliances, diplomacies: the attempt to understand, and predict, the behaviour of national actors is key to the work of diplomats and scholars of international relations, and many paradigms have been created in order to schematise their behaviour and attitudes.

Realists, Social Constructivists, scholars of Liberalism and Marxism and others have all different ideas on the rationality, or irrationality, of the behaviour and choices of the actors (Collins, 2013). World can be assumed as anarchic, or ordered by international law; actors can be organised in different levels of “rationality”, sorted according to their positions in *power balances*, or again according to their *security dilemmas*. All the categorisations are intimately

connected to identity-building processes, and such categories include expectations on the behaviour of the actors as well as records of their past choices; a minimal change in the overall environment of the communication among nations is bound to influence such processes of identification. Globalisation is one process that has strongly changed the environment of interaction among nation-states, and should therefore not be taken “as it is” in this kind of analysis.

Globalisation is not just “the modern way of interacting” between peoples. Humanity has faced many periods of globalisation during its history; it can be observed how the succession of globalisations and isolation constitute two sides of the same coin. The two opposite impulses could be compared to two legs on which human societies have taken their path towards the future. Globalisation carries, sooner or later, to unavoidable confrontations; confrontation will be likely to encourage societies to compete, and though to unite against a perceived threat, or collapse. Confrontation takes often the shape of war, be it a “conventional” war seeing soldiers fighting one another in the name of their king, their ideas or their nation; it can also result in a confrontation over economic domains, ability to commerce and produce, or on cultural domains. The atrocities of the wars in twentieth century have shown once again the cruelty and the violence that can be achieved by human populations. The naming of those conflicts as the First and the Second World War reflects rather a Eurocentric vision, but they can still be looked at as one among the most cruel, violent periods of humanity, which did not end in 1945. War has been going on ever since: confrontation continued over hegemony on the galaxy of new nation-states that emerged from de-colonisation. Wimmer and Feinstein report of four “waves” of nation-building processes, since the end of the war: chronologically, British Asia and Middle East in the 1945 aftermath; French and British, then Portuguese Africa with the progress of decolonisation; and Soviet and Yugoslavian territories as the latest, resulting from the collapse of the USSR (Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010, figure 1 p. 765). Confrontation and

isomorphism have promoted the adoption (or imposition), of the models promoted by the United States or the Soviet Union, as shown by the Korean War and the long list of armed confrontation that have occurred in the second half of the century all over the world.

The “Cold War” represented a new kind of confrontation. Being “cold” only in some parts of the world, but conventionally fought in others, it moved to an end as one of the two contenders faced an imminent collapse. Further discussion could be proposed on the periodisation of the Cold War, or on its temporary nature. Nevertheless, after 1984 the world has seen a new period of globalisation, characterised by a rapid integration of markets, and the creation of a “network” of relations between centres and peripheries of capitalism. A new period of confrontation began with the attack to the Twin Towers in September 2001; market globalisation, however, has not arrested. Globalisation and confrontation still persist together, highlighting the complexity of the communication among nation-states that still play a central role in such processes.

2. The end of the nation-state?

Has the nation-state model reached the end of its utility in global politics? Nation-states, intended as *modern tools* to mobilise masses and impress a direction on state policies, and has already shown its usefulness. Like all tools that are used to reach a goal – goals like industrialisation, effective armies, political stability – they are likely to become, sooner or later, obsolete. Kymlicka and Straehle report that

“nation-states can no longer protect the interests of their citizens on their own, and this is leading people to question the legitimacy of the state. Establishing well-functioning

transnational institutions, capable of resolving the problems which transcend nation-states, should not necessarily be seen as weakening nation-states, but rather as restoring legitimacy to them, by enabling them to focus on those goals which they can successfully pursue.” (Kymlicka and Straehle, 1999, p. 84)

Ohmae Ken’ichi, in his book *The end of the Nation-State* (1995) poses a similar theory. He suggests that the nation-state has effectively become an obsolete instrument for the organisation of economy. It used to provide what he calls *the four Is*: industry, investments, individuals and information; those factors, in the age of global markets, are subject to high mobility and can flow throughout borders, across economic regions that often have in trans-nationality their *forte*. Nationalism – intended as economic nationalism – would so provide nothing more than a cover for inefficient industries and regions that try to bandwagon with efficient ones. Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilisations* remarks as well that *civilisations* are the true actor in the definition of interests, goals, and in shaping antagonisms and alliances.

The central point in the discussion on the liveliness of nation-states is that there are domains in which the nation-state maintains an exclusive control (on education system, welfare systems, security etc). It is professor Touraine’s opinion that

“[t]he idea of the nation is being divorced, then, from that of the nation-state (...). The nation is becoming more and more important because sustainable development usually involves growth in activities that are not immediately profitable, as in the case of education, health care and the protection of the environment” (1998; translation mine)

Those sectors are the ones that are more connected with identity; although being not optimal anymore, and sometimes even obsolete, nation-states still have a role to play. There are highly liberalist points of view that see the state as a completely inefficient tool for managing societies, and thence presuppose that market economy will ensure to every individual the fulfilling of their needs. Experience shows that it is a wrong presupposition, and that to have every individual “covered” the state remains necessary. The nation-state seems not to be dead yet, nor it seems that it will be soon, due to the absence of other actors able to play the same role. It is more likely that the nation-state will continue its existence sided by other structures that rely on trans-national, supra-national, inter-national basis.

Can supra-national and inter-national institutions effectively represent peoples in the domains where the nation-state is not an optimal agent anymore? National governments are, still, the only representative actors of the people’s will – where there are properly functioning democratic states – and the trans-national organisation whose members are directly elected by people, such as the European Parliament, constitute the exception (being aimed at the creation of *other* sovereignties that are not at global domain). There are currently few alternatives to nation-states; additionally, they prove to be alive, and mutating. Meyer et al. propose the existence of a *World Culture* which “celebrates, expands, and standardizes strong but culturally somewhat tamed national actors” (1997, p. 173). National identities are alive and lively as well. They are subject to continuous modifications, and become in certain occurrences strong as one would not expect in the age of globalisation. The role played by identification in defining the well-being of the individual and that of the nation-state is still necessary, and fruitful, as proposed in Touraine’s works (1998; 1997).

3. New nationalisms

Lively identification processes have had, however, a variety of outcomes. The establishing of a European identity in Europe has had the effect, for example, of draining force from other movements aimed at reinforcing the national identity. Nationalist movements on the continent showed less power until when the two identities (the European and the national one) did not clash. The crisis that struck the European Union after 2008 showed the weaknesses of a monetary union with many economic identities. As a result, weaker and endangered economies of countries like Greece, Spain and Italy had to undergo a process of “restructuring” of their economies, which touched their national economic identities as well. The proposed model of European economy – based on technique and on less flexibility for state expenditure – clashed with that of those countries that shaped their economic identity on different features.

The feeling of having their national identity endangered by external pressures produced, as a reaction, a *renaissance* of nationalism in Europe. It can be imprudent to consider it a revival, for the rhetoric of such movements is different from those of the past, but they should not be underestimated. They often classify themselves out of the “canonical” nationalist parties, and nationalist rhetoric is spreading towards demagogical discourse.

In Greece, *Association of the Golden Dawn* has a clear anti-European policy, and is at least partly a reaction to the failure of European integration in that country. The *Coalition of the radical left*, the so-called SYRIZA ($\Sigma Y P I Z A$), on the other hand, has policies aimed at gaining back the sovereignty that had been given to Europe by Greece; *Le Monde Diplomatique* reports that it is willing to do so by the political mobilisation of masses of the unsatisfied Greek population. In France, the nationalist movement *Front National* is gaining more and more popularity

thanks to the anti-European rhetoric of its leader: Marine Le Pen, daughter to Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder of the movement, racist and anti-Semite European parliamentary. Similar examples can be observed in Great Britain, Austria, but also to some extent in Spain. The Dutch *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Freedom Party) has turned to xenophobia, and examples could continue. By giving the European Union large parts of the national sovereignty, and not having European identity ready to function as the binding factor in a situation of crisis, state-nationalisms have returned again, as a national identity-reinforcing factor. The situation that has been taking shape in 2012-13 will be at stake, and the results of spring 2014 elections will be pivotal in the making, or unmaking, of the European project.

Nationalisms are rising in East Asia, too. The absence in the area of supra-national identity results in a tougher confrontation. In Japan, the Liberal Democratic Party (自由民主党, *Jiyū Minshutō*) has a firm majority in both the branches of the Parliament. The leader and head of the government, Abe Shinzō, has implemented a heavy plan for the restructuration of economics that has been labelled *Abenomics*, in regard of the *Reaganomics* in the USA implemented by former President Ronald Reagan. Those policies are regarded as openly nationalist by commentators but some economists – to name one, Joseph Stiglitz – have welcomed the renewed approach to economy with a heavy intervention of the state as a path for the world to follow. The new, Keynesian-like policies implemented with *Abenomics* are promoted through expansionist monetary policies and fiscal stimuli to economy. Additionally, they are accompanied by a relevant rise in military expenditure. In China, Xi Jinping is at work as well. The new leader of the Chinese Communist Party (中国共产党, *Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng*) has opened the path for the so-called Chinese Dream (中国梦; *Zhōngguó mèng*) and inaugurated a new season of political centralisation of powers. The direction of the policies that will be implemented in China in the coming ten years will be aimed at the making of a “prosperous country” and a “strong army” to celebrate the

centenary of the Communist Party in 2021. Xi Jinping announced that the 21st century will see, as quoted in the *China Daily* website, the “national rejuvenation” of China.

The two main powers in East Asia are re-defining their geopolitical strategies, and an escalation in militarisation has followed. The debate over the eight islands forming the archipelago named *Senkaku* (尖閣) in Japanese and *Diàoyú* (釣魚) in Chinese is perhaps the most roused argument in the new-nationalist dialectics in East Asia, and is being utilised as so. Manifestations in both Japan and China can mobilise great numbers of people, therefore giving force and appeal to nationalist rhetoric used by governments. Recently, at the World Economic Forum held at Davos, Abe Shinzō has went as far as comparing the situation of tension between China and Japan as the one between Germany and Great Britain before the outburst of the 1914 War.

The confrontation is not only between Japan and China, but also the Republic of Korea plays a role in the scenario. Stimulated by the surrounding nationalisms, also the southern part of the Korean peninsula knows a renewal of nationalism. The leader and impersonation of the renewal of nationalist rhetoric is Park Geun-hye (박근혜, Bak Geunhye), daughter of General Park Chung-hee (박정희, Bak Jeonghui), former leader of the South Korean state until his assassination in 1979.

The definition of a new equilibrium in East Asia seems to be heading toward tough confrontations, and the perception of endangered identity is enhanced by the continuous stimulation of the populations by nationalist rhetoric. Territorial disputes in this area of the world are being used as catalyser for popular discontent, to redirect social tensions towards external problems, and aggregating societies on the domestic side. The creation of a community of East Asian countries, therefore able to create a supranational identity, would soften the

tensions and perhaps replace the *Six Party Talks* in which the United States play a major role, but in which Republic of Korea and Japan are bound on the same side in an unnatural way, enhancing rivalry between the two.

4. Globalisation as archipelago

The first “modern” globalising period occurred between 1840 and 1914 (Deaglio, 2004), influencing markets, societies and communication. Commercial integration among different markets began to be studied, and a new merchant bourgeoisie learned how to take advantages of the many opportunities offered by a society of progressive integration. Nevertheless, war arrived, and nation-states began to de-integrate. A new globalising period – occurred between 1985 and 2001 – gave life to a new bourgeoisie, who gained power by and with mass communication media (ibid). Markets have being integrating progressively ever since, and – even if the attack on the Twin Towers of September 2001 is considered if not the end of that globalisation, at least a changing point – have continued to do so. Globalisation has been though progressing on two parallel routes: on the one side, economy; on the other, society. Capitals flow regardless of boundaries from almost every part of the world, to everywhere; the production chains have taught to governments that their economic policies alone could little or nothing against the power of international markets. On the other hand, even if societies have been communicating more and more through internet and other mass-media, it has become less obvious to think of “*one world society*”, preferring rather the plural “*world societies*”. The former statement does not allow peace and cooperation as taken for granted – as the latter does not mean the imminence of a clash of civilisations.

Identity is a multiform concept. Since the eve of the modern inter-national relation system, the nation-states – which had been created to pursue industrialisation, to create wealth, and also to protect it – have found in identity a factor to reinforce their existence. As identities can be multiple (and often are), each nation-state has seen itself as part of a coalition of states sharing a particular religion, as a community of speakers of a given language, as carrier of a certain economic ideology etc.

The two parallel paths of globalisation might converge to different solutions, according to various observers. For Francis Fukuyama, the world will be likely to find a common identity and reach a point to which history would not have significant developments any more. On the contrary, for Samuel Huntington the different civilisations are slowly heading to a new era of violent confrontation. The two opposite possible futures – which are at the centre of the last part of *Postglobal* by Mario Deaglio – represent two extreme development of globalisation. A third way, the middle possible scenario is that globalisation will continue with the progressive polarisation of different realities. Already in the Cold War, where two different world views polarised the globe in two separate worlds, the existence of a multi-polar reality came clear with the Bandung Conference in 1955. What is here proposed is not the prosecution of the so-called *Third World-ism*, but a different kind of multi-polar world, that of the “Archipelago”.

Economic integration is more rapid in realities that share some common point in geography and socio-cultural bonds (Deaglio, 2004, p. 117). The European Union is one example of such discourse, others are the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), and similar cooperation treaties in South East Asia (the ASEAN), in South America (the MerCoSur) etc. National identities are affected by such projects, especially in the case of the European Union, where the will is not only to pursuit economic integration, but also a political one.

The Archipelago Globalisation paradigm postulates that the world society will be likely to pursue integration agglomerating around poles that are intermediate between the reality of the nation-state and that of the world as a whole. These “Regions” of the world will see their economies progressively integrating, and with economy – as shown by the European experience – societies will be also likely to have more tight cooperation. Modern states have been created in a similar way, associating – or conquering – the area around a stronger centre and agglomerating. A stronger province, or region, or confederate state, has expanded to comprehend a wider area, or more subjects have joined forces to create a more powerful reality to gain international status. This process has shown, at a certain point, a necessity to create a common identity on which focus the efforts of populations, therefore creating, inventing, or “awakening” national communities. Common identities have proved their effectiveness and the substantial help they can provide in order to empower the society to which they belong. Regions might be likely to follow the same path; the creation of a supranational identity, which is closer to the already established state-national one, might prove to be helpful to the realisation of high goals that are valuable in those realities.

In 2012 the European Union has been recognised the Nobel Prize for Peace in preventing that the rivalries in the Old Continent might lead to world wars as happened in the previous century. It is undeniable, however, that the rivalry between France and Germany has found an institutional environment in which evolve peacefully, towards cooperation. The creation of a European identity has prevented the two nation-states to escalate again their nationalisms, proving how a common identity can play a major role in that domain. Nevertheless, the European identity is still under construction, and far from being realised. Common identity and shared goals are connected to peace, and thence to the pacification of those aggressive nationalisms that lead to violent confrontation. It is Fukuyama’s

opinion (2012) that the failure of economic policies in Europe depends on the failure in creating a strong, common identity, but there are also other considerations that can prove this connection. There is a strong connection between supranational identity and national identity: one example can be found in new-nationalist movements in Greece.

East Asia has failed, after the dramatic history of the twentieth century, in creating a common identity. The *Sino-centric* identity had the goal of granting peace, and it is possible to compare the resulting *Pax Sinica* to the *Pax Romana*, at least for some centuries of its long history. The dismantling of that order by the Japanese project of the *Great Sphere of Co-Prosperity* has not provided a *Pax Nipponica*; the Japanese effort failed, conflictuality rose and created an environment that is closer to that of the Cold War, than to the post-globalism of Europe. The Korean peninsula is divided as Germany was until 1989, and it is not likely to be soon peacefully reunited. On the 38th parallel there are not merely the North Korean and the South Korean identity clashes: their hostility is enhanced by other powers that still defend the superiority of their identities, and are those represented in the Six Party Talks. The subjects involved are United States, Republic of Korea and Japan on one side and Russia (formerly: USSR), the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the other. More than a clash of ideologies (Russia and China cannot be seen as defending the Communism any more), it is a clash of identity, mainly the security identity of the mentioned powers. It is possible to argue that the creation of an East-Asian, supranational identity regarding, in first stance, economic cooperation, and though easing communication among governments, would help resolving the tense situation more than the Six Party Talks. On the contrary, *not* creating such an identity has left space for nationalisms to rise again, making peaceful co-existence more difficult, while creating peaceful identities aimed at easing cooperation has already shown fruitful.

The islands of the supposed Archipelago of globalisation would not create, moreover, exclusive identities. As identities can be multiple, Japan could be part of an East Asian island *and* of the Pacific Ocean island; Greece could be European and Mediterranean, etc. Nevertheless it is important to stress the importance of the cumulative nature of these identities, and the persisting nature of older identities, such as the old nation-state ones. Philosophers, like Hegel, social scientists like Rousseau, but also Habermas, or Brubaker – remark how identity is necessary to the mental well-being of the humans and how they will be more likely to act to protect and enforce one identity, than to forget it. The identities that will be eventually necessary to build the new reality of the Region, or the Isle of the Archipelago, will face the persistence of old identities and will have to prove able to enforce them by ascribing those identities into a greater one.

“The unity of society does not depend, however, on the identification of the nation with the state. It is possible to base it on the defence of the right for everyone to construct her or his own project of life, or on the way in which they put together identity and instrumentality. (...) Unity cannot be imposed nor by economic globalisation, nor by tradition; the only way to impose unity is that of a democracy that struggles for the combination of the highest possible solidarity and the respect of civil, social and cultural rights for everyone” (Touraine, 1997, translation mine).

IV. Conclusion and further works.

This study has started with the questions posed by a fictitious alien sociologist who arrived on this planet to study human society, and has lead her or him through the fundamental steps taken to build the concept of “nation”. It has proceeded to the application of such concepts to politics, and their further usage. The alien should now be familiar to the process of building a national identity for making a state able to perform a better competition against other nation-states. Yet, many possible questions still miss an answer.

Do nations have, finally, their navel? For what may result from this study, it would seem that nations do *not* have navels. Human populations have many and different origins, and have customs, and languages, and habits, that change considerably also on a very small distance scale. Nevertheless, they have been organised in nations, and that organisation has given fruits that would have been achieved in longer times, or perhaps never, without the conscientious usage of the tool of identification.

Identification has occurred slowly, and gradually, for centuries; it had to cope with invasions of barbarians coming to endanger identities, or with local populations that were unwilling to share their territory with other populations that had been forced to move. History shows how human societies have been interacting and communicating in a variety of ways, and have undertaken a number of possible identifications processes. Then, the gradual and natural process of creation of identity has been observed, studied, imposed to populations by ruling élites. The results are often communities that had to be imagined scientifically in order to become real; it is not possible to know how those societies would have developed their identities if the natural processes were left their time. It is possible to say, finally, that contemporary nations do *not* have navels. However, they are real, and they prove to be alive. The creation of the

nation-state has proven so effective that today they seem to have become necessary.

This study will be for the alien nothing but an approach to the great, complex theme of the nation. It may give some initial answers to the few, basic questions that someone who has never lived among human beings might ask. Here treated there is a variety of themes, but they are not sufficient to cover the whole domain of the study on national and inter-national societies. For instance, that of the connections between nationalism and socialism should be a necessary part of a complete work on the creation of national identity. Socialism has been a reality that has lived together with nationalism, and that has needed it in the same way as capitalism did, and does still.

History of inter-national relations seems to be moving on two legs, integration and de-integration. Globalisation and isolation might be observed though as two sides of one coin, engendering one another. In the same way, it looks like human societies respond with processes of centralisation and de-centralisation. Nationalism, in the version used to aggregate people and to make them aim at one goal, is caused by competition among nation-states: is it competition, then, the strongest of human behaviours? Is it competition that has been the fundamental address of the evolution of human societies?

Identification has a high importance for the political life of every society. It has been mentioned, in the first part of this study, how psychology is tightly connected to identification processes and how, being identification a human need, can be used as an effective tool to control the human mind. That of the nation is such a powerful ideal that has moved entire populations to aggregate and work together, to suffer for its good, even to die for it. What is more surprising is that, even after the demonstration that such ideals can produce violent and inhuman outcomes, peoples from a number of cultural background still believe in it.

The alien sociologist should be alerted – moreover – that dealing with national identities can lead to stereotyping. Stereotyping is a human necessity, too. It should be avoided all the same, for stereotyping takes away much of the differentiations that make human societies so beautifully different one from the other. Nevertheless, the processes of identification are aimed at putting aside differentiations to strengthen the features that can be shared and accepted by a larger number of people. The aim of this study is not stereotyping national identities, to force acceptance that a given nationality behaves according to fixed habits. It is instead to show which common points have been used, in order to strengthen the feeling of belonging to identities that were greater than the narrower ones perceived before, and how that has been done. It is hard to deal with nationalities without regarding them through the eyes of one's own nationality, especially considering the degree of naturalisation that they have reached in the definition of a human being. It is for this reason that four case studies have been chosen, in the attempt to find four relevant examples of identity-building. And it is also for this reason that the author's nation-state has not been chosen as an item of comparison with the other case studies.

Due to the necessity to choose some nationalities as case study, other fascinating societies have been set aside. The building the United States' identity, for instance, will be another step that this study will undertake; another society that will be analysed, is that of the United Kingdom. These two societies have been formed drawing on multiple populations' identities, and have been able to create strong, supra-national identities. Even more fascinating, will be the study of national identity in the Korean peninsula, where one original population has been divided in two states, both claiming to be the only one able to reunite again the Korean people.

One objection that might be posed by the alien sociologist is about the constant attention to words. It is true that too much attention on terminology can

result in nominalism, and that such kind of study is likely to divert the attention of the dissertation towards unnecessary details; nevertheless it is important to care about which words are used, which ones exist and how they describe ideas, especially when dealing with abstract, theoretical concepts. “Nation” is a good example for such statement: during history it has known many meanings, and through the analysis of the signifier, the evolution of the signified becomes clearer.

There is hope that the alien sociologist would be, to some extent, satisfied with the analysis that this study has tried to propose of one of the themes around which the modern world has been structured. If s/he will return in a far future, there is a possibility that s/he will find the evolution of the world that has been studied in these pages. That of nationalism will be most certainly a theme of renewed interest in the twenty-first century world politics. Nation-Regions are only one of the possible future assets of world society; given the power of the ideal of nation, and the trends in Regional aggregations, it seems to the author of this study that the political evolution of inter-national society will follow this path. If it will not, let us hope that whatever path that the evolution of human societies will undertake, it will be thoughtful of recent and ancient past events, and that humanity shall not make the same errors again in the name of what is nothing but an *imagined community*.

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