

The nonrational core has been reached and triggered *through* music popularly perceived as reflecting the nation's particular past or genius; the music may vary in sophistication, embracing the work of composers such as Richard Wagner, as well as folk music.

The core of the nation has been reached and triggered *through* the use of familial metaphors which can magically transform the mundanely tangible into emotion-laden phantasma: which can, for example, mystically convert what the outsider sees as merely the territory populated by a nation into a motherland or fatherland, the ancestral land, land of our fathers, this sacred soil, land where our fathers died, the native land, the cradle of the nation, and, most commonly, the *home*—the *homeland* of our particular people—a 'Mother Russia,' an Armenia, a Deutschland, an England (Engla land: land of the Angles), or a Kurdistan (literally, land of the Kurds). Here is an Uzbek poet referring to Uzbekistan:

So that my generation would comprehend the Homeland's worth,
Men were always transformed to dust, it seems.
The Homeland is the remains of our forefathers
Who turned into dust for this precious soil.⁵

A spiritual bond between nation and territory is thus touched. As concisely stated in the nineteenth-century German couplet, 'Blut und Boden,' blood and soil become mixed in national perceptions.

It is, then, the character of appeals made through and to the senses, not through and to reason, which permit us some knowledge of the subconscious convictions that people tend to harbor concerning their nation. The near universality with which certain images and phrases appear—blood, family, brothers, sisters, mother, forefathers, ancestors, home—and the proven success of such invocations in eliciting massive, popular responses tell us much about the nature of national identity. But, again, this line of research does not provide a rational explanation for it.

Rational would-be explanations have abounded: relative economic deprivation; elite ambitions; rational choice theory; intense transaction flows; the desire of the intelligentsia to convert a 'low,' subordinate culture into a 'high,' dominant one; cost-benefit considerations; internal colonialism; a ploy of the bourgeoisie to undermine the class consciousness of the proletariat by obscuring the conflicting class interests within each nation, and by encouraging rivalry among the proletariat of various nations; a somewhat spontaneous mass response to competition for scarce resources. All such theories can be criticized on empirical grounds. But they can be faulted principally for their failure to reflect the emotional depth of national identity: the passions at either extreme end of the hate-love continuum which the nation often inspires, and the countless fanatical sacrifices which have been made in its name. As Chateaubriand expressed it nearly 200 years ago: 'Men don't allow

themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions.'⁶ To phrase it differently: people do not voluntarily die for things that are rational.

[*Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 196–8, 202–6.]

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12 Ethnic Groups and Boundaries

The main theoretical departure consists of several interconnected parts. First, we give primary emphasis to the fact that ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people. We attempt to relate other characteristics of ethnic groups to this primary feature. Second, the essays all apply a generative viewpoint to the analysis: rather than working through a typology of forms of ethnic groups and relations, we attempt to explore the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups. Third, to observe these processes we shift the focus of investigation from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance. Each of these points needs some elaboration.

Ethnic group defined

The term ethnic group is generally understood in anthropological literature¹ to designate a population which:

1. is largely biologically self-perpetuating
2. shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms
3. makes up a field of communication and interaction
4. has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

This ideal type definition is not so far removed in content from the traditional proposition that a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others. Yet, in its modified form it is close enough to many empirical ethnographic situations, at least as they appear and have been reported, so that this meaning continues to serve the purposes of most anthropologists. My quarrel is not so much with the substance of these characteristics, though as I shall show we can profit from a certain change of emphasis; my main objection is that such a formulation