A NATIONALISM OF GOOD INTENTIONS

Dilemmas of Inclusion and Exclusion

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Abstract

The dissertation analyses ethical aspects of nationalism and criticizes the nation-state paradigm. Based on theories that concern various forms of 'benign' nationalism, the dissertation explores fantasies of inclusion with the help of various 'positions'. The question is: *How are national identities, which are able to include ethnic minorities, constructed to be ethically justifiable, and what do the fantasies that sustain these ideas look like*? Empirically I have worked with media material and have conducted focus groups with various ethno-political activists in Sweden and Finland. These minority groups are discussed based on the positions they hold in relation to the idea of the nation, and also the positions they would hypothetically end up in if their ethno-political struggle were successful. The dissertation is based on a discourse theoretical approach, with specifically the concept of *fantasy* being utilised from the discourse theoretical framework. My conclusion is that what I call the 'Fantasy of Inclusion', that is, a fantasy that the discourse of nations has taught us to desire, is based on ignoring the ethnic character of different groups in cases where it becomes "uncomfortable" in order to maintain the idea of inclusion as 'benign'.

TACK, **TACK**, **TACK**. Av någon anledning envisas dessa ord med att komma ut på svenska, mitt modersmål. Kanske för att samtliga av dem jag vill tacka är svensktalande. Jag förmodar att det är okonventionellt att skriva ’acknowledgments’ på svenska i en avhandling som i övrigt är helt skriven på engelska, men eftersom det är min avhandling så bestämmer jag att det är okej. Dessutom är det ju det avhandlingen handlar om, dvs. vår rätt att fritt uttrycka vår särart, oavsett om vi tillhör en majoritet eller minoritet.

Jag vill börja med att tacka min huvudhandledare som har varit med mig allra längst, Karin Borevi. Du har varit ett fantastiskt stöd för mig på den här resan på så många plan. Jag vill även tacka mina övriga två handledare, Johan Eriksson och Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, som har varit med nästan lika länge. Jag är så oändligt tacksam för den trio ni har utgjort, för ert tålamod med mina processer och för ert engagemang, det känns svårt att tacka er tillräckligt.

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Nu kommer vi till punkten jag har så svårt för, att tacka ”alla andra” med risk för att glömma bort någon viktig person. Jag har varit notoriskt rädd för att människor i mitt liv ska känna sig exkluderade eller uteslutna ur gemenskapen (ni vet, dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion) och det jag har kommit fram till, kan man säga, är att det inte kan hjälpas: någon kommer alltid att bli exkluderad. Men i detta fall väljer jag ändå ett litet trick – nämligen att inte nämna någon alls vid namn. På så vis kan alla som tycker att de borde ha blivit omnämnda här känna sig inkluderade i mitt allomfattande JÄTTETACK till alla som funnits med på min resa på ett eller annat sätt.

Slutligen vill jag tacka min familj och dedicera denna licentiatavhandling till mina svensk-kurdiska barn Lale och Evin. Må ni leva i en värld där mångfald respekteras och hyllas!

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Ellinor Hamrén

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Introduction

Incidentally, Arno Michaelis still thinks of himself as white. He didn't disguise or ignore his identity; he just stopped being a white supremacist. Our identities aren't the problem. The choices we make around those identities – the meanings that we and society give them – that's the problem. Arno made one choice for part of his life and then changed his mind and made a different choice. We can also make different choices and turn away from hate. We've mostly been talking about explicit, conscious hatred – like the kind embraced by overt white supremacists. As I've said, though, my definition of hate is much broader and includes unconscious bias, too. Perhaps it's obvious that explicit hate isn't inevitable – we've thankfully seen it wane at times in our history. But unconscious bias and hate seem harder to solve, in part because they're more pervasive and because, by definition, we may not even be aware of them. How should we think about and address the hate that we may not even know we have?
Kohn, Sally (2018) *The Opposite of Hate. A Field Guide to Repairing Our Humanity*: 117

I have chosen to begin with this quote by Sally Kohn, as it captures the essence of what my work is about. Our identities are not the problem; the problem is the fact that we live in a world where certain identities are deemed more worthy than others, and in a way that keeps us unaware of these hierarchies because the system makes us take for granted the normative ordering of identities, thereby remaining unconscious of this practice. This dissertation engages with what I call *a nationalism of good intentions*, asking the question: "How are national identities constructed as ethically justifiable in order to accommodate ethnic minorities?" This question is posed because it is precisely in the justifications given that one gets closer to the fallacy committed, that is, to the act of covering-up what is preferred not to be looked at. In a closed system of nation-states, or trapped if you like in a discursive space of having to relate to the idea of a nation and its inevitable demarcation, different groups will find themselves positioned as either the dominant or the underdog, fighting to be included or resisting assimilation. This dissertation explores this space and what happens when the problems of the original construct – the very system of nation-states – gives rise to ethical dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion. Instead of statically placing specific groups in one corner of this space, I conceive of these groups as occupying a number of possible positions and imagine what would happen to those same groups had they been placed in a different position. This exercise is a way to identify cracks in the system, inconsistencies in the ideological *fantasy* that comprises what I call the 'nationalism of good intentions'. Fantasy is a concept used here as part of the discourse theoretical approach to nationhood that I adopt in this dissertation. Nationalism is seen as a discourse that gives meaning to a historically specific system of rules, and the world of

nation-states is viewed as a social system that is contingent - and therefore possible to change. I will argue in this dissertation that the discourse of nations permeates both the scholarly literature on nationalism and ideas found among the ethnopolitical activists with whom I engage, and more specifically – ideas of inclusionary nationhood that we are taught to desire in order to be good. This 'Fantasy of Inclusion' is therefore present in both theoretical literature on the ethics of nationalism as well as in the empirical material.

I use empirical cases to explore the core question – how are national identities constructed as ethically justifiable in order to accommodate ethnic minorities – as well as the identification of the flaws that are covered over by the fantasy that sustains these national constructs. The positions I work with are extractions from empirical realities. They thus work as illustrations to support the underlying argument this dissertation makes, namely that the nationalism of good intentions cannot satisfy all cultural groups equally; inclusion will always be at the expense of someone when one part is made dominant, either explicitly as an ethnic group concealed as nation or implicitly as a de-ethnified nation. The problem is intrinsic to the system of nation-states itself and can only be resolved outside its logic. I look at how 'nation' and 'ethnicity' are viewed among ethnic minorities in Sweden and Swedish Finland depending on positions as dominant group or 'underdog', 'new' or 'old' minority, with or without territorial claims, as well as what happens with claims to particularity when an ethnic group acquires a majority position. Attempts at turning nationalism into a benign project, which is often the case with national identities that aim to be as inclusive of ethnic minorities as possible, is the main focus of this dissertation, and I explore how the ideal of inclusive nationhood is perceived depending on the positions occupied by particular groups. By looking through the lenses of Swedish-speakers in Finland, the Kurdish, Sami and Roma minorities in Sweden, as well as touching on the "elephant in the room" - which is the idea of ethnic majorities - I analyse what justifications are used in order to make certain attachments and ways of belonging seem ethical. Through exploring the core question, i.e. in what ways are national identities made ethical, by way of these micro-empirical contexts, a number of dilemmas can be distinguished. They are identified as inconsistencies in the narrative, which also correspond to similar inconsistencies found within the theoretical literature on the ethics of nationalism.

Given that I focus on the type of nationalism that seems harmless, inevitable or maybe even desirable, and at a time when our world is increasingly polarised, one might wonder why I have not chosen to focus on scrutinizing these divisive forces instead of picking on those that aspire to inclusivity? I have chosen not to engage with right-wing nationalisms with ties to fascism and racism, in other words those types of nationalism that many would categorise as malign or exclusionary, because it would not contribute to our understanding of the complexity of nationalist thinking. It

would only perpetuate the divide between “good nationalism/patriotism” (ours) and “bad nationalism” (theirs) (Billig 1995). Indeed, for me, it is our own blinders that we need to take a good look at, instead of projecting our shadows onto the other. Hence, a nationalism of *good intentions*. The underlying question is if these good intentions necessarily lead to the corresponding favourable outcomes that such a standpoint seeks to attain. In other words, I want to point out that good intentions are not always equal to good results. Not every kind of population needs to imagine itself as a community sharing the same national identity. I am using the words ‘imagine’ and ‘community’ here, drawing on Benedict Anderson’s influential *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (1983), because as any scholar of nationalism knows, nations have not arisen from the natural world, but are human constructs that appeared during the modern period. The nation only exists insofar as its population imagines itself as such and – as many would argue – it also needs a shared identity that keeps its citizens loyal to one another (Miller 1995).

I hope to contribute to the literature on nationalism and ethnicity, and specifically to the literature on the *ethics* of nationalism. I shall do so by shifting the focus from a discussion that is stuck on inclusion into a taken-for-granted national unit and fixated on the issue of migration and integration of minorities – particularly in a Swedish context - to how old minorities challenge nationhood itself by resisting pressures to assimilate. In other words, I focus on how the right to ‘remain particular’ sometimes clashes with ideals of integration and inclusion. The main contribution I want to make is to point out that ethnicity is often treated as “the elephant in the room”, and how this obscures the dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion that are inevitable in a world of nation-states where some cultural expressions are hierarchically placed above and at the expense of others - as the consequence of the very construct of nation-states. The ‘nationalism of good intentions’, then, is what keeps the discourse of nations alive.

Dissertation outline

Chapter 1 engages critically with the scholarly debate on the ethics of nationalism and clarifies what is meant by 'a nationalism of good intentions'. This chapter provides the reader with the necessary roadmap for the rest of the dissertation, introducing the nature of the theoretical puzzle and the dilemmas that it gives rise to. The inclusionary nationalism that I call a nationalism of good intentions downplays the existence of ethnic culture in a way that conceals dilemmas that are 'uncomfortable'. This chapter describes how this plays out in four attempts to formulate benign forms of nationalism: liberal nationalism; constitutional patriotism; multiculturalism and liberal ethnicity.

Chapter 2 describes the research design. It goes through how the 'positions' I have chosen have been identified as well as how the concepts of *dislocation* and *fantasy* have been theorized within the Essex School of discourse analysis, and how I apply this framework in my own analysis. I have designed my research project around four positions and the spacing between these four positions and the idea of the 'nation'. These four positions are then analysed in two different types of empirical material: focus groups with ethno-political activists and selected extracts from media debates.

Chapters 3 and 4 are based on focus groups carried out with Kurdish activists in Sweden in 2016 and Swedish-speaking Finns in Helsinki in 2017. These two groups are discussed in terms of their changing positions as either 'victim' or 'dominant' majority. While the Kurds, in their homeland context, move from a position as a victim minority towards that of a dominant group (in the scenario of an independent Kurdistan), the Swedish-speakers in Finland are a former dominant minority with significant constitutional rights, but a group that is diminishing demographically.

Chapter 3 deals with the dilemma facing an ethnic majority that aspires to build its own nation on the very premises from which it seeks to escape as a minority trapped between other states. In this chapter, the analysis of the focus groups made with Kurdish activists asks if there is a conflict between, on the one hand, the integrationist Swedish project they are engaged in as an ethnic migrant minority in Sweden – the so called 'hostland' context – and, on the other, the struggle for Kurdish independence in the 'homeland' context. This conflict, however, is not perceived by the participants who are invested in what I call 'the fantasy of inclusion'.

Chapter 4 is about the dilemma facing a linguistic minority, which while once holding a dominant position is now demographically at risk and must advocate to preserve the bilingual nation in order to survive. In this chapter I analyse how the Swedish-speaking Finns construct their work for a bilingual Finland in a way consistent with a fantasy of 'openness'. Since the idea of Swedish-speaking

Finns as an ethnic group is somewhat uncomfortable for the participants in the focus group, and given also the historic power inequality that once existed between the Swedish-speaking dominant minority and the Finnish speaking majority, work undertaken to preserve the Swedish language in Finland is framed as a higher good for everyone in Finland.

Chapter 5 engages with instances when the principles of inclusion and exclusion are taken for granted but are resisted by minority groups challenging the construct of the nation. This chapter analyses statements made by politicians and political activists in Sweden in relation to nationhood and ethnic minority status in media debates that took place between 2012-2015. This chapter shows examples of how, on the one hand, the Sami, as an indigenous people with a territorial attachment to the homeland of Sápmi, disrupts the taken-for-grantedness of inclusion with claims to a separate identity. On the other hand, the Roma, a heterogeneous minority without attachments to a homeland, instead make visible the arbitrariness of national boundaries by their existence as the largest ethnic community in Europe, thereby challenging the logic of inclusion/exclusion into the national community from the opposite direction.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, describes the Fantasy of Inclusion and summarises the dilemmas that are identified and asks what the future may bring. Here the ethical – or ethnical – dilemmas of which the four positions make us aware, are recapitulated as well as the position most 'silenced' in the theories of 'benign' nationalism, namely the ethnic majority position. In other words, the position that within the framework of nationalism is normalized to the extent that it is invisible, or denied having content of its own. I conclude that ethnicity is the elephant in the room in most of the theoretical literature as well in my empirical material. The last section of this chapter explores possible future fantasies and discusses what kind of world is possible for us to imagine beyond the nationalist paradigm.

Chapter 1. A critique of scholarly thinking on nationalism and ethnicity

This chapter engages critically with the scholarly debate on nationalism and ethnicity. I argue that the idea of a 'nationalism of good intentions' contributes to the literature on national identity by shedding light on the underlying normative assumptions with which our views on inclusion are charged. I will challenge the view that a national identity based on inclusivity is desirable, and complimentarily that ethnic exclusive identities are *a priori* morally retrograde, on the grounds that such a view runs the risk of downplaying the value of ethnic pluralism. The reason for framing things in terms of a 'nationalism of good intentions' arose from a dissatisfaction with the wider discussions of nationalism and national identity in scholarly debate. This dissatisfaction concerns the common tendency to project nationalism onto 'ethno-nationalist' movements, such as populist radical right parties or separatist movements, which are perceived as something 'evil', while 'state-centred' sources of identity are referred to as benign forms of 'patriotism' rather than as nationalism (Billig 1995). This dichotomisation obscures the nuances of nationalism and does not take some of the claims made in its name seriously. Another, related frustration that spurred my thinking was the suspicion that certain values are not questioned, but simply taken for granted. While it may appear obvious that the inclusion of various groups into a common national identity is necessary to create a fair society, discussions of how to best arrange a smooth integration in plural societies often overlook the potential problems of this idea. There are several dilemmas that arise when the national entity is stretched to accommodate subgroups who may resist inclusion as well as what happens with the character of the dominant group when it is trying to shed any substantial content. My ambition is to introduce the idea of a 'nationalism of good intentions', so as to fill this gap in the literature.

Defining a nationalism of good intentions

Inherent in the title there is a suggestion that good *intentions*, a desire to do good, are to remain separate from the effect they have. In other words, good intentions do not necessarily amount to good results, but may well lead to somehow undesirable consequences. Another evident observation is the uncommon connection between 'nationalism' and 'the good'. Since nationalism is often associated with something 'bad', many will find this notion peculiar. This section will try to clarify what is meant by a nationalism of good intentions by unpacking this idea. I will define it in the following way. By a nationalism of good intentions I mean that a national identity deemed inclusive is

also considered desirable. Put another way, a national identity that is thin enough (civic) to include (ethnic) minorities is benign.

In this definition, there is one term, nationalism, which requires immediate clarification. Nationalism here is taken to mean "the language and symbolism of the nation" (Smith 2001: 5), the very fact that the nation-state is the organising principle of our world. Hence, following Billig (1995), nationalism cannot only be projected onto something 'evil' that others engage in, but, rather, there exists also a common sense-nationalism that we all partake in. Nationalism is thus something we cannot free ourselves from. Craig Calhoun reminds us of this:

> As moderns we are all participants in the discourse of nations whether we like it or not. Many of the categories and presumptions of this discourse are so deeply ingrained in our everyday language and our academic theories that it is virtually impossible to shed them, and we can only remind ourselves continuously to take them into account. (Calhoun 2007: 54)

In light of this, I regard nationalism as a discourse. Several scholars have pointed to discursive approaches as a particularly useful method in the study of the nation. Claire Sutherland (2005) also argues that discourse theory is valuable for the study of contemporary nationalism, particularly the dynamic between nation-state and minority nationalisms. Umut Özkirimli argues that there are different forms of nationalism yet all are united by 'the national discourse' which he defines as "a particular way of constructing the social reality we experience." (2000: 229)

The national discourse compels every nation-state to adopt a national identity. Anthony Smith writes that a national identity involves some sense of political community (Smith 1991: 9). A *nation*, for Smith, is defined as a "named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith 1991: 43). While it is widely agreed that the political entity of a 'nation' should not be conflated with either state[1] or ethnic community, scholars of nationalism have not arrived on the common definition of a nation (Smith 2001: 12). Anthony Giddens argues that a nation cannot exist without a state and describes the nation as a "bordered power container" created by the state (Giddens 1994: 34). In contrast, opening the discussion on 'stateless nations', Walker Connor argues that the notions of 'state' and 'nation' should be clearly separated and defines nation as a "self-aware ethnic group" (Connor 1994: 45).

The dichotomy between civic and ethnic nations has been discussed and criticised at length, and it should be highlighted that the aim here is not primarily to contribute to this well-established debate.

[1] A state is defined as a set of autonomous institutions that are differentiated from other institutions, possessing a legitimate monopoly of coercion and extraction in a given territory (Smith 2001: 12).

Yet it must be acknowledged that, despite criticism, these concepts remain widely in use among social scientists (e.g. Brubaker 1992; Smith 2001). The traditional distinction between civic and ethnic nations is one in which the civic nation is defined by a social contract between citizens and political institutions, while the ethnic nation is defined through culture and a common origin. However, these are commonly used as ideal types and most scholars argue that a majority of existing nations contain elements of both. There are interesting attempts to replace the civic-ethnic dichotomy with other models (Zimmer 2003; Kaufmann, 2008; Jensen 2014), but I do not think we should altogether reject the civic-ethnic framework. Some scholars have argued for the relevance of distinguishing between a good civic nationalism and an evil ethnic nationalism. But this contention has also been strongly questioned (eg. Yack 1996). Halikiopoulou et al argue that a 'civic zeitgeist' can be found throughout Europe, where even radical right parties have adapted a rhetoric of democracy and human rights (Halikiopoulou et al 2013: 108). From this perspective, one could say that that this civic rhetoric is used for ethnic ends; ethnic nationalism is concealed by civic rhetoric. However, it is not the ethnic *per se* that is seen as undesirable, but the *exclusion* of others. Hence, while the civic-ethnic framework is problematic to use, it is still generally held that an inclusive national identity is essentially good whereas exclusion based on ethnicity can never be acceptable. Therefore, I argue that the idea that an inclusive national identity would be benign, while an exclusive national identity on the other hand would be unacceptable, remains 'useful' in the sense that it still pervades current scholarly thinking.

Before moving on to problematising this inclusive/exclusive binary, we need to first clarify the usage of ethnicity. As with nation, ethnicity is a contested category. But again, we need to relate to common definitions. Anthony Smith defines an ethnic community, or an *ethnie* as he prefers to call it, as "a named human community connected to homeland, possessing common myths of ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of shared culture, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites" (Smith 2001: 13). Fredrik Barth's influential *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* from 1969 changed the view on ethnicity to a category that deals with boundaries rather than a specific content (1994). From this perspective, a person will understand his or her ethnicity only in contrast to other ethnicities. Thus ethnicity is understood as a relational category.[2] Owing to its relationality, we cannot fix the precise meaning of the concept. Within discourse theory, contested categories such as ethnicity are referred to as 'floating signifiers' (Laclau 1990: 28), which means they remain open to different meanings and are themselves sites of contestation. However, because ethnicity is

[2] In everyday speech, ethnicity is often carelessly used as a code word for 'non-white', especially in Sweden where talking about 'race' was frowned upon for a long time (though this has changed somewhat in recent years). While phenotype can be an ethnic marker this isn't a relevant identity marker in my study. Here it is linguistic and other cultural differences that make distinct one ethnic culture from another.

such a central concept in this dissertation, I will say a few words about what I *do not* take it to mean. It certainly does not refer to blood-based ancestry in a primordial way, and it does not refer to race. In some contexts in the world, 'white' and 'black' can be relevant identity markers to separate out two ethnic identities. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, ethnic identity markers are less phenotype-oriented; rather, linguistic and other cultural identity markers are more pronounced. For instance, the Kurdish ethnic identity is mainly based on how it differs from its neighbouring states and here we generally cannot make a distinction based on how a person looks, but to the extent that a person speaks Kurdish and not Turkish, Persian or Arabic. In other words, the most pronounced identity marker is a linguistic one. As we will see throughout this dissertation, the specific aspect that makes ethnicity controversial is the issue of descent – or "common myths of ancestry", to paraphrase Anthony Smith (2001: 13) – and its exclusionary character.

Now that these crucial terms have been defined, we are ready to ask the important question of how to begin criticising the civic-ethnic framework, and by extension the inclusive/exclusive dichotomy. This critique is not a judgement on whether or not this dichotomy is valid; as it has already been established, it does have utility insofar as it pervades current scholarly thinking. Instead, this critique regards the consequences of these ideas. A starting point is Derrida's insight that modern societies are built upon a number of binary oppositions (such as good/evil) that frame how we perceive the world. The first term of a binary always has priority over the second, and the method of deconstruction is about disrupting this oppositional logic (Hellström 2006: 52). In order to deconstruct a discourse we have to look for something outside of it, its *constitutive outside* (Torfing 2005). This is based on the presumption that there are no positive meanings, that a phenomenon can only be understood in terms of what it is not. Thus, to understand the meaning of mother, we also need to know child, sibling, father, etc., i.e. the things that a mother is not. I argue that ethnicity functions as part of the constitutive outside of the discourse of a 'nationalism of good intentions'; it is defined by what it is not, that is, ethnic and exclusive. It also needs ethnicity in the sense that it would not exist unless it has ethnic minorities to include. As a result, the nationalism of good intentions - grounded in the claim that so long as a national identity is thin enough (civic) to *include* (ethnic) minorities it is benign - can never be free from ethnicity. And following this insight, the relevant question to ask is why should it? This dissertation problematizes the common view that a national identity based on inclusivity is desirable, while ethnically exclusive identities are seen as intolerable. The next section provides a critical reading of scholarly thinking within the ethics of nationalism.

The ethics of nationalism

Any national or ethnic identity entails some kind of boundary (Barth 1969), and therefore, it will always exclude other groups in one way or another. National identity markers that have the ability to include a diversity of ethnic groups into one national identity are often seen as ethically defensible due to their inclusivity. In many cases, this is seen as desirable among ethnic minorities. However, there are cases where ethnic groups in their homelands resent this type of inclusion, especially when it entails the risk of leading to assimilation. What is at stake is the difficulty in managing ethnic pluralism in a world of nation-states, due to the inherent tension of inclusion and exclusion that exists simultaneously: how to come up with solutions that seem justifiable for everyone involved. Karin Borevi (2016) argues that any liberal welfare state has to deal with an intrinsic tension between ethnos and demos, which is a result of the situation that a political community – demos – will always in some way have reference to, and rely on, ethnically tied conceptions of community (ethnos). Borevi's ideal types for integration strategies (see table 1) which are based, along one axis, on the tension between demos and ethnos, and, on the other, on promoting ethnic identity among subgroups or not, illustrate 'liberal' versus 'illiberal' integration strategies. The top regions of the quadrant, ethnic assimilation and ethnic segregation, represent illiberal strategies to the extent that they are exclusionary (p. 18). The liberal strategies, civic integration and multiculturalism, on the other hand, rest on 'inclusive' principles.

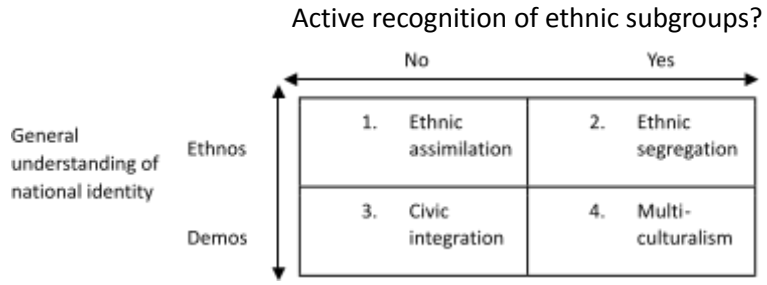

Table 1. Karin Borevi's ideal-typical integration policy options (Borevi 2016)

The inherent tension between demos and ethnos means that any inclusion automatically entails some kind of exclusion. A nation-state can adopt various integration strategies, ranging from multiculturalism to civic integration, but there is always a risk that such policies effectively lead to either ethnic segregation or assimilation (ibid 2016). Borevi says that if one agrees with the view that a national community is political and not ethnic, then one has to always relate to these tensions to which there are no simple solutions (Borevi 2002:320). Although there are no simple solutions, numerous scholars have theorised how to accommodate ethnic groups in a system of nation-states.

The scholars that I will engage with here all represent attempts at 'alchemizing' nationalism. Some of them do this explicitly and fall under the category of 'liberal nationalism', while others reject the term and use other words such as patriotism or multiculturalism. Notwithstanding these differences, all such approaches operate within and accept the paradigm of the nation-state as a given. As a result, I argue that they all fall under the umbrella category of 'benign' nationalism.

The theories of liberal nationalism and constitutional patriotism are two normative responses of how to deal with nationalism. They are different to the extent that the former defends the principle of the nation, while the latter claims to be post-national. However, both are united by the common project to justify the idea that we need a certain common identity within the nation-state as well as, I argue, a poor engagement with ethnicity. Liberal nationalism defends the existence of national community on moral grounds, regardless of its history. Yael Tamir says that "[l]iberals often align themselves with national demands raised by 'underdogs', be they indigenous peoples, discriminated minorities, or occupied nations, whose plight can easily evoke sympathy. But if national claims rest on theoretically sound and morally justified grounds, one cannot restrict their application. They apply equally to all nations, regardless of their power, their wealth, their history of suffering, or even the injustices they have inflicted on others in the past" (1993: 11). David Miller, the other main proponent of liberal nationalism, defends nationalism mainly on the grounds that a functioning democracy needs a national identity (1995). Miller further argues that nationality is a (potentially) inclusive identity, and therefore is able to incorporate different subgroups (2000: 35). He says that the conservative nationalist - different from a liberal nationalist - begins from the valid premise that a functioning state rests upon a sense of common nationality, but falsely concludes that this sense of common nationality can be preserved only by protecting the present state of national identity. Miller instead argues that a national identity can adjust over time (1995: 129). Liberal nationalism is thus consistent with the core idea of a nationalism of good intentions, the idea that a national identity is benign to the extent that it is inclusive.

In contrast to liberal nationalism, constitutional patriotism claims to be post-national. Any sense of community, according to the constitutional patriotic vision, must be rooted in the constitution and in values such as democracy and human rights, while remaining neutral to the surrounding culture (Helldahl 2013: 144). Jürgen Habermas, the father of constitutional patriotism, says that "[c]ertainly the democratic right to self-determination includes the right to preserve one's own *political* culture, which forms a concrete context for rights of citizenship, but it does not include the right to self-assertion of a privileged *cultural* form of life" (1998: 514). Jan-Werner Müller says that "[C]onstitutional patriotic 'integration' is not simply code for absorption which in turn might be code for assimilation which in turn might be code for 'acculturation'– in other words, precisely the chain of

unwarranted assumptions and expectations that liberal nationalism tends to encourage" (2007: 89). However, Müller argues that we should not treat constitutional patriotism as a "fancy version of civic nationalism". Müller says that constitutional patriotism is a transformative conception of living together that involves a different moral psychology than any sort of nationalism (2007: 71). Constitutional patriotism is much more complex than I can present here, but the point I want to emphasise is that it is a theory that tries to avoid ethnicity.

In contrast to these two approaches, multicultural theories - at least those I present below - place ethnicity and culture at the centre of the analysis. These multiculturalists argue that cultural diversity has an intrinsic value and that recognition of one's cultural identity is crucial to human beings. Charles Taylor holds that our identity is partly shaped by the recognition of others and therefore non-recognition or misrecognition can cause damage to a person (1994:25). In general terms, multiculturalism respects cultural autonomy and encourages equality between different ethnic groups. In this way, the multicultural vision challenges both the ethno-cultural idea of the nation as a cultural and assimilatory community, as well as the civic idea of the nation as a community of equal citizens where ethnic belonging is irrelevant (Brown 2000: 126). Will Kymlicka has developed a theory of 'liberal multiculturalism'. Kymlicka is sometimes also placed in the category of liberal nationalism, but I will choose to describe him as a multiculturalist here, since he does not shy away from discussing ethnicity. Kymlicka sees culture as a 'context of choice' and says that freedom involves making choices among various options, and that our culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us (1995: 83). Kymlicka distinguishes between 'national minorities' and 'ethnic groups'. National minorities are defined as previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultural groups that have been incorporated into a larger state. Ethnic groups are defined as cultural groups that have immigrated to a state. He argues that national minorities generally want to preserve their distinct society alongside the majority culture, whereas ethnic groups typically want to integrate into the majority culture (ibid: 10). Kymlicka questions the idea of 'benign neglect', arguing that no state can be neutral with regard to its official language and how internal boundaries are drawn (ibid: 51).

Multiculturalism takes ethnicity seriously and is therefore - I argue - more developed than liberal nationalism and constitutional patriotism. Multiculturalism is sometimes even put forward as a model to replace the national one (eg. Özkirimli 2014). In his article "Multiculturalism, Recognition and the Kurdish Question in Turkey: the Outline of a Normative Framework", Özkirimli describes his own multicultural model as essentially different from nationalism. However, I doubt that such a clear distinction between multiculturalism and nationalism can be made so easily, since this means one only ends up projecting the term nationalism onto an 'evil' category. So long as we remain within the

framework of the nation-state, there is still a need for some kind of ethnically neutral, umbrella identity that is sufficiently thin for both national minorities and ethnic groups (in Kymlicka's terminology), as well as the majority population, to be able to identify with it. This brings us to Eric Kaufmann's critique.

In "Liberal ethnicity" (2000), Kaufmann criticises Yael Tamir, David Miller and Will Kymlicka for failing to reflect the reality of ethnic *communities* rather than just ethnic *cultures*. Kaufmann argues that we need a theory of 'liberal ethnicity' to fill this gap, one that protects "active ethnic communities" and not simply their "passive cultural products" (2000: 1112). He criticises Kymlicka and other proponents of what he calls 'liberal culturalism'[3] for defining ethnicity in what he calls an unrealistic, 'cosmopolitan' way. Kaufmann argues that liberal culturalists show tendencies that contradict ethnic practices: 1) unease with practices of ethnic boundary maintenance; 2) a preference for inclusive, flexible and thin ethnic *mythomoteurs*[4]; 3) the treatment of ancestry and race as morally retrograde group symbols; 4) opposition to 'national ethnicity' (majority ethnicity), despite an affirmation of 'transnational ethnicity' (minority ethnicity derived from immigration)(p. 1092).

I want to address the fourth point regarding 'national ethnicity'. It is clear that it is easier for liberals to empathise with minorities rather than with dominant ethnic groups, and Kaufmann asks what we do with nations that are also ethnic groups. He defines national ethnicity as a primary ethnic group that has become a nation (and that may or may not possess a state). Examples of such 'homeland' ethnic groups are the French in France and the Catalans in Catalonia (p. 1103). Kaufmann criticises the liberal culturalist assumption that majorities will be happy as managers of a multicultural state while minorities enjoy self-determination, cultural development and recognition. He argues that the liberal culturalist concern for ethnic minorities at the expense of ethnic majorities results in an asymmetrical multiculturalism. He contends that national ethnicity is no less legitimate than transnational ethnicity and that, for instance, the Malays of Malaysia should be viewed as no less ethnic than their Chinese fellow citizens. However, this is provided that national ethnicity is not concealed under the name of the state (p. 1111). I find Kaufmann's argument on this last point to be crucial, otherwise his theory would amount to nothing more than a liberal nationalism. However, unfortunately his line of reasoning is not entirely clear and is in need of further elaboration. Fundamentally, though, he argues for some kind of separation of nation and state where national

[3] Kaufmann poses the same critique towards Liberal nationalism.

[4] This is a concept developed by Anthony D. Smith in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986). Smith defines a *mythomoteur* as a 'political myth' or a distinctive 'myth-symbol complex' with myths, memories, and symbols with peculiar claims about an ethnic group's origins and lines of descent. He distinguishes between a *dynastic* and a *communal* type of *mythomoteur*, where the former focuses on religion while the latter has a more political valence (ibid: 57-58).

ethnic groups should abandon the quest to control a state's political structures. He says that in a liberal ethnic world order, international norms of global multiculturalism would reinforce the collective security of ethnic communities just as international norms of human rights would continue to safeguard individual rights. Kaufmann argues that liberal ethnicity would lead to a considerable revision of current liberal and ethnic thinking to the benefit of both (p. 1112). In his later work, Eric Kaufmann (2018) argues that behind what he calls the nationalist-globalist divide, there are people with distinct psychological types – one that has a preference for stability and sameness, and one that appreciates change and diversity – and that we need to start imagining a world in which the nation can be multicultural, civic and ethnic, all at once. If we censor either multicultural or ethno-national imaginings, he argues, we will end up alienating both minorities as well as ethno-traditional majorities (2018: 531).

Kaufmann rightly points out what many thinkers avoid stating clearly because it makes them uncomfortable; just as there are ethnic minorities, majorities are also frequently ethnic in character and therefore are exclusive in one way or another. If he meant that national ethnic groups should abandon the quest to control a state's political structures, as he stated somewhat vaguely in his 2000-article, then this would mean *transcending* those state structures and the paradigm of the nation-state completely. However, in his later work Kaufmann says that 'ethno-traditional' majorities have the right to reduce immigration (2018: 529), which therefore undermines this quest altogether. This discloses a central inconsistency in Kaufmann's work. For, if majorities are given the right to reduce immigration (in a state that they control) they are not merely defending their own right to maintain a cultural identity that is dear to them, they are additionally arrogating to themselves a dominant position at the expense of others, just as nationalism has always done.

Hidden Ethnicity

All of the abovementioned theoretical debates deal with versions of 'benign' forms of nationalism in which national boundaries are fixed, and where the nature of the content inside is more or less highlighted. *Liberal ethnicity* is closer to fully describing the nature of a pluralistic nation in the sense that there is no "elephant in the room" in the form of 'hidden ethnicity'. However, essentially it is no different from *Liberal nationalism* in its practical application. In the Liberal nationalism-model, majority ethnicity is not hidden in the same way as in constitutional patriotism or multiculturalism, but it is named 'nation' rather than majority ethnicity. In other words, the dominance of the majority ethnicity is couched in terms of 'the nation'. The differences are subtle and therefore hard to pinpoint. In Liberal ethnicity it is clearly stated that there is such a thing as an ethnic majority that is

not the same as ‘the nation’ and therefore, whenever particularity is claimed – whether in the form of a minority resisting assimilation or a majority resisting acculturation to make its identity thinner to accommodate and/or incorporate other groups into the same identity – Liberal ethnicity is able to account for this phenomenon in a more precise way than Liberal nationalism, which takes the nation more for granted. *Multicultural theories* hide the existence of majority ethnicity, while *Constitutional Patriotism* does not acknowledge any cultural content other than implicitly.

A Nationalism of Good Intentions, which is formulated as a comment about the above theories, is the fantasy that inclusivity can resolve the underlying power asymmetries between different cultural groups that arise within a system of nation-states. It is the systematic avoidance of ethnicity as a barrier to fair inclusion – either in the form of a minority that wishes to express itself in its own terms – or in the form of a dominant majority identity that is meant to assume its ethnic character as non-existent because it has become universalized. The critical stance towards this fantasy lies in the fundamental injustice that some cultural expressions are valued more when compared to, and at the expense of, other cultures. In other words, the fact that ethnicity is allowed to remain hidden also means it is allowed to continue to dominate, but without having the accurate language to describe that this is what we actually experience. Without a label that describes ethnic majority and its dominance at the expense of ethnic minorities, ‘the nation’ and the perceived inevitability of the system of nation-states, i.e. the taken-for-grantedness of the discourse of nations, can remain un-scrutinised.

Chapter 2. Research design

This chapter describes how this study has been conducted. It is divided into three parts. First I give an account of how I work with various positions and what they represent. Second, I will present the discursive approach employed in this investigation. Finally, I discuss the empirical material and how it is used in this dissertation.

Positions – changeable circumstances in relation to nationhood

This dissertation is intended as a contribution to the theoretical debate on nationalism. I will do this by exploring what I call 'positions' in a particular empirical context, using the empirical cases as an illustration. The point of first separating the positions from the groups is to capture how positions are changeable, i.e. it is not the group itself that is statically positioned in relation to nationhood but rather the position in which they find themselves. One can think of this as a wheel that one can spin, so that a group finding itself in a subordinate position can end up in a dominant one and vice versa. The exploration of positions throughout this dissertation concerns potential outcomes that are hypothetical for as long as they remain unactualized, but that are potentially real scenarios to consider in a discussion on the ethical aspects of a certain struggle. If, for example, an oppressed ethnic majority struggles to gain independence on the basis of their ethnic divergence from their host state, how can they then claim to defend the very principle that they as the underdogs are fighting against, namely the existence of nation-states where one particular ethnic identity is dominant over others. In order to capture the problems of the construction of nation-states at its core, I use these potent examples of groups that can be moved from one position to another to illustrate where the justifications about nation-states are ethically weak.

The overall context for this discussion is Sweden and Swedish Finland and where various positions are explored in relation to nationhood. I have chosen to talk to ethno-political activists from the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden as they represent a noteworthy position of being a victimized minority[5] with the potential – at least at the time when conducting the focus groups – of gaining the position as the ethnic majority in an independent Kurdish state/autonomous region. Swedish Kurds are also

[5] I originally picked up the term 'victim' from Khayati (2008) in relation to the Kurdish case. Why I use the notion of victimhood is because it is important in the dynamic between a majority that not only is numerically larger than the minority, but exist at the expense of that minority. The perceived victimhood is interesting in the sense that it does something to the groups that are trying to imagine being something else than a victimized minority – what happens to the identity of the same group in a dominant position, i.e. the fulfilment of their struggle - when the identity as a victim is cast off.

intriguing because they can relate to both the “old” minority position in the original homeland and the “new” minority in the new homeland – i.e. the Swedish “host” state. To contrast this position, Swedish-speakers in Finland are a formerly dominant minority with a constitutional status equal to that of the Finnish speaking majority, but demographically they are at risk. Two other minorities that both challenge our view on nationhood through their positions are mentioned: the Sami perspective appears throughout the dissertation, with their indigenous perspective as the native population, and the Roma who lack connections to an original homeland of their own.

The “Kurdish” and “Finnish” examples are discussed more in-depth through the focus groups that have been conducted. They are cases of two different kinds of ethno-political groups and their responses to ideas of nationhood come from two opposing perspectives: The Kurdish experience as a victim minority in their respective host states and a movement that wants greater autonomy on the one hand, and the Swedish-speakers in Finland and their history as a dominant minority with shrinking influence on the other. The Sami position is discussed throughout the dissertation; it appears through the voices of Sami activists in the chapter that looks at a Swedish media debate on Swedish national identity and minorities. It is a case that is also discussed in the focus group with Kurdish activists and is further explored in the last, concluding, chapter. The Roma position is only mentioned in the chapter that discusses Swedish national identity and minorities. For the purpose of my argument, there is no other importance given to any one of these groups other than their function in shedding light on the overall question asked, namely how are national identities constructed as ethically justifiable in order to accommodate ethnic minorities? The positions are seen as lenses through which we can access new insights into this problem; for instance, what happens to the idea of nationhood when looked at from the vantage point of an indigenous minority. The thing I call position is not reduced to ‘everything that is experienced by this particular group’ and all the aspects that are involved therein – it is also what we can ‘logically’ assume when putting ourselves in the shoes of that group. I have consciously chosen to formulate the idea of positions instead of working with traditional Weberian ideal types. The ‘position’ is my attempt at formulating a way to describe something unique – a unique experience that cannot be reduced to a ‘case of’ or an ideal type. Positions are less reductive than ideal types in the sense that they are more context specific. If I had used ideal types in this dissertation I am afraid I would have committed similar mistakes as the theoretical perspectives I am trying to criticize in the first place; that is, falsely universalizing what remains particularistic and instances of self-expression. Moreover, what I am trying to capture with the idea of positions is that they are changeable and not static. Which means, we have to be able to take into account the hypothetical scenarios of having ‘won’ the struggle. This is a way to check if the argument made for the sake of justice for my own group is still valid for other

groups in the same position. This is the kind of discussion I have tried to provoke in my focus groups. The positions show up in multiple contexts throughout the dissertation, when one minority is trying to put itself in the shoes of another and tries to perceive what they might perceive through their own interpretive lens. In chapter 3, the Kurdish activists discuss the position of Swedish Sami and in chapter 4 the Swedish-speaking Finns contrast their experience with that of Sami and Kurds. Their way of relating to one another's positions is how we can try to put ourselves in the shoes of others, in ways that are 'translatable' from our own position but are irreducible to it. In other words, this investigation seeks to take both the universal and transcendent as well as the unique and particular into account.

Discursive approaches to nationhood – dislocation and fantasy

As I have already pointed out in chapter one, nationalism is best viewed as a discourse in which we construct the social reality we experience (Özkirimli 2000) and because it is so ingrained in our everyday experience it is almost impossible to shed (Calhoun 2007). As Claire Sutherland (2005) points out, discourse theory is a valuable approach for the study of contemporary nationalism, and in particular the dynamic between nation-state and minority nationalisms.

Within Political Discourse Theory (hereafter PDT), also known as "the Essex school", the concept *discourse* includes all social practices in the sense that discourses and discursive practices are synonymous with systems of social relations. "Discourse theory begins with the assumption that all objects and actions are meaningful, and that their meaning is a product of historically specific systems of rules" (Howarth 2000: 8). In contrast to other traditions within discourse studies, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, PDT defines discourse not merely as talk, text and other semiotic elements, but as a meaningful relational whole. As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe describe:

> *[b]y discourse we do not mean a combination of speech and writing, but rather that speech and writing are themselves but internal components of discursive totalities*. Now, turning to the term discourse itself, we use it to emphasize the fact that every social configuration is *meaningful*. If I kick a spherical object in the street or if I kick a ball in a football match, the *physical* fact is the same, but *its meaning* is different. The object is a football only to the extent that it establishes a system of relations with other objects, and these relations are not given by the mere referential materiality of the objects, but are, rather, socially constructed. This systematic set of relations is what we call discourse. (Laclau and Mouffe 1987: 82).

At the heart of this theory is the idea that every social system is contingent but temporarily fixed. If every social system is contingent, it also means it could have been, or could be, otherwise. In other

words, while the discourse of nations – a paradigm that is temporarily fixed – seems like a system impossible to break free from, it is actually contingent and therefore possible to alter.

The Essex School of PDT is built on the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and finds its intellectual crystallisation in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). However, here I am mainly working with the second generation of scholars within this tradition, and most notably the work of Jason Glynos, David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis. More specifically, the main concepts put to work in my analysis are *dislocation* and *fantasy*. Ernesto Laclau developed the concept of dislocation to explain the conditions under which discursive change is possible. The concept of dislocation refers to the process by which the contingency of a discursive structure is made visible (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000: 13). The existence of dislocation in a discursive structure is thus the main logic that accounts for how identities change and are negotiated. Laclau says about dislocation that "[i]f on the one hand, they threaten identities, on the other, they are the foundation on which new identities are constituted" (Laclau 1990: 39). Dislocation occurs when a hegemonic discourse is confronted by new events that it cannot explain (Torfing 2005: 16). One way of understanding dislocation is when a subject's mode of being is experienced as disrupted. Alternatively phrased, "dislocations are those occasions when a subject is called upon to confront the contingency of social relations more directly than at other times" (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 110). Referring to Howarth (2013), Pernilla Andersson (2016) conceptualizes such concrete situations when it is not clear for a subject how to 'go on' as *dislocatory moments.* Glynos and Howarth express a similar point when they note that not only can dislocations provoke a political response through public contestation, they can also provoke an ideological response aiming at repairing and covering over a dislocatory event before it has the real possibility of becoming the source of a new political construction. This ideological dimension thus shows how a subject becomes complicit in covering over the radical contingency of social relations (2007: 117). The question to ask is therefore how the subject responds to a dislocatory moment? Is it by contestation or closure? Both these responses can be explained by the underlying ideological *fantasy* at work.

In the same way that discourses, and the fact that nations, are human constructs is not meant to be understood as if they were somehow not real, 'fantasy' is not meant to be understood as something purely imaginary. Glynos and Howarth argue that the role of fantasy is to conceal the radical contingency of social relations. Rather than a false picture of the world, a fantasy has a constitutive function in social life. They provide us with a "fullness-to-come", promising us a sense of fulfilment once a specific obstacle is overcome. Thus, a fantasy can have what they call a beatific dimension. However, it can also be horrific, insofar as it predicts disaster if this obstacle is not overcome (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 147). An example would be the idea that the creation of an inclusive national

identity would accommodate all ethnic minorities within a nation (beatific fantasy), or that the lack of a shared national identity would lead to a breakdown of national unity (horrific fantasy). A fantasy is there to normalise what could have been otherwise, or in other words, the fantasy helps to ensure that an existing social structure or institution is taken for granted. In periods of social change, on the other hand, fantasies work as a vector that gives energy and direction to a social movement (ibid).

An important aspect of fantasy is that it entails an affective dimension. The logic of fantasy is based on the Lacanian concept of enjoyment, or *jouissance* (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 15). *Jouissance* should not be conflated with pleasure, at least not in its common-sense meaning, but rather contains within it its opposite (ibid: 107). Yannis Stavrakakis describes this concept as a "satisfaction so excessive and charged that it becomes painful" (2007: 195). He goes on to explain how desire is founded on the impossibility of recapturing our lost enjoyment while at the same time its appeal depends on the possibility of a partial enjoyment. He turns to Slavoj Žižek (1998) to explain that fantasy promises a resolution to social antagonism, the covering over of a lack. This dimension of the fantasy is supported by another dimension which explains why things went wrong, what Žižek calls the 'theft of enjoyment' (Žižek 1993). This is the idea that we are deprived of our enjoyment because somebody else has stolen it from us, such as a national Other (Stavrakakis 2007: 197). In other words, a fantasy promising a sense of fullness or a lost enjoyment, can only be sustained through attributing the lack to the theft of enjoyment by an external actor, such as 'immigrants' or a 'neighbouring nation' (ibid: 198). As Žižek puts it: "What is at stake in ethnic tensions is always the possession of the national Thing: the 'other' wants to steal our enjoyment (by ruining our 'way of life') […]" (Žižek quoted in Glynos and Howarth 2007: 107; Žižek 1991b). Žižek also explains how a fantasy teaches us how to desire: "it provides a 'schema' according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by the formal symbolic structure." (Žižek 2009: 7). This desire is therefore not simply one's own desire, but it is a desire that we are taught to desire. This is closely linked with who we imagine ourselves to be in the eyes of others once the fantasy is fulfilled.

A few scholars have looked specifically at nation and fantasy (Žižek, Rose, Stavrakakis). Yannis Stavrakakis argues that to understand the reproduction and longevity of national identification one needs to take into account Ernesto Laclau's arguments concerning the force of affect. Laclau talks about force as the affective dimension of an investment: "[I]f an entity becomes the object of an investment – as in being in love, or in hatred – the investment belongs necessarily to the order of *affect*." (2005: 110) Stavrakakis argues that the work of Anthony Smith (1986) is valuable to begin to make sense of the paradox that while there is no doubt that the nation is a contingent product of our recent history, people are still ready to die and kill for it. However, the mere fact that modern nations

build on pre-existing ethnic cores is not enough to understand people's attachment to the nation and its ethnic fabric. Rather, we need to know more about the nature of the bond between people and nation (2007: 192). In other words, national sentiment needs the grip of fantasy to make sense. In *States of Fantasy*, Jacqueline Rose (1996) uses the example of Israel to look at how we build our claims of solidity in the world in fantasy. Rose asks, "what acts of consciousness, what forms of belief or fantasy, constitute the seeming solidity - the *reality* - of the world, and air we breathe?" (p. 20) To this, she offers the following: "Only by stopping the movement of the earth – vertically through space, horizontally across time – can you enter the 'once and for all' and take possession. Of land, of others, of yourself. Blind credence. The fantasy on which state and nationhood rely." (p.21) In other words, a fantasy is successful to the extent that we do not experience the gap between fantasy and reality; they merge and become one and the same. Rose uses the example of Israel here, and Žižek explains the same phenomenon, i.e. how the ideological fantasy works, using the example of the anti-Semitism of 1930s Germany:

> The proper answer to anti-Semitism is therefore not 'Jews are not really like that' but 'the anti-Semitic idea of Jew has nothing to do with Jews; the ideological figure of a Jew is a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system […] An ideology is really 'holding us' only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality - that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. (1989: 49)

What Žižek and other scholars describe is the grip of the fantasy of the nation and how fantasy and reality merge into one, thereby covering over the contingent nature of this system of thought. Something similar plays out in my empirical material. The following section will describe how this theoretical framework has been applied on the material I have worked with.

Spotting the fantasies

In this dissertation I explore the fantasies that sustain ideas of nationhood as ethically sustainable, and what they look like. This is done by paying attention to how inconsistencies are made logical through fantasmatic supports. For it is through such supports that a sense of 'fullness' is obtained that conceals inconsistencies in our everyday practices, allowing us to take such practices for granted. Based on the experience of the in-person focus group discussions, where I noted instances of dissonance – a feeling that something 'went wrong' – in communication, I developed my analytical strategy retroductively.[6] Initially I had no terminology to name these instances of communication,

[6] Glynos & Howarth (2007) describe the retroductive circle as a to-and-fro movement between the phenomena investigated and the various explanations that are proffered (p. 34).

but after watching the videos and analysing them, I ended up identifying what I found to be three main elements of the analysis: *awkward silence, logical fallacies* and *common truths.*

As mentioned above, I have drawn on the notion of 'dislocatory moments', described by Pernilla Andersson (2016) as a situation when it is not clear for a subject how to 'go on'. These points of dislocation become operative in the narratives that subjects tell. Among members of my focus groups, such dislocatory moments were found intuitively – a gut feeling that says something is wrong. I observed an *awkward silence* followed by either nothing – the end of a conversation – or an abrupt change, as a result of not knowing how to continue. Another way of detecting inconsistencies in the narrative is through logic, and here I have described it as *logical fallacies*, where a story told does not make sense logically because it ends up contradicting itself. This was observed when participants would argue for a principle that did not apply equally for other groups than one's own. I also detected *common truths* in my material – fantasies where supposedly universal claims are assumed to create common ground among different groups, but where this fantasy is disrupted and challenged – either by me the researcher or by the ethno-political activists with whom I have engaged, in my focus groups or through their statements in the media material I have worked with. Drawing on Joan Wallach Scott (2011), Johanna Lauri (2021) uses the term 'fantasy echo' to describe how differences are concealed through repetition. In her example of a fantasy of global sisterhood, the enjoyment of 'doing good' and using a particular historical narrative that taps into collective feminist struggles, this fantasy obscures colonial power asymmetries by fuelling a sense of shared struggle and common ground (Lauri & Bäckström 2019, p. 897). In a similar vein, and analogous with Lauri's findings where the enjoyment of 'doing good' in the context of a supposedly shared feminist struggle hides underlying colonial power asymmetries, I find in my material a fantasy of 'doing good' through repetition of common truths. With the exception of the *observed* awkward silences, logical fallacies and common truths were found equally in the media material. In addition to the abovementioned elements of analysis, which I have identified through working the material (awkward silence, logical fallacies and common truths), the concepts of 'theft of enjoyment' and 'beatific and horrific fantasies' (Glynos & Howarth 2007) have been applied directly as two additional elements of my analysis.

Empirical material

Before describing my empirical material, I want to situate its place in my work. As a theoretically driven dissertation, I am not primarily interested in mapping certain ethno-political struggles to

understand them better, but to use their examples to inform my theoretical construction. Therefore, the material is seen as offering 'extracts' from empirical realities, which help shed light on ethical dilemmas arising from the politics of a nation-state.

In chapter 5, which is based on written material, I have identified debates in the Swedish media among ethno-political activists and representatives from political parties, which help to shed light on the particular questions I was interested in – i.e. how nationhood and the position of minorities can be problematized on the basis of inconsistencies and contradictions, principles that do not apply equally to all groups without apparent reason, or dislocatory moments found in the material. I have interpreted dislocatory moments – the equivalence of 'awkward silences' – in this written material as a lack of further debate after a highly controversial statement from the wrong person/position, i.e. from one of the 'good ones'. I have tried to identify debates where precisely such 'tension in the virtual room' can be said to take place. In the years preceding my PhD, I followed public discourse[7] on topics relating to national identity and minorities and therefore became closely acquainted with it and the kind of arguments found in the major newspapers at that time. Doing so helped me to formulate my research project. This material is therefore not in any way a coverage of the totality of what was going on in the years between 2012-2015, the three years preceding the Refuge crises,[8] but merely examples handpicked from a real context where I can illustrate how the theories of ethical nationalism run into problems. I identified three such examples – "Sami-as-Swedes", "Ethnic Swedes", and "Our Roma vs. EU-migrants" where 'common truths' of inclusion/exclusion could be found and disputed on the basis of statements made by the ethno-political activists and/or contradictions in the narrative. The examples are extracts from debates that took place in or were reported by the major Swedish newspapers, e.g. *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) and *Svenska Dagbladet* (Svd), and Swedish Public Service (Svt). I have analysed a totality of 16 articles.

Focus groups

The main empirical material for this dissertation is the two focus groups with Kurdish activists in Sweden 2016 and Swedish speakers in Finland 2017. Focus groups are generally led by a moderator to discuss a given topic with the aim of collecting data through group interaction (Wibeck 2010: 25) The strength of this method compared to more traditional interviews is that it generates a rich material that can be analysed in several different ways; to map the content of the discussions, i.e. the participants' attitudes and ideas, but also to study the interaction itself (ibid: 21-22). My first focus

[7] Discourse meant in its everyday meaning here, as written communication, not as a theoretical concept.
[8] After the Refugee Crises of 2015 there was a shift in the public discourse on national identity, particularly regarding views on immigration.

group was with Kurdish diaspora activists in the Stockholm region, where the purpose of bringing them together into a focus group rather than individually was precisely to observe what happens when they interact and how they respond to the questions as a group. Another advantage with focus groups is *stimulation*; respondents want to express their ideas as the level of excitement about a particular topic increases within the group (Stewart and Shamdasani 2015: 46). Focus group participants may be treated as informants who wish to share as much as possible of their information, while the researcher and moderator remain as neutral as possible, to avoid moderator bias (ibid: 94). In my focus groups I have used the opposite approach; an interactive one where I make no claims to such neutrality.

Group cohesion, the level of belonging that the individual feels with a group, is an important aspect of my focus groups. In other types of focus groups, too high a level of cohesion may be regarded as problematic, since this would run the risk of generating only one acceptable way of thinking (Wibeck 2010: 30-31). However, here, this is viewed as a positive, since I am interested in the norms that allow for certain things to be expressed. In my first focus group with Kurdish diaspora activists, participants were selected for what they have in common, which is the fact that they all have positions within Swedish politics, media or civil society and thereby belong to what I have referred to as 'the Kurdish elite' in Sweden. I selected the participants through snowball sampling and made sure the participants had roots in all of the Kurdish regions. This was relatively easy given I have a lot of private connections within this community. In my second focus group with Swedish speaking Finns in Helsinki, I already knew that I preferred a pre-existing "group" and therefore, rather than selecting participants, I contacted an organization that would automatically provide me a group of participants with a shared agenda. This type of selection also means that one cannot make any claims to representativity, i.e. I do not see my respondents as representatives of the larger community. With this in mind, the focus group conversations I held are treated as one instance of many possible ones.

Part of the preparation for the focus groups was to inform the participants about the research project, about their anonymity and that the focus groups would be filmed with a camera. I chose to film them because it would enable a richer analysis. It would give me the possibility of using several senses and would afford the possibility of analysing body language as well as the dynamics in the room. Filming the focus groups also enabled me to easily return to the discussions, and repeatedly. This helped me to remember aspects of the focus groups that would not have been possible if I had worked with the more traditional written transcriptions. The focus groups lasted for about two hours. The first group with Kurdish activists took place at a conference room at Södertörn University in Stockholm, in September 2016, and was filmed by two cameramen. The second group, with Swedish speaking Finns, took place in April 2017 in a conference room at their own workplace in

Helsinki and was filmed with a stationary camera. Before the focus groups took place, I had prepared questions, although the conversations were open and evolved organically during the sessions.[9]

Ethical considerations

An important question is how the researcher affects the respondents and therefore the results from the focus groups. It is thus important to address the power asymmetry inherent in this setup. This question relates to what is known as a reflexive approach to research, where the researcher strives to increase the awareness of her own position within the research process, and how it affects the object of study (Gustavsson and Johannesson 2016: 20). Discussions on reflexivity have been discussed at length in other disciplines and within ethnographic research. Alas, similar debates within political science research are less established. However, as Linda Finlay notes, most qualitative researchers nowadays accept that the researcher influences – or actively constructs – the collection, selection and interpretation of data (Finlay 2002: 212). The question is therefore not so much if, but in what way, this influence is exercised, since there are several different approaches to reflexivity in research. In co-operative inquiry approaches, which is one version of collaborative research, researchers are treated as participants in their own research, engaging in both mutual reflection and experience (ibid: 218). This is similar to my own approach. I am not only the researcher and moderator of the focus group but also a participant: the aim of the focus group is both to understand what they think about various topics, but also for them to "think with me" regarding my particular interests. I therefore allowed myself to provoke the discussion by asking specific questions that led them to my own topics of interest. Some forms of collaborative research have been criticized for a naïve view on the relationship between researcher and participants (ibid: 220), a concern that I share. While I treat my respondents as participants in an interactive focus group discussion, their participation is limited to the focus group itself. This means that the analysis, of which they may or may not approve, is entirely my own. This also means that there is an inevitable power asymmetry between the researcher and the subjects of the study. This fact should be acknowledged rather than hidden. Some researchers argue that it is an important task to support the group(s) one is studying by combining the roles as activist and researcher. On the other hand, other researchers try to act in a

[9] A third focus group was conducted with Sami activists from the Forest-Sami group in Luleå in northern Sweden in March 2019. However, unfortunately, this recording was lost and for this reason I will not be able to use that material in this dissertation. I also undertook a field trip to Jokkmokk in April 2018 to collect material and inspiration for my planned research on the Forest-Sami, a group that is also marginalized among themselves, mainly due to Swedish policy on the Sami during the 19th century. None of this work will be used here, however. Instead, the Sami voices will be represented through the words of Sami activists in media debates, as well as in the concluding chapter.

neutral way in relation to the respondents' various interests and agendas (Gustavsson and Johannesson 2016: 21). This question is important to reflect upon in my case, since I have previously been involved in issues concerning human rights of minorities, both as an activist and as a researcher, and in some cases I continue to do so. While most of my respondents have been aware of my overall sympathy with their question(s), it may nevertheless be the case that my results will not correspond to their various agendas. Since ethnic origin is considered sensitive personal data, the material is automatically of this nature. However, for the participants in my focus groups, their ethnic belonging is not something they would hide, given that their activism is connected to their ethnic identity. Before the focus-group interviews took place the participants were assured confidentiality and were informed that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms. They consented to being recorded and were told the recording would only be used as working material for the researcher and possibly for her supervisors to watch. They were also informed about the purpose and methods of the research project and that the results will be published. The recordings have been digitally stored at Södertörn University, in compliance with the university's guidelines on research ethics.

The subsequent three chapters are based on the empirical material described in chapter 2. Chapter 3 and 4 are based on focus groups and chapter 5 is based on media material. But before proceeding to the next three chapters I want to remind the readers that it is not essentially *about* the groups, in other words we are not primarily looking for a deeper understanding of the realities of these groups in and of themselves. I have chosen to engage in conversations with people – either real conversations or figurative ones through written statements – in order to capture contradictions within a grander narrative that I have distinguished both in the literature on nationalism as well as in popular discourse, what I call a 'nationalism of good intentions'. The following three chapters are best read through this interpretative lens, that is, as illustrations of this narrative. For the very same reason, the four positions that I work with – represented by Kurds, Swedish-speaking Finns, Sami and Roma minorities – are not all covered equally and there is no internal priority between the groups as such, but to the extent that they help shed light on the questions I ask: How are national identities constructed as ethically justifiable in order to accommodate ethnic minorities, and what do the fantasies that sustain these justifications look like? Ultimately, I am interested in the ideas that create and sustain a 'nationalism of good intentions' and the fantasy of inclusion that maintains and gives ethical validation to the nationalist paradigm, the discourse of nation-states, as well as opening up the realisation – grounded in political discourse theory – that the (discursive) structures regulating our current world are themselves contingent and changeable.

Chapter 3. From victim minority to ethnic majority

This chapter is an exploration of how to reconcile one's own position as the victim with a hypothetical future scenario where the position of victimhood is no longer true. It asks if one's own quest for redress is based on power asymmetries that are fixable or if the underlying structural problems are in fact the cause of the dilemma. This chapter shows that by investing in the fantasy of inclusion, which is what the nationalism of good intentions is about, the problem of divergence from the identity that tries to be inclusive is not named and spoken about but covered over by the alleged 'goodness' of the will to include.

Swedish Kurds

How do Kurdish activists negotiate the ideals of integration in the Swedish context with the Kurdish struggle for independence? This is the main question that this chapter will try to seek to answer. But first we need to unpack what this question means and why there would be a conflict between the 'Swedish integrationist ethos' and the Kurdish struggle for recognition in the first place. As an established, Western nation, the Swedish nation-state and its nationalism has acquired a 'banal' status (Billig 1995). A nationalism that is taken for granted is no longer perceived as such and thereby ceases to exist. However, the banal reproduction of the Swedish nation-state, even in the form of integrating newcomers as full members of the Swedish society, such as the flag waving at citizenship ceremonies on the Swedish national day where new citizens are celebrated, is also a form of inclusionary nationalism. As Kurdish immigrants to Sweden, with a strong commitment to contributing to the creation of an inclusive society in Sweden, Swedish-Kurdish activists partake in this integrationist Swedish project. At the same time, the Kurdish struggle for independence is not one of integration into existing nation-states but, on the contrary, one of recognition of a separate, ethnic identity. Swedish-Kurdish activists committed to the Kurdish question are therefore engaging in two projects with opposite logics: one of Swedish integration and the other of Kurdish separation. The question that I pose here is how Swedish-Kurdish activists negotiate these two contradictory logics. Here one might object that the two contexts are completely different and that such a comparison cannot be made. The Swedish nation-state is a democracy while the dominant states surrounding Kurdistan are oppressive regimes, and thus the Kurdish struggle for liberation needs to be understood in this context. While this objection is fair, I would still argue that there is an inherent conflict that arises between these two ideals in a situation where the Kurdish struggle is about to succeed in some parts of Kurdistan, especially in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in

northern Iraq.[10] How do Swedish-Kurdish activists negotiate their inclusionary ideals in Sweden with the establishment of a Kurdish state based on a Kurdish ethnic majority culture?

The context of Kurds in Sweden

Swedish Kurds have been described as one of the most politicised diaspora groups in Europe (Khayati 2008). In comparison to Kurdish diaspora groups elsewhere, Kurds in Sweden are particularly intellectually mobilised, focusing on the development of Kurdish culture and literature (Baser, Emanuelsson, Toivanen 2015: 137). Due to the economic support for organisations among immigrant groups, the Swedish political context has been favourable for preserving and strengthening Kurdish language, culture and identity. This has seemingly made possible a larger amount of transnational activities among Kurds in Sweden in general, compared to other European countries (Bruinessen 1999; Khayati 2008). During the past decade, a number of previous studies have been carried out specifically on the political activities among the Kurdish community in Sweden. In addition to the work of Khayati (2008), Charlotta Zettervall (2013) has written a dissertation on diasporic Kurds in Sweden that deals with Kurds from Turkey as a political generation. Bahar Baser (2015) looks at second-generation Kurdish and Turkish activists comparatively in the cases of Sweden and Germany. These two cases are described as relevant in terms of their differing integration policies and she finds that in the Swedish case, multicultural policies have allowed Kurdish immigrants to organise along ethnic lines and moreover have allowed them to integrate into various Swedish political parties. Previous work on Kurdish diaspora has pointed to the importance of ´long distance-nationalism´,[11] both for constructing a collective Kurdish diasporic identity but also for the diaspora, in turn, to strengthen Kurdish nationalism in general (e.g. Alinia 2004; Emanuelsson 2005; Khayati 2008; Eliassi 2013). Khalid Khayati highlights that there is a large number of influential Kurdish individuals, forming what he calls a Swedish-Kurdish *elite*, with notable positions in Swedish cultural and political life (Khayati 2011: 88). He also points out that Swedish-Kurdish activities are not solely transnational but also directed to the hostland, often engaging in general questions around integration and

[10] This was true when this focus group was conducted in 2016. However, the political landscape has changed since the referendum on independence in Iraqi Kurdistan in September 2017.
Kurdistan Regional Government, Statement from Kurdistan Regional Government, 25/10 2017, http://previous.cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=55938 [last accessed 2021-09-21].

[11] Benedict Anderson (2001) calls "a nationalism that no longer depends as it once did on territorial location in a home country" 'long-distance nationalism' (p. 42) Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001) talk about Haitian immigrants to the United States as long distance nationalists to the extent that they view remittances such as financial and material support to family and extended kin as a matter of nationalist obligation. Those left behind in the homeland also demand these remittances in the name of Haiti. In this sense, the givers' commitment is not just to family but to the "nation".

anti-racism (ibid: 92). It is this group of politically active Swedish Kurds, widely understood as 'Kurdish activists' with an engagement both in 'the Kurdish question'[12] as well as in Swedish society, that in the present study are used as a context – or a position from which we can talk about claims to a separate ethnic and national identity.[13] My definition of diaspora here resembles how Bahar Baser understands the term in her work. She talks about her interviewees as community members with *politicised* collective identities, i.e. those members who take a stance towards political issues in the homeland. These can also be categorised as core members of the diaspora; an organising elite active in diasporic affairs and that is able to appeal for mobilisation among the larger community (2015: 15-16). Khayati says that as a group Swedish Kurds are highly active in the Swedish sphere, with no considerable conflict of loyalty or identity in terms of the double citizenships as Kurds and Swedes (2011: 96). While this seems reasonable, this chapter asks whether there is not indeed a conflict between the way 'a just society' is imagined when it comes to the Swedish and Kurdish nations respectively. As Eliassi (2016) notes, thanks to Swedish multiculturalism, the Kurds in Sweden have been able to claim rights and cultural recognition as Kurds (p. 9). But the question remains, is the Swedish integrationist version of multiculturalism the same kind of vision they have for Kurdistan or is it something else they have in mind? How does the changing position from 'victim minority' to one as a dominant ethnic group in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Rojava influence their vision of Kurdistan?

In my focus group, five Swedish individuals with Kurdish origins, from the wider Stockholm region, are brought together in their capacity as Kurdish activists with a social and political engagement both in Swedish and Kurdish society. They are asked to discuss issues related to national and ethnic identity. The purpose of bringing these people together into a focus group is precisely to observe what happens when they interact and how they respond to the questions as a group. Group cohesion –that is, the level of belonging an individual feels within a group – is an important aspect of my focus group. This does not mean that they have to agree with each other, but the point here is not to select people with different opinions. In other types of focus groups, a too high level of cohesion may be regarded as problematic since this would risk producing only one acceptable way of

[12] I take 'the Kurdish question' to mean the matter of Kurdish independence, which may or may not involve independent statehood, but some kind of recognition or autonomy.

[13] I refer to 'the Kurdish elite', drawing on Khayati & Dahlstedt (2014) who chose their interviewees among celebrities, political debaters, journalists, politicians association leaders, writers, artists, young activists and association members in the Stockholm region. As such, they are seen as having a prominent position in the Kurdish diaspora, with the possibility of influencing the political as well as cultural life in both former and new homelands (p. 58). These members of the Kurdish elite are referred to as 'Kurdish activists' to the extent that they engage in long-distance nationalism. Principally, it is not necessary that the Kurdish elite members are Kurdish activists and vice versa, however there is significant overlap.

thinking. However, as noted in chapter 2, this is viewed as a positive thing here since I am interested in the norms that allow for certain things to be expressed in this particular context (Wibeck 2010: 30-31). The participants are selected mainly for what they have in common, i.e. the fact that they all have positions within Swedish politics, media or civil society and thereby belong to what I have referred to as 'the Kurdish elite' in Sweden.[14] I had originally selected six participants through snowball sampling. For the sake of gender balance, I had selected three women and three men (though one of the woman participants ended up not attending). Two of the participants have their origins from the Kurdish regions of Turkey, the other three have their origins from the Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Syria respectively. The ages ranged from around 30 to 60 years old. The participants who took part in the focus group are Özlem, with origins from Kurdistan-Turkey[15], Dilan from Kurdistan-Syria, Serdar from Kurdistan-Turkey, Hassan from Kurdistan-Iran and Hiwa from Kurdistan-Iraq. It is important to note here, that I make no claims to represent neither Swedish Kurds as a group nor these 'elite' Kurds as a subgroup. Instead, our conversation around these topics should be seen as one among many possible conversations about the issues.

As I have discussed in chapter 2, when carrying out a focus group one needs to reflect on how the researcher affects the respondents and therefore the results of the focus group, and whether one can combine the roles as activist and researcher, or if one should try to act in a neutral way in relation to the respondents' various interests and agendas. This question is important to reflect upon; I have previously been involved in issues concerning Kurdish human rights, both as an activist and as a researcher. I have also been married to a Kurdish person and I have two children of mixed Swedish-Kurdish origin. From this perspective, even though I am myself an ethnic Swede, one could argue that there is at least some level of insider perspective. While the respondents are aware of my overall sympathy with their political cause, it may nevertheless be the case that my results will not correspond to their various agendas. While I treat my respondents as participants in the focus group rather than as informants, their participation is limited to the focus group itself. This means that the analysis, of which they may or may not approve, is entirely my own.

[14] The appropriate mix of participants of different age, gender and occupation always depends on the research questions (Burnham et al 2004: 107). In this study, where these are not viewed as variables in the traditional sense, these differences are mainly mentioned for the purpose of transparency.
[15] She was born in Sweden by Kurds from central Anatolia. All names are pseudonyms.

Nationalist fantasies among Swedish Kurds

When analysing the focus group with Swedish Kurds discussing nationhood and ethnicity, the concept of fantasy helps us to see the role of *affect* in national and ethnic identification. A good example here is Hassan, who often comes back to the importance of subjective feelings, saying "it's all about emotions". He says if there is someone or something that makes you feel bad – for instance as a Kurd in Iran he does not feel that he is treated well – then one will react to that. But there are some Kurds in Turkey who identify with Turkey and a sense of 'Turkishness'[16], who really hate Kurdish activists, he says. Hassan's example clearly shows that we need to take into account emotions such as love and hatred, and the following section will show how the fantasy approach is helpful to shed light on these affective dimensions.

When asked how they relate to the Swedish-Kurd identity that I had ascribed them, they took this ascription to be unproblematic. Özlem responded that this was the identity that she used the most when describing herself. Hassan said that he did not see being Kurdish and Swedish as conflicting identities, but for him the issue was between the identities of either being Kurdish or Iranian. For Hassan, he enjoys watching the Swedish team playing football, but he never feels happy when Iran is playing. Hiwa agrees. He says he never felt Iraqi; he feels more Swedish than he ever felt Iraqi. This indicates that in the cases of the Iranian and Iraqi nation-states, there is a *theft of enjoyment* (Žižek 1993), something that prevents them from enjoying their identities as Kurds. When it comes to the Swedish nation-state, there is not a Swedish identity blocking the enjoyment of their Kurdishness – though, as Özlem points out, this might differ between first and second generation Kurds. While Hassan and Hiwa immigrated to Sweden as young adults, Özlem was born in Sweden. As a second generation Swede, it bothers her when people question her Swedishness. Such a tendency is also found by Alinia and Eliassi in their comparison between the experiences of two generations of the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, where young people, who were born or brought up in Sweden, felt a stronger attachment to the country as well as claims to social power and space compared to the older generation (Alinia and Eliassi 2014: 75*).* While they note that it is common for the younger generation to say that "I am a Swede" there is also an awareness of not always being regarded as a Swede by mainstream society. As 'immigrants', they all have negative experiences of discrimination and exclusion (p.76). While the Kurdish identity in Sweden cannot be fully separated from the identity as an immigrant group, the present study is more interested in the Kurds in their position as Kurds, i.e. not primarily as an instance of an immigrant community but as a particular ethnic

[16] The Turkish word *Türkiyelilik* which is referred to here could also be translated as 'Turkey-ness' or a person from Turkey, which is an attempt to create a more inclusive term for citizens in Turkey who may not identify as 'Turks'.

community. The context for this study is also one in which I have already ascribed to them the label, 'Swedish Kurds'. Moreover, compared to the mainstream Swedish-Kurdish population, my participants are not only part of the Kurdish elite, but also in comparison to the Swedish population at large, part of a social strata with high education and a position within society from which they can speak their mind and expect to be heard.

The participants were also asked how they relate to the other identity that I had ascribed them, that is as Kurdish activists in the diaspora, as well as how they think about Kurdish activists with other ethnic origins. The following conversation took place between the two participants with origins in Kurdistan-Turkey, when they were asked if somebody who is an ethnic Swede or an ethnic Turk could be a part of the Kurdish diaspora:

> Serdar: Yes, if they want to be part of the Kurdish struggle, then of course… And there are many Turks in different organisations… So it is a rather simple question, if they are humanist then they can join.
>
> Özlem: We wish that they are allowed to join, the ideal is that everybody can join, anyone who is committed to the Kurdish question. But in reality we are more appreciative of an ethnic Swede than an ethnic Turk or an Iraqi. Because we are a little suspicious of them bearing in mind that they have been the regimes of oppression.

Here we can understand how the notion of theft is relevant in explaining how the Kurdish identity relates to the two different 'host- and homeland' contexts. While Swedishness as an identity is not seen a threat, the Turkish and Iraqi identities are regarded with suspicion, or as potential thieves of their enjoyment.

A decisive moment in the focus group took place when Dilan, the participant from Kurdistan-Syria, known as *Rojava*, related to her Assyrian friends here in Sweden, who come from the same city in northern Syria. The Assyrians are a Christian community whose homeland coincides with that of Kurdistan, with the significant difference being that they are numerically much fewer.

> When it comes to my non-ethnic Kurdish friends, "friends of Kurds", the question becomes: what you think about an independent Kurdistan? (…) I think about my Assyrian friends who I have been friends with here in Sweden for many years. We are from the same city. Where do you think that I should live if you want a Kurdistan, I do not want a Kurdistan, she says.

What Dilan implies is that a Kurdistan would not be desired among its own ethnic minorities. Here something happened in the room, for a second or so it was as though nobody knew how to 'go on'. However, this was a quick moment, then the conversation continued:

> Özlem: Did you end your friendship then?

> Dilan: No! We are still friends. And I can tolerate it. […] But the discussion stops there. I want a Kurdistan for Kurds, but in that country there are of course other minorities too.

For Glynos and Howarth, the moment of dislocation is a moment when it is registered, either by the researcher or the subject, that something is not right (2007: 143). I interpret the moment when Dilan relates to her Assyrian friends as a quick moment of dislocation, immediately followed by a moment of closure - what Glynos and Howarth call the ideological dimension of social relations (2007: 120). The ethical dilemma that Dilan describes is precisely the paradox that I had in mind when setting up a focus group with Swedish Kurds: on the one hand, it seems perfectly legitimate to claim that the Kurdish population should have access to the full replete of cultural rights, with which only a nation-state of their own could provide them, but on the other hand the nation-state logic poses a dilemma for how to deal with the demands by ethnic minorities, which is something that – as Kurds – they are very well aware of.

When asked how they feel about the Kurds as an ethnic majority in KRG, which is a *de facto* state, the respondents did not seem to understand my question. Their answers regarded the four parts of a united grand Kurdistan, and their problem was how the Kurds can (or cannot) unite in order to become an ethnic majority. Hassan points to the fact that not even KRG is united but is effectively ruled by the two major political parties. However, he says the more KRG looks like a nation-state, the more his Kurdish identity is recognised, which is a good feeling. After specifying my question about the Kurdish ethnic majority in KRG specifically, Dilan, who has spent a lot of time there, says that one can feel that KRG behaves like a nation-state. She feels particularly proud of how well the Kurds treat the Arab refugees from Syria and southern Iraq and feels that the Kurds have shown that they are 'better' than their former oppressors. Serdar says that he feels a sense of responsibility when thinking about the Kurds as the ones in charge. Now we mustn't do anything wrong, he says. Before the only thing we thought about was the struggle, but now we have responsibility, and those Kurds in charge must behave. Dilan points out that due to the war against ISIS - a common enemy - the nationalist feeling has become stronger in Kurdistan. She talks about this in a positive way. However, 'nationalism' does not always have this positive connotation for them, not even when talking about Kurdish nationalism. Hassan frequently makes a divide between traditional Kurdish nationalists (KRG) and more leftist-minded Kurds (Rojava). He claims that the reason Rojava does not use the name Kurdistan is because it wants to distance itself from KRG and become another sort of nation-state, something better.

Hiwa, from Iraqi Kurdistan, says that he is trying to contribute to a more democratic KRG. He emphasises the importance of the constitution, cultural diversity, the rights of women and children, etc. He says that Kurdistan should not become another Iran, Iraq or Turkey, but a proper democracy. In this way, his vision for Kurdistan equates to the vision of a democracy where human rights, including women's rights and the rights of LGBTQ-persons, are respected. Hassan adds that Kurdistan gives him a sense of pride and identity, especially when he thinks about for instance female *peshmerga* fighters who are fighting ISIS. However, he contends, the content of Kurdistan is more important than the symbol: the most important thing for him is democracy, women's rights, social justice and equality. The quote below captures well this fantasy of Kurdistan as the image of 'something different':

> If we Kurds are oppressed, and we are, if we create a Kurdistan… The closest we have come is northern Iraq, that is the closest we have come to an independent Kurdistan. Because of that I put a lot of value in that it must work, it should be the role model. But if we are going to continue a mechanism of oppression that the other countries have done to us, against the other minorities that live in different parts of Kurdistan, such as Turkomans, Christians or Assyrians. Then we are not better than Saddam or Erdogan. Then I do not want to have such a Kurdistan. We are obliged to seek something entirely different than what we have been through.
> *Özlem*

The others agree with Özlem, but Serdar adds that the second territory controlled by Kurds, Rojava, is more popular than KRG among Kurdish youths in his experience. Because there is pluralism there, he says, both in terms of issues such as LGBTQ but also when it comes to the Assyrians. Serdar says that Rojava is the closest to utopia we have come; no ethnic oppression exists there. Serdar's usage of the word *utopia* here is noteworthy in relation to the image of 'something different'; an order that would be 'good for everyone'. Ruth Levitas writes that "the core of utopia is the desire for being otherwise, individually and collectively, subjectively and objectively. Its expressions explore and bring to debate the potential content and context of human flourishing." (Levitas 2013: xi) While utopias are often dismissed as dangerous fantasies leading to totalitarianism, Levitas argues that utopias are the expression of a desire for a better way of living and as such are interwoven in human culture (ibid xii-xiii). This is also in line with the beatific dimension of fantasy: the promise of a fullness-to-come, present in social movements such as the Kurdish struggle for independence.

An inclusionary Sweden and the Sami minority

So far our conversation had been focused mainly on Kurdistan, and this last part has dealt particularly with their vision for Kurdistan. After this passage, I interrupted them and shifted their focus, asking them about their vision of Sweden. Özlem mentions her engagement in the local community in a suburb of Stockholm, where they prefer to talk about 'interculturality' rather than multiculturalism.

> My vision for Sweden is not the multiculturalism of the 70s and 80s, because for me multiculturalism means that the Iranians can have their culture undisturbed, the Kurds have their culture, and the Pakistanis have theirs. But when are they cooperating, when are they together? What we have in common is that we all live in Sweden.

In Özlem's vision of Sweden, she refers to the territory of Sweden as a place where everybody should have the right to belong. Having discussed their vision of Sweden, I once again changed the focus asking the following: What is the difference between being a Swede and Kurd (Swedish Kurd/Kurdish Swede) and a Swede and Sami (Swedish Sami/Sami Swede)? The reason for raising the Sami question at this juncture in the group discussion was to provoke a sudden awareness of a discrepancy between the ideals of integration in Sweden vis-a-vis the insistence on a separate Kurdish identity within the dominant states in the Kurdish regions. While there was some form of puzzlement among the participants when the Sami question was brought into the discussion, this was rather a moment of surprise - since I had not told them we would discuss this issue beforehand - than a moment of dislocation that I had expected. In other words, there was no awkwardness felt in the room. The following discussion took place after the short moment of surprise:

> The difference is that we have recently come to Sweden, but they are the original population here. They deserve having more rights and attention from the state, the media, and so on. We are new here, but they have been here already before the Swedes.
> *Hiwa*

Serdar agrees with Hiwa and adds:

> They have their original territory here but we do not. In a way, it feels like we can integrate more easily, or we have to choose to become integrated. But since they are still in their country, and since Sweden has chosen not to separate from Samiland, then all of Sweden is their country. So then they need to preserve their culture, or they should be able to preserve their culture, and there should be more acceptance of this compared to the Kurdish culture, in Sweden.

The discussion between Hiwa and Serdar characteristically reflects Will Kymlicka's influential theory of 'liberal multiculturalism'. Kymlicka distinguishes between 'national minorities' and 'ethnic groups'. National minorities are defined as previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultural groups that have been incorporated into a larger state. Ethnic groups are defined as cultural groups that have immigrated to a state. He argues that national minorities generally want to preserve their own and distinct society alongside the majority culture, while ethnic groups typically want to integrate into the majority culture (1995: 10). In Kymlicka's terminology then, whereas the Sami in Sweden constitute a national minority, Swedish Kurds constitute an ethnic group with less right than the Sami, so the argument goes, to preserve their particular culture in Sweden. However, Dilan points out that the Kurdish culture and language has been able to flourish thanks to the Swedish state:

> But I have to say, Sweden has really helped preserving the Kurdish culture and develop the Kurdish language. I think that Sweden is one of the countries in Europe where the Kurds have been able to thrive, it will go into the history textbooks (…) The mother tongue education, all the Kurdish writers (…) Kurmanji has developed in exile, I find it fascinating (…) And Sweden has provided this opportunity.
> *Dilan*

Hiwa then again contends that the Sami deserve more than the Kurds, in Sweden. Is he implying Swedish Kurds are almost enjoying themselves at the expense of the Sami? On the one hand, there is a clear feeling of gratitude towards Sweden embracing the cultural development among Kurds in exile, as expressed above. But at same time there was a feeling among the participants that Sweden should perhaps do more for its indigenous Sami population, and there was almost a sense of guilt among the Swedish-Kurdish activists. When the Sami question was brought up, Dilan stated the following:

> In fact, it is the only occasion when I feel ashamed of being a Swede, of being someone from Sweden.

Further on in our conversation, I told the participants about a statement made by the Sami singer Sofia Jannok, where she said "I do not want the right to be Swedish, I want the right to be Sami". What do you make of that statement, I asked them?

> Hassan: Well, it depends on how one defines Swede, if one means ethnic Swede, well I can never be an ethnic Swede. But when I think of Iran, and being a Persian or a Kurd, then I want to have the right to be a Kurd, and then I understand her. […]
>
> Özlem: […] If she defines herself as a Sami then one has to respect that.
>
> Serdar: But she might not get the opportunity to be Sami. Perhaps, if she has children, do they get schooling in the Sami language? [...] Perhaps Sweden does not allow her to be as much Sami as she wants.
>
> Özlem: Then it is like Kurds in those countries, we are not allowed to be Kurds.

Serdar: Exactly, one is not provided the right conditions.

The shift away from talking about their visions of Kurdistan and Sweden to exploring the differences between Kurds and Sami in the Swedish context, and then finally reflecting on the similarities between Sami in Sweden and Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, is an interesting discussion to follow. I have argued that the notion of enjoyment and its theft are useful to understand the construction of this narrative. A free Kurdistan (or a number of free Kurdistans) is imagined as a means to enjoy their Kurdishness, something which is currently stolen by the dominant states of Turkey and Iran, and still to a certain extent by Iraq and Syria. Sweden, on the other hand, is not seen as stealing enjoyment; instead the Swedish and Kurdish multiple identities are seen as additive. Which is to say, the Swedish national identity is not understood as a threat to enjoying ethnic Kurdishness, but rather the opposite; the Swedish state has helped to develop the Kurdish language and thereby to preserve the culture. At the same time, the participants can easily identify and sympathise with the Swedish Sami, feeling that the Swedish nation-state have detrimentally impacted on the possibility of the Sami community enjoying their identity; the Swedish state has 'stolen enjoyment' from the Sami population.

A fantasy of inclusion

This chapter has asked how Swedish Kurds negotiate the ideals of integration and inclusion in Sweden with the Kurdish struggle for independence, and moreover it has explored how they think about their position as 'victim minority' in the wider context of them wanting to become a dominant ethnic majority in Kurdistan. While it is relatively straightforward to defend the cultural rights of the Kurds in their position as an oppressed ethnic group in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, in situations where the Kurds constitute a dominant ethnic group, new questions are posed. The potential conflict between the abovementioned ideals did not arise since the Kurdish activists invest in what I call *a fantasy of inclusion*, where Kurdistan would be 'good for everybody'. In this way, they can align their ambitions for an inclusionary Sweden with the Kurdish struggle for independence. While other examples of nationalist fantasies are often pictured as malign nationalism, or racism (cf Žižek 1989), what I have tried to characterise here is a nationalist discourse, a nation-state logic, that we are all part of. The underlying argument is that the grip of the nation-state logic, which can be explained by the notion of fantasy, is valid also for emancipatory movements such as the Kurdish struggle for recognition in a world of nations. In order to stitch up the inconsistencies of their own ideological

system, to use Žižek's words (e.g. how we deal with members of the Assyrian minority who do not want to be part of a Kurdistan), the Kurdish activists invest in the idea of creating 'something different'. I have suggested that this utopic fantasy, promising an order that would be 'good for everybody', could be called a *fantasy of inclusion*. Instead of the ordinary exclusionary nationalism, it is an inclusionary – but nevertheless it remains a – nationalism.

In sum, I have argued that the concept of fantasy is helpful for our understanding of constructions of national and ethnic identity, particularly the affective bond underlying national identification. The position of Swedish Kurds – simultaneously part of an integrationist Swedish project and a Kurdish struggle that inevitably revolves around ethnic separation – helps to shed light on the normative implications of various claims to national and ethnic identity. The fantasy approach shows us how the affective grip of the nation-state works also in an emancipatory project, such as the Kurdish struggle for an independent state, and how creating a fantasy of inclusion helps to rationalise any inconsistencies in this project.

This chapter shows how it is difficult to make the imaginary move from a position as underdog to that of a group in a position of dominance, without it also impacting on how the very stakes of ethnicity are perceived. A minority/underdog ethnicity is not controversial. But, a majority/dominant ethnicity is viewed in a different light. The next chapter deals with a different dynamic – that of a former dominant minority and individuals who do not see themselves as underdogs because of the legacy of dominance, despite the fact that they now struggle to survive as a distinct group.

Chapter 4. Speaking the language of one's heart

This chapter works with the idea that we as humans want to express our identity, whether or not we belong to a majority or minority, and whether or not that identity is linked to privilege or under-privilege. Speaking the language of one's heart does not take outer structures into consideration, because it is personal and emotional. However, in relation to the paradigm of the nation-state, the will to self-expression is positioned in relation to the history of that nation-state, and as a shrinking linguistic minority it is ultimately about the very right to exist in the future. This chapter is about a movement from privilege to underprivilege and the justifications for a bilingual nation-state that are possible to make within a given structure. 'Speaking the language of my heart' is an expression taken from one of the participants from the focus group I held. As I shall argue in this chapter, because claiming the right to speak the language of one's heart appeared politically impossible to make on one's own, the Swedish-speaking Finns to whom I spoke tended to articulate the struggle to keep Swedish as an official language on the same level as Finnish as an altruistic case for the common good.

Swedish-speaking Finns

As a formerly dominant elite, the Swedish-speaking community in Helsinki might be conceptualised as a dominant minority (Kaufmann and Haklai 2008). While being a numerical minority, the Finnish constitution grants the Swedish-speaking Finns linguistic rights equal to that of the Finnish-speaking majority. However, these rights are increasingly questioned in Finland, and Swedish-speaking actors are therefore also increasingly pushed to defend their position. This chapter explores how Swedish-speaking actors, working for the formally bilingual Finland, make sense of the tension between the Swedish-speakers' dominant position as well as their perceived victimhood. Based on a focus group with members working for a Helsinki-based organisation, the chapter discusses how a normative defense of Finnish bilingualism is constructed and enquires into the sort of fantasies that function as 'legitimizers' of certain ideals. It also discusses the value of cultural survival of an ethno-linguistic group in relation to power – where the simultaneous dominant/victim position of the Swedish-speaking Finns offers an intriguing case.

When Finland became independent in 1917, it was after hundreds of years of Swedish as the administrative language. It was only in 1863, that Finnish and Swedish became equal and still in 1870 Swedish was the lingua franca in Finland. In 1920 the Swedish speakers made up 11 percent of the

population (Meinander 2016:9); today it is only 5-6 percent.[17] Eric Kaufmann (2004) refers to the concept of *dominant ethnicity* as a particular ethnic group exercising dominance within a nation and/or state (p.3). A dominant ethnicity can be either an ethnic majority or it can also be a *dominant minority*. Kaufmann and Haklai define politically dominant minorities as "communally differentiated ruling groups who are able to govern majorities despite being demographically outnumbered." Examples of these are for example Sunni Arabs in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, who were a politically dominant minority, while the Arab Shi'ites, constituting the demographic majority, were the socially disadvantaged groups (2008: 746)[18]. Another example of a (formerly) dominant minority, then, are the Swedish-speakers in Finland. The paradox here is that, on the one hand, the Swedish speaking Finns enjoy one of the highest constitutional language rights in the world, especially considering the small number of this minority group. In fact, some would argue that the Swedish speakers in Finland are not strictly a minority at all, since according to the constitution, Swedish and Finnish are equal.[19] On the other hand, the group is diminishing and in practice, many of their rights have been taken away from them. Indeed, the scenario that Swedish will be gone from the official sphere within a few generations is real, and as a consequence, it is a matter of the very survival of this cultural group.

A focus group with a Swedish-Speaking organisation in Finland

In the following sections, parts of the conversation that took place between myself and four women working for the continuous presence of the Swedish language in Finland will be presented, with the purpose of raising some bigger questions on the survival of separate cultural identities in today's world of nations. These four woman work for the same organisation, so in contrast to the Swedish Kurds in the previous focus group, who I described as ethno-political activists, what these four women have in common is their place of work. Both the organisation itself and the women remain anonymous. I have thus used the following pseudonyms: Christina, Maria, Anna and Hanna. As discussed in chapter 2, I treat my focus group as a conversation in which I participate. This fact needs to be reflected upon in reflexive research where the researcher strives to increase the awareness of the position of the researcher and how it affects the object of study (Gustavsson and Johannesson 2016: 20). That I am an ethnic Swede living in Sweden will inevitably affect the way

[17] Statistikcentralen, "Finland i siffror 2020", https://www.stat.fi/static/media/uploads/tup_sv/suoluk/yyti_fis_202000_2020_23213_net.pdf [last accessed 2021-09-21]
[18] Along with the Kurds in northern Iraq.
[19] Paragraph 17 of Finland's constitution. Finlex, Finlands grundlag 11.6.1999/731, https://www.finlex.fi/sv/laki/ajantasa/1999/1999073 [last accessed 2021-09-21].

we talk about nationhood, ethnicity and the Swedish language in Finland. The focus group took place in Helsinki on 2017-04-11. It lasted for two hours and was filmed.

"We are not working for the Swedish speaking Finns, but for the idea of a bilingual Finland"

It became obvious very quickly in the focus group discussion that the participants neither see themselves as ethno-political activists nor were they entirely comfortable with the idea of the Swedish-speaking identity as ethnic in character. Indeed, in the context of Swedish-speakers in Finland, language as an identity marker is looked upon as questionable as an ethnic marker. Being closely associated with phenotype and ancestry, ethnicity is viewed with suspicion. The organisation is working for the idea of a bilingual Finland, rather than 'for' the Swedish speaking Finns, which enables its members to detach from the idea of Swedish speaking Finns as an ethnic group. In this way, a bilingual Finland is promoted as a 'common good'.

> We work for a bilingual Finland, we don't work *for* the Swedish-speaking Finns and their rights to keep their crayfish-parties.
> Christina

One of the participants, Anna, contended that the Swedish speaking Finns should not be described as an ethnic group but a purely linguistic group since it is not necessarily connected with genetic ancestry. In contrast, for example, to the Sami minority.[20] Anna also points out that there is no Swedish speaking ethno-separatist movement in Finland:

> We don't have an ethno-political movement, we have a linguistic one.
> Anna

However, another participant, Christina, who unlike Anna is not strictly from a (Finland)Swedish-speaking background, with a Finnish speaking father and a Sweden-Swedish mother, said she would describe the group as ethno-linguistic. She could perceive this in school. On the one hand, she says, the Swedish schools are the main site of socialisation for the Swedish speaking identity, but it was also there that she realised she was not related to the other Swedish speaking Finns. A third participant, Hanna, agrees:

[20] The Sami are an indigenous people who are spread over four nation-states: Norway, Sweden, Finland and a small area of Russia.

> This becomes visible when one cannot take part in discussions about who is cousin to whom.
> Hanna

The discussion reflects very well an unease with the idea of descent among theorists of liberal multiculturalism. In *Liberal Ethnicity*, Eric Kaufmann illustrates this, referring to the work of Will Kymlicka:

> If ethnicity is not about shared ancestry, why the need to specify that 'ethnocultural' groups and 'polyethnicity' do not involve 'ethnic descent.' The problem is that Kymlicka is trying to square a circle. He knows that the empirical record shows an extremely close relationship between (putative) descent and what we understand as ethnicity, yet his liberal convictions will not allow him to endorse this definition of the term. In practice, however, he, along with other liberal culturalists, defends actual descent-based ethnic movements against the universalism of societies where descent is a less significant principle of social organisation. In this manner he is endorsing the practical advancement of the very principle (descent) that he abhors. (Kaufmann 2000: 20)

This illustrates how ethnicity is avoided by theorists as well as focus-group participants whenever it feels uncomfortable; when, for example, an ethnic group is a majority, in a dominant position or when it comes close to the notion of descent or exclusivity.

Horrific and beatific fantasies

Among the participants, the overall horrific fantasy foretells a situation where the Swedish language has vanished entirely from the public sphere in Finland. The beatific fantasy promises a bilingual Finland where the Swedish language can persist as a public language or even expand through the socialisation of new Swedish speakers through the school system. In this dream scenario, Swedish will be an inclusive identity marker possible to adapt by newcomers to Finland as well as Finnish-speakers. Anna says her real fear is that the “evil” nationalism will take over in Finland, that people of migrant background will be thrown out of the country, and that the Swedish speakers will be pushed to move to Sweden. Hannah says that attitudes towards Swedish is connected to being able to speak freely – of encouraging openness in general – and a Finland for everybody. One can therefore view the language question as an expression of a fantasy with two sides that goes beyond the question of language itself. On the horrific side, we have an evil nationalism that could

potentially throw out of the country people who do not belong to the Finnish majority population. On the beatific side, there is the idea of freedom, openness and inclusivity. An underlying assumption of the beatific fantasy is the idea of an inherent value in cultural and linguistic pluralism. The Swedish language is also seen as an inclusive identity marker that newcomers to Finland can take on, since the school system – with entirely Swedish schools - functions as a strong socialising institution. Immigrants and children with migrant backgrounds tend, if they go to Swedish-speaking schools, to adopt this identity.

Christina says there is no problem with inclusion with regard to immigrants learning Swedish, since they do not pose a threat to the position of the Swedish language in Finland, but rather the opposite. The problem arises when deciding on how to include Finnish-speakers, to what extent they can be included if Swedish in Finland is to remain a separate culture, alongside the majority Finnish. She says she would like a Swedish Finland that is inclusive, also towards Finnish-speakers. But nonetheless there must be some form of separation for Swedish to survive.

> There is no problem with immigrants, but how much can one give up in relation to the Finish-speakers? How much separation must there be in order to preserve Swedish?

Here is a situation in which the 'theft of enjoyment' (Žižek 1993) becomes relevant. Whereas those immigrants who adopt the Swedish language and the identity of a Swedish-speaking Finn pose no threat to the native Swedish speakers in Finland, the presence and inclusion of a person from the Finnish-speaking majority in a Swedish-speaking space has the potential of eradicating the Swedish altogether, should they have to switch to a language that everybody speaks. At this point I ask them why it would be important for the Swedish language to survive in Finland in 100 years, and for whom is this issue important? Maria, who comes from *Österbotten* in the northwest of Finland – a Swedish majority region – says that for her the answer is emotional. She would like to pass on the Finland-Swedish culture because she likes it more, because it is part of her and makes her feel at home. I asked if they would like to preserve Swedish for their own sake, or if it is for the sake of their future descendants.

> It's for my own sake of course, because I like to be a Swedish-speaking Finn and I prefer the Swedish-speaking culture to the Finnish simply because it is my own and because it is there that I feel at home. So it is natural for me to want my children, grandchildren and their children to belong to this culture.

Anna mentions the value of linguistic pluralism and pluralism in general. Different languages generate different modes of thinking, she argues, and in turn, gives other perspectives. Christina

adds that the existence of two national languages gives – at least those who are bilingual – an awareness of there being more than one perspective. She says she wishes for everyone to have this experience, as it encourages tolerance and open-mindedness.

Power – domination and victimhood

I asked the participants how they felt about the idea of coming from a privileged position into a position of victimhood. They responded in unison: even though there is fear connected to losing language rights, Swedish speaking Finns are by no means victims. The Swedish speaking Finns have many resources and can therefore should not be described as "real" victims, such as the Kurds or the Sami populations. However, there is simultaneously a growing resentment shown towards Swedish speakers among the majority population in Finland. For the Swedish speaking youth going home with public transportation at night it is not always safe to speak Swedish without risking to hear "hurri" – a derogatory term for Swedish speakers. "The colonial ghost" is internalised amonge participants. They are well aware of the existence of a group of Swedish speakers in the Helsinki region that still act with a sense of entitlement, always demanding service in Swedish even in places like a coffee shop, and acting as if they own the world. Anna says this small group of upper-class Swedish speakers detrimentally affect all other, "normal" Swedish speakers. The other participants agree that there is a form of defense involved in being a Swedish speaker, a need to express that "I am not like them". The resentment towards Swedish is often connected to the mandatory Swedish in schools, known as *pakkoruotsi* – "forced Swedish" – among its critics. There is a growing belief in Finland that Swedish should be made optional as a school subject. Anna says that for many of these critics, having a separate Swedish school system is fine, as long as they themselves are not forced to learn Swedish in their own schools. I ask the participants what would be worse; if they lose general school Swedish or if they lose their own, separate Swedish schools. Hannah responds that she would prefer a situation where a few learn Swedish voluntarily and well, rather than many learning it badly and by force. However, if the separate Swedish schools disappear, so will probably Swedish as a public language in Finland. Christina says:

> It is a fact that the percentage of Swedish-speakers in Finland is decreasing so we have grown up with the idea that there is a risk that we will be fewer and that we will be displaced (…) the feeling is that there is a threat, and that we must protect the Swedish language for it to continue to live.[21]

[21] My own translations from Swedish to English.

The right to speak the language of one's heart

Before the order of nation states was established, different languages were spoken by the elites and the masses without any thought of the need for a single language shared by everybody and a public sphere in which 'the people' could participate as equals. The Swedish language in Finland rests from those times. In Swedish Finland today, the language question can be narrowed down to one single question: will Swedish survive as an official language or will it eventually disappear? In order to construct a legitimate defense of the survival of the Swedish language as an official language in Finland, one must invoke ideals such as equality, a common good, the value of pluralism and inclusion. In the focus group conversation with Swedish speakers working for a bilingual Finland, a beatific fantasy of open-mindedness, freedom of speech and inclusion of immigrants is inflected by focusing on the language question.

In our liberal democratic societies, provided that we adhere to the principles of equality, there is a desire for a fair and equal distribution of power. Ethnic politics is usually about power asymmetries between groups, and typically ethnic minorities are fighting to gain equal powers with that of the majority. In the case of Swedish speakers in Finland, a minority group once privileged to the extent that their power was one of domination, they now face a situation where they experience a gradual loss of that power. The horrific fantasy among Swedish speakers portrays a future scenario where Swedish as a language, and their Swedish identity, will be lost in Finland. Or even worse, that Finland will become a country of "evil" nationalism pushing away all forms of plurality. Simplified, then, the fantasy legitimising the struggle for Swedish and a bilingual Finland, goes beyond the language question. The beatific fantasy foretells a future of openness, whereas the horrific version speaks of destruction of pluralism in all its forms. This fantasy of openness thus obscures the emotional preference underneath – the desire to speak the language of one's heart.

This chapter shows that, because the idea of Swedish-speaking Finns as an ethnic group is somewhat uncomfortable for the participants in the focus group, as well as the former power inequality between the Swedish-speaking dominant minority and the Finnish speaking majority, their work for the Swedish language in Finland is framed as a higher good for everyone in Finland. The next chapter works with a different kind of empirical material than the former two chapters. In chapter 5, we will see how ethnicity disrupts taken for granted 'common truths' that are embedded in the discourse of nations in a number of different ways.

Chapter 5. Public debates on national identity and minorities

This chapter uses selected media debates to illustrate ideas of inclusion as a taken-for-granted virtue, and exclusion based on national boundaries that are taken-for-granted as inevitable. The purpose in this chapter is to deconstruct the logic of the nationalism of good intentions I have already discussed. Here the aim is not to paint a picture that claims to be representative of the debate at this time, nor is it to claim to be representative of the groups that are mentioned – as they are internally heterogeneous – but to use the example of positions such as 'indigenous and territorially attached' and 'nomadic and territorially detached' to discuss dilemmas of the nation-state. This chapter also touches on the awkwardness of ethnic majority identity, which the fantasy of the nationalism of good intentions ends up obscuring.

This chapter shows examples of how ethnicity and nation are articulated together with the different positions 'Sami', 'ethnic Swede', 'Roma' and 'EU-migrant'. I have chosen these particular positions here because they help us to glimpse the problems of inclusion within a national community that is supposedly ethnically neutral. Kymlicka's distinction between indigenous national minorities and ethnic groups that have immigrated is not unproblematic, but it does pinpoint some of the flaws which arise when questions around integration are solely framed in terms of immigration. The examples of how ethnicity and nation are articulated together with the Sami as an indigenous people, ethnic Swedes as the majority, Roma as a national minority, and EU-migrants as a particular type of immigrants, are taken from a number of selected media debates among Swedish politicians and social commentators from the years between 2012 and 2015. The political landscape in Sweden has changed considerably since this time; after the refugee crisis of 2015 the discourse has been significantly altered. However, the examples from this chapter are still valid as illustrations of thinking where national inclusion hits rocky ground.

Nationhood and new and old minorities: The context of Sweden

In studies of nationalism and ethnicity, Sweden is often depicted as a homogenous nation that was nationalised early and unproblematically (Shall 2012: 1467). Therefore, questions surrounding the ambiguous nature of Swedish national identity are largely framed in terms of more recent migration flows. To make sense of Swedish multiculturalism and inclusion, the work of Karin Borevi (2002) is helpful. She traces the current Swedish "integration policy" from the present day back through to the 1960s. Bengtsson and Borevi argue that in the 1975 "immigrant policy" two contradictory logics can

be discerned: a “logic of inclusion”, which posits that immigrants must be provided with a standard of living equal to that of the majority population, and a “logic of minorities” which states that immigrants must be compensated culturally in the sense that they can retain their cultural identity on an equal standing with the majority (Bengtsson & Borevi 2016: 28-30). Both of these logics break with earlier nation-building policies of ethnic assimilation and segregation, which had been directed to the Sami population, an indigenous people whose homeland Sápmi stretches over the borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and an area of Russia. In the late 1990s a new Swedish “integration policy” replaced the previous “immigrant policy,” which contended that the latter not only essentialised ethnic groups but that it also had a stigmatising effect. Borevi shows that, already from the 1980s, Sweden pioneered the current retreat – witnessed throughout Europe – from ‘multiculturalist’ policies towards one of ‘integration’, according to which the logic of inclusion became the dominant position (Borevi 2010: 23-24). Other scholars such as Schierup and Ålund (1991), Magnus Dahlstedt (2005), Masoud Kamali (2006) among others have also written critically about integration policy and structural discrimination of immigrants in Sweden. However, these are mainly focused on issues dealing with a multicultural population due to migration. Old minorities – or ‘homeland ethnicity’ is discussed by scholars such as Will Kymlicka (1995) and Eric Kaufmann (2000) and in relation to the Swedish case there are for example Mörkenstam (1999) and Carlsson (2021) who discuss the Sami minority in relation to the Swedish state and majority culture, which is also the example that will be mentioned in the section below.

The Problem of Inclusion: Swedishness, the Sami and ethnic Swedes

In December 2015, there was a Swedish Public Television (SVT) report detailing new guidelines for a more inclusive language policy. In these guidelines one can read: “SVT News uses the term Swede to refer to everyone that holds Swedish citizenship. We prefer to use Swede to Swedish citizen in order not to differentiate between Swedes”.[22] This statement is also exemplary of the discourse among established political parties in the Swedish parliament during this time, that is, all parties except the populist radical right party the Sweden Democrats (SD). This discourse is exemplified by the public debate that took place just months after the 2014 election when the SD had become the third largest party in parliament. SD member of parliament Björn Söder was appointed to the position of speaker

[22] All translations are my own.
Anne Lagercrantz, “Nya språkråd för att bättre spegla hela Sverige”, Sveriges television (Svt) December 2015, http://www.svt.se/svt-bloggen/bloggare/anne-lagercrantz/nya-sprakrad-for-att-battre-spegla-hela-sverige, [last accessed 2016-05-12], the link no longer exists.

of parliament. In an interview with the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* (DN), referencing an earlier statement that Söder had made, he was asked the following:

> Journalist: What about those Swedes with multiple identities? You talk about the fact that we have people from 'other nations' living in Sweden.
>
> Söder: Yes. There are for example people belonging to the Sami or Jewish nation in Sweden.[23]

Following this statement, a heated debate ensued, and representatives from the other parties demanded that Söder should resign from his post as parliamentary speaker. Below is a transcription from a news report with Maria Ferm from the Green Party:

> This is not about the fact that SD is against immigration, but the fact that they want to change Swedish society and that they believe that many Swedish citizens are not Swedes and do not belong to Swedish society. When you translate these beliefs into political ideas and policy, then it becomes very severe and unpleasant.
>
> […] it feels totally unreasonable that a person who does not even know who the Swedish population are, are to represent the entirety of the Swedish population.[24]

This debate shows how it is taken for granted that the Sami should be understood as Swedish, or belonging to the Swedish nation, in the discourse of one of the established political parties. When Söder referred to the Jews and the Sami as belonging to other nations, the response made clear that the statement was deemed unacceptable. However, the SD is *already* looked upon as an illegitimate, xenophobic party, and certainly not a respectable partner for dialogue. One might expect a different response from someone from another subject position. Following this debate, a comment was made by Mattias Åhrén, a Sami lawyer specialising in international law:

> I personally get even more concerned when everybody from all the other parties, from right to left, enter the debate from the position that the Sami are Swedes - because we are not. That is why we have a Sami Parliament, the right to education in the Sami language and special rights to land and natural resources.
>
> *He argues that it is basically a more dangerous argument to say that the Sami are Swedish.*
>
> Because it leads to assimilation and eventually it will lead to the disappearance of Sami culture.[25]

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[23] Niklas Orrenius, "Den leende nationalismen", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 14/12 2014, http://www.dn.se/val/nyval-2015/den-leende-nationalismen [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[24] Iva Horvatovic, "Söder: Jag är ledsen att jag har tillskrivits åsiker", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 15/12 2014, http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/soder [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[25] Anna-Karin Niia, "Mattias Åhrén: Samer är inte svenskar", Sveriges Television (Svt) 16/12-2014, http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/mattias-ahren-samer-ar-inte-svenskar [last accessed 2021-09-20]

This contribution to the debate was followed by a dislocatory moment for which the existing discourse could not account: Åhrén's statement seemed too confusing and in the absence of an explanation, there was silence. The main point here is not to offer any explanation though, but to illustrate my argument, embedded in the Swedish context. I have described the concept of nationalism of good intentions as the view that an inclusive national identity is benign, essentially because of its inclusivity. This view is largely shared by the established political parties in Sweden and there seems to be a tendency to therefore adopt a language whereby ethnic minorities are simply described as 'Swedes'. What Åhrén adds to the debate, and what can be described as a dislocatory moment in the dominant discourse, suggests that this inclusive language, despite its good intentions, prevents him from fully expressing his ethnic identity. In other words, the *common truth* that inclusion is good is being challenged by a person who represents the position that is intended to be included. A similar position was expressed in an article with the Sami singer and ethno-political activist Sofia Jannok.

> Reporter: Finally, just so that we are just as clear as you are in your album. What is it that you want, what is it that you fight for?
>
> Jannok: I do not want the right to be Swedish, I want the right to be Sami. I have never felt Swedish and this is no political statement, but we are a separate people. We want the right to land and water. We want self-determination.[26]

What these statements talk about is not the problem of 'othering', as it is often framed in the discussions of inclusion of minorities that have immigrated. It is instead about the *right* to be 'other'. The possibility to have one's ethnic identity recognised, while living in a nation-state framework, is not the same for indigenous groups as many immigrant groups, since the very existence of the former depends on being particular. Therefore, this problem could not be solved through constructing an 'ethnically neutral' or maximally 'thin' Swedish national identity. Neither is such a solution helpful for those belonging to the ethnic majority who wish to express their *particular* identity. This argument will be elaborated below.

Ethnic Swedes

Unlike countries such as Britain and the United States, public registering of ethnic identity is prohibited in Sweden. The fact that the epithet 'ethnic' is a sensitive one in public usage is

[26] Linn Mauritzon, "Nu finns det en chans att ge oss lite upprättelse", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 21/3 2016, http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/musik/nu-finns-det-en-chans-att-ge-oss-lite-upprattelse/ [last accessed 2021-09-20]

demonstrated by another debate that took place in 2012, which occurred following a statement made by the then prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt:

> It is not correct to describe Sweden to be in a state of mass unemployment. If you look at middle-aged ethnic Swedes the unemployment rate is very low.[27]

The same news article then gives an account of the comments made by representatives from other political parties. They talk about the problem of unemployment and question why it is relevant to talk about which specific groups are affected, but also the very usage of the phrase 'ethnic Swede' itself. Former spokesperson of the Green party Maria Wetterstrand states:

> Or actually, the term 'ethnic Swede' is in fact very stupid in all contexts that I can think of.

A subsequent analysis of the notion of 'ethnic Swedes', written in the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet* (Svd), claims that there is no such thing:

> In the original statement regarding 'ethnic Swedes' made by Reinfeldt there is nothing that explains what he really means. 'Ethnic Swedes' is not the same thing as the category born in Sweden. The category 'ethnic Swedes' is not something that is used in statistics or official contexts, therefore it is an uncertain term to use, according to experts with whom Svd have spoken. The unemployment that the Prime Minister talked about is nowhere to be found in statistics since the group 'ethnic Swedes' does not exist formally. And yet Reinfeldt made this statement. The check-up of facts therefore gives Fredrik Reinfeldt a red light for his statement.[28]

In an open letter to Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, the member of the liberal party Mikael Trolin (Swedish-born with an African father) writes:

> My mother is Swedish, my grandmother, grandfather, aunt as well as my cousins. I was born here and I have lived my almost 50 year old life in this beautiful and wonderful country. I have always seen the people mentioned above as my family, a family that I have been a part of with an unconditional belonging. But after your statement regarding unemployment yesterday, a statement that separates 'ethnic Swedes' from the rest of us, this unconditional belonging disappeared.[29]

These statements suggest that it is viewed as unacceptable to speak of 'ethnic Swedes'. According to the logic of this discourse, there can be no such thing. I have argued that the idea of a nationalism of good intentions is grounded in the claim that a national identity thin enough (civic) so as to include (ethnic) minorities is benign. The idea of ethnic Swedes, a 'thick' Swedish identity, is intolerable according to this worldview. At the same time, I have argued that ethnicity is part of the constitutive

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[27] TT, "Reinfeldt kritiseras för uttalande", Svenska Dagbladet (Svd) 15/5 2012, http://www.svd.se/reinfeldt-kritiseras-for-uttalande_7201642 [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[28] Jenny Stiernstedt & Erik Paulsson Rönnbäck, "Faktakoll: Rött ljus för Reinfeldt", Svenska Dagbladet (Svd) 15/5 2012, http://www.svd.se/faktakoll-rott-ljus-for-reinfeldt_7203940 [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[29] Mikael Trolin, "Plötsligt känner jag mig mindre svensk", Svenska Dagbladet (Svd) 15/5 2012, http://www.svd.se/plotsligt-kanner-jag-mig-mindre-svensk_7203664 [last accessed 2021-09-20]

outside of this discourse, which means that this idea of a nationalism of good intentions will always be haunted by it. Put another way, an inclusive Swedish identity is by one definition a non-ethnic one, but at the same time 'the ethnic' is what defines it. This means that we can never reduce ethnicity to something irrelevant. Since it may be important for vulnerable minorities, and thus is something that needs to - in fact always - be taken into account. Following this insight, the normative question to be posed is whether people who identify primarily as ethnic Swedes should be allowed to do so, despite their current position as the norm, and to what extent this identity can be expressed without oppressing other identities.

Anthony Smith points out that majorities have often not been described as ethnic but instead are treated as synonymous with 'the nation' (2004: 17). Smith describes the dominant group in a nation-state as an 'ethnic core' around which most Western states were historically formed (2001: 101). But one might ask why it is relevant to talk about ethnic majorities today? How is one to define ethnic Swedes, a 'national ethnicity' in Kaufmann terminology? And, moreover, why would it be important to do so? As long as the majority continue to treat the nation as 'theirs', seeing themselves as synonymous with it, highlighting a Swedish national ethnicity makes little sense. However, if we imagine an order in which national ethnic groups have abandoned this dominant position, then it becomes reasonable to argue that there is room for expressing a majority ethnic identity. If there is a human need to have one's identity recognised, then majority groups should have equal access to expressing their identity. Naturally, this identity should not be seen as an essentialist category and we cannot define it by any objective criteria. Identities are fluid and many individuals have multiple ethnic identities. Consequently, there is no good reason why a black person, such as Mikael Trolin in the example above, could not identify as an ethnic Swede. The failure to realise this is probably due to the common conflation of ethnicity and race, especially in the Swedish context, where ethnicity is often used as a euphemism of race.[30]

The next example has less to do with 'the fear of the ethnic' and more to do with our inability to think beyond the discourse of the nation. The Roma example shows how inclusion will always be a force that strengthens the nation and that, in this way, any inclusion will not only entail another exclusion, but will impact on how the national unit is articulated as the only legitimate one.

[30] For a discussion of the Swedish usage of race and ethnicity, see the report: Open Society Foundations, "Europe's White Working Class Communities Stockholm", 2014, ISBN: 9781940983141, white-working-class-stockholm-20140828.pdf, [last accessed 2021-09-21]

The Problem of Exclusion: Roma, EU-migrants and national boundaries

The following discussion shows how the labels 'Roma' and 'EU-migrant' are constructed and how these different labels are charged with very different meanings. This example takes as its starting point a policy that the then government issued in 2012 to combat the social exclusion of the Romani national minority. On the webpage *Romani inclusion,* the reader meets the following words: "Welcome! The life of Roma in Sweden has been characterised by discrimination and exclusion for centuries. The Government has adopted a long term strategy for Romani inclusion in force until 2032".[31] In this short introduction, but also in other official documents regarding the 20-year strategy for Roma inclusion 2012-2032, which was adopted by the former government, no definition is given about which Roma group it is (not) referring to.[32] For a visitor to the capital Stockholm as well as other places in Sweden during this time, it is hard not to notice the presence of Roma people begging in the streets, which might lead one to picture these Roma. However, it is taken for granted that the Roma concerned are those who are Swedish citizens and that have been defined as one of Sweden's five officially recognised national minorities.

In 2013, about a year and a half after the government adopted the strategy on Roma inclusion, the Swedish daily DN revealed that the regional Skåne police in southern Sweden had illegally compiled a register of Roma people. Given the fact that ethnic registering is prohibited in Sweden and that the Roma constitute a vulnerable minority, this created a huge scandal. Upon this disclosure, the then Minister of Justice Beatrice Ask apologised to the Roma on behalf of the Swedish police:

> I apologise for what has happened. It is extremely regrettable and very serious, because we have clear rules for what is allowed.
>
> […]When the police carry out investigations on crimes they do surveys. But then there are very clear rules on what is relevant. Here they have mapped entire families of a certain ethnicity in a way that seems to be far from what is normal in police investigations - it's outrageous.[33]

In a later statement the then Minister of Integration Erik Ullenhag states:

> Already from day one when we have been discussing this register in Skåne, I have been worried that a group of Swedes will lose their trust in Swedish authorities. And

[31] Minoritet.se. Sveriges nationella minoriteter och minoritetsspråk, Romsk inkludering, http://www.romskinkludering.se/En/Pages/default.aspx [last accessed 2021-09-21].
[32] Ministry of Culture, A Strategy for Roma Inclusion, Fact sheet November 2016, https://www.government.se/4ac87e/contentassets/ac46c34c5ee94d1b8cd1ea26f7c04e52/a-strategy-for-roma-inclusion [last accessed 2021-09-21]
[33] Mats J Larsson, "Ministern: Det kan handla om rasism", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 26/9 2013, http://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/ministern-det-kan-handla-om-rasism [last accessed 2021-09-20]

> added to this a minority that already, for good reasons unfortunately, have had a limited trust in the authorities.[34]

In 2014 the former government presented a white paper on the historical treatment of the Roma people. Ullenhag stated that the discrimination of Roma is a dark chapter in the history of Sweden:

> In many ways, this book is a painful reading. It's about a part of Swedish history that was previously relatively unknown. There is much in this book that there is every reason to be ashamed of. (…) Throughout the 1900s, Roma and travellers have consistently been treated as second-class people. As a red thread through both public organisations, local counties and citizens' attitude towards Roma and travellers, we see prejudice, discrimination, and during much of the 1900s pure racial prejudice.[35]

As shown above, the former government made efforts to deal with Sweden's discriminatory past and exclusion towards the Roma minority during its last three years in office (2012-2014). In the same period, the presence of Roma beggars in Sweden, coming mainly from Romania and Bulgaria, increased dramatically. In 2013 this led to a national debate on begging - whether it should be allowed or not - as well as their presence in the country in itself. In 2014, the then Minister of EU affairs Birgitta Ohlsson revealed that the Swedish government had been negotiating with the Romanian government for months, with the aim of helping Roma from Romania within their home country, but that recently the discussions with Romania had collapsed. The negotiations revolved around Sweden's demand to ask the EU Commission for help to set up an expert group in Bucharest to make sure that the money from EU structural funds are used properly and that they reach the targeted group, a demand that Romania rejected. Below is an interview with Ohlsson:

> Journalist: For some this could be interpreted as a way to get rid of the beggars that we see on the streets in Sweden and as a way of accommodating those voters who do not want these beggars to remain in Sweden. Comment?
>
> Ohlsson: No, this has nothing to do with restricting the freedom of movement or introducing a ban on begging. It has to do with improving the lives of these people. There is money and every country has the responsibility to look after its own citizens.
>
> Journalist: What is the government's view on the comment made by the EU Commissioner Laszlo Andors that Sweden should integrate the beggars and give them jobs?
>
> Ohlsson: The Romanian Roma who are begging on the streets in Sweden have, just as any other EU citizen, the right to reside in Sweden for three months. Any person who has a job to support his or herself is welcome to settle here.[36]

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[34] Niklas Orrenius, Ossi Karp & Katarina Lagerwall, "Tjänstemän åtalas inte för olagligt register", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 21/12 2013, https://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/tjansteman-atalas-inte-for-olagligt-register-2/ [last accessed 2021-09-20]

[35] TT, "Plågam läsning om romövergrepp", Svenska Dagbladet (Svd) 25/3 2014, http://www.svd.se/plagsam-lasning-om-romovergrepp [last accessed 2021-09-20]

[36] Josefine Hökerberg, "Hemliga förhandlingar om tiggarna i Sverige", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 8/4 2014, https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/hemliga-forhandlingar-om-tiggarna-i-sverige [last accessed 2021-09-20]

It is clear that these Roma, in contrast to 'our' Roma, are not covered by Swedish inclusion. It is taken for granted that Romania, or the EU, are responsible for solving this 'problem'. A year later the new government succeeds in initiating cooperation between Sweden and Romania, with the aim of improving the situation for Roma in Romania.[37] In September 2015, the Swedish Minister Åsa Regnér and Martin Valfridsson, appointed national coordinator for "vulnerable EU-citizens", urge the Swedish population not to give money to beggars but instead to donate money to charities in the original countries. In their article the phrases "in their home countries", "in the original country", "in Romania and Bulgaria", "in the relevant countries", "on the ground" as well as "in Europe" are used.[38] These Roma are articulated as a group that go beyond the specific responsibility of Sweden, and therefore as a 'problem' to be 'solved' by 'the EU' so that they can return to 'the original countries', Romania and Bulgaria.

The construction of the subject positions 'our' Roma and EU-migrants is also visible in a news item from August 2015, reporting that "Roma days" are arranged at the open-air museum *Skansen*. Erland Kaldaras, a Roma representative and co-organiser, says that the Roma have been in Sweden for at least 500 years, but that few people know of their history and tend to group them together with the EU-migrants who are begging in the streets. Kaldaras says:

> "Most visitors ask some questions about history and culture, then they wonder what we intend to do about the beggars. As if we have to defend the fact that beggars come here. But that is of course something that the state should manage. It is a matter for Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden, and not least the EU. So obviously this is something that affects us".
>
> *He emphasises that the solidarity with the community is a core ingredient of Roma culture.*
>
> "We feel empathy with those sitting in the street. Swedish Roma are fine today. But 50 years ago, we experienced the same hell".[39]

The view that 'our' Roma are covered by inclusion in the Swedish national project, whereas the Roma who have become known as 'EU-migrants' belong to Romania and Bulgaria, appears as natural. Moreover, the fact that these Roma are EU citizens, both means that they have the right to move freely within the union, but cannot seek asylum in another EU member state. The EU is often invoked as the institution responsible for 'solving the Roma problem'. In an article, three liberal MEPs write

[37] Josefin Sköld, "Sverige ska hjälpa fattiga i Rumänien", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 3/6 2015, http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/sverige-ska-hjalpa-fattiga-i-rumanien [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[38] Åsa Regnér & Martin Valfridsson, "Skänk till organisationer på plats i hemländerna", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 11/9 2015, http://www.dn.se/debatt/skank-till-organisationer-pa-plats-i-hemlanderna [last accessed 2021-09-20]
[39] Andreas Nordström, "Romsk kultur I focus på Skansen", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 12/8 2015, http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/romsk-kultur-i-fokus-pa-skansen [last accessed 2021-09-20]

that the issue must be solved at the EU level, and that we need a common action plan to stop the historic violations against Roma. The article describes the Roma as "the largest ethnic minority in Europe […] subjected to large-scale discrimination and violence, with higher unemployment rates, health problems and lower education than the average European". They see it as "painful to observe that there is still systematic discrimination on ethnic grounds within the EU. The Roma is a group that has been vulnerable throughout history. Not a single member state is free from guilt."[40] Discrimination on ethnic grounds within the EU is articulated as something unacceptable, and 'the EU' is responsible for solving this situation. The liberal MEPs contend that not a single member state is free from guilt, yet 'the EU' always seems to be imagined as something else, not us. In Sweden, efforts are made to include 'our' Roma, those who have been defined as a Swedish national minority and those who are Swedish citizens. However, according to this discourse, it cannot be said that all Roma, based on their very ethnicity, and as the largest and most vulnerable ethnic minority in Europe, are each and every EU member state's responsibility, wherever they decide to settle. Living within the discourse of nations, any inclusion will necessarily be something that strengthens the legitimacy of the nation, since it refers to inclusion within a national community.

A dislocatory event can lead to a variety of possible responses. One is in the form of a demand that challenges the norms of an institution. Glynos and Howarth write that a radical political demand is one that publicly contests a fundamental norm of a practice or regime (2007: 115). The Roma community historically and presently, by their very existence, pose a challenge to the national order. If one tries to imagine a world order beyond the national hegemony and the logic of inclusion, the Roma could instead be imagined as an ethnic community and, as such, as bearers of cultural and social rights, irrespective of country of residence. However, what Glynos and Howarth call the ideological response to a dislocatory experience is where "the subject becomes complicit in covering over the radical contingency of social relations by identifying with a particular discourse." (p. 117) The 'Roma problem' poses questions that we cannot properly deal with from within the current paradigm, and therefore the ideological response to the problem remains a strong one.

In this chapter I have analysed extracts from media debates dealing with Swedish national identity in relation to two of Sweden's national minorities – the Sami and the Roma – as well as the position of 'ethnic Swedes'. The Sami, as an indigenous people with a territorial attachment to the homeland of Sápmi, disrupts the taken-for-grantedness of inclusion with claims to a separate identity. The Roma, a heterogeneous minority without attachments to a homeland, instead make visible the arbitrariness

[40] Cecilia Wikström, "Romska tiggare är en europeisk angelägenhet", Dagens Nyheter (DN) 3/4 2013, https://www.ceciliawikstrom.eu/artikel-1 [last accessed 2021-09-20]

of national boundaries by their existence as the largest ethnic community in Europe, thereby challenging the logic of inclusion/exclusion into the national community from the opposite direction. Both of these create dislocations with strong ideological responses that cover over the cracks in the system, almost as if they were not there.

This chapter shows how the 'nationalism of good intentions', and the fantasy of inclusion, is based on the necessary exclusion of ethnicity to uphold inclusivity as the enjoyment of doing good. While the fantasy can account for minority ethnicity – as it is to be included – the notion of a majority ethnicity messes with the inner logic of this fantasy and must therefore be ignored and covered over.

Chapter 6. Conclusion: Dilemmas of Inclusion and Exclusion

This dissertation has been an attempt to engage critically with the discourse of nations. It has asked how 'benign' versions of nationalism are constructed to accommodate ethnic minorities to remain ethical, and has explored the fantasies that sustains this narrative. The answer to this question is that the fantasy of inclusion – what I understand as the overarching fantasy— is constructed by avoiding the presence of ethnicity when it falls outside of what the discourse of nations can encompass. I have argued in this dissertation that the discourse of nations permeates both the scholarly literature on nationalism and the ideas found among the ethnopolitical activists with whom I have engaged. More specifically, it spreads into ideas of *inclusionary* nationhood, which we are taught to desire in order to be good. This fantasy of inclusion is therefore present in both the theoretical literature on the ethics of nationalism as well as in the empirical material I have analysed. The question that I ask, namely 'how are national identities constructed as ethically justifiable in order to accommodate ethnic minorities?', has been explored by analysing a number of contexts where dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion arise, and by exploring how these dilemmas play out depending on their positioning within the space that the world of nation-states creates. I have argued that in the scholarly debate on the ethics of nationalism, the topic of ethnicity is often avoided, since it highlights what the idea of the nationalism of good intentions has sought to conceal; that inclusion cannot make up for pre-existing inequalities between different cultural groups. The fantasy of inclusion has been explored empirically in focus groups and media debates. In this material the fantasy is sustained by the repetition of common truths that impart that inclusion is for us to enjoy as a means of doing good – something that is good for everyone. Or to put it differently, the desire to include is transmitted to us so that we can do and be good. This is expressed slightly differently depending on the context, but can be known through the dislocatory moments that are then covered over by the ideological responses that serve to keep the discourse of the idea of a 'nationalism of good intentions' intact. Below is a recapturing of the dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion that are covered over by fantasies in four different scenarios.

Dilemmas of Inclusion and Exclusion

I want to refer back to Karin Borevi's model on integration strategies and the tension between demos and ethnos (2016). To manage cultural and ethnic plurality, a nation-state can adopt various integration strategies, ranging from multiculturalism to civic integration, but there is always a risk that such policies effectively lead to either ethnic segregation or assimilation. Borevi says that if one

agrees with the view that a national community is political and not ethnic, then one has to always relate to these tensions, to which there are no simple solutions (Borevi 2002:320). My ambition has been not merely to accept but to 'test' these tensions that lead to a number of dilemmas and to explore how they are altered depending on the positions adopted by particular groups. I will go through these dilemmas by revisiting each of the positions. The dilemmas are problematic on several levels, both for the groups themselves but also, theoretically, for general arguments about justice and equality between different groups. The positions are not the same as, but informed by, real empirical cases. They are constructed by me as positions seen from the perspective of wanting to live up to a scenario where inequality between cultural groups is erased. In other words, the ethical dilemmas that concern a particular group are automatically assumed to have validity for other groups facing the same situation. I am assuming that the level of fairness sought for one group is applied equally to all groups – as a template to strive for. Therefore, for instance in the case of the Kurds, when I ask 'what if you were the ethnic majority in an autonomous Kurdistan?', I assume that the ethical dilemma facing them in this hypothetical scenario when confronted with other ethnic minorities within the same territory would be as troubling as if it affected their own group. The shift from one position to another by the same group would thus hopefully disclose whether or not this is true, and if any discrepancies do exist then it will be possible to show cracks in the nation-state discursive system. This was visible in the focus group discussions, given that I could ask them about other groups explicitly. When it comes to the media material, it worked a little differently. Here I have instead discovered three cases where what falls outside of a civic understanding of an inclusive Swedishness cannot be made sense of. However, in all of these cases, it is by denying the ethnic characteristics of a group whenever it feels uncomfortable that the fantasy of inclusivity can continue to thrive.

The Kurds: Oppressed ethnic majority seeking autonomy. As an ethnic majority in a particular territory, deprived from the same thing that its neighbours possess – namely a nation-state 'of its own'– the injustice felt by the unrecognised ethnic majority is hard to deny. My neighbour's identity is officially sanctioned, while mine is denied. The longing for autonomy is therefore understandable within a system of nation-states, but the ripple effects are harder to justify. If I am opposing the current nation-state's ethnic bias, how can I propose the same design without contradicting my own criticism? The dilemma is impossible to solve within a nation-state logic, unless one chooses to conveniently bypass the reality of ethnicity as a barrier to fairness for all cultural groups whenever it makes itself felt. This ethical dilemma is exemplified by the Kurdish case, which is a prime example of the fact that liberal thinkers are comfortable with ethnicity – and thereby exclusivity – as long as we are talking about minorities or groups that are not in a position of power. Looking at the nation as a

self-aware ethnic group may feel justifiable in cases such as the Kurds, often referred to as the largest stateless nation in the world, but it starts to feel less comfortable – for scholars as well as the ethno-political activists in my focus groups – to talk about a nation in ethnic terms when we are no longer dealing with underdogs. When we are entering the territory of ethnic majorities as nations, nations as ethnic and not just 'civic', we are inescapably confronted with the idea of other minorities having to relate to the ethnic character of the dominant ethnic majority/nation in their own homeland – thereby repeating the very dynamic that the Kurds are fighting against in the first place. In the focus group with the Swedish Kurds, there is a 'theft of enjoyment' (Žižek 1993) involved in the 'homeland' context that is not present in their position as Kurds in Sweden. In other words, the Swedish civic-integrationist project does not come at the expense of their identity as ethnic Kurds. However, when they put themselves in the shoes of the Sami minority, who are indigenous to the land, they can perceive the resemblance to their homeland situation. There is a conflict of interest as a soon as the ethnic characteristic of the majority culture is acknowledged. Because this is uncomfortable acknowledge, the Swedish Kurds in my focus group are investing in 'the fantasy of inclusion' to cover up this inconsistency.

Swedish-speaking Finns: Dominant ethno-linguistic minority seeking survival. This is the position of a linguistic minority who used to hold a dominant position but are now demographically at risk and need to advocate the preservation of a bilingual nation in order to survive. They must undertake this work while unable to claim the underdog position. The Swedish-speaking Finns are, through their example, highlighting the opposite dilemma from the Kurdish example. As a former dominant minority, the old position of power that they held is now overshadowing their current desire to speak 'the language of their hearts', and ultimately – to even exist as a distinct group. This is thought-provoking in the sense that when the right to exist as a separate group is divorced from the question of whether or not they have equal access to power when compared to surrounding groups, it becomes an emotional question of wanting to express oneself in the most authentic way possible. Because this inner 'feeling' is hard to defend rationally without the 'underdog card', the Swedish-speaking Finns construct a fantasy where a Finland with Swedish as an official language alongside Finnish is the only way to thrive as an 'open' nation-state. In the focus group with Swedish-Speaking Finns, the beatific dimension of fantasy (Glynos and Howarth 2007) is constructed as a scenario where a bilingual Finland is open, tolerant, pluralistic and democratic. The horrific dimension of this fantasy (ibid) is a scenario where an 'evil' nationalism and racism has crushed all forms of plurality. In this way, the linguistic movement that seeks to preserve Swedish and its bilingual status in Finland – in the case of the individuals in my focus group – can do so while enjoying the idea of an 'open' Finland for everyone.

Swedish Sami: Indigenous people seeking self-expression beyond the nation-state. Indigenous peoples are an example of the existence of ethnic identities before the system of nation-states was established, and therefore a continuous challenge to the logic of the nation-state. Indigenous peoples who were colonised and incorporated into different nation-states against their own choosing may therefore also resist having to relate to an identity that is imposed on them without consent, rather than their own identity first. In other words, because they 'came first' and have remained a distinct group, despite attempts to be assimilated into an identity that 'came later'. The Sami example poses a similar but slightly different question to the Kurds in their 'homeland' context. As an indigenous people and territorial minority, Sami activists make claims about their original homeland Sápmi, but without claiming to form a separate and independent nation-state. Like for instance Kurds from Turkey, who react against their forced inclusion into an overarching Turkishness, some Sami activists in Sweden are suspicious of being called Swedish instead of Sami if this leads to assimilation and therefore comes at the expense of their self-expression as Sami. They differ from the Kurdish example, however, in the sense that they do not wish to perpetuate the system of nation-states. In my analysis on national identity and minorities in Swedish media, the 'common truth' that an inclusive Swedish identity will accommodate ethnic minorities, represented by Swedish politicians, is challenged by Sami ethno-political activists who argue that they are a distinct people, which creates a dislocatory moment in the debate, by bringing an end to the public discussion.

The Roma: Ethnic group without a homeland of their own seeking belonging beyond territory. Non-territorially based groups are examples of an existence beyond the logic of nation-states, existing as a collective without a territorial container but nevertheless claiming to exist as an identity. Whenever that identity is claimed when the boundaries of the nation-state are simultaneously crossed, it disrupts the logic of the nation-state by showing there are groups that follow another logic and therefore cannot be subsumed under the former principle. The Roma community brings a different dilemma, but like the Sami they are operating outside of the nation-state logic. With no claims to nationhood or attachment to a 'Romani homeland', but as the largest "homeless" ethnic group in Europe, the Roma disrupt the logic whereby national borders are the only relevant ones. With 'no place to go' of their own, so to speak, they potentially belong everywhere. When the Roma have acquired national minority status which grants them cultural and linguistic rights in several European countries, confusion arises when their 'ethnic kin' knocks on the border of nation-state. In the analysis on national identity and minorities in relation to Swedish Roma and Romani 'EU-migrants' in Swedish media, it is shown that the potential arbitrariness of who should belong to the Roma national minority in Sweden is met with a strong ideological response – one that repairs the dislocatory event before it becomes a source for a new political construction (Glynos and

Howarth 2007: 117) – in favour of nationalist inclusion, according to which ethnic kinship is deemed irrelevant. This is true both from the perspective of Swedish politicians and from that of the Roma minority.

Conclusion: Ethnicity as the Elephant in the Room

I have argued that national identities are constructed as legitimate from an ethical point of view through denying ethnic elements when they seem to disrupt the idea of inclusion as benign. This is a problem on a theoretical level, and it is also apparent among ethno-political activists. It is a problem that is intrinsic to the discourse of nations, and that remains hidden through the perpetuation of a fantasy of inclusion. Ethnic majorities generally see themselves as synonymous with 'the nation'. If we are serious about the equal ability of different groups to express themselves, ethnic majorities need to give up this position of dominance in order to make space for equality between them and minorities. However, when this is done within the framework of the already existing nation-state context, it generally means that the identity held by the majority must be stripped of any 'thick' substance in order for the identity to encompass minorities. The question regarding to what extent the ethnic majority in Sweden – had they not been in a dominant position in a Swedish nation-state – has the right to self-express as a group separate from other groups, begs to be asked. Since this question cannot be asked, so long as their dominance remains and is only hypothetical, then it remains outside a possible line of questioning for as long as the system of nation-states reigns supreme. Ethnic majorities are the elephant in the room. Such discussion is avoided because it is uncomfortable to talk about and relatively easy to slip under the radar. The 'normal' is easily concealed as 'nothing' – it is hidden - and is therefore able to dominate at the expense of others' ability to express themselves. Nina Carlsson (2020) illustrates this well in her work on banal colonialism in Swedish Sápmi, shedding light on the conflicting aims of the Swedish policy towards new and old minorities. The Swedish state is engaged in both the process of granting possibilities for Sámi linguistic and cultural revitalisation, on the one hand, and at the same time providing civic orientation courses for immigrants where they learn the national language and "Swedish values". As Carlsson points out, when these two policies coexist in a colonised locality, they have contradictory logics (p. 269). Carlsson's work illustrates very well the hegemony of the national model and how the implication of national domination remains hidden. In her own words: "A banal colonialist perspective makes visible not only the taken-for-granted national domination, but also brings attention to the weak presence of 'the other'. The word banal does not imply that the operations are harmless, nor that they unnoticed for everyone; rather, it directs the attention to what has been

erased for the dominant to be perceived as banal." (ibid: 272) When we are not talking about the dominance of ethnic majority as problematic, but instead pretend that it is not so through hiding it in an invisible national identity, we cannot have a sound conversation about ethnic majorities either, owing to the fact that it has become "impossible" to talk about it. The fantasy of inclusion can be seen as the enabler of the longevity of this system – i.e. the nationalist paradigm. Ideally, everyone - whether minority or majority – should have equal opportunities to express themselves in their own terms and without doing so at the expense of others. I have argued that there is no theory, within the literature on the ethics of nationalism, that successfully has come to terms with hidden ethnicity precisely because they don't tackle the problem at its core - the nationalist container itself.

In the last section of this dissertation, I will continue to use the Sami/indigenous example to raise questions for further research and to highlight the possibility of a world where minorities and majorities may coexist without doing so at the expense of other cultures.

The way forward – future fantasies

In this last section of the dissertation I shift over to a politico-philosophical discussion on the possibility of creating a post-nationalist world, using the Sami example as my point of departure. As the descendants of indigenous tribes and the keepers of an endangered way of life, the indigenous' example places the question of the intrinsic value of a particular culture, and the point of preserving a culture facing extinction, in an extraordinary light. While the centrality of a culture's meaning to its members has been debated thoroughly (and a point discussed throughout this dissertation), a less common argument is that a culture needs to continue to thrive for the sake of the planet. However, this is precisely the case made by many indigenous activists. An example of this is my meeting with a Sami activist during my field studies in Jokkmokk in 2018.[41] She said that as a young girl, her father gave her the task to keep the old Sami ways of living with nature. He had said to her that she needed to know everything, because one day she would be teaching the majority population and people around the globe about how we can live sustainably. In this way, the Sami struggle for recognition is not only a case for preserving a way of being that they themselves hold dear, but one that is intimately linked with saving the Earth.

When we are talking about the need for our guardianship of the earth as a whole, one might think of this as the cosmopolitan dream of a united world with no borders and a global identity rather than national or ethnic identities. The idea of a world citizen has been theorised by various political

[41] Field notes, Jokkmokk, Sápmi/Sweden, 29 March 2018

philosophers. Martha Nussbaum argues that, as citizen of the world, our primary loyalty should be to humankind. She is concerned about the argument that we need shared values within a nation, but that the shared values do not apply when the arbitrary borders of the nation are crossed (2002). Nussbaum says that none of us can stand outside of global interdependency and the fact that our daily lives put pressure on global environment, meaning that burying our heads in the sand and ignoring the many ways in which we influence the lives of distant people every day is irresponsible. Education, she claims, needs to cultivate students with the ability to see themselves not only as members of a heterogeneous nation, but a heterogeneous world. It is therefore about time we start seeing ourselves as 'citizens of the world'. According to Nussbaum this also entails learning more about the history and character of the diverse groups that inhabit the world. (Nussbaum, 2010: 80) The idea of 'citizen of the world' can however also be interpreted as a shedding of one's cultural identity. In his essay, "Minority cultures and the cosmopolitan alternative", Jeremy Waldron takes issue with the multiculturalist's view on community. He writes:

> If I knew what the term meant, I would say it was a 'postmodern' vision of the self. But, as I do not, let me just call it 'cosmopolitan', although this term is not supposed to indicate that the practitioner of the ethos in question is necessarily a migrant (like Rushdie), a perpetual refugee (like, for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau), or a frequent flyer (like myself). The cosmopolitan may live all his life in one city and maintain the same citizenship throughout. But he refuses to think of himself as *defined* by his location or his ancestry or his citizenship or his language." (Waldron 1995: 95)

Waldron disagrees with the communitarian argument that there is a human need to be immersed in a particular culture. He argues, drawing on Salman Rushdie, that the hybrid lifestyle of the cosmopolitan is the only appropriate way of life in the modern world (Waldron 1995: 100). I have argued that it is not the issue of having a particularistic identity that is problematic, but the power asymmetry that follows when a certain group dominates, and is allowed to 'possess' a territory. Therefore, the problem is not with the myriad of cultural identities that exist among humans. The central problem is rather the fact that a *national* identity gets imposed on them as a form of oppression. Nussbaum (2010) says that:

> No society is pure, and the "clash of civilizations" is internal to every society. Every society contains within itself people who are prepared to live with others on terms of mutual respect and reciprocity, and people who seek the comfort of domination. We need to understand how to produce more citizens of the former sort and fewer of the latter. Thinking falsely that our own society is pure within can only breed aggression toward outsiders and blindness about aggression toward insiders (p. 29).

This is precisely the mistake that I have argued is made, when trying to alchemise nationalism into an inclusive, and therefore benign project, since nationalism comes from the era of conquering, owning

and controlling territories as well as the populations that inhabit them. A fantasy of a global population loyal to the Earth is the fantasy of a world where attachment to one's own culture does not come at the expense of another people's right to express themselves, but that this attachment in no way justifies any domination over resources or that one's loyalty would be with the ingroup – instead our loyalty should be with the world at large. This dream includes the idea that we as humans will all start seeing ourselves as guardians and protectors of the earth rather than the entitlement that comes with the current paradigm – "this nation is mine to have". Glynos and Howarth say that the process of problematisation "involves the identification of an aspect of a practice which is deemed *worthy* of public contestation, thereby imputing to it some normative import." (2007: 145). In my view, the system of nation-states is worthy of problematisation just as much as for instance the capitalist system, on the grounds that both can become self-serving rather than protecting the value of our planet and all its sentient beings in their many shapes and forms. I see this period of social change on the planet as an opportune moment to problematise these old systems. Others, of course, would argue the opposite. In her recent book *Why Nationalism* (2020), Yael Tamir foretells a revival of nationalism in the wake of the pandemic – a revival that she deems hopeful provided we are talking about a civic nationalism. A united humanity may be an attractive vision, she says, but it is nowhere in sight (p. 102).

> Globalism failed to replace nationalism because it couldn't offer a political agenda that meets the most basic needs of modern individuals: the desire to be autonomous and self-governing agents, the will to live a meaningful life that stretches beyond the self, the need to belong, the desire to be part of a creative community, to feel special, find a place in the chain of being, and to enjoy a sense (or the illusion) of stability and cross-generational continuity. (Tamir 2020: 155)

However, none of the above actually require a nation but can be satisfied through community much smaller than a national community. Globalism has become synonymous with the free flow of capital. However, imagining a new paradigm beyond both nationalism and the capitalist system - something that the climate crisis requires us to do – opens up the possibility of starting to envision a 'global' mindset in an entirely new way, where being global looks more like being local. Before the emergence of nations, people generally knew no other life than a local one; sometimes they didn't even know what was beyond their own village. A potential future of being more local again, does not have to mean a 'return' to old ways of knowing, but living a local life that makes us aware of our interconnectedness with the rest of the world. A decentralised political system in which people would gain more freedom to shape their own lives locally need not be at the expense of a 'global mindset', in other words it is not an either/or relationship, but one of both/and. This requires an awareness in line with indigenous wisdom of loyalty to the Earth and with future generations, which breaks with the nationalist paradigm of domination. One could ask the question if protecting ethnic

particularity as a means to keep indigenous wisdom intact from threats of assimilation, masquerading as benign inclusion into the nationalist project, may prove to have been crucial for our survival? It is indeed difficult to imagine anything beyond our current world of nation-states, and perhaps those who say that we as humans are not capable of something as abstract as loyalty to humankind are correct. However, what we think we know about human nature, or what may have been true for humans in one era, is not necessarily applicable in another time. This dissertation takes seriously, the idea that the period in our history that has been characterised by nationalism in its widest meaning, i.e. a world of nation-states, potentially one day will come to an end and be replaced with something else. Whatever an alternative post-nationalist world would look like, however, it cannot resolve the necessary exclusion of 'them' from 'us'. The important question is how this is done. According to discourse theory, which is based on the assumption that every social order is a temporary articulation of contingent practices, things could always be otherwise and any order is always based on the exclusion of other possibilities (Mouffe 2013: 2). Chantal Mouffe writes:

> In my view, the fundamental question is not how to arrive at a consensus reached without exclusion, because this would require the construction of an 'us' that would not have a corresponding 'them'. This is impossible because, as I have just noted, the very condition for the constitution of an 'us' is the demarcation of a 'them'. The crucial issue then is how to establish this us/them distinction, which is constitutive of politics, in a way that is compatible with the recognition of pluralism. Conflict in liberal democratic societies cannot and should not be eradicated, since the specificity of pluralist democracy is precisely the recognition and the legitimation of conflict. What liberal democratic politics requires is that the others are not seen as enemies to be destroyed, but as adversaries whose ideas might be fought, even fiercely, but whose right to defend those ideas is not to be questioned. To put it in another way, what is important is that conflict does not take the form of an 'antagonism' (struggle between enemies) but the form of an 'agonism' (struggle between adversaries). (Mouffe 2013: 6-7)

Plurality, as Mouffe describes, needs a demarcation. Therefore there will always be some kind of exclusion and, concomitantly, there will always be Others. The dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion can never be fully resolved. All the same, unjust power hierarchies can be altered. A pluralistic world of peaceful co-existence needs to be accepting of difference, and neither reject nor try to assimilate the Other. Our fear of excluding – which is what the aggressive type of nationalism does – can lead to inclusion in places where inclusion is not desirable. For all groups to be given the freedom to express themselves and celebrate their identities while giving equal importance to the right and freedom of others to do the same, it is likely that the entitlement that comes with the paradigm of nation-states must be scrutinised more thoroughly: What form of power does the one have, who has the power to include?

The flower on the front page, which I painted in 2018, is a visual representation of my vision for a future world – a radical multiculturalism in which the freedom of one group of people to express their identity must never be at the expense of any other group. This requires a deep understanding of the privilege once held by some groups as well as a feeling of solidarity with others – the ability to take the well-being of humanity as equally important as that of any self-interest. The future promises massive waves of migration due to climate change and preparing for this scenario looks like preparing for a world in which the entitlement to a particular territory, for which the construct of nation-states allows, must be given up. The sooner we accept that enormous change is on its way and that the systems that we have come to rely on as solid will not be able to survive forever, the smoother the transition to the future world will be.

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Field work

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