2. Conflicts in divided societies: Key terms and general approaches – overview

2.1. Key terms: national/ethnic identity, nation vs. state, political/national self-determination, class/socio-economic position

All these terms are very difficult to define. Yet finding an appropriate terminology is crucial for the analyses of conflicts in divided societies. There is a vast amount of interpretations of what is a nation, what amounts to one’s national/ethnic identity. There seems to be an almost infinite variety of approaches to the study of nations and nationalism. There are also various approaches that deal with class and socio-economic position in society. The aim of this session is to provide a guiding thread and shed light on some of the main perspectives in the study of key concepts relevant to the analysis of conflicts in divided societies.

Nationality/national identity/nationalism

Nationalism is an inescapable feature of the modern condition and has been a crucial force in the history of the modern world. It has underpinned the emergence of many states, and the conflict it has often generated has caused tremendous suffering, both directly (through violence) and indirectly (e.g. through oppression, intimidation, inequality).

What is a national/ethnic identity? The study of nationalism (the identification with a ‘nation’ and the causes for and expression of this identification) has been considerably transformed throughout the last 30 - 40 years – in method, scale, sophistication, and sheer quantity. Many studies in related areas – history, anthropology, sociology, feminism – used these conceptions of nation/national identity/nationalism, ethnicity/ethnic identity.

Key texts in the study of nationalism include:

- Ernest Renan. *What is a Nation?* (1883)

- to name only a few. In the following only a brief account of the main ideas of some of this approaches will be given.
Classification of approaches of nationalism:

Primordialist vs. Modernist: The primordialist sees nationalism as something old and present throughout history (kinship, common descent), whereas the modernist sees this (political) identification with a ‘nation’ as a recent, modern phenomenon and a consequence of the distinctive feature of our modern world.

Ethnonational vs. Cultural:

Ethnonational approaches:

Walker Connor ‘Ethnonationalism’
Connor distinguishes between nationalism in the head (constructed, beliefs = cultural) and nationalism of the heart (belief in blood, descent, lineage, ancestry = ethnonational). Ethnonationalism “connotes identification with and loyalty to one’s nation,” which is “a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related (Connor, xi).”

Smith argues that nationalism draws on the pre-existing history of the "group" an attempts to fashion this history into a sense of common identity and shared history. This is not to say that this history should academically valid or cogent - indeed, Smith asserts, many nationalisms are based on historically flawed interpretations of past events and tend to overly mythologize small, inaccurate parts of their history.

Nationalism, according to Smith, does not require that members of a "nation" should all be alike, only that they should feel an intense bond of solidarity to the nation and other members of their nation. A sense of nationalism can inhabit and be produced from whatever dominant ideology exists in a given locale. Nationalism builds on pre-existing kinship, religious and belief systems.

Cultural nationalism approaches:

Benedict Anderson ‘Imagined Communities’
Nationality, nation-ness and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. What is required is an understanding of the historical development and a dynamic analysis of their meanings. The creation of these, as Anderson calls it, artefacts dates back to the late 18th century.

In an anthropological spirit, Anderson defines the nation as an imagined community. Why? Because the members of a nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear from them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their community (p.6). The nation is imagined as limited, it is defined by (physical, emotional, ...) boundaries that separates the nation from other nations. Nations differ in respect to their culture – different traditions, values, way of organisations, etc. The nation is imagined as sovereign – this implies the idea of the sovereign state, which is closely linked to the ‘problematic’ idea of national self-determination (because almost every territory comprises more nations, we will come to that again later). The nation is imagined as a community, “because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.” This fraternity is the cause for so many people’s willingness to kill and die for their nation.

Ernest Gellner ‘Nations and Nationalism’
Nationalism derives from cultural necessities.

Like Anderson, Gellner highlights the importance of culture. Human societies are characterized by 1. the possession of culture, and by 2. (social) organisation.
“Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond (Gellner, Ernest (1997) *Nationalism*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 3).

Gellner points to a structural connection between nationalism and the *needs of modern, industrial society*: nationalism creates the common culture and social homogeneity needed for the complex and constantly changing division of labour in modern societies. The legitimacy of political authority is derived from the fact that “the members of the group concerned are of the same culture (~ of the same nation). Some constellations of culture and organisation generate nationalism – but not all! Nationalism, unlike culture and social organisation is not universal! Gellner also assumes the imitative character of many nationalist movements. In his words, *nations do not so much create nationalism as nationalism creates nations*.

David Miller ‘On Nationality’

According to Miller, a nation is rooted in the *beliefs* of its members.

The ‘nation’ (nationality) bears the following characteristics (which serve to distinguish it from other collective sources of personal identity): 1. a *shared* belief that its members belong together (*sense of belonging*) and a *shared wish* to continue their life in common (*living together*); 2. nationality is an identity that embodies *historical continuity* (nations have their origins in the past (containing a considerable element of myth) and also stretch forward into the future); 3. national identity is an *active identity* – “nations are communities that do things together, take decisions, achieve results (p. 24)” etc. (*active, dynamic character*); 4. *territoriality*: national identity connects a group of people to a particular geographical place (difference to ethnic or religious identity, which do not demand that a particular place (a sacred site) should be occupied.). “A nation must have a homeland.” 5. People who share a national identity should have something in common – a *common set of characteristics* that in the past was often called a ‘national character’ (cf. e.g. Otto Bauer); what is required, is a *distinct common public culture*. This public culture must not be monolithic, there must not exist common attributes such as race or language – national communities are constituted by *belief/mutual recognition*.

Miller emphasizes two worries: National identity is not rigid, but fluid in character. Although the nationalist doctrine often proclaims the absolute priority of national allegiances over allegiances of other kinds – however, according to Miller, having a national identity does not mean that one is a nationalist in the doctrinaire sense; people can identify with two nations (e.g. in Northern Ireland, Basque Country, Catalonia)

Tamir, Yael ‘Liberal Nationalism’

*Nation, States, and Cultural Communities* (see 58-63)

A state is not identical with a nation!

“In modern political discourse, the right of individuals to determine their government remains a basic tenet of both liberal and nationalist doctrines.” (61)

What is a Nation? (see 63-69)

“When members of a particular group sharing some identifying national characteristics [such as criteria concerning numbers, territory, or language] define themselves as a nation, they ought to be seen as one, lest they become victims of a needless injustice.”

Alternative, modernist approaches:

Rogers Brubaker ‘Nationalism Reframed’

Brubaker deals with trans-border nationalisms and emphasizes the triadic relational interplay between national minorities, nationalizing states (“core nations” claims, ethno-national nature), and external national homelands.
Gans, Chaim ‘The Limits of Nationalism’
Gans argues for a specific liberal version of cultural nationalism – as opposed to the family of statist nationalism.

"Within statist nationalism, the national culture is the aim, and the state is the means. Within cultural nationalism, however, the national culture is the aim, and the state is the means." "Moreover, within statist nationalism ... any national culture, not necessarily the national culture of the states’ citizenries or a part of their citizenries, could in principle be the means for realizing the political values of the state. Within cultural nationalism, on the other hand, states are the means or the providers of the means for preserving the specific national cultures of their citizenry or parts thereof." (7)

Statist nationalism = normative essence is called by historians and sociologists territorial-civic
Cultural nationalism = ethnocultural normative essence

Essentialist approach:
John Breuilly “Nationalism and the State”:
"A nationalist argument is a political doctrine built upon three basic assertions:
1. There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
2. The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
3. The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty." (p.3).
Breuilly takes the existence of nations and nationalism as a given.

Traditional/Historical approaches:
Ernest Renan ‘What is a nation?’
A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle, which is constituted by two things: One is in the past – the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent (a daily plebiscite), the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.

Erik Hobsbawm ‘Nations and Nationalism since 1788’
Nationalism is a re-occurrence of local ideas and interests
Hobsbawm sees nationalism as the work of traditional elites, trying to protect their advantages and preserve customary practices. He speculates that nationalist movements derive from 'middle peasants' seeking to preserve a threatened way of life and their own advantage, or from the fact that the mass of the state produced tradition for the sake of its own legitimacy.

Marxist approaches:
Ephraim Nimni ‘Marxism and Nationalism: The Theoretical Origins of the Political Crisis’
Marx and Engels had a coherent perception of the national question. Classical Marxists referred to the National Question as the totality of political, ideological, economic and legal relations between national communities (= interchangeable with the national phenomenon). For Marx and Engels, what they call 'the modern nation' is the direct result of the process by which the feudal mode of production was replaced by the capitalist mode. 'Modern nations' could exist only in the context of a capitalist economy, and originated in the process of transition from feudalism to capitalism. They identified a pattern of national formation.
Marx and Engels called certain non-European, stateless or small national communities as ‘historyless peoples’ or non-historical nations, which were denied of having the right of
self-determination and historical continuity. They would eventually lose their
'underdeveloped' national character. By contrast, the so-called 'historical nations' are
national communities capable of being agents of historical transformation, that with the
formation of separate national states, will, in the judgement of Marx and Engels, further
the formation of a strong capitalist economy. For example, Marx and Engels strongly
supported the right to state independence of the Irish and Poles – two stateless
' historical' nations, which by becoming independent would also become agents of social
transformation for themselves, and for the states that hold them in subjection. Thus Irish
independence was supposed to be highly beneficial for the British working class: 'A
nation that oppresses another forges its own chains'.
Marxist approaches to nationalism had their height in early 20th century – Karl Renner,
Otto Bauer, Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, (Stalin/Lenin)
e.g. Otto Bauer: "a nation is a community of fate" – fate is rooted in the will of the
people to belong to the nation; suggestion non-territorial national autonomy!
Another contemporary theorist of 'marxist' (class-centred) nationalism (beside Nimni) is
Michael Löwy, who sees nationalism as an 'elite'/imperialist ideology aimed at the
exploitation of the lower (working) classes.
All Marxist approaches tie nationalism to the capitalist means of production, exploitation
and imperialism.

Concluding Remarks
Nationalism is a rather 'empty' term, unless it is filled with emotional depth and utilized
for particular purposes, e.g. as a means of mass mobilization to come to power, or a
means of mass division to maintain power. Thus nationalism is an ideology (= a
particular set of ideas with particular objectives).

Ethnicity/ethnic group/ethnic identity
Ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity are terms which are very difficult to define. It is
maybe even more difficult to differentiate between ethnicity/ethnic identity and national
identity/nationality.
The concept of ethnicity:
In everyday language the word ethnicity still has a ring of 'minority issues' and 'race
relations.' In social anthropology it initially referred to aspects of relationships between
groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally
distinct.
Classification of approaches of ethnicity:
Primordialist vs. Situationalist (Essentialist vs. Constructivist): Primordialists (e.g. Shils
1957, Geertz 1963, Connor 1978) view ethnicity as innate, emotional, irrational and
defined by common blood, descent, ancestry. Situationalists (e.g. Nagata 1974,
Anderson 1991) see ethnicity as a social construct, or a choice to be made. Either kind of
representation is inadequate on its own, and many theorists draw on characteristics of
both categories (e.g. Barth 1970, Brubaker 2002, Weber).

Max Weber 'What is an ethnic group?' (in: Guibernau, Montserrat and John Rex (eds).
The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration. Cambridge: Polity
Press, 1997; pp. 15-26)
- primordial and constructivist conception of ethnicity
"We shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in
their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or
because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the
propagation of group formation (18); conversely, it does not matter whether or not an
objective blood relationship exists. *Ethnic membership* (*Gemeinschaft*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the latter. In our sense, ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity. This belief tends to persist even after the disintegration of the political community, unless drastic differences in the custom, physical type, or, above all, language exist among its members.”

For Weber, “this artificial origin of the belief in common ethnicity follows the pattern of rational association turning into personal relationships. If rationally regulated action is not widespread, almost any association, even the most rational one, creates an overarching communal consciousness; this takes the form of a brotherhood on the basis of the belief in common ethnicity.”

“The belief in common ethnicity often delimits ‘social circles’, which in turn are not always identical with endogamous connubial groups, for greatly varying numbers of persons may be encompassed by both. Their similarity rests on the belief in a specific ‘honour’ of their members, not shared by the outsiders, that is, the sense of ‘ethnic honour’ (a phenomenon closely related to status honour, which will be discussed later).” For a specialized sociological study of ethnicity a finer distinction needs to be made. (19)

“Groups, in turn, can engender sentiments of likeness which will persist even after the demise and will have an ‘ethnic’ connotation. The political community in particular can produce such an effect. But most directly, such an effect is created by the *language group*, which is the bearer of a specific ‘cultural possession of the masses’ (*Massenkulturgut*) and makes mutual understanding (*Verstehen*) possible or easier (20).”


- primordialist and essentialist conception of ethnicity

*Ethnie* (ethnic communities) may be defined as named human populations with *shared ancestry, myths, histories and cultures*, having an association with a *specific territory* and a *sense of solidarity*. The concept is persistent but in a constant flux. Ethnicity is not a static thing but a *dynamic process*: "The paradox of ethnicity is its mutability in persistence, and its persistence through change (29).”

Alternative (non-classical) views on ethnicity:

Frederik Barth ‘Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference’

Barth demands that we should not just focus on the cultural content but shift the emphasis on the boundary process – the process that delimits the in-group from the out-group. What is important is how people define their group, i.e. the *boundary definition*. From then on, people realized that the boundaries could shift and evolve, and from that so could the cultural content that used to define what is an ethnic group (incl. descent, language, territory, religion ...).

Rogers Brubaker ‘Ethnicity without Groups’

According to Brubaker ethnicity is above all else a *cognitive process* (i.e. it’s not emotional, it’s not innate, it happens in the head). Brubaker emphasizes that analyses need not be framed in terms of ethnic groups but that it might be more productive to focus on practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, commonsense
knowledge, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, political projects, contingent events and variable groupness.

Distinction between ethnicity and nationality (and the state):
For Ernest Gellner ('Nations and Nationalism'), the sense of ethnicity means the identification with a 'nation'. He defines nationalism as a “theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones (Gellner, 1997:1-2).”

David Miller ('On Nationality') deals with two misunderstandings that are common in relation to the question of what nationhood involves: 1. the confusion of 'nation' and 'state' ('nationality' and 'statehood'). 'Nation' refers to “a community of people with an aspiration to be politically self-determining, whereas 'state' corresponds to “the set of political institutions that may aspire to possess for themselves; 2. the confusion of nationality and ethnicity is more understandable, because these are two phenomena that are of the same general type. “Both nations and ethnic groups are bodies of people bound together by common cultural characteristics and mutual recognition; moreover, there is no sharp dividing line between them (19).” The understanding of the national identities of various peoples requires an examination of their ethnic origins. “Typically, though not always, a nation emerges from an ethnic community that furnishes it with its distinct identity.” Furthermore, ethnicity is a potential source of new national identities: “Where an ethnic group finds its identity being threatened or its legitimate political aspirations being denied, it would be quite surprising if it did not think of itself as a nation and to express those aspirations in nationalist terms (20).” Miller recognizes the possibility of multi-ethnic nations (not necessarily) within a state (Diaspora of the Jews). For him, Gellner is wrong in his premises that a nation must be understood as an ethnically homogeneous community.

The State
The State, according to Plano and Olton (1969) is “a legal concept describing a social group that occupies a definite territory and is organized under common political institutions and an effective government.”

The most familiar perception of the state is the one by Max Weber: According to Weber the state is “the possessor of ultimate coercive power within defined borders. The modern state had both legality and legitimacy and it controlled through a bureaucracy with numerous functions.” Traditional functions include: dispenser of law, upholder of order, guardian of property, etc. Additional collectivist functions of the modern democratic state include: education, social insurance and health care, charity, (re)distributive taxation – welfare and distributive functions.
State is a functional concept – the state serves as a means to realize the objectives, ideas, values of one (rare) or more nations, of society as a whole.

Class and socio-economic position (incl. reflections on the relations to nation and state)
In the view of Marxist theorists, the social class structure as an economic arrangement influences individual's life chances and well-being according to their positions in society. Due to the competitive and exploitative nature of capitalist states, class struggles inevitably occur, yet whether the bourgeoisie succeeds in dominating the working class depends, according to Poulantzas, on the relations of the modes of production and social division of labour. However, the state, which for Poulantzas is the functional expression of the nation, plays a crucial role in that it concentrates power and shifts the class struggle from the economic to the political sphere (Poulantzas, 1978). This monopoly of power of the mononational state, which holds together its antagonistic classes, is
severely challenged in multinational societies, especially in case of intense inter-group rivalry. Furthermore, this may turn into violent conflict, if the bourgeoisie of one community pursues a strategy of inter-communal class division of the working class in order to ensure its superior status within the community and to maintain its dominance over the other community – a phenomenon which Bauer in his instrumentalist view on the relations of class and nation describes as ‘national hatred’ through ‘transformed class hatred’ (Bauer, 1924 and 2000).

Erik Olin Wright – Aspects of Class Analysis


Wright is concerned with a re-conceptualisation and present-day adaptation of Marxist class analysis. He founds his analysis on two principles: “first, that the ingredient that most sharply distinguishes the Marxist conceptualization of class from other traditions is the concept of “exploitation”, and second, that an exploitation-centered concept of class provides theoretically powerful tools for studying a range of problems in contemporary society (Wright, 2004, 1).” (in contrast to purely descriptical accounts of class and socio-economic position!)

Religion

Religious belief may also be constitutive for the identity formation of individuals who may want to see their religious values recognized in the public sphere. In multireligious societies such claims raised by members of opposed religious groups have a considerable potential for conflict (cf. Fulton, 1991. and 2002; Lambkin, 1996; Seul, 1999). The divisive aspects of religious identity may express themselves in a way that is similar to the expression of divisive cultural identities and senses of belonging.

Power

So far some notions of power and the motives of rival groups for their pursuit for power and domination have already been indicated. Concerns of relative power are important in inter-group conflicts. The systematic classification of the forms of power given by Russell

---

1 Wright argues that the core of Marxist class analysis forms “a set of normative commitments to a form of radical egalitarianism (2).” A reoccurrent theme “Marx himself felt then talk about “justice” and “morality” was unnecessary and perhaps even pernicious, believing that ideas about morality really just reflected material conditions and interests of actors. Rather than defend socialism on grounds of social justice or other normative principles, Marx preferred to simply argue that socialism was in the interests of the working class and that it was, in any case, the historical destiny of capitalism.” (2)

“The underlying radical egalitarianism within Marxist class analysis can be expressed in terms of three theses:"

Radical Egalitarianism thesis: Human flourishing would be broadly enhanced by a radical egalitarian distribution of the material conditions of life. This thesis is captured by the classical distributional slogan advocated by Marx, “To each according to need, from each according to ability” and by the ideal of a “classless” society.”

Historical possibility thesis: Under conditions of a highly productive economy, it becomes materially possible to organize society in such a way that there is a sustainable radically egalitarian distribution of the material conditions of life. Not only reflection of timeless human value, but also the expression of a practical political project.

Anti-capitalism thesis: Capitalism blocks the possibility of a radically egalitarian distribution of the material conditions of life.”
and Boulding seems highly conducive for analysing the nature of power struggles in divided societies on individual and group level. Russell concerns himself with the forms of ‘power over human beings’ and distinguishes between traditional, revolutionary, and naked power, which also differ in the way they are achieved by individuals or by organizations. These different kinds of power find expression on the political, economic, and military arena (Russell, 1938). In a similar vein to Russell’s threefold classification, Boulding regards power as having ‘three faces’, which he calls destructive power, productive power, and integrative power. The first is in effect political and military power, the second economic power, and the third social power or power over opinion (Boulding, 1990). Further works of interest to my analysis of whether power interests matter in divided societies are Bourdieu’s account of power and power relations (Bourdieu, 1977) and Blalock’s theory of the relations of power and conflict (Blalock, 1989).

In sum, achieving power is not an end in itself, but serves to realize other interests mentioned above.

National/Political Self-determination

Many of the concepts embodied in the ideal of self-determination can be found in earlier documents such as the Declaration of Independence of the United States. The concept of the right to self-determination of a political community can be seen to date back at least as far as 1859 with John Stuart Mill’s work On Liberty in which he argues that political communities are entitled collectively to determine their own affairs. In his work he argues that states should be seen as self-determining communities even if their internal political arrangements are not free, self-determination and political freedom are not equivalent terms.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the United Nations states that everyone has the right to a nationality and that no one should be arbitrarily deprived of a nationality or denied the right to change nationality. Self-determination is often invoked in national liberation struggles, succession of territories and constitutional disputes about how this right can be expressed to the satisfaction of opposing interest groups.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966. In Part 1, Article 1 it guarantees the right to self-determination of all peoples:

1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.


There is tension between the concept of self-determination and that of territorial integrity, the latter is given priority over the former. Territorial integrity can only be applied to prevent the cessation of integral parts of a state, and does not apply to decolonisation. It is clear that a colony cannot affect the territorial integrity of a country of which she does not form part. Many of the newly independent former colonies faced secessionist and irredentist movements and therefore there was an international consensus that self-determination did not apply to these movements.
2.2 Approaches to the study of conflict in divided societies (esp. Northern Ireland)

Context
At any given time, a great number of intra-state conflicts occur in the world. In 2002, for example, 52 states – over one quarter of all the countries in the world – experienced more or less violent conflicts within their territories (National Defense Council Foundation, 2002). Many of these conflicts take place in societies whose members are deeply divided by conflicting national allegiances. The patterns of inter-group tensions often resemble each other: antagonistic groups pursue irreconcilable objectives, each claiming the legitimacy of their demands in the name of justice, freedom, and equality. Demands for political self-determination (see also above) by the minority group, ranging from autonomy to independent statehood, are generally countered and repressed by the majority group on the ground of majority rule and the 'sacred' duty to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. Such minority claims often have deeper roots and long traditions. Scientists differ considerably in their approaches and in their interpretations of the grounds for such claims. Notions such as perceptions to belong to a distinct national or ethnic group, deep resentment among minority groups due to socio-economic deprivation and discrimination, domination, imperialism and capitalist colonialism, usually constitute the central and enduring themes of the various approaches. Overall, analyses of the causes of conflict in divided societies can be grouped into two broad categories: (national) identity-based and materialist explanations, depending on the respective weight researchers attach to national divisions and to issues of class and socio-economic inequalities.

This distinction is reflected in the actual divisions on the ground – in the views of the people and their (political) representatives. The spectrum ranges from traditional/extreme nationalist views to more moderate/modern nationalist views. Beside this there are people who emphasize the socio-economic dimension of the conflict (disadvantaged position of their group, etc.). Sense of group belonging and group cohesion is usually high in conflict settings, polarization, etc.

Theoretical approaches of interest for the study of conflict in divided societies include:

- Theories of national identity and nationalism emphasising either their liberal, civic and cultural form (cf. Gans, 2003; Miller, 1995; Smith, 1991; Tamir, 1995), or viewing them as primarily ethnic, ethnocultural and primordial (cf. Connor, 1994; Sisk, 1996).
- Theories of class analysing the relationship between class and national identity and dealing with issues of domination and exploitation (cf. Bauer, 1924 and 2000; Nimni, 1991; Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998; Poulantzas, 1978; Wright, 2004).

Timothy Sisk “Ethnic Conflict”
In his ethno-national approach, Sisk distinguishes two schools of thought to explain the phenomenon of ethnic conflict: Primordialism – explains ethnicity in terms of inherited group behavioural characteristics (biologically based) -> ethnic group identity is passed from generation to generation.

Instrumentalism – argues that ethnicity is contextual, fluid and a function of structural conditions (constructed)

Both approaches are not mutually exclusive! The important thing is that members of an ethnic group perceive the ethnic group to be real!

Sisk adopts a combined approach – each ethnic conflict has a particular historical development, structural conditions and regional and international contexts. There is a dynamic element in all ethnic conflicts.

4 types of deeply divided societies:
• fragmented: more than 4 major mobilized ethnic groups, none of which is dominant (e.g. Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Zaire)
• balanced: up to 4 groups, either bipolar (e.g. Northern Ireland, Cyprus) or multipolar (e.g. Bosnia)
• dominant minority (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi, Guatemala)
• dominant majority (e.g. Israel, Croatia, Sri Lanka)

Donald Horowitz “Ethnic Groups in Conflict”
Using a psycho-cultural approach, Horowitz stresses the importance of “relative group worth”, in explaining ethnic group mobilization. Differences in the perception of status are important in understanding the presence or absence of tensions between groups, especially when the status of a particular group is rapidly rising or falling. E.g. Horowitz distinguishes between “advanced” and “backward” groups on the basis of their technological and organizational capacities (166).

There are a number of political scientists who refer to the concept of ethnic conflict as a myth because they argue that the root causes of ethnic conflict do not involve ethnicity but rather institutional, political, and economic factors. These political scientists argue that the concept of ethnic conflict is misleading because it leads to the conclusion that certain groups are doomed to fight each other when in fact the conflicts between them are the result of political decisions. Opposing groups may substitute ethnicity for the underlying factors to simplify identification of friend and foe.

There are several contemporary approaches – multiculturalism, the politics of recognition, liberal nationalism - that address the specific problems of (exclusivist/ethno-)nationalism and national self-determination (see also above!).

Will Kymlicka “Multicultural Citizenship”
Kymlicka argues that ethnic and cultural diversity is the norm for most contemporary states. This diversity, Kymlicka contends, gives rise to some important and potentially divisive questions related to issues such as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, educational curricula, land claims, and last but not least, immigration and citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995, 2).” After the second World War, diversity replaced the prior dominant classical forms of nation-state citizenship.

Multiculturalist theorists argue that since individuals are essentially socially embedded and constructed, the recognition of their identity and their particular culture in the public sphere is essential to their well-being. Moreover, individuals want to see their cultural values reflected in the institutions of the state of which they are citizens. In a multicultural state this has a significant impact on their life chances, as individuals belonging to a minority culture may experience difficulties in relating to the state's institutions if these institutions reflect only the majority culture. Therefore, these minority cultural groups should be granted a certain set of rights, which recognize their specific cultural values in the public sphere (cf. Kymlicka, 1995, and 2000; Parekh, 1995; Taylor, 1994; Young, 1990, and 2000; Tully, 2001 – Taylor, Young and Tully deal with the politics of recognition!).

According to liberal nationalist theorists, individuals in their social embeddedness and need for social interaction are not only driven by a desire for recognition but also by a sense of belonging to a national or ethnic group. They want to be governed by state institutions which express their national cultural identity. In a multinational or multiethnic society these national claims, if based on exclusivity, result in feelings of oppression of national or ethnic minorities by the national or ethnic majority and, at worst, in violent intra-state conflict and civil war. As Gellner (1983) has famously pointed out, there is too little territory for all candidate ethnic groups to have a state and the same goes for other...
goods demanded by nationalists for the exclusive use of their co-nationals. In her
attempt to reconcile nationalism with liberalism, Tamir suggests a redefinition of the right
to national self-determination away from its traditional territorial meaning to a cultural
interpretation. In her view, granting members of all national groups within the state the
right to cultural self-determination, meaning that they can freely express, preserve, and
cultivate their national identity, would successfully counter oppression of national
minorities and claims to secession. Furthermore, a cultural interpretation of the right to
national self-determination is to be seen as an individual right, which is distinct from the
right to self-rule and other human rights (Tamir, 1995; cf. Miller, 1995).

Yael Tamir ‘Liberal Nationalism’
Justifying the Right to National Self-Determination (see 69-72)
“Individuals wish to be ruled by institutions informed by a culture they find
understandable and meaningful, and which allows a certain degree of transparency that
facilitates their participation in public affairs. When they are able to identify their own
culture in the political framework, when the political institutions reflect familiar traditions,
historical interpretations, and norms of behaviour, individuals come to perceive
themselves as the creators, or at least the carriers, of a valuable set of beliefs.” “The
right to national self-determination cannot be reduced [to the right of self-rule or] to
other human rights, and more particularly, is not synonymous with rights to political
participation or with freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association.” (72)

The Essence of Cultural Self-Determination (see 72-77)
“The cultural interpretation of the right to national self-determination developed so far
views it as the right of individuals to express their national identity, to protect, preserve,
and cultivate the existence of their nation as a distinct unity.” (73)
“It is commonly assumed that the implementation of rights is to be restricted so as to
assure all individuals an equal sphere of freedom. Rawls’ first principle of justice
illustrates this constraint well.” (see 74) Tamir concludes “that all nations are equally
entitled to enjoy the widest possible degree of national self-determination allowed by
their specific circumstances.” (75)
“Members of national minorities are entitled to national rights because they have an
interest in preserving their unique cultural essence. In this sense, the term “minorities”
should not be understood as merely pointing to the group’s proportional size but rather
to the extent to which its culture is reflected in the public space.” (76)

David Miller ‘On Nationality’
National Self-Determination
Miller is defending the proposition that national communities have a good claim to
political self-determination. “As far as possible, each nation should have its own set of
political institutions which allow it to decide collectively those matters that are the
primary concern of its members.” However, he concedes, that “some nations – for
instance those whose members are geographically intermingled with other groups – will
have to settle for something less than full self-government. (p. 81)”
The crucial question according to Miller is “whether people justifiably conceive their
nationality as carrying with it a claim to political self-determination.”
Miller’s reasons favouring self-determination are: 1. Nations are communities of
obligation and thus required to care for / meet the basic needs and protect the basic
interests of their members (issue of distributive justice). 2. Protection of the national
culture. 3. Expression of collective autonomy. The underlying assumption is that “people
have an interest in shaping the world in association with others with whom they identify.”
In the case of deep/sharp community divisions the competing claims can be evaluated
against the standard of (mutual) fairness. For Miller the regulative ideal is a deliberative democracy – a political community in which decisions are reached through an open and uncoerced discussion of the issue at stake where the aim of all participants is to arrive at an agreed judgement. (96)

National/political self-determination conflicts with sovereignty and most important with territorial integrity (see also above). Miller’s approach offers solutions in cases where there “is an identifiable territory within which the smaller nationality forms a majority, and over which, therefore, some form of partial autonomy can be exercised (p. 118).” In both works, ‘On Nationality’ and ‘Citizenship and National Identity’, David Miller defends a moderate, civic form of nationalism, which he views as an important factor in maintaining support for welfare states (including institutions such as the British National Health Service). The nation state, he argues, performs the role of replicating the social solidarity found in local communities at the level of states in which populations are largely anonymous. He argues that we have greater ethical duties to our co-nationals than nationals of other states: “nations are ethical communities...The duties we owe to our fellow-nationals are different from, and more extensive than, the duties we owe to humans as such”.

The Northern Ireland conflict

Key characteristics: intractability, complexity, multi-dimensionality

Northern Ireland has been chosen as the main case study because of the complex and seemingly intractable nature of inter-community conflict, which has a long historical tradition, occurs at all levels of the public sphere – political, economic, social and cultural, and involves a radicalised and often violent struggle for resources, power and recognition and dispute over the constitutional status of the territory (cf. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1995; Darby, 1995; Dixon, 2001; Hayes and McAllister, 1999; McGarry and O’Leary, 1995; Ruane and Todd, 1996; Tonge, 2006; Whyte, 1991; Wright, 1987).

Approaches can be classified into external/internal explanations, one-factor/several-factor interpretations.

These can be further classified into ethnonational (cf. McGarry and O’Leary, 1995; Hayes and McAllister, 1999; Wright, 1987), colonial (cf. Macdonald, 1996; O’Dowd, 1990), structural (cf. Darby, 1995; Ruane and Todd, 1996), socio-economic/class (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1995; Roche and Barton, 1991; Rowthorne and Wayne, 1988), and religious explanations (Fulton, 1991; Hickey, 1984).