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National Identity, Chauvinism and Citizenship: A Better Understanding of Exclusion from Citizenship in Ethno-National States

National Identity, Nationalism and discrimination of foreigners have been at the center of social research during the last decades. The interest in these subjects grew due to Global developments, and especially the increasing flows of international migration, which have posed a challenge to nation-states. The presence of immigrants in western countries compelled these nation states to reconsider the way of thinking about their membership criteria and status. However, according to different studies, nations are still regarded as the key references of macro-institutional identifications and national identities, and are seen as the core social identities. Along with the identification of one with his or her nation it is also possible to distinguish the concept of nationalism that relates in a sense to a connection one feels to his or her nation. Researchers distinguish between two main dimensions of this connection, the first, nationalism (or "chauvinism"), includes feelings of superiority and blind support in one's nation (or state), and the idealization of the nation and its history. The second, patriotism, is portrayed as a more critical love for and pride in one's country and people.

The current research intends to explore conceptions of national identity by examining the criteria people use to evaluate claims about membership in a national community, following a line of analysis developed in previous researches conducted in western countries. The availability of a new data set on national identity collected in 2003 by the ISSP, which for the first time included Israel, allows a better understanding of the concept for the Israeli case, and the possibility to compare it with other western nation states. The research will try to assess the unique patterns of macro-social attachments in two ethno-national states, Israel and Germany and to identify demographic and cultural factors that explain differences in the conception of national identity in the two countries.

In the research, I will also formulate a comprehensive model of ethnic exclusionism, both at the theoretical and empirical level. The model will combine concepts of national identity, chauvinism, and perceptions of perceived socio-economic threat, in order to disentangle the relevance of these factors to explaining exclusionary attitudes towards foreigners. The research will also provide a comparative model, which will demonstrate the similarities and differences between the two ethno-national states. The comparison with Germany in particular, is based on the similarity between the two countries in their primary citizenship principle ("jus sanguinis"), which is an ethnic one, conditioning citizenship by being a member of the ethnic group by birth. The complex histories of the two states with the central roll of ethnicity, nationalism and exclusion in it, was one other reason for choosing Germany. It is also important and useful to consider the many differences between the two countries, from their size and number of people, and their different histories, to the different geo-political realities in recent years, The Israeli - Palestinian front and the many continuing processes relating to Germany and the European Union. The different characteristics of the two nation-states may contribute, to some extent, to some macro-level aspects explaining national identity in particular, and the complete model.