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Nationalism, cosmopolitanism and statelessness: An interview with Craig Calhoun[♣]

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Abstract
This interview with Professor Craig Calhoun expands on issues of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in relation to the question of statelessness. Since the 1990s, Calhoun has worked on nationalism, ethnicity and cosmopolitanism. For Calhoun, nations still matter despite post-national and cosmopolitan elaboration and repudiation of so-called parochial and provincialised identities like nation or national identity and citizenship. In this interview, Calhoun dis-cusses the material, political and cultural situations of the Kurds in the Middle East and the role of Kurdish nationalism in the context of statelessness. Calhoun finds class-based understanding of inequalities between the Kurds and their dominant others in the Middle East as problematic and incomplete since the cultural, political and material inequalities are intimately interlinked in rendering the Kurds to a subordinated position in the states they inhabit. The interview also engages with diasporic identities and examines how countries of residence can impinge on the identity formation of diasporas and how they obstruct or facilitate migrants translating their citizenship status into the right to have rights (Arendt). An important issue that Calhoun dis-cusses is that there are both asymmetrical power relations between dominated (Kurdish) and dominating nationalisms (Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian and Syrian) and within the same nationalisms.

Keywords: Self-determination, Kurds, Turkish Constitutional Court, autonomy, democracy.

Introduction

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residence can impinge on the identity formation of diasporas and how they obstruct or facilitate migrants translating their citizenship status into the right to have rights (Arendt). An important issue that Calhoun discusses is that there are both asymmetrical power relations between dominated (Kurdish) and dominating nationalisms (Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian and Syrian) and within the same nationalisms.

Eliassi: What motivated you to write about nationalism?

Calhoun: The very first time I wrote about nationalism, I received an invitation to write an article from the *Annual Review of Sociology* on structure and agency. And I thought that was less interesting because it is so abstract and not connected to what was going on in the world. I wrote back and said that I would be happy to write an article on nationalism rather than structure and agency. They wrote back and said no because we want core sociological questions like structure and agency and not nationalism because that is not so important. This was in 1991 so it got me thinking about the disconnection between what people think is important in academic terms and what was going on in the world. This was a time of the break-up of the Soviet Union and all the conflicts that were emerging in Central Asia. I thought that nationalism was hugely important so I ended up writing an article and I started getting more and more interested in studying nationalism. I was interested in the question of social solidarity and loyalty. I had been working on issues like class, community, protest and collective action. What is a nation and how do we think about this? Of course people used words like national community. National community is not community in the same sense as local community is. It is a metaphor. Local community has all these dense relationships where people know each other. National community is more abstract by definition. That is what got me thinking about nationalism and what solidarity and loyalty mean in such large scale communities. During the 80s when I started thinking about this more and more, I was influenced by Benedict Anderson's work on national community, in particular. I was influenced by my experiences while working in China on the student movement in 1989, where I found an interesting feature regarding the student movement that presented itself in the language of science and democracy in English and internationally, but in China it also presented itself as a national self-strengthening movement. I said, ok, what is going on here? Why is this partly national but not nationalist in the ordinary sense?

Eliassi: Few of those scholars who write about nationalism are in favour of nationalism and position themselves very critically vis-à-vis this ideology. In 2005, during an interview Benedict Anderson publicly announced his support of nationalism. In response to a question on whether he was nationalistic, Anderson replied: "Yes, absolutely. I must be the only one writing about nationalism who doesn't think it ugly. If you think about researchers such as Gellner and Hobsbawm, they have quite a hostile attitude to nationalism. I

actually think that nationalism can be an attractive ideology. I like its Utopian elements." (See: http://www.uio.no/english/research/interfaculty-research-areas/culcom/news/2005/anderson.html).

Do you agree with Anderson on his pro-nationalism stance?

Calhoun: I completely agree with Anderson on that. This is part of the themes that I discuss in my book *Nations Matter*. I do not think that nationalism is always an attractive ideology but I think that nationalism can be a force for good and it can raise people beyond narrow self-interest in various ways. I think that it can also be divisive and problematic. People try to do things like separating patriotism and nationalism. They think that patriotism is a good national thing and nationalism is a bad thing. We need to ask more complicated and specific questions about nationalism. Without national solidarity, democracy would not exist in the world today. There are potentials to organise democracy in city-states but we do not have that today. But in fact democracy has been very dependent on nationalism and the rise of democracy depended on the idea of who could be a citizen and who could vote. This idea of citizenship is closely tied with nationalism. This does not mean that everybody should be an ethnic proponent of one ancestry and one language. There are a lot of various ways to construct the nation as I have argued in my books. You can have good or less good ways to do it. Some nations are better at integrating outsiders than others. It is a good thing to be able to integrate immigrants, so not all nationalisms are negative. From inspiration to loyalty, the kinds of arguments that are made under like the Labour[1] policy that says: Well, we are one nation and we should not let the differences between the rich and the poor get too great and we should not let certain regions of the country be impoverished while others being rich. We should try to think about the whole nation. That is an attractive thing. It is not good if you say that we are nationals and we should keep all immigrants outside of our nation. Nationalism can call upon people to care about what happens to other people in their country.

Eliassi: Can we really call the idea of nation as a horizontal comradeship despite the huge economic inequalities between different classes?

Calhoun: I think that nationalism is mainly horizontal. Having a strong horizontal understanding of the nation is not by itself enough to guarantee that you won't also have an extremely unequal capitalist economic system. Nationalism is the basis for calling upon people to do something and limit that inequality. Countries that are ruled by Social democratic governments are often more equal and social democracy is dependent on a strong national idea. That does not mean that xenophobic attacks in Sweden and Norway on immigrants are not nationalist. It is nationalist and can be a nasty nationalism. But the problem is when people try to generalise from its worst examples. They tend to look at Nazi Germany and they look at ethnic cleansings in the

[1] The UK based Labour Party.

Former Yugoslavia. Nationalism is these nasty things. But they do not look at the achievements and the loyalties.

Eliassi: Why has nationalism been so successful?

Calhoun: Nationalism in particular is an ideology very closely related to the nation-state and helping to answer a question that demands an answer. Nationalism is about who is inside, who can vote, who can get a passport and who is a member. The rise of the state was connected to this question. The rise of the state created a sort of potential and reinforced nationalism. Other ideologies like religion are also interesting. Even Benedict Anderson compares nationalism with religion and kinship than with other ideologies like liberalism and socialism. We have seen a rise of religious ideologies that are often explicitly transnational like the *Umma* of Islam. The Umma is set up against the division by national identities. Muslims are expected to emphasise their unity with other Muslims. The Catholic Church is also like that. So religion is an important comparison to nationalism. But the centrality of states to the way the modern world system has been organised creates, in my view, a kind of demand for an answer to who is legitimately part of the state, who are the people of the state? And that is why I mentioned democracy earlier. Nationalism is actually reinforced by the attempt to have popular sovereignty in a state. Nationalism is always an international ideology and it is not a question of one nation-state at a time and it always grows in making a distinction between "them" and "us". Nobody becomes national just through thinking about "us" without thinking about "them" or opposed to "them". For instance, Europe becomes national in a process that produces distinctions and oppositions and it can produce cross-boundary movements for democracy. It is not often the nationalist idea but the idea of the nation that matters. That is the key to our understanding of nationalism. Nationalism as a political ideology emphasises the nation. Imagined is not opposed to real. The idea of the nation is that we should work together and that nothing should separate us.

Eliassi: Doesn't the idea of nation express a lack of identity?

Calhoun: Yes, sure. I believe that the nation is not a pre-existing fact. It is not that it was already there. All nations are developed through communication and the ability to be connected. If you do not have roads, you cannot connect the whole country which in turn can decrease the sense of national solidarity. It varies from country to country how much unity exists or is produced. Nations are produced mostly by social institutions like schools and media and communication, transportation and infra-structure, by all the things that connect. This can get reduced and then you get European integration and a lot of people assume that nations will automatically go away following European integration but I do not think that there is any evidence for that. In fact, in the last five years following the financial crisis, the opposite has happened. In many ways, Europe has become more nationalist. But we should not think that nationalism is just a right-wing political ideology separate from the nation. In the Third World, people would try to make distinctions like

saying that I am not nationalist but I believe in national liberation. But I would say that nationalism is all about that liberation. The Middle East is a very interesting example. In the Arab Middle East, you have the question what is the nation? Is it Arab? Pan-Arab nationalism? During the 20th century you had a very strong Pan-Arab nationalism like Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970). His legacy existed among the Baath regimes in Iraq and Syria. Nationalism has often been modernising. You get strange arguments in the field where some people say that the nation has always been there and is a part of past ethnicity (Anthony Smith). There is continuity but also some changes. The old ethnicities are assumed to be transformed into modern national identities (Anthony Smith) while others like Hobsbawn and Ranger think that it is all about invented traditions and they show that these traditions are not from ancient times but invented for just hundred years ago. Just because these traditions come from hundred years ago, nations and traditions are not regarded as *real*. But here Hobsbawm and Ranger miss the point that what they are describing is the process of adapting to larger scale social organisation and modern life (Gellner). Nation is a transformation and not completely new because they have previous roots and Smith is right in this regard. But the nation is also partially new and being new does not invalidate the idea of the nation. Hobsbawm believes that if he can just convince people that nations are artificial and they are some kind of false consciousness, then nations would not matter anymore and go away because then you have cured the false consciousness through a reading therapy about the idea that nation is invented. That is crazy. All ideas of solidarity can rise and fall and be changed over time. I do not believe in the idea of true or correct consciousness against a false consciousness. I think that there are understandings of who we are that are better or worse and their consequences. You can for instance say to Scottish nationalists that the Scottish National Party has bad economic analysis and therefore you should not believe in them or vote for independence and separate from England. But do not start by saying to the Scots that you are the real nationalist. Do not attack the nationalism, attack the economic policy and provide answers to what can be good for the Scottish people! So I think much of the discussion of nationalism creates unhelpful ideas of distinctions like this idea that you can just get rid of the nation by showing that it is historically new. It has no effect.

I think for every nation, what was there before matters in constructing the nation. China was not really national before the late 19th century. But there was certainly a Chinese language and culture but there were a new set of changes from 1890s until the 1910s that changed the way people thought about being Chinese, it changed the social imaginary about the Chinese society. The rise of a nationalist imaginary engaged with getting rid of emperors and not thinking in old ways about Chineseness. It is not only the right-wing but also the left-wing that opposed the emperors and wanted to modernise by being national in a new way. Some of the communists in China put abolishing class differences at the forefront, but they are communist nationalists because

they are still focusing on China. Others say that it is just about strengthening the nation. Both the left- and the right in China were nationalists because they had the strengthening of the nation as their central goal.

Eliassi: Do you think that nationalism is here to stay?

Calhoun: Well, it is part of the world. I do not think that it will stay forever. Nothing is permanent in human life. With the rise of the modern state system and the capitalist system, nations and states are related to each other and it is not easy to just say get rid of the idea of the nation and keep the rest of this organisation of the world. If there were some completely different way of organising, then it might change but I do not see that happening. I do see some sort of a return of imperial thinking in some places.

Eliassi: Do you think of Russia?

Yes, I am thinking for example of Russia. So there is a tension between a strong Russian nationalism and a more imperial idea of rebuilding the world. But that is not a complete contradiction because if you think of the rise of British nationalism, it happened at the same time as its empire.

Eliassi: How do you relate to contemporary debates about post-nationalism?

Calhoun: The short version of my answer to this is that there is a false opposition to nationalism and it is a dangerous situation where people imagine that nationalism is just fading away and we are all becoming cosmopolitans (and do not ask me what that means). Do they mean one world, one government or do they mean cultures as mixing all over the world? There are certain cosmopolitans like human rights activists and there are people who are listening to world music and speaking many languages (although they are fewer than we expect). I think it is wishful thinking about nationalism as fading away and us becoming world citizens. But can you get a passport as a world citizen? The more specific (particular) forms of belonging still matter. So post-nationalism should not be sharply opposed to nationalism; that we are moving from nationalism to post-nationalism and beyond post-nationalism to cosmopolitanism. The idea of cosmopolitanism is based on the idea that we used to have backward cultural identities and now we are freeing ourselves from that and taking part in a more reasonable and rational cosmopolitan world. I think that the movement is from one form of cultural idea to another. Cosmopolitans do not accord attention to their class backgrounds. Nations can be more cosmopolitan, like for instance being better at integrating immigrants. Some nations thrive on that. Germany was a country that was very bad at incorporating immigrants and has now, more or less, decided for its own economic future that it needs to get better at making non-Germans integrate and feel at home in Germany. Germany realises 1) that it needs engineers of all kinds, 2) it needs workers, 3) it has an ageing population that will create problems for the German economy. But the problem is that Germanness has been a fairly intolerant ideology. Earlier, Germans were talking about cosmopolitanism like Immanuel Kant and later on adopted an ideology based on

racial superiority. Cosmopolitanism and nationalism were all in Germany. I think that when people become cosmopolitanism, nationalism is part of that definition because it is not either cosmopolitanism or nationalism. It is not that you give up all national things and become cosmopolitan. You should think larger about your country, like including differences and multiculturalism within your country and building good relations between your country and other countries in the world.

Eliassi: How do you look at statelessness and nationalism?

Calhoun: You can put it in two ways. National membership is complicit in creating the suffering of stateless people. Hannah Arendt says that statelessness is the great tragedy of the modern world. What is the solution? Abolishing nationalism or getting state membership for stateless people? This happens to refugees all the time. I would say that the nation-state still has a lot of power and that shows how problematic it is to be stateless, the extent to which forced migration strips people of their credentials. You were a doctor and you end up as a cleaner or a taxi driver because you are not national. I think that nationalism can be good or bad in this regard. The solution for the states is not to be more nationalist but it is to change the ability of countries to absorb and recognise immigrants. First, I don't think that abolishing national identities solves this problem, it is impossible and I think it misses the point. Secondly, we need to change the nation into a more open and accepting community. I do not agree with Brubaker and Cooper regarding the idea of "beyond identity". This reminds me of cosmopolitans who think that identity applies to old belongings and not the new ones that we adopt.

Eliassi: Renato Rosaldo in his book *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis (1993)* talks about the nexus between citizenship, culture and power and discusses how dominant groups often escape being labelled as cultural/ethnic and assume post-ethnic or post-cultural identities.

Calhoun: There are groups who claim this. I think we should not accept their definitions that they are not cultural or claiming to be not ethnic but they look pretty white, they all speak English and it is not that there is no class, culture, ethnicity or race but it is their claims that they are not. We have to be careful to analyse their claims and describe their ideologies. It is right that there are groups who believe that they have transcended class, race and ethnicity but this is an ideology because they are not conscious about their new ways of being exclusive. They have a cultural identity and nobody has ever moved beyond cultures. I think that some people think that they have, but it is more a matter of cultural change and some people can become less focused on nations. That is true. You can become an officer of a multinational cooperation and really work multinationally. The corporate elite figure who travels around the world and speaks three languages and is cosmopolitan still has a cultural identity and a class identity and probably has a passport from a country that makes it easy for this person to cross the borders. So s/he is not stateless since his/her ability to travel is not based on his/her statelessness but

based on coming from a state with a respected passport. If you have a Sudanese passport, you will have problem at every border. There is a great deal of asymmetry and inequality in this regard. It is almost like this: that members of dominant groups misunderstand and misrecognise their particularities. People who are dominated are conscious of this because they face these inequalities every day. But those who are dominating can afford to forget about it because it works for them. It is a crucial form of privilege. If you do have a car, you do not think about people who do not have cars. There is always a forgetting about differences by those groups who are privileged.

Eliassi: In Oxford I interviewed a Kurdish refugee from Syria who said that he thinks daily about Kurdistan, Kurdish identity and being stateless. What do you think about this situation?

Calhoun: This is what I am trying to describe when I say that nationalism can sometimes be good as Benedict Anderson also indicates. Secondly, nationalism is not simply an intellectual mistake which I think Hobsbawm's position is about, that you should really read Marx and figure out that you should have a class identity and not a national identity. I say no, that Kurdish person is correctly grasping and it is not only sentimental but he is reminded that he should do things for his nation and it does matter.

Eliassi: One of the painful moments for those Kurds that I have interviewed in Sweden and the UK concerns the question: Where are you from? For many of them saying that they are Swedish or British citizens does not suffice as an answer to people's question about their belonging. Besides, many of these Kurds want to say that they are from Kurdistan. They want to adopt a Kurdistani identity. Some dominant nationals of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria contest Kurdistan's existence and tell the Kurdish migrants to show them Kurdistan on the map if it really exists.

Calhoun: Yes, where are you really from? Where are your parents really from? The aspiration to nation in that sense makes perfect sense in every one of the countries where there is a large numbers of Kurds. The Kurds lack political control over their country and they are not fully participating and integrated and do not have equal economic chances in these states. Now in Iraq they try to achieve these rights. Kurdistan is like a pie where Iran takes a part of the pie, Iraq takes a part of the pie, Syria takes a part of the pie and Turkey takes a part of the pie. So in each one of these countries someone else or an ideology is dominant and many of them have had a dominant ideology of nation and national building. For instance, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created modern Turkishness and Kurds were regarded as problematic to that project. More or less, the same thing happened with Baathists in Iraq and Syria that have had modernising nationalist regimes. If there had been no discrimination against the Kurds, if the national idea had really included equality for everyone, then there would have been less incentive to focus on the Kurdish identity, it might still have been an issue. You could say that it was overly cultural. But now it is always and in every case both cultural and material because there

are material consequences for admission to universities, for having books printed in your own language, for economic opportunities and for how you are treated by people sometimes. These are material conditions that Hobsbawm interprets wrongly and are not successfully grasped by the notion of class. They really do matter. Nationalist thinking, the idea that we (Kurds) need to have an independent Kurdistan is reinforced by genuine unequal material conditions of life and it is not an intellectual mistake. It is a problem because it is hard to form Kurdistan. It is hard not only against each of these states where Kurds are dominated, it becomes the case that Kurds from these states do not fully get along with each other. To form a Kurdistan, it is both a project of unifying Kurds and of separating Kurds from others. This is true for almost every national project in their earlier performative stages. A national project has to make national unity as well as make a successful claim for autonomy from others. It can be done in progressive ways with certain ideologies or in very regressive ways. Many nationalist movements are very bad on gender. They accept very unequal patriarchal gender relationships and they even incorporate them into their idea of nation and say: "This is our tradition and we have to protect our traditions." But some national movements are different and they say that the modern national idea is that women are also part of the nation. Women should also have rights. The PKK has been relatively successful in this regard. That also applies to the Eritrean national liberation movement. These nationalist groups are often more socialist and have transformative ideas about women's rights. Many within the PKK have the idea that the revolution is both social and national at the same time. The PKK has viewed modernising Kurdish lives and gender relations within the Kurdish society as part of its social and national movement.

Eliassi: How do you relate to the idea of dominating and dominated nationalism?

Calhoun: That is an important question. Nationalisms vary in terms of whether they are aspirational like Kurdish nationalism and Palestinian nationalism that are seeking a state and those who are defending a state, like we already have a state and we need to defend it against outsiders. There are dominating and dominated nationalisms in every case. Even in France that we think is the extreme case of national formation. Well, to be from Béarn (Pierre Bourdieu's birthplace) is to be a dominated version of being French compared to being from Paris and belonging to the elites there. Everywhere there is dominated and dominating nationalism. Nationalism is shaped by the extent in which it is in one position or the other. That can be the whole nation in relation to a colonial rule but it also is inside the nation in relation to national identity. So you have a dominant version of the national identity in most countries and this is one of the things that is not consistently grasped when talking about nationalism. The idea that it is just a fact of cultural and ethnic unity is always misleading because it is always a project of greater or less inclusion. And it comes with various sorts of baggage of inequality and regional differentiations. Many people are strongly nationalist but they can say that this

region is better than that region. National idea should be somehow about levelling inequalities but it does not always do that.

Eliassi: Italy is a good example.

Calhoun: Yes, Italy is an excellent example. China is another example. There is an idea that inner China is somehow more Chinese. On the one hand, there is an idea that if you are Chinese then you are Chinese, on the other hand, if you are from this core (inner China) region, then you are more Chinese. If you are from the Han national identity, you are more Chinese. The Han identity is regarded as defining the Chinese identity and Chinesness. But there are a number of people who are from other groups in China and they speak different languages. Chinese is the same written language everywhere but a different spoken language in different part of China and not often mutually intelligible. In China, when you go to an academic conference, the Chinese often have to pass each other notes to explain what they are saying to each other. One is speaking Cantonese and one is speaking Mandarin for example. It is the exact same writing but different spoken language, different numbers of tones. The same word can mean mother in one language and horse in the other. The point is that there is a strong national consciousness in China and claims to Chineseness but it is internally differentiated. Some people in China claim it more and often in a powerful way. So the subaltern and dominant division goes on even within the nation as well as between nationalisms and outside dominations.

Eliassi: To what extent have conceptualisations of statelessness changed in the 20th and 21st centuries? (Starting with Hannah Arendt.)

Calhoun: A lot. Arendt says her key things about statelessness in around the years of World War II and in relation to the massive refugee displacements. Her idea of statelessness is shaped hugely by the experience of the Jews but also others. The Jewish experience is one of a long history of partial assimilation and of movement, statelessness and vulnerability and attacks. A distinctive feature of contemporary statelessness is the claims of territory. Arendt was not specifically Zionist and did not support Israel. For Palestinians, for Kurds and other stateless nations, there is a clear idea about where their states should be. The problem is that these territories are not recognised as their states. The Kurds know their territories but other people do not recognise it or let them have it. From '50s to the present, the world is much more interconnected by a range of international treaties and human rights recognition, protocols and agencies for dealing with statelessness. We have a more organised response to it. In the last 30 or 40 years, it has been a world of finance capitalism and rapidly accelerating globalisation and in that world, there is a return to migration levels compared to the post-war period that were very high. Some stateless groups were able to gain state membership and some were not. So it was not a general condition of statelessness and with all states trying to claim more or less birth-right nationalism (citizenship). Gaining a formal citizenship has increased although Europe is now trying to close down

its borders. The big change from Hannah Arendt's time is that it was much more possible in 2000s to actually get a formal citizenship, so Sweden is a classic case in this regard. Do you become Swedish by getting a formal Swedish citizenship? It has double meaning. Yes, you can go to Swedish school, speak Swedish and have a Swedish passport, but you are not regarded as a real Swede because real Swede means ethno-nationalist. Many of contemporary stateless people are stateless with regard to a national identity but actually have a state status. The majority of Palestinians are able to get a passport in the United States or Europe, but some of them are in the extreme form of statelessness, living in refugee camps and have UNHCR documents. So I think that statelessness has become more complicated in that sense. Stateless people can be citizens in a state but that citizenship can be taken away from them. This is also what Hannah Arendt says in her work. The Jews were assimilated into the Germany society and when the Nazis came, the Jews were told that they were no longer Germans and took away their German citizenship. Arendt says that this can happen again. I think that there is always insecurity but it is not only that. What I want to say that there are two senses of statelessness, the extreme case of Palestinians living in Lebanon who do not have travel documents, and there is the case of diasporic people who may have felt permanent insecurity in whatever country they are in even if they have been given citizenship and right to social welfare and education and so forth. This feeling of statelessness does not go away and may take generations to fade away. The Roma phenomenon is about statelessness but it is also a denigrating view of Roma that Roma are a bad people.

Eliassi: Some of my Kurdish interviewees use the Roma as a metaphor for statelessness for not allegedly having a fixed territorial identity, a position that they want to escape and do not want to be associated with. Is it really possible to have a non-place identity?

Calhoun: The Jews are a good example. Zionism created a place identity for the Jews in Israel. Essentially Zionism wanted to say "We Jews need a place and a territory to anchor our Jewish identity". So territory is extremely powerful and there are all sorts of problems and issues with territory like wars over them but it is extremely powerful. At the same time, there are fairly strong national identities that do not have the same sort of state territories. The issue of Maldives, a people whose island is going to submerge because of global warming and what is going to mean to their national identity if there is a place where they are from and it is suddenly gone. They might end up in Australia or some other places and keep a national consciousness. So the relationship between the people who are national in somewhere else and national in the so called homeland is a big deal. I would guess that this is true for the Kurds. Though more Kurds are in some version of the potential Kurdistan proportionally, the number of the Palestinian case, the proportion that is somewhere else is much higher. And it really changes it when the national identity is kept alive by people who do not live in places that are not associated with the nation.

Eliassi: There are Palestinians who think that those Palestinians who left the country "betrayed" the Palestinian national home and pave the way for Israeli occupation and settlements.

Calhoun: Even Irish people who moved to the US. Why were American Irish people sending money to the Irish Republication Army? Yes, because they felt diasporic guilt.

Eliassi: How do you see the concept of a stateless diaspora?

Calhoun: I think that the concept makes sense and it matters a lot how people relate to potential states.

Eliassi: What do you think of a diasporic identity formation?

Calhoun: The diasporic people are more conservative about the national culture than the people living back in the homeland. This is partly because they are remembering how things were when they were there. So what they identify with is a national culture that is based on an idealised memory. For people who are somewhere else outside of the original homeland, they contrast their lives with the surrounding society and think of defending their identities and the national culture. It is easier for them to fossilise the national culture and have a more culturally conservative view of it because of the role it is playing in their life. You organise Kurdishness in the private realm of your life, so you have it on the weekend or the evening and it is less emphasised during the working day. It gets connected to those cultural activities which you can perform Kurdishness in some way. On the other hand, somebody is living in Anatolia, they Kurdish are all the time in a whole variety of different contexts. It is not the same sort of split between the Kurdish or the non-Kurdish part of life in the original homeland. That conservatism is fuelled by this split in diaspora.

Eliassi: What do you think of the concept of a stateless citizen?

Calhoun: Citizenship is such a state-centred concept. I interpret it as a metaphor than simply descriptive.

Eliassi: How can we explain that there are Kurds who enjoy Swedish/British citizenship although in subordinated terms but still claim statelessness?

Calhoun: I think that this has to do with a double consciousness that we do not have a state. The "we" that I identify with as a Kurd does not have a state but I do have a state in so far I can use my British or Swedish passport. I can vote and do things. But on which end, what counts as a valid "we". So in Sweden do you use "we" to include you and the Swedish and when? You are also aware of many contexts in Sweden that you are not part of a "we". This "us" and "them" reinforces this sense of statelessness.

Eliassi: Do you think that the "crucial audience" which scholars like Richard Kiely, Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone (2005) use in their article *Birth, blood and belonging: Identity claims in post-devolution Scotland,* to identify the

dominant group impinges on the identity formation of stateless people to define themselves as stateless?

Calhoun: Yes, it impinges on it a lot. In general dominant identity impinges on their identity formation. But how important it is to maintain a strong sense of belong to the diasporic nation rather than the host nation varies with how welcoming the host nation is and how much opportunity you get for integration. So you have a number of cases, Sweden is one, of countries that at certain times are open in the sense that is relatively easy to get formal citizenship but they are closed in the sense that it is hard to become a cultural member. That contrasts with the US, where it is sometimes goes up and down how hard or easy it is to get a formal citizenship. But it is easier to become a cultural member because the cultural self-understanding in the US is based on a mosaic of different cultures. It is easier if you are white than if you are non-white to be included. I think the more the host nation makes it hard to integrate and fully belong and be accepted, the more people will continue to have their main sense of identity located in distant, potential homelands.

Eliassi: Eleonore Kofman in an article about the *Figures of the cosmopolitan: Privileged nationals and national outsiders* (2005) talks about the Jews in Europe as being historically conceived as *outsider within,* which partially resembles the contemporary anti-Muslim debates in Europe. Yet, Jews were historically regarded as fully assimilated and thus presented as a danger. Today, the Muslims are regarded as segregated and living in parallel societies in Europe.

Calhoun: This sounds true to me. That is an interesting topic to study regarding when are the exotic outsiders attractive and when they are bad. In Germany, a hundred years ago, there was a kind of intellectual culture that was very engaged with Islam in a stylised Orientalist way, a cultural appropriation was going on and partly because there were not any actual Muslims there. The Muslims who were there were sort of attractive and exotic, while the Jews were regarded as a problem for the Germans. Then it changes. Now, the German consciousness says that the Muslims are the problem and there are too many of them here and what they are doing here is changing the identity of Germany. Muslim cultures are no longer attractive and fascinating. On the other hand, after the Holocaust, there is a sort of attractive fascination with the Jews, when Jews show up in Germany, they are proving that Germany is no longer the bad Germany and it is experienced as something very positive. See! Jews are here and we are not bad Germans like our grandparents! So there has been a reversal of position for the Muslims and the Jews.

Eliassi: Can you say something about stateless diasporas (e.g Kurdish and Tamil) and state-linked diasporas (e.g Turkish)?

Calhoun: It is a question of power and the double consciousness. When you are stateless, you always have to use other states to get in or get around and get anything done. The vulnerability to a constant kind of status injury or insult for being from a stateless side. Your example of the Kurd who wants to say that he is from Kurdistan but he cannot show Kurdistan to people on the

map. This is a status injury. Even if you come from a poor country, you have a country and there is a pride and you are on equal footing with everybody else who has a country. But if you come from a stateless situation, then you are in this disadvantage in certain way and vulnerable constantly to being insulted and put down by the difficulty to answer the question where you are from. What do we do about this? Most of the cosmopolitan theorists have said that we should all be stateless. But statelessness looks pretty terrible so we really should create possibilities of effective state membership and be open to redrawing boundaries. I do not think that solution is that everybody becomes stateless is very realistic. You have to deal with people who are stateless case by case and see what the possibilities are. But it is not easy. My prediction for the Kurds is not that there will be *a* Kurdistan but maybe two or three Kurdistans, not a unified Kurdistan. This will be terribly disruptive for Kurdish nationalism. It will not be easy just to say that we are all one and we are all Kurds. It will be like the Arabs. People want to be Arab but they are still Egyptians, Tunisians and Jordanians.

Eliassi: Why do you think that the nationalisms of dominant groups are regarded as inclusionary while the nationalisms of dominated groups as separatist when stateless people talk about national self-determination?

Calhoun: It is subversive when you want a state or want to change a state. If you belong to the dominating side of the state, you want to continue to be in charge of political control. It is not because that one is nationalist while the other is not. Many Americans usually say that America is not nationalist but multicultural, but indeed it is very nationalistic since it has a very dominant national culture and has the power to set the rule. The dominant groups are nationalist but they do not recognise it as such. That is one of the privileges of being dominant that you are able to see what you do as natural rather than see it as dominant. But if you are subordinated, you do not have that privilege. You know all the time that what you do is in this relationship.