

# Neo-nationalism as a reaction to globalisation and superstate<sup>1</sup>



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TO THE MEMORY OF CHRISTIAN GIORDANO (1945–2018)

## ABSTRACT:

According to Gellner the *raison d'être* of nationalism is the (nation) state. This has been gradually achieved in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Oceania through the disintegration of colonial and multi-national empires. The nation-building process was accompanied and enabled by national languages. Many colonial languages remained (the Americas, most of Africa, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa before and after apartheid, and post-independence English imposed on Namibia). Ironically, English is now the main language of the EU while UK is no more a member. Iran reacted to speedy westernisation by Islamic revolution. Arab „revolutions“ are reactions to secular regimes of capitalist or socialist kinds. Basically the nation state, though many declare its demise, is a very successful invention. The present neo-nationalism is the reaction to supranational integration imposed by economic globalisation or late imperial ideological interests. The Soviet Union fell apart for various reasons but neo-nationalist states such as Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltic states or even the autonomous Tatarstan are now thriving<sup>2</sup>. China still keeps its empire together but may eventually face nationalist explosions on its margins. The European Union is under threat of late because various neo-nationalist elites find unbearable the super-state trends and economic neo-liberalism of bureaucratic cosmopolites. Nationalism is a populist doctrine by definition that was framed by democratic polities. Neo-nationalism, however, uses populism as a substitute for liberal democracy<sup>3</sup>. The result could be closed national societies that (once again) become prone to military solutions of their differences.

## KEYWORDS:

nation-state, neo-nationalism, populism, democracy

## INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that nation-states in the contemporary world remain the most stable political formations. But the causes of this vary with time and historical circumstances. For example, the optimism from integration processes such as European Union seems to be gone. To create a common European foreign policy not speaking

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- 1 This article is a revision of my paper presented at the IUAES Congress held in Poznań 2019 in the framework of the panel “Awry Solidarity — Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism* revisited.”
  - 2 This was written before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The ability of Ukrainians to fight back and face with bravery Russian bombardments can be viewed as an evidence of thriving.
  - 3 David Gellner, Ernest’s son, wrote an engaging discussion on Gellner’s concept of populism (Gellner 2022).



about European army proves to be very difficult, if not impossible. Perhaps surprisingly, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), as a military organization relying on the might of the United States, expands, even to countries where “North Atlantic” does hardly make sense. The reason for it should be sought in attempts at resuscitation of some past empires. In Russia it seems that the idea that the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. was a grave mistake gets widespread currency. Beside dwelling on the nuclear arsenal and fierce development of new weapons, Russia surrounds itself with some former members of the Soviet Union in what is called the Commonwealth of Independent States (*Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv*) while it is creating Bantustan-type formations such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia or Transdnistria. “Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Lugansk People’s Republic” are located legally on Ukrainian territory but in fact are satellites of Russia. On top of this Russia occupied Crimea in 2014 with support of its Russian-speaking majority and later annexed it<sup>4</sup>. Russian Federation is a specific nation-state in which Russian nationalism is the main driving force.

On lesser scale Turkey’s ruling party dangles the Ottoman imperial slogans while it officially prepares for 100 years of modern Turkish Republic (1923). Türkiye, Iran, Iraq and Syria do their best in preventing Kurdish nation-state to emerge. Iran is busy to create a Shiite political carpet reaching to the Mediterranean and the Red Seas. Its recent China negotiated reconciliation with Saudi Arabia should be read accordingly. China behaves increasingly as a global power, playing role in Africa, Middle East, Latin America but especially in Southeast Asia (the domain of ASEAN bloc of countries). It is controversially stretching its dominance in South China Sea while hardening internally its dictatorial role in Hong Kong, East Turkestan (which it calls Xinjiang or New Territory), Tibet and Inner Mongolia. China keeps afloat economically Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and repeats its intention to incorporate the Republic of China on Taiwan which it considers a breakaway province.

Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism*, written before the fall of communism in Europe, contemplated also the future of nationalism. He discussed various possibilities but eventually concluded that “the nationalist imperative of the congruence of political unit and of culture will continue to apply. In that sense, one need not expect the age of nationalism to come to an end” (1983: 121). But he believed at the time of writing that “the sharpness of nationalist conflict may be expected to diminish” (*ibid.*). Historically, however, nations were politically conscious only when they became classes, i.e. nation-classes. Fourteen years later, posthumously, came out a new version, called simply *Nationalism* (Gellner 1997). Here Gellner, facing the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, is less optimistic about the mischief of nationalism. Actually, he writes about ‘the murderous virulence of nationalism.’ He reminds the reader that only one, westernmost, zone of Europe achieved fully the congruence of high culture with the state. In three other zones to the east the additional factors not included into the original Gellner’s model of nationalism have led to proneness to

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<sup>4</sup> In 2022 Russia officially annexed these two “republics” as well as the Zaporozhzhia and Kherson regions. Its war against Ukraine continues and the final result of it may be disappearance of these Russian tumors.

‘extreme virulence of nationalism.’ Gellner alluded to the 19<sup>th</sup> century socioeconomic ‘distress’ in Europe and more recently to the shantytowns around the cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Thus “[C]lasses without ethnicity are blind; ethnicity without class is empty” (Gellner 1997: 61). This, however, does not account for the Balkan wars of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. There ‘a machismo ethic of self-help’... ‘an ethos of honour, vengeance and the need for self-enforced legality’ were invoked. Though I have another explanation for the last series of wars in the Balkans<sup>5</sup>, Gellner has a point about the ferocity of ethnic wars.

## LANGUAGE OF THE NATION-STATE

One of the most important markers of nation-states is national language. This is, however, valid for Europe where nation-states emerged first. And even in Europe some nation-states have their specificities. Irish do have the Irish language but use predominantly English. Montenegro uses Serbian (‘Serbo-Croate’ was made obsolete). Austria’s language is German, and there is no Swiss language. Switzerland is a quadrilingual country (official are German, French, Italian and Rhaetian). Kosovo’s language is Albanian (plus Serbian on 10% of its territory) and Moldova uses Romanian along with Russian in Transdnistria. Ukrainian is the language of Ukraine but many Ukrainians, especially in its eastern part speak Russian as their first language. Ukrainian is promoted as the only national language of Ukraine though. Belarus uses Russian more than Belarussian. Other former union republics of the Soviet Union, with exception of the Baltic states, use Russian when suitable although all have their native languages. Russia’s official language is Russian but many other languages are used in autonomous republics. Malta and Cyprus have their national languages (Maltese and Greek) but English, former colonial language, is also widely used.

It is ironic that the European Union uses English as its main language although the United Kingdom has left the Union. It will be interesting to see whether German, French, Italian and Spanish will be more used now that UK is no more a member. Personally, I doubt it.

Outside of Europe the situation is different. Although some postcolonial nation-states have their own native languages, they keep using the colonial language when expedient (India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the Philippines). Literary Arabic is official in Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, but colonial languages are still widely used there. Besides, all Arab countries have each their spoken and sometimes even written dialect of Arabic. East Timor uses Portuguese. Macau uses Portuguese and Hong Kong English along with majoritarian Chinese. However, in China proper (People’s Republic of China or mainland China) the written Chinese uses ‘simplified’ script which may be not understood in Hong Kong,

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5 I believe that primarily the Yugoslav communists were strongly opposed to the disintegration of Yugoslavia on ethnic grounds. Only later, when wars did not prevent disintegration of the federated state, the same communists became Serbian, Croat, etc. nationalists and joined other nationalists in the newly formed republics.



Macau and Taiwan where traditional writing is in use. Singapore's national language is English but Malayan and Chinese are widely used as well.

In North America (Canada, U.S.A.) English is dominant but French is also official in Canada while it is dominant in its Quebec province. Spanish is widespread in many parts of the U.S.A., and entirely dominant on Puerto Rico. Mesoamerica and the Caribbean use Spanish, English (Belize and a number of Caribbean islands), French (Haiti and French overseas territories) and Dutch (Curaçao, Aruba and the remaining islands of the Dutch Antilles). In South America all countries except Brazil (Portuguese), Guyana (English), Suriname (Dutch) and Guyane (French) speak Spanish. Only Paraguay has two official languages with Guaraní along with Spanish, while the Plurinational State of Bolivia has 36 official languages with Spanish as dominant.

All sub-Saharan Africa with exception of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Comoros where Swahili is official along with English and French, uses colonial languages as official, but Namibia adopted English although German and Afrikaans were colonial languages while Rwanda switched from French into English. Mauritania uses Arabic along with French, Madagascar Malagasy along with French. South Africa has 11 official languages with English as dominant whereas Afrikaans is on the retreat.

In Oceania Papuan languages on New Guinea and Austronesian languages in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia coexist with Indonesian, English and French. In New Zealand Maori is also an official language. In Papua New Guinea Melanesian Pidgin is widely used in official contact.

## NATIONALISMS TODAY

What is the status of nationalism today? The answer is that it is again on the ascent, worldwide. That is why one can speak of neo-nationalism. What is the reason for it? The global scene is changing rapidly, perhaps too rapidly and people hardly cope with it. In Europe the limitations on sovereignty of member states in favour of the EU bureaucratic machine (the top officials are not elected) lead to demands for 'exit'. Leaving of the United Kingdom dubbed Brexit is already completed, discussions about exits of Italy, Greece, Hungary or Poland are heard here and there. Britain is composed of four parts each of which displays its own kind of neo-nationalism. Scotland is leading with its quest for independence but also Wales and England behave as neo-nationalists. Northern Ireland identifies ever more with the Republic of Ireland but unification into an Irish unified nation-state may still be a dream. On the other hand, the countries of Western Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Northern Macedonia and Kosovo) strive for joining the EU. Whether their nation-building will be strengthened or weakened is to be seen. Türkiye, as an associate member since 1963, did not give up its ambition to join the EU. But the decades since have been marked by the growth of Turkish neo-nationalism and suppression of Kurdish nationalist ambitions. Moldova and Ukraine also declared interest in joining the EU and became official candidate countries in 2022. Two South Caucasian countries, Georgia and Armenia, also have shown ambitions to join the EU. At the same time all these countries show evident increase of nationalist feelings. A contradiction? In Central

Europe, the Visegrád group of nation-states (Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary) has weakened of late mainly due to Hungarian particularism dubbed as illiberal democracy that gets support in recent elections. Czech, Slovak and Polish nation-states have profited from their almost complete monoethnic composition. Similar situation obtains in two former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Austria has asserted itself as a nation-state after the World War II when it woke up from the devastating merger with the national socialist Germany and managed to conclude the state treaty with the victorious powers. As a result, Austria jealously guards its neutral status. A very special case is Switzerland which uses four quite different languages but its historical experience of passive neutrality and exclusive economic position forged a very stable nation-state. The European mini-states of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein and Vatican as well as the last European colony of Gibraltar each have their specific identities, mostly derived from their history but to call them nation-states would perhaps be an exaggeration. Cyprus remains divided since 1974 and the nationalisms of both Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking parts are mitigated by the influence of Greece and Türkiye respectively. Relative prosperity of the Republic of Cyprus could not help overcome the division and the Northern Cyprus under the protection of Türkiye still remains an artificial quasi-state.

The expansion of the EU into former communist countries was not matched by the level of development of that region of Europe. De facto two-speed Europe was created. Even the east of Germany, the erstwhile German Democratic Republic, has developed “Ostalgie” and can display new forms of identity which make the German nation-state somewhat problematic. Moreover, Germany as a country with sizeable immigrant stock further complicates the scene. Is Germany to develop its integrated neo-nationalism? The southern flank of Europe was also less prepared for the integration. Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece were at a time dubbed PIGS. Once crisis-ridden Ireland was the only country which fully recovered and entered a new prosperity as a nation-state. Scandinavia, composed of five stable nation-states of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland, does not display any particular neo-nationalism. The Faroese, whose country is not an EU member, show a degree of national identity different from Denmark.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Ukrainian fierce defence against the aggressor apparently leads to the strengthening of the Ukrainian nation-state. Russian nationalism is also strengthening due to war against Ukraine. But if one or the other party loses, so may lose its nationalism and the nation-state.

In the Levant, Israel still occupies the West Bank and keeps Gaza under siege. Two nationalisms struggle for their nation-state. Israel is on defence because it realises that purely Jewish nation-state is impossible. The Palestinian Arabs are divided and their nation-state remains a dream, both because Israel does not allow it and because their territory reminds one of a Swiss cheese with many holes of Jewish settlements. My position of a political anthropologist is that this case is special because two nations want the same territory for their states. Unless they agree about sharing this territory there will be no solution. Two-state solution proves to be a utopia.

Türkiye, Syria and Iraq may have their nation-states but to make them stable needs to accept Kurdish autonomies that might eventually lead to a nation-state of





the Kurds (possibly without Iranian Kurds who are too weak to stand against the Shiite regime in Tehran.) In the Arabian Peninsula, the nation-states there are Arab but divided into Sunni majorities and Shi'ite minorities. Because of this division, civil wars are waged in Yemen and Syria, tensions reign in Bahrein. Lebanon, divided into four major factions (Christian, Sunni, Shi'ite and Syrian refugees), still miraculously keeps together as a multi-community nation-state but is at present economically bankrupt that endangers its quality of nation-state. Relatively stable are the Arab states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman although the numbers of foreign guest workers sometime may exceed the size of the state-forming Arabs. Therefore, it is questionable to what extent they can be considered full-fledged nation-states.

Iran is split into conservative and progressive wings but holds surprisingly well as a nation-state. Iranian Kurds have a low degree of ethnic identity. Protests movements in Iran are sometimes serious but do not question Iran as a state of the Persian speakers. Pakistan and Afghanistan are multi-ethnic Islamic states, unstable in their dubious stability. India is a federal state with headache called Kashmir. Kashmiris, most of whom are Muslims, strive for their own nation-state but would accept autonomy, preferably under Pakistan. India's nationalism is a result of Gandhism with the Congress Party's follow up, now ever more turning into the exclusivist Hindu ideal. Nepal was united by its monarchy which is now missing and partly substituted by communist type of nation-building. Bhutan, however, is still fully in the grip of the royal dynasty even though democracy from above is apparently intended as a nation-building device. Myanmar or Burma is also a federal state comprising of several ethnic groups driven by ideas of their own nation-state. Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam seem to be fairly stable nation-states, each with national language and script but Thailand with the royal cement in addition. In contrast, Malaysia is an artificially created federation of formerly traditional polities and the ex-British colonial territories on the Borneo. Rich ministates of Singapore and Brunei are kept together by a combination of economic exclusivity and residual colonial heritage. The Maldives are inhabited by Dhivehi speakers who are 100 per cent Muslims. Indonesia is as artificial as possible and therefore a nation-state in the making. It is a survival of Dutch colonial India now united by democratic system and ethos of benign Islam mixed with modern nationalism. West New Guinea, nominally part of Indonesia, has its own resistance movement resulting from Papuan nationalism. East Timor is nationalistic through its Catholicism and Portuguese, both residues of the centuries-long colonial past, combined with the tradition of resistance against 30 years long Indonesian occupation. The Philippine nationalism is problematic because of Muslim separatism in the south of the archipelago and multinational composition of the country. But the country is otherwise holding together by their national language and Roman Catholicism.

It is difficult to characterise China as other than an empire irrespective of its nominally internationalist communist ideology. The Han in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in the Republic of China (on Taiwan) display what can be called Chinese nationalism; at the moment there are two nation-states in 'one' China (Horálek 2019). But other more than fifty nationalities identify with it in various





degree, while Tibetan, Uyghur and Mongolian nationalism have acquainted themselves with the vision of nation-state which thus far was thwarted by the Han<sup>6</sup>. Uyghurs (East Turkestan) and Tibetans have their governments in exile while at home Tibetan and Uyghur identities are suppressed in ‘re-education’ camps and by forceful settlement of the Han.

The situation on Taiwan is complicated by the political, in fact security situation, because the PRC constantly toys with the idea of unification/military takeover. The Taiwanese population is divided into those who still stick to the idea of one China and those who envisage an independent nation-state<sup>7</sup>. Hong Kong has autonomy in the style ‘one country — two systems’ but this formula is gradually disappearing. Recent mass movement for democracy and calls for true and permanent autonomy or even independence à la Singapore show that the Chinese communist empire may have serious cracks. This movement was suppressed and Hong Kong seems to be gradually pulled into the one system of the PRC. Macau, on the other hand, rather reminds one of an apolitical opium den where mainland Chinese and international gamblers compete with the fame of Las Vegas.

Mongolia is a country with a mighty past (Genghis Khan epoch) but also a special present. Sandwiched between Russia and China, it is a country jealously protecting its independence. Its nationalism is very closely linked to it.

Korea is one of the most serious conundrums of our times. Humiliated by Japanese colonial occupation (1910–1945), once Japan was defeated it was split into communist North and capitalist South, devastated by fierce three-year fratricidal war that confirmed the division. The Republic of Korea in the South became one of the world’s most developed industrial countries while the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the North has been the toughest communist dictatorship on earth. Both countries display nationalism that heralds the need to unite the country as one nation-state but both the method of unification and character of the unified nation-state differ substantially. The two states are technically at the state of war and preparedness for war is apparently their highest priority. Both have allies which are ever less eager to support them but that does not diminish their belligerence while there were recently some rapprochement dances.

Japan seems homogeneous as far as nationalism is concerned. However, it is officially an ‘empire’ which lost its empire. That is to say that its nationalism is based not only on cultural unity (though its writing has been partly a Chinese borrowing) but also a regret that its expansionist hegemonism was defeated and its well-meant intentions misunderstood (“we could have won the war, if”).

Australia is a continent and a federal state that at the same time remains a dominion (British monarch is the head of state). There is a movement in favour of declaring Australia a republic which, if successful, obviously would strengthen the existing

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6 Manchuria as a geographical name and the Manchu as a composite nation of China has virtually disappeared from contemporary Chinese discourse, probably because of the negative evaluation of the last Qing dynasty and the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo (1932–1945).

7 Adam Horálek (2022) discusses the age dynamism in Taiwan as a function of nationalism.



tendency towards a nation-state. The indigenous population known as Aborigines has recently improved its status within the nation predominantly composed of European and Asian immigrants.

New Zealand has recognized the equality between the indigenous Maori and the immigrant population mostly of European origin. Most island states of the Pacific have been nation-states on the basis of local Polynesian ethnicities and traditional policies. However, on Fiji indigenous population led by chiefs faces the problem of incorporation of an approximately one half of immigrants of Indian origin. The emergence of Fijian nation-state reflects the competition between these halves. A democratic solution is unlikely because of demography which appears to be in favour of the Fiji Indians. The stage-master of the two coups in 1987, General Sitiveni Rabuka, after many vicissitudes is at power again, this time as a democratically elected Prime Minister. New Caledonia is another Pacific island where the indigenous population competes with the immigrant element. The local Kanaka population strives for independence while immigrant French oppose it. Thus far two plebiscites resulted in keeping the colonial status. The nation-state status of several Polynesian and Micronesian coral island countries such as Kiribati, Palau, Nauru is endangered by the rising waters of world's oceans. Palau, a federation of 16 'states' that in fact are tiny chiefdoms has been cited as a successful case of nation-building.

Africa is an arena of nationalism without nations. Whereas in the north of the continent Islamo-Arab expansion engulfed Berbers and modern nation-states of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya are result of history's divide and rule vagaries, Egypt's modern nationalism has devoured kingdom and created seemingly permanent military dictatorship. Morocco illegally occupies the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara and has further territorial claims towards Algeria and Mali. Morocco's nation-state thus has a tendency towards imperial expansion.

In the South of the Sahara the independence father figures such as Nkrumah, Senghor, Touré, Houphouët-Boigny, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Azikiwe or Kaunda tried to forge modern nations out of a plethora of often unrelated tribes whose territories sometimes stretch into another independent country. This nationalist ambition was only partly successful while the colonial borders were proclaimed as sacred. For example, nation-state strategy does not work well in Mali, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. In largest ex-Portuguese territories it cost lots of lives in civil wars before Mozambique and Angola reached some degree of agreement between the politically opposed ethnicities. In Equatorial Guinea the unity of a seeming nation-state, divided into the insular Bioko inhabited by the Bubi, the remote island of Annobón, and mainland Rio Muni with the dominant Fang population, is bought by enormous proceeds from gas and oil sales.

Nigeria has to face huge ethnic, economic and cultural differences which make this federal state of 36 states hardly governable. Still, it is a giant nation-state within Africa. Eritrea and South Sudan are the only African states that emerged due to changing borders. Both had to fight fiercely before they could declare their respective independence. But South Sudan immediately after independence entered the stage of civil war between the dominant ethnic groups of the Dinka and the Nuer. The state nationalism had to face the ethnic strife.



Ethiopia is multi-ethnic but holds together because of federalism which however is shaken by Tigray separatism while neighbouring Somalia is monoethnic but broken into politically motivated parts. Zimbabwe had to go through reconciliation between the Shona and the Matabele, the prolonged dictatorship of Mugabe, perhaps reaching only now the neo-nationalist stage of statehood.

South Africa and Namibia created their political nation-states by recognizing both majorities and minorities as well as ethnic diversity. Whereas Namibia seems to have succeeded through the acceptance of the dominance of the Ovambo, South Africa struggles with ethnic and language disunity. While there is a general acceptance of the population that it belongs to a South African nation, some ethnic groups such as the Zulu and the Afrikaners tend to consider themselves as separate nations. Former British protectorates of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland have their historically formed nationalisms based on chiefship and their nation-state status was reached as if by default. Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius are multi-ethnic nation-states. The Comoros derive the national unity from the adherence to Islam. The island nations, like in so many countries on the African continent, are result of statehood rather than of nationalism.

Neo-nationalism of Latin America is only balanced by the growing isolationist neo-nationalism of the Trump's America ("Make America great again!"). The 19<sup>th</sup> century Monroe doctrine slogan "America for the Americans" and Bolívarian quest for independence from Spain are as if overshadowed by particularistic nationalisms of each country. Yet, some Mesoamerican countries including Haiti have such pathetic internal security and economic problems that their citizens vote by their feet and walk thousands of kilometres in order to find better and safer life in the United States, thus leaving behind their belonging to the country of origin. There are also mini-nationalism in the Americas that are fuelled by beliefs in a special mission. I mean Quebec nationalism, Puerto Rican nationalism and even exclusivist 'Kelp' pride of the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands. Cuba, in addition to its Latin heritage, displays a revolutionary riposte pride vis-à-vis the U.S. Nicaragua and Venezuela assert their nation-state character by the political programmes of their political leadership.

Brazil as the largest of the Latin American countries cultivates its neo-nationalism on its economic strength, fuelled also by its membership in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) whereas Venezuela, potentially rich, has asserted its nation-state through references to Marxist anti-imperialist rhetoric while economically bankrupt. Argentina is also potentially rich and proud but mismanagement brings it periodically into economic and thus also national humiliation. Chile's neo-nationalism is based on post-Pinochet prosperity and indigenous population's low voice. The split into indigenous and ex-European population is much more palpable in Peru causing political instability combined with unclear direction of its nationalism. Colombia seems to have resolved leftist guerrilla opposition to the establishment and country's democracy is part of the nation-state narrative. Ecuador finished with populism while Bolivia is a nation-state divided into indigenous and ex-European population that pursue contradictory national strategies. The nation-states of Guyana, Suriname, Paraguay and Uruguay are relatively stable but their stability is more of default than of structural nature.





The Caribbean (with exception of Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico) is composed of a number of ex-British independent island states whose national consciousness has not been much tested. Guadeloupe, Martinique and adjacent islands belong to France as overseas departments (and thus to the European Union) but their population may still express specific identity strivings. The former Dutch Antilles are now more loosely connected to the Netherlands but do not show tendency towards independence.

## **NEOLIBERAL GLOBALISATION AND ITS NEO-NATIONALIST COUNTER TREND**

The neoliberal globalisation experienced by today's world is the direct response to economic and political crises of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Second World War, European economists and politicians of former enemies believed that in order to avoid repetition of such devastating conflicts a solid economic and social integration fabric must be developed. What is today the European Union has started seventy years ago. The EU works by collective decision-making of member states. All major decisions must be approved by consensus. If one state disagrees, the decision is not accepted.

Nevertheless, the most powerful is the European Commission led by a chairperson selected (not elected!) by the leaders of the most powerful states within the union. The President of European Council is also not elected although he/she is presiding over the gatherings of the heads of EU member states. The EU, through its non-elected and elected (European Parliament) organs, often reaches ordinary citizens of EU with various orders and limitations that causes negative reactions. The European Bank makes the countries of Eurozone (the countries that adopted the Euro as their currency) feeling that the financial matters are decided without consulting the citizens of EU. The contributions of member states into the gigantic budget of EU are considered unjustified although some of the policies are aimed at levelling of incomes and levels of development among various member states. It seems that the main objection of the UK was its lack of control over the financial contribution to the common European budget. On the other hand, there are enormous contributions to the agricultural policy which prefer more developed countries such as France. One has often a feeling that EU is running in two-speed mode.

The political integration that might one day result into the creation of a European superstate is another stone of contention within the EU. This trend, pushed forward by some of the member states and some influential politicians, has especially called forth neo-nationalism aimed against the loss of sovereignty of individual states. Economic integration is also leading some of the states against the adoption of the Euro as a common currency of EU. There is no clear tendency towards acceptance of Euro in Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary even though these countries declared at accession their preparedness to accept the Euro. At the same time Montenegro and Kosovo use Euro as their national currency even though their membership of EU is still unaccomplished. Economic

problems in Greece which included tough austerity measures led to an outbreak of a neo-nationalism bordering on demands to return to the former national currency, the Drachma.

Economic ascent of China has led to the current trade war between the United States and China. Certainly the U.S. imposition of tariffs is an aspect of neo-nationalism, expression of policy of “Make America great again”. China, thus far, is not allowing to be dragged into the nationalistic frenzy, but that depends on the balance of losses and the need to avoid internal instability. Chinese project of Belt and Road could be perceived as a global politico-economic ambition. In other parts of the world such as the Middle East, sanctions against Iran invoke belligerence fuelled by nationalist eruptions. Israeli nationalism versus Palestinian Arab nationalism is another case of low-key warfare.

In some countries such as Germany and Poland one can observe sub-nationalism of less ethnically or economically developed parts of these countries. The party called Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) unites people in the former communist East Germany. Silesia in southwestern Poland, inhabited by Silesians (some of who pose as a German minority) has experienced waves of local patriotism of small homeland type.

We can see that the world a quarter century after the death of Ernest Gellner is more nationalism-ridden than then. We can expect more nationalism even though the world is already divided into a definite number of nation-states. The fast changes, however, have led to constant revisions of the status quo.

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