



Debate on John Hutchinson's *Nations as Zones of Conflict*

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Introductory remarks

On 7 February 2007 the third *Nations and Nationalism* public debate took place at the London School of Economics on John Hutchinson's *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (Sage, 2005). The debate was introduced and chaired by Eric Kaufmann and three reviews of the book were presented, by Umut Özkirimli, Andreas Wimmer and Gerard Delanty. John Hutchinson replied to these presentations and the panel of speakers responded to questions and comments raised by the audience. This is a written version of the debate.

Eric Kaufmann: Introducing *Nations as Zones of Conflict*

This journal is of course associated with the great debate in historical sociology over the modernity of nations. Anthony Smith and Ernest Gellner largely set the terms of this debate within the walls of the LSE in the 1980s and 1990s. However, while younger writers as diverse as Rogers Brubaker and Andreas Wimmer have introduced their own novel interpretations of the modernist canon, there are actually very few 'second-generation' theorists of note working within the Smith-Armstrong tradition. The ethno-symbolist theory is instead reproduced, *incognito* (and with little critical reflection), in the mainstream of medieval or classical history, while primordialism thrives within evolutionary psychology. In the social sciences, by contrast, the reverse

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holds, and we instead see the routine (obligatory) critique of the ‘primordialist’ straw man but hear precious little from the straw man himself – whether primordialist or, as in John’s case, historical-culturalist. John Hutchinson is of course an exception to this rule, and, as a direct (methodological!) descendant of Anthony Smith, is uniquely placed to flesh out the contours of the ethno-symbolist school. In this debate, Umut Özkirimli claims that John Hutchinson has an identity crisis, caught between his postmodern and ethno-symbolic halves. One could take the psychoanalytic metaphor further, since John has needed to carve out a distinct academic identity for himself while working under his mentor’s formidable methodological umbrella. In this respect, this book represents a successful *debut* for John, in which this creative tension has produced something which, while recognisably Smithian, is also irreducibly Hutchinsonian.

Ethno-symbolism differs from primordialism in that it locates the power of national identity in history and cultural symbols rather than biology and evolutionary psychology. Biology is primordial, but cultures which carry historical memory are essentially confined to the period of written human history which emerged in Sumer after 6000 BC and involved aggregations of peoples into urban civilisations that transcend the scale of the local *gemeinschaft*. Smith and Armstrong both begin their sagas in classical rather than prehistoric times, and open the door to the idea that culture and history are not just so much evocative and qualitative embroidery, but have real social force. This is an argument which few modern historians and social scientists easily accept, given their preference for more concrete, easily measurable solids like income per head, boots on the ground or systems of government. Yet John Hutchinson convincingly argues that culture and history matter for politics. In so doing, he stands on the shoulders of giants like Anthony Smith and Chris Bayly.

I became interested in *Nations as Zones of Conflict* because it seemed to build on previous work and weld it more tightly together into a unified theory. In this sense, John’s most innovative chapters are the core ones (2–4), where he elaborates upon the ways in which conflicting interpretations of a nation’s ‘symbolic resources’ (see also, Zimmer 2003) actually reinforce the nation. This is a pointed riposte to a fashionable postmodernism which claims that divergent discourses of national identity reflect the meaninglessness of the entire concept and its fragmentation in the present day. Hutchinson accepts multiplicity, but contends that multiple discourses, by orienting themselves toward a common fund of symbols and the same referent, wind up reinforcing the nation. For instance, the divergent interpretations of Joan of Arc by French Republicans and Catholic monarchical conservatives demonstrate the trans-historical power of this particular resource (p. 38). Likewise, the recourse to conflicting ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ usable pasts within numerous Eastern European nations (like Hungary or Russia) reflects the continuing hold which different path-dependent symbolic layers exert over successive generations of social actors.

1 The 'layering' of pasts into which nationalists can dip is of course a product
2 of historical events, which are often contingent. Such events can also
3 reconfigure prevailing identity paradigms. It is a strength of John's work
4 that he recognises the limits of continuity and path-dependency, arguing for
5 the episodic nature of nationalism (p. 136). Major crises and threats are often
6 required to ignite 'hot' nationalism, but once ignited, nationalism often fills
7 space according to the lineaments of mytho-symbolic recipes bequeathed by
8 previous generations. Why did Zionists press for a homeland in Palestine
9 rather than in Uganda, where geopolitical considerations pointed to a path of
10 less resistance? This is the kind of question that cannot be addressed without
11 recourse to explanations like John's which peer at an ethnic or nation's stock
12 of symbolic resources. Why wouldn't Canada adopt a French past to more
13 easily secure its legitimacy and differentiate itself from the United States?
14 Here again, we see that real historical events (such as the founding of modern
15 Canada by English-speaking American Loyalists) bear a truth and lay down
16 resources which cannot simply be brushed aside in the name of contemporary
17 exigencies.

18 Yet it is simultaneously clear that not all national projects have premodern
19 blueprints, and that inter-generational national consciousness can be broken.
20 The Greek and Jewish cases provide prime examples. Even so, the fact that the
21 ancient Greeks existed is not without importance for modern Greek national-
22 ism. The national consciousness of the ancient Greek and modern Greek
23 may be radically different, but the very fact of an ancient Greek proper name
24 and culture has bequeathed a critical resource to modern Greek nationalists.
25 Some modern Ulster-Protestants may try and invent the notion a pre-
26 Plantation 'Cruithin' past, but this is a flimsy construct which is easily
27 lampooned by opponents and has failed to take root even amongst its target
28 audience. It is less easy to scoff at the connections – however interrupted –
29 between ancient and modern Greeks or Jews. Such multiple pasts are not
30 unified wholes, however, and serve as exemplars for competing ideologies:
31 traditionalism or modernism, equality or hierarchy. John makes this clear in
32 his discussion of Slavophiles and westernisers in Russia (p. 50), or of Anglo-
33 Saxonists and proponents of the Norman inheritance in Britain (pp. 82–3).
34 Overall, the mechanism of modern-premodern continuity is not an unbroken
35 consciousness but a recurrent revivalism. This is generated by the algorithms
36 encoded within seemingly inert cultural-historical resources whose latent
37 properties point towards answers to modern predicaments.

38 In his final chapter, John turns to examine globalisation, and makes the
39 point that globalisation is nothing new, but is a recurrent theme in human
40 history. As he notes here, 'imperial conquest, religious missions, migration
41 [and] economic expansion' bulked large even in premodern times. Some even
42 locate the previous apogee of globalisation in the period 1250–1350, before
43 the Mongol invasions upset the world system, leading eventually to the rise of
44 western Europe (Abu Lughod 1998). The corollary of this is that ethnic and
45 nation can coexist very nicely with globalisation, and global networks may

1 even help to spread the idea (p. 168). Along the way, John casts doubt on the
2 idea that the nation may be readily superseded. The EU, for example, is
3 heavily constrained by the intergovernmentalism and divergent 'European'
4 visions of its member states (pp. 182–3). Political Islam also expresses itself
5 primarily in national arenas, and even the explicitly universalistic Soviet
6 communism was directed by a Russian 'elder brother' (p. 181), not altogether
7 unlike France's claim to be the 'Eldest Daughter of the Church' in premodern
8 times.

9 In this debate, John is confronted by a series of critics who come
10 from the loosely defined 'modernist' mainstream of social science. Umut
11 Özkirimli cleverly utilises the metaphor of Veronika/Veronique to probe what
12 he sees as the inconsistency between John's 'postmodern' emphasis on
13 multiplicity and interruption, and his 'ethno-symbolist' insistence on
14 the ethnic origins of nations and national continuity. Andreas Wimmer
15 follows this up with a sophisticated methodological critique drawn from a
16 variable-centred social science approach worthy of King, Keohane and
17 Verba. Much of the critique is directed at the historical sociological
18 tradition of nationalism studies in general, whether ethno-symbolist or
19 modernist: that it selects cases to fit the theory ('case selection bias') and
20 hence cannot make statements which usefully compare against the random, or
21 typical, median case. How important are ethno-symbols in explaining
22 nationalist political movements? We cannot know unless we assess
23 their impact against a set of other covariates across a random, representative
24 range of cases, including dogs like the Frisians, Balinese and Savoyards
25 that didn't bark (i.e. are not 'selected on the dependent variable'). Later,
26 Wimmer adds a more normative dimension to his critique, accusing John
27 of reifying the nation as social actor, and, more seriously, of endorsing a
28 Herderian ontology which fails to see the potential for violence which is latent
29 within nationalism.

30 In contrast to Özkirimli and Wimmer, Gerard Delanty focuses upon
31 John's final chapter on globalisation and supranationalism. Here Delanty, a
32 noted expert on the relationship between the European Union and the
33 nation, concentrates his fire on John's dismissal of the cultural impact of
34 the European project. Gerard agrees with John that supranational and
35 cosmopolitan projects do not undermine the nation, but he claims that they
36 do alter the quality of national identity. Most national identities in Europe, he
37 claims, have adopted a European dimension. Here Delanty makes the
38 insightful observation that trans-national movements like Europeanisation
39 often operate through the prism of the nation, but are no less radical
40 for doing so.

41 All told, John's critics give him an excellent run for his money, and John
42 responds to them no less ably. What is beyond dispute is that John
43 Hutchinson has developed a new, more flexible ethno-symbolist theory which
44 helps to colour in many of the blank spaces which could be found in the
45 conceptual interstices of its predecessors.

Umut Özkirimli: The Double Life of John Hutchinson or Bringing Ethno-symbolism and Postmodernism Together

First, I would like to thank ASEN and in particular Eric Kaufmann and John Hutchinson for inviting me to this public debate on *Nations as Zones of Conflict*. I think many people who are here today, including the organizers, will be expecting me to criticize the book, given my earlier engagement with ethno-symbolism, but I would like to say, at the outset, that honouring these expectations will be a challenging task, for two simple reasons. First, *Nations as Zones of Conflict* has a lot to commend it; I am particularly taken by the discussion of Romanticism in Chapter 2 and of 'hot' and 'banal' nationalisms in Chapter 4. I also share some of the views expressed in the final chapter on globalization and the clash of civilizations – and in fact, an earlier version of this chapter was published in a book I edited in 2003. The second reason is closely related to the first; this is probably the first book written by an ethno-symbolist with which I concur so much, from a theoretical point of view. In fact, if you take the Introduction and Chapter 1 out, this is probably one of the finest examples of 'postmodernist' work in the field I have read in a long time! But of course Hutchinson never recants his past convictions, and ethno-symbolist theses continue to creep into his otherwise postmodernist analysis throughout the book, not just the first two chapters. This is precisely what I am going to talk about today.

More specifically, the question I want to pick up is the following: to what extent is the idea of 'nations as zones of conflict' compatible with ethno-symbolism? The reason I have decided to address this question is both academic and personal: academic, because answering this question may also shed some light on the wider questions of 'what is ethno-symbolism' and 'which ethno-symbolism', hence allowing us to revisit the foundational question of nationalism studies, that is, 'how to make sense of nationalism'; personal, because while reading this book, I suffered from a minor identity crisis, concerning my own position within the theoretical debate on nationalism, and found myself asking the ultimate existential question 'who am I'. More on this in the conclusion.

Hutchinson is very explicit about his intentions in the Introduction to his book. This interpretation, he says, 'seeks to combine two apparently antithetical approaches. The first is the long durée 'ethno-symbolic' framework developed by such scholars as John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith, which views nations as dynamic, long-term historical processes that structure the forms of modernity. The second is a 'postmodernist' framework (and here Hutchinson refers to my and Nira Yuval-Davis's work), which emphasizes that collectivities and individuals have multiple and conflictual identities over which there can be no final consensus' (p. 5). He then says he rejects the postmodernists' 'idealist and asociological voluntarism that ignores the binding power of identities when they are institutionalized'. Of course there is nothing in Yuval-Davis's or my work that suggests this, but I am sure there

1 are postmodernists out there who would make such a claim, so I am not going
 2 to dwell on this. But can the synthesis between ethno-symbolism and
 3 postmodernism work? I have my doubts. This is probably why *Nations as*
 4 *Zones of Conflict* reminded of one of the early movies of the late Polish
 5 director Krzysztof Kieslowski, *The Double Life of Véronique*. The movie was
 6 the story of a Polish music student, Weronika, and a French music teacher,
 7 Véronique, born on the same day and leading parallel lives, although they
 8 never meet each other, except a brief encounter in Krakow. Strangely enough,
 9 however, both women feel that ‘they are not alone’, sensing intuitively the
 10 existence of the other. As in the movie, there are two John Hutchinsons in this
 11 book, Hutchinson the postmodernist and Hutchinson the ethno-symbolist,
 12 who never come together, but have an intuitive knowledge of the other’s
 13 presence.

14 What does Hutchinson the postmodernist claim? He claims that ‘the past
 15 should be seen as a set of overlays of different and sometimes rival traditions
 16 that live as alternative repertoires available to be used at times of crises’
 17 (p. 27), that these differences seem to be systemic and ‘individuals adopt a
 18 range of heterogeneous positions and . . . shift between them’ (p. 78); that
 19 ‘national identities co-exist with other identities, and the salience of national
 20 identities may vary from country to country and may also fluctuate over time’
 21 (p. 116). According to Hutchinson the postmodernist, ‘nation-formation [is]
 22 an unfinished and evolving process. All nations, to a lesser or greater extent,
 23 contain plural ethnic repertoires that in the modern period become systemized
 24 into competing cultural and political projects’ (p. 193). Hence, ‘there can be
 25 no final definition of a national identity’ (p. 111).

26 But then there is also Hutchinson the ethno-symbolist who suggests an
 27 alternative model of nation-formation: ‘the enduring character of nations [is]
 28 based on a sense of being embedded in much older (ethnic) communities that
 29 have survived centuries of vicissitudes’ (p. 4). ‘In spite of significant
 30 differences between premodern and modern societies’, Hutchinson the
 31 ethno-symbolist says, ‘long-established cultural repertoires (myths, symbols
 32 and memories) are “carried” into the modern era by powerful institutions’
 33 (p. 41). But what is it that is ‘carried’ into the modern era? Didn’t Hutchinson
 34 the postmodernist tell us that there were indeed many competing, sometimes
 35 even conflicting, repertoires in each nation’s past? How can we talk about
 36 ‘much older ethnic communities’ surviving centuries of vicissitudes when in
 37 fact there are different visions or projects within each particular ethnic
 38 community? Which project survives the vicissitudes of history? Which
 39 project is taken up by latter-day nationalists? Why is this particular project
 40 chosen, and not the others? What happens to the other projects? Hutchinson
 41 the ethno-symbolist is undaunted by such questions. All projects, all cultural
 42 repertoires survive, he argues, and in fact ‘the preservation of persisting
 43 differences and rival cultural repertoires is one of the most important reasons
 44 for the adaptability of the nation throughout two centuries of tumultuous
 45 change’ (p. 5). He continues: ‘The long historical perspective of nationalists

1 . . . inspires the capacity of communities to overcome disaster by mobilizing an
2 inner world of spiritual energies' (p. 37); 'the capacity of . . . national identities
3 to suborn other loyalties depended on whether or not they could attach
4 themselves to a distinctive and earlier ethno-cultural heritage that regulated
5 identities of family, class and religion' (p. 131). And here I am confused.
6 Which inner world would the nationalists mobilize if they have different views
7 about that inner world? Which earlier ethno-cultural heritage would they
8 attach themselves to if there are multiple ethno-cultural heritages competing
9 to be their object of loyalty? Didn't the meaning of these ethno-cultural
10 heritages change from one group to the next? Didn't Hutchinson the
11 postmodernist tell us that 'individuals adopt a range of heterogeneous
12 positions and . . . shift between them'? Some of these questions are also raised
13 by Hutchinson the postmodernist. 'On what grounds are specific historic pasts
14 selected as emblematic of the nation where there are multiple heritages . . . ?'
15 (p. 75), he asks. His reply, though not exhaustive, is spot on: 'Traumatic
16 historical events may appear to 'decide' in favour of a particular vision'
17 (p. 109). It is then that particular historical conditions, perhaps even
18 contingencies, help a particular vision establish its hegemony over others.
19 We might add to this the role of agency, or the interplay of interests and
20 power, the dire need of popular legitimacy, in determining the outcome of the
21 struggle for hegemony. Given that, we can argue that what matters is not the
22 existence of 'a distinctive and earlier ethno-cultural heritage', or a plurality of
23 it, but the choices of nationalist elites in the present, or the various historical
24 conditions that 'may appear to decide' in favour of a particular vision.

25 In any case, how could the existence of plural heritages contribute to a
26 sense of unity? Hutchinson the ethno-symbolist answers: 'The protagonists in
27 these cultural wars may share (perhaps unwittingly) many assumptions, and
28 that, where there is a common ethnic substratum, ideological competition
29 defines and elaborates a national identity' (p. 103). Moreover, 'rivals validate
30 their vision by reference to an authentic past', and the effect of this is 'to
31 define, codify and elaborate the characteristics of the nation. Out of the
32 debates about the authenticity of certain figures or practices, an internaliza-
33 tion of national values takes place' (*ibid.*). But how can an internalization of
34 national values take place if protagonists have different national values in
35 mind? What is the common ethnic substratum that Hutchinson the ethno-
36 symbolist talks about? How can Hutchinson the postmodernist and Hutch-
37 inson the ethno-symbolist coexist when one talks about the plurality of ethnic
38 heritages, conflicting views about what a nation is, the other talks about a
39 common ethnic substratum, an inner world of spiritual energies?

40 Hutchinson the ethno-symbolist's discussion of national symbols, based on
41 concrete examples, intensifies my sense of confusion. Take the case of Joan of
42 Arc. I am told, and I really don't know by which Hutchinson, that 'Action
43 Française monarchists sought to reclaim her for the extreme right, while the
44 communists in the 1930s attempted to win Catholic working-class support
45 for the Popular Front by depicting her as a member of the proletariat

1 betrayed by the ruling classes' (p. 104). Now how can Joan of Arc be a symbol
2 of national unity? As I read it, this tells me that Joan of Arc means different
3 things to different groups, that different groups appropriate her to 'legitimize'
4 their claim to represent the nation. Now I know that Hutchinson the ethno-
5 symbolist would intervene here and say: 'Precisely. Why would different
6 groups feel the need to appeal to the figure of Joan of Arc if they didn't think
7 it would legitimize their claims, that it would resonate among the masses?
8 Why would they turn to a symbol of the past if the past didn't matter at all?'
9 But this begs the question. First of all, the appeal to the past is a characteristic
10 of the 'modern' discourse of nationalism, and as such, cannot be used to
11 justify the resilience of premodern ethnic symbols. Let us not forget that Joan
12 of Arc started to matter only in the age of nationalism. It is the modern
13 discourse of nationalism that redefines Joan of Arc as an 'ethnic' or 'national'
14 symbol retrospectively, and what matters is not the existence of Joan of Arc as
15 such, but the meaning given to her in the age of nationalism. Moreover, this
16 meaning, as Hutchinson the postmodernist reminds us, changes from one
17 group to the next, and fluctuates over time. In short, the appropriation of
18 Joan of Arc in the age of nationalism tells us nothing about its resilience or its
19 appeal. If Joan of Arc did not exist, nationalists would have found another
20 symbol, and in fact, there are many symbols that are not taken up by
21 nationalists, and condemned to oblivion. To put the point more rhetorically,
22 if Joan of Arc did not exist, she had to be invented!

23 In sum, I do not see how the suggested synthesis between ethno-symbolism
24 and postmodernism can work. But there is also another issue here. I think the
25 ethno-symbolism portrayed here has little in common with classical ethno-
26 symbolism as defined by Anthony D. Smith, who talks about 'shared
27 memories of golden ages, ancestors and great heroes and heroines, the
28 communal values that they embody, the myths of ethnic origins, migration
29 and divine election, the symbols of community, territory, history and destiny
30 that distinguish them' (2001: 119). Hutchinson the postmodernist, on the
31 other hand, talks about 'multiple and competing allegiances', 'long-running
32 cultural conflicts', 'rival traditions', heterogeneous and shifting positions. This
33 is a futuristic ethno-symbolism, so to speak, an ethno-symbolism that
34 acknowledges plurality and change more than its classical predecessor. But
35 can ethno-symbolism, which is basically a story of continuity and recurrence,
36 survive this amendment? Didn't ethno-symbolism claim that modern nation-
37 alists are constrained by the existence of pre-modern cultural repertoires
38 which resonate among the masses? But to what extent are nationalists
39 constrained if there are indeed many different, sometimes conflicting, cultural
40 repertoires which are open to constant change, innovation and reinterpretation?
41 Which particular repertoire resonates among the masses? How do
42 nationalists know which repertoire will resonate among the masses? Don't
43 they in fact invest enormous amounts of energy and resources to make their
44 particular vision resonate? And what happens to the meaning of ethno-
45 cultural heritages once they are adopted by nationalists? Do they remain the

1 same? Hutchinson the postmodernist actually answers this question: cultural
2 nationalists, or what he calls 'moral innovators', are 'engaged in an internal
3 transformation of tradition', he says, an unpredictable process which oper-
4 ated 'in part through trial and error, because the search for the nation
5 revealed unsuspected pasts, cultural practices, 'hidden' sacred sites and
6 communities' (p. 192). But to what extent does the outcome of this unpre-
7 dictable process, which operates through trial and error, resemble the original
8 tradition? Where is continuity, which is key to the ethno-symbolist story? To
9 what extent does the past matter if moral innovators can indeed discover
10 'unsuspected pasts', 'hidden sacred sites and communities'? Don't we need to
11 put the stress on the discovery process itself, and not what is discovered, as
12 indeed Hutchinson the postmodernist does in most of the book?

13 Enough questions . . . I think Hutchinson's revisions define ethno-symbo-
14 lism out of existence or reduce it to an approach which merely appreciates the
15 significance of myths and symbols in the construction of nations, an insight
16 that all participants to the theoretical debate on nationalism, past or present,
17 primordialist or postmodernist, would readily embrace. I am afraid Hutch-
18 inson the postmodernist prevails over Hutchinson the ethno-symbolist!

19 I would like to end with a note on my personal identity crisis. It is quite
20 simple actually. I also talk about contingency, plurality, heterogeneity and
21 change, and I get to be called a 'postmodernist', and of course, Hutchinson is
22 not the only one who calls me that. Then he talks about the same, and he is
23 called an 'ethno-symbolist'. Which one is true? Is Hutchinson a postmodernist
24 too, or am I an ethno-symbolist? Or are we both postmodern ethno-symbo-
25 lists? Are we Weronika or Véronique? I am truly confused. I would be very
26 grateful to you John, if you can help me out of this impasse!

27 28 29 **Andreas Wimmer: How to Modernise Ethno-Symbolism**

30 Professor Hutchinson's book represents perhaps the best available synthesis
31 of the 'ethno-symbolist' school of nations and nationalism that Anthony
32 Smith proclaimed some time ago. John Hutchinson's book, however, also
33 goes beyond recasting these well known positions. Reading it is an intellec-
34 tually much more stimulating experience than skimming through a family
35 album of old arguments. In Chapters 3 and 4, he outlines a new perspective on
36 the rise of nationalism which emphasizes its internal heterogeneity and its
37 conflictual nature. In this reader's eyes, this is the most original part of the
38 book and the one that inspired its title. I will limit myself to a discussion of
39 some of the most pertinent ideas that these two chapters offer.

40 Contrary to the somewhat rosy picture that modernists paint of the
41 integrative functions of nationalism and the nation-state, the national domain
42 is one of internal struggle and conflict, John Hutchinson convincingly argues.
43 These conflicts revolve around the question of which of the various lines of
44 ethnic descent that have nourished the national family in the past matter most

1 for its future. In France, to give one example, a Gallo-Roman-republican-
2 secular, a Bonapartist-imperialist, and a Frankish-Catholic-conservative
3 interpretation of the nationalist project have struggled with each other for
4 centuries. In the author's view, these struggles do not simply reflect competi-
5 tion between factions, regions or classes over the control of the national
6 movement or the nation-state, as in most other approaches. Rather, they
7 result from the continued relevance of the various extant ethnic traditions
8 when romantic nationalism enters the stage of history. These older ethnic
9 traditions compete with each other for a privileged place in the nationalist
10 movement. Nationalist discourse therefore is multi-layered and offers various
11 conflicting interpretations of the common history. These various interpreta-
12 tions develop a life of their own, mold the competing political projects and put
13 them onto the tracks of path-dependency. What are the consequences of such
14 heterogeneity and conflictivity, Professor Hutchinson asks? The competition
15 between various brands of nationalism has a positive effect on the life of a
16 nation. Such competition provides a nation with a range of alternative modes
17 of political orientation and thus increases its capacity to react to outside
18 challenges in a flexible and adaptive way. Furthermore, conflicts over the
19 nationalist doctrine may reinforce, rather than weaken it: The more prota-
20 gonists fight over the correct interpretation of the nation's mission, the more
21 they reinforce the implicit agreement that indeed there *is* a nation and that it
22 *does* have a world historical mission.

23 John Hutchinson deserves much praise for offering such a thorough
24 analysis of the internal conflicts and debates among nationalists of various
25 leanings. His analysis of the layered character of nationalist myths, the
26 internal heterogeneity and conflictual nature of nationalist discourse, as
27 well as the episodic nature of nationalist mobilization represents a consider-
28 able step forward towards a more differentiated view of the nature of
29 nationalism. This overcomes both the idealistic tendencies of earlier ethno-
30 symbolist accounts and the functionalism of some modernist writings. I am
31 sorry to report, however, that I disagree with his *explanation* of such
32 heterogeneity and conflict and with the *methodologies* he chooses to make
33 his case. In what follows, I will limit myself raise four main points. Trying to
34 be as constructive and helpful as possible, I will hint at possible ways of
35 overcoming these problems in order to make the ethno-symbolist argument
36 more convincing and thus future debates in our field, well, more fun.

37 *Assumption of uniformity*

38 Professor Hutchinson assumes that all nations and national histories are
39 shaped by the same forces in similar ways. There is one, universal story to tell.
40 This assumption plagues the historical sociology of nationalism in general,
41 not only its ethno-symbolist variant. It is all the more deplorable because it
42 leads to a systematic lack of attention to variation. Might it be that some
43 nationalist discourses are more characterized by internal conflicts than others?

1 Could it even be that in some countries the major political conflicts have
2 developed between nationalism on the one hand and non-nationalist forces,
3 such as the Communist International, or an ultramontane Catholicism, or a
4 pan-national Islamism, on the other hand, while in other places, the major
5 dividing lines indeed run through the nationalist camp, as John Hutchinson's
6 analysis foresees? And instead of assuming the benevolent functions of
7 nationalist dissent, would it perhaps be more fruitful to ask under which
8 conditions intra-nationalist debates lead to conflict and war and under which
9 conditions this has not been the case? Instead of trying to find the universal
10 form, the essence, the inner truth of nationalism in all of its manifestations, we
11 should pay attention to such variation in its appearance and consequence.
12 This will lead us away from the somewhat romantic pre-occupation with the
13 question 'what is the nation' to the more analytical question of how to
14 comparatively explain the varied manifestations and diverging consequences
15 of nationalism.

16 *Sampling on the dependent variable*

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19 Secondly, John Hutchinson's book and ethno-symbolism more generally
20 samples on the dependent variable when trying to establish its claims
21 empirically. To choose less technical language, authors in that tradition
22 privilege examples which display the characteristics predicted by their theory,
23 a point raised many times by earlier critiques of ethno-symbolism (e.g.
24 Breuilly 2005). They look for continuity between ethnic pasts and nationalist
25 presents, and find it. They look for cases where intra-nationalist debates are
26 shaped by diverging ethnic sub-currents, and find it. There is no systematic
27 discussion of cases that do not fit the scheme, even if some of them are
28 mentioned *en passant* in this book (the Turks; the Slovaks). One could add
29 many other examples, however. Debates over the future of the Swiss nation
30 are *not* shaped by the divergent French, German, and Italian-speaking ethnic
31 traditions; today's debates in Germany are not, contrary to what Professor
32 Hutchinson writes, a re-iteration of older controversies about a *Kleindeutsch*
33 or a *Grossdeutsch* solution to the national question or about whether the
34 German nation should be defined by contrast to its republican neighbours to
35 the West and North. Moreover, some currents of nationalist thinking *have*
36 disappeared and do no longer shape the nationalist imagination. The racist,
37 eugenicist versions of nationalism, which dominated thinking from the 1890s
38 onwards, are no longer alive in the West.

39 To advance the arguments made in the ethno-symbolist tradition, one
40 would have to overcome this case selection bias and adopt a more systematic
41 research methodology where the choice of examples would NOT be deter-
42 mined by the degree of fit with the argument. Otherwise we will go on
43 endlessly citing examples and counter-examples without ever bothering to fit
44 the various pieces into what might turn out to be a solvable puzzle. Too much
45 of the literature in nationalism studies (including some of my own writing) is

1 an exercise in throwing up examples in the air without offering any guidance
 2 to the stunned reader as to how to catch them when they come down again.
 3 Comparative nationalism studies should be an exercise in juggling, if I may
 4 pursue the metaphor further to the point of *catachresis*, rather than skeet
 5 shooting.
 6

7 *Endogeneity*

9 Third, Hutchinson's ethno-symbolist argument struggles with endogeneity
 10 problems caused by the *ex-post-factum* mode of historical explanation, which
 11 again is characteristic of many other currents of thinking, but particularly
 12 endemic to writings in the ethno-symbolist tradition (cf. the earlier critique
 13 raised by Gellner 1996). One example from the book may suffice here. Why
 14 is Italy a weaker nation-state than Germany? Because its ethnic substratum is
 15 weaker, Professor Hutchinson argues, not bothering to explore the rich
 16 possibilities that the Roman legacy obviously offered to Italian nation-
 17 builders.

18 In order for such arguments to be plausible, one would have to develop a
 19 way to determine the strength of a group's symbols, myths, and memories
 20 *independently* of whether or not they have developed strong nationalisms later
 21 on. And one would then have to systematically show that groups with *strong*
 22 mythomoteurs have indeed developed *stronger* nationalism than others, all
 23 other things being equal. Unfortunately, the *ceteris* often refuse to be *paribus*.
 24 Some nationalist movements can rely on an existing network of political
 25 alliances, such as provided by tribal ties, trading networks, or the organiza-
 26 tional infrastructure of a church. How can we know that it is the relative
 27 power of symbols that explains the success and failure of various nationalist
 28 movements, rather than such organizational factors, if we do not even attempt
 29 some sort of controlled comparison in the tradition of comparative historical
 30 sociology (Mahoney 2004)?

31 *Romantic ontology*

32 Fourth, ethno-symbolism builds its arguments on a romantic ontology. It is
 33 not individual or collective actors who do things to each other, pursue
 34 political projects, and ally with each other or fight. In the world of ethno-
 35 symbolism, it is nations, myths and memories that *do* such things. 'National
 36 identities', writes Professor Hutchinson on the very first page (1), 'remain . . . a
 37 living force . . . , organizing individual and collective activities'. Here we have
 38 a theory of the nation as a living organism with a lifespan of centuries and
 39 millennia . . . a view that bears more than a family resemblance to that of the
 40 eighteenth century philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (Herder 1968
 41 [1784–1791]), the intellectual father of all nationalist thinkers. On page 94,
 42 such conflicts are 'strengthening the nation as it navigates the many challenges
 43 . . . of the modern world'. Again in Herderian fashion, the nation appears as

1 the subject of human history (cf. also pp. 7, 28, 45, 90). Note that this
2 represents not just a terminological slippage, a convenient metaphor or simply
3 a *façon de parler*, but a core theoretical argument. Without the claim that
4 myths, symbols and memories have transhistorical power shaping human
5 action over the course of centuries, the ethno-symbolist program would
6 collapse into the simple argument that historically constituted cultural frames,
7 including the concept of national identity, matter for processes of political
8 mobilization (see Snow et al. 1986).

9 Such an approach would not only be simpler, but also more convincing.
10 Without attributing agency to nations, myths, symbols and memories, ethno-
11 symbolists (thus perhaps converted to 'post-ethno-symbolism'?) would show
12 why political actors have strong reasons to identify with a certain concept of
13 the nation (rather than another, or with a social class ideology). Further, they
14 would show why actors continue to find meaning in an ethnic myth even in the
15 national age, or uphold and pass on a specific ethnic memory even in
16 dramatically changing circumstances. Such analysis would then proceed to
17 show how exactly how these ethno-cultural frames, once adopted and
18 transmitted, reduce the universe of possible political options for actors in
19 such a way as to produce the path dependency effects (Mahoney 2000)
20 claimed by ethno-symbolism. But it would *also* identify the conditions under
21 which existing ethnic and nationalist frames do NOT produce such effects. It
22 would go on to specify when frames produce radical re-interpretations of who
23 belongs and who does not, of which memories are relevant as templates for
24 future political action, and of which symbols are worth struggling for. Such
25 moments of historical openness are called 'critical junctures' in political
26 science jargon (Collier and Collier 1991), or 'turning points' in sociological
27 lingo (Abbott 2001: ch. 8), or simply 'events' in historical sociology and
28 anthropology (Sewell 1996).

29 This more sophisticated, or dare I say 'modern', approach regarding how
30 culture affects agency would immediately bring politics back in to the picture
31 as well, which is strikingly absent from Hutchinson's analysis, even if he is
32 concerned with political events throughout his book and introduces political
33 factors in an ad hoc manner now and then. According to his analysis,
34 struggles over the meaning of the nation are not driven by the quest for
35 power and recognition by various actors or coalitions of actors, but by the
36 memories and myths which seem to lead a life of their own and breathe, like
37 Herder's *Volksggeist*, through the bodies of the nation. Professor Hutchinson
38 even explicitly rejects the idea that the internal debates are driven by divergent
39 interests, by political struggles over who belongs and who does not belong to
40 the core of the national project and so forth. He argues that such an approach
41 would fail to explain why various groups with diverging interest share similar
42 nationalist language. He seems to be unaware of the notion of coalition and
43 alliance, quite elementary concepts in political sociology, which explain this
44 phenomenon effortlessly and without recurrence to a rather mystical 'power
45 of symbols' argument.

1 *Does nationalism breed violence or violence breed nationalism?*

2 This brings me to the last weakness that I would like to briefly discuss here,
3 which is another consequence of the absence of politics in Professor
4 Hutchinson's analysis. What I find most surprising, given the title of the
5 book, is the overwhelmingly positive evaluation of nationalism's role in the
6 modern world. John Hutchinson's book remains silent about what many
7 authors see as the defining feature of nationalism: that according to its
8 political ideology each state should represent and house *one* nation. The
9 spread of nationalism into a world dominated by multi-national imperial
10 states was, therefore, one of the most important sources of conflict and war.
11 My own research shows, on the basis of quantitative analysis, that the spread
12 of the nation-state is indeed responsible for most of the wars in the modern
13 world (Wimmer and Min 2006).

14 In Hutchinson's book, however, wars are treated as *external* events, as
15 quasi-natural catastrophes to which peoples *react* with increased nationalism.
16 Nationalism is 'a pacific movement', the author writes on page 70. While he
17 mentions nationalist wars of independence on the following page in an almost
18 embarrassed tone, quickly moving on to analyse how such wars thicken
19 nationalist myths of heroism and sacrifice, there is no analysis of what leads to
20 such wars in the name of the nation. And there can be no such analysis within
21 the framework of this book because it treats nationalism as a cultural
22 movement, rather than a political ideology demanding a state for each nation,
23 the crucial point of the early, 'pre-ethno-symbolist' writings of Anthony Smith
24 (Smith 1984a) and most of the so called 'modernist' school (e.g. Breuilly 1993;
25 Gellner 1983; Wimmer 2002).

26 Blinding out the war-proneness of nationalism and the historic role that it
27 had in the military mobilization of the masses quite simply risks of getting the
28 history of nationalism over the past 200 years wrong. It looks at that history
29 from the humanistic point of view of Herder's eighteenth century, when the
30 prospect for nationalism to morally educate peoples to a higher level of shared
31 humanity was not yet tarnished by the subsequent catastrophes that it has
32 brought to peoples across the world. It seems that ethno-symbolism's fore-
33 most task for its future development might be to swim free from the Herderian
34 currents of thinking that it has mapped out with so much empathy, clarity and
35 subtlety.

36 **Gerard Delanty: The Three Faces of the Nation**

37 I was interested to read this book since its author has written what in my
38 personal estimation is one of the finest works on Irish cultural nationalism
39 (Hutchinson 1987). With this book under discussion John Hutchinson has
40 established a strong argument on the cultural foundations of nationalism. It
41 is a work deeply grounded in historical knowledge and is full of fascinating
42 insights. But it is guided by a big idea and one that I wish to engage with in

1 this critical comment with respect to some claims that only become evident in
2 the final chapter.

3 Hutchinson has provided a convincing critique of the so-called modernist
4 conception of nationalism for its relative neglect of the deeper cultural aspects
5 of nationalism and he gives an interesting and robust account of nationalism
6 as a powerful current in the world today (although I note most of his examples
7 relate to Europe). On the whole I have little to dispute with the general claims
8 put forward in this book, which is a significant work in the field and should
9 be seen as a major corrective of the modernist approach.

10 In this short critical note I address myself to the final chapter, 'Nationalism
11 and the Clash of Civilizations'. Before I do so, I wish to make a few general
12 observations on the argument as a whole since I would like to refer to some
13 aspects of the general argument to disagree with the claims made in this
14 chapter and the general conclusions that follow from what appears to be the
15 central argument of the book. Reading the book for the first time, I thought
16 the final chapter was the weaker one, but on closer inspection I have reached
17 the view that the weakness of the argument is a consequence of a problem
18 with the more general thesis and is less evident in the other chapters where the
19 examples taken tend to suggest an ethno-symbolist approach.

20 I entirely agree with what I understand to be a central argument of the
21 book that conceptions of the nation are very often, if not always, divided. As
22 he says on p. 121 '... the unified mass nation is something of a myth, and ...
23 there are always multiple and competing allegiances ...'. Like Hutchinson, I
24 have also been struck by the fact that divisions within the national community
25 are often more significant than conflicts with others. This way of looking at
26 nationhood tends to shift the emphasis away from Self vs. Others to conflicts
27 within the Self. Now, I do think this is an important argument and one that
28 does not fit too well with the claim that nationalism is rooted in a common
29 cultural/ethnic community and for this reason is enduring. His argument in
30 Chapter 3 – in my view the most interesting part of the book and by far the
31 most original and insightful chapter – that there are competing interpretations
32 of the nation suggests a conception of nationalism as a field of interpretations.
33 In my view this does not necessitate a view of it as a field of conflicts and –
34 when we get to Chapter 5 – clashes between different worldviews, civilizations,
35 and societies (although I recognise he disagrees with Huntington). In essence,
36 I think the argument overplays the 'quasi-ethnic nature' of nationalism and
37 reduces the problems of the present day to premodern forces.

38 At this point I can put my main criticism, which I want to take up
39 specifically with respect to Chapter 5. Nations are internally contested, due to
40 different interpretations of nationhood, and are not homogenous and unified.
41 This operates not only on the political level but also on the cultural level of
42 ethnic attachments. Hutchinson relies too much on a primordial notion of
43 ethnicity that always defines the field of nationhood. With his target a neatly
44 defined take on the modernist position this all makes sense and is not
45 objectionable – especially with respect to the historical national identity

1 projects of the modern era. But when it comes to some aspects of the current
2 situation I think there are some problems and the terms of the analysis are
3 simply not robust enough. It is easy to oppose statist concepts of national
4 identity with an approach that emphasises the ethnic component, but what is
5 lost in this is the civic dimension of nationalism, which is arguably a third
6 dimension of nationalism. This is a dimension that is lost both to the
7 modernists and to their ethno-symbolist critics, such as Hutchinson and
8 Smith. Let me make clear, it is not my intention to refute the ethno-symbolist
9 position advanced in this book, nor is it my aim to defend the modernist
10 statist approach, but to argue for this third dimension of nationhood. I would
11 prefer to see nationalism theorised in terms of political/state, civic, and ethnic/
12 cultural forces than any one or two of these elements (Delanty 2003, 2002). It
13 is the interaction of these forces that explains the durability and versatility of
14 nationalism.

15 In my view, the limits of both the position John Hutchinson is criticizing
16 and his own alternative are evident in the argument advanced in the final
17 chapter that there can be no real sense of national community beyond the
18 national one. Many relevant points are made, but here his target is the
19 European equivalents – who are rarely identified – of the modernists
20 unmasked in Chapter 1. There are three relevant considerations here.

21 The first is the claim that he has made against the obviously mistaken view
22 of European identity as an alternative national identity. As he points out
23 (p. 171), most conceptions of European identity have been articulated through
24 the very category of the nation and not against it. The notion of Europe is
25 indeed indeterminate, but, I would argue, so too is the category of the nation.
26 In any case, he reverts to a view of the European project as one that is
27 overcoming nations – as opposed to nationalism – and is only upheld by elites.
28 Undoubtedly there are some Euro elites who see as their aim the overcoming
29 of nationality and nationhood, but this is only one dynamic and I would argue
30 a minor aspect of Europeanization, which has in most of its processes
31 operated through the category of the nation. We also need to be cautious
32 of equating nationality and nationhood with nationalism. I do think nation-
33 alism has been considerably diluted as a result of Europeanization, but I
34 would not claim that this is true of nationhood. Again, as in the critique of the
35 modernists, but more forcibly here since there is no Gellner and the like to
36 contend with, Hutchinson has set up a fairly simple target that is easy to hit.
37 His target is the supranational conception of Europe (41Delanty 2005).
38 Neglected in it is the tremendous transformation of nationality that has
39 been a feature of the past few decades. In this context the civic tradition is
40 particularly relevant. It is too simple to claim that the European project has
41 operated only on the political level: the reality is that it has penetrated the
42 cultural and moral fabric of European societies to a considerable extent.
43 There is now a convincing empirical and scholarly literature documenting the
44 Europeanization of collective identities (Herrmann, 2004). The claim, which is
45 on the face of it correct, that Europeanization is dominated by national

1 interests (p. 177) fails to see that the national project has been transformed by
2 Europeanization and that the relation between both is a reflexive one, each
3 being transformed by the other (as well as many other forces, such as
4 regionalization).

5 This is an argument that is not specific to Europeanization, but is relevant
6 to wider processes of globalization. Again here the target is too simple, for
7 I do not think there are many who argue that globalization makes the nation
8 state redundant. It has been recognized by several theorists that globalization
9 does not simply undermine nationhood, but offers it new opportunities to
10 reinvent itself. What we need now to address in greater detail is less the
11 consequences of modernity for nationalism than the relation of globalization
12 to nationalism and nations.¹

13 This brings me to the third point, the civic dimension of nationalism. By
14 this I mean a view of the nation that emphasizes the public dimension of
15 culture and the link between nationalism and democracy. Hutchinson
16 ultimately relies on a notion of culture as symbolic and embodied in ethnicity.
17 This neglects the civic or public dimension of culture as public contestation.
18 Notions of ethnicity and nationhood are not exempt from this. Following the
19 interesting suggestion made in Chapter 3, the nation can be seen as a field of
20 conflicting interpretations without being necessarily one of deeply engraved
21 cultural conflict. Cultural diversity does not amount to cultural conflict. The
22 nation may not be invented in the way the modernists believed by elites for
23 instrumental purposes, but it is continuously constructed in debates about it.
24 Now, with respect to Europe I think it is simply too easy to say that there is
25 'no common fate as *Europeans*' (p. 184) and that consequently there is no real
26 alternative to the ethnically based nation state. While I agree that the notion
27 of a trauma inherited from the Second World War is also not strong enough
28 to create a sense of belonging or identity (p. 189), this does not warrant the
29 conclusion drawn. There is a European civic tradition of nationhood – as
30 reflected in citizenship, social struggles over rights and justice – and one that
31 has a considerable significance today. Its significance consists less in a
32 common supranational European identity than a mode of public discourse
33 over issues of political community and civil society. I would argue that this
34 dimension of nationhood came to the fore, for example, in Ireland in recent
35 years and has succeeded in diluting both the communitarian and statist
36 conceptions of the nation. I do not see any recognition of this in the analysis.

37 The thesis of the book ultimately falls on the examples discussed in the final
38 Conclusion – Australia, Canada, USA and many countries in the non-western
39 world – where an uncertainty enters into the picture on those countries which
40 have been relatively successful in creating multi-ethnic national communities.
41 It is indeed the case that in Australia the Anglo-Celtic ethnicity formed the
42 main component, but current attempts to articulate a more inclusive Aus-
43 tralian national identity are not premised on this ethnicity; it cannot be
44 credibly argued that Canadian national identity is based on an Anglo-French
45 core – indeed it is arguably the case that Canadian national identity is an

1 accommodation, if not a neutralization, of the British and French traditions.
 2 And what about the many examples of non-western countries where concep-
 3 tions of the nation do not appeal to a premodern ethnic past? Again, I suggest
 4 the problem is the absence of a civic conception of nationalism and an
 5 approach that is limited by the concern with providing an ethno-symbolist
 6 corrective of the modernist theory of nationalism.

7 In sum, this impressively argued book on the contemporaneity of nation-
 8 hood is weighed down by an obsession with the past or premodern origins of
 9 the nation and a view of ethnicity as coeval with the nation; it fails to see that
 10 nations are more than both nationalism and ethnicity. The key insight of the
 11 book for me is not that nations are zones of conflict but fields of conflicting
 12 interpretations of the world. I think that the most significant aspects of
 13 Europeanization and wider cosmopolitan currents have occurred within and
 14 through nationality rather than above it. Thus the category of the nation can
 15 be a positive source of renewal and not one of historical fatalism. The key to
 16 the appeal of nationalism is not its integral connection to ethnicity but rather
 17 its association with democracy and self-determination.
 18
 19

20 **John Hutchinson: In Defence of Transhistorical Ethno-Symbolism: A Reply to** 21 **My Critics**

22
 23 It was once the fashion for scholars to engage in an autocritique of their
 24 intellectual flaws. The debates inaugurated by *Nations and Nationalism* make
 25 this task redundant, at least for scholars of nationalism, since the three
 26 distinguished academics invited to discuss *Nations as Zones of Conflict* have
 27 done a better job than I ever could. I thank them for their appreciation and
 28 for their searching criticisms. Before, I was unaware I was a *transhistorical*
 29 ethno-symbolist: now I know I am. I thank also Eric Kaufmann for
 30 organising this occasion so efficiently.

31 To begin with, let me explain the book. I did not intend a comprehensive
 32 overview, let alone a theory of nationalism and nations. My aim was to
 33 stimulate debate by bringing into focus the unacknowledged role of conflict in
 34 the constitution of nations. My main theses were: Nations are products of
 35 globalisation, which is not a novel but an ancient and recurrent phenomenon
 36 (including imperial conquest, religious missions, migration, economic expan-
 37 sion), that is ethno-genetic, and has resulted in many populations having
 38 layered and traumatic pasts. Although built on such pasts, nations are
 39 modern political entities, created by nationalists who employ historical
 40 revivals in order to overthrow ethnic traditionalists. In many cases, the
 41 memories of traumatic pasts have provided reference points for competing
 42 nationalist projects that have offered alternative models of modernisation as
 43 well as producing civil conflict. Although nationalists typically seek unitary
 44 and bounded nation-states, they have never succeeded because their popula-
 45 tions have always been immersed within wider networks that sustain rival

1 class, religious, regional-continental identities, with which they periodically
2 clash. In short, conflict is endemic to nations, and the idea of the unitary
3 nation-state as the exemplar of modernity is a myth. Nationalists may
4 propose the nation and even attempt via a state to impose a nation, but the
5 nation can only be formed as recurrent process from below. Equally mythical
6 is the idea that we are moving into a post-national age because of the
7 multiplicity of loyalties resulting from global pressures. Competing loyalties
8 have existed from the origins of nationalism and are the primary reason we see
9 its episodic revival. Further globalisation will generate new rounds of nation-
10 creation.

11 I aimed to provoke, but my critics' reactions indicate I may have been too
12 successful. In one, my book has induced an identity crisis; in another, an
13 attempt at methodological exorcism. Umut Özkirimli, a postmodernist, is
14 worried because he largely agrees with me: I am rebuked for defending an
15 ethno-symbolism that I have effectively abandoned. Andreas Wimmer,
16 however, claims the weaknesses of the book come from its rampant ethno-
17 symbolism: I have essentialised ethnicity and nations as transhistorical
18 entities. Clearly both can't be right, but can I defend myself against the one
19 without seeming to confirm the criticisms of the other?

20 All books are partial, and a short book that is trying to say something
21 original in one respect is likely to neglect other aspects of nationalism. I had
22 hoped to discuss the non-ethnic bases of nation formation, but space
23 prevented me. Politics is there; I do discuss the importance of the state, for
24 example, but there is much more to be said, as my critics point out. I agree
25 that state centralisation is the best predictor of nationalism, but the book is
26 not about nationalism so much as nation-formation. Hence, my focus on the
27 cultural dimension.

28 Nonetheless, Gerard Delanty is right about my neglect of the civic side of
29 nationalism. I should have devoted more attention to this on the bases of my
30 own arguments. I had suggested that populations were often forged into
31 distinctive ethnic groups by global processes (such as empires or missionary
32 religions making cosmic claims); and that ethnicities and nations in turn could
33 offer platforms for broader (global) networks. Logically then, I should have
34 examined how populations combine a sense of ethnic distinctiveness with
35 universalist models such as civic republicanism (see Roshwald 2006: ch. 4).
36 Delanty also states I emphasise the national framing of Europeanism at the
37 expense of how Europeanisation is changing the nation. But I do observe that
38 national identity was forged in relation to European wide movements (e.g. the
39 religious wars provoked by the Reformation) and also that pan-European
40 movements such as the republicanism and romanticism articulated alternative
41 models of nation-formation. Furthermore, there are many potent processes,
42 originally European, that have been with us for a long time that have affected
43 nation-states, for example, secularisation, industrialisation and militarisation.
44 Is contemporary Europeanisation qualitatively different from such precursors?
45 Even if we accept this, there are many forms of Europeanisation. Some

1 are benign and have stabilised civic democracy in several states. Others are not
 2 so benign, and are perceived to be reducing democratic accountability.
 3 I agree, there is more to be said about this.

4 Delanty claims my model fails to account for multicultural nations. Surely,
 5 contemporary debates (e.g. Huntington 2003) confirm the continued salience
 6 of ethnicity in influencing policy options. For example, Australian multi-
 7 culturalism is part of a nationalist project to distance Australia from British
 8 monarchical traditions, and is influenced by (though not premised on) an old
 9 battle fought between those of English and Irish descent (O'Farrell 1993). The
 10 English dominated the Liberal party, business and favoured a British
 11 monarchical Australia; the Irish were overrepresented in the Labour party,
 12 the unions and republican movements. In the cabinet of Bob Hawke's Labour
 13 government that promoted multiculturalism and republicanism in the 1980s, a
 14 majority were of Irish descent. Hawke's Labour successor Paul Keating
 15 combined a fervent republican multiculturalism with an Irish nationa-
 16 list bravado. He was defeated by the Liberal John Howard, committed
 17 to the British connection, who has dampened both republicanism and
 18 multiculturalism.

19 Andreas Wimmer is a formidable theoretician of nationalism and ethnicity,
 20 but he has at times misconstrued my book. He is wrong to suggest I offer a
 21 general theory of nations or present them as uniform. Rather, I emphasise (as
 22 a historian would) that populations are affected unevenly by long range social
 23 processes. I do not posit that all nations are similarly divided, that all conflicts
 24 have ethnic bases, or that all ethnic pasts persist into the present. I analyse the
 25 regional and class bases of competing national models (pp. 85–7), but I claim
 26 we cannot explain the recurrence of these models by such interests. I discuss
 27 conflicts between nationalists and ultramontane Catholicism (pp. 120–2, 134–
 28 5, 144–5) and Islam (pp. 184–6).² Wimmer is able to find passages where I
 29 appear to write as if the nation is a collective actor. This, however, is a
 30 terminological not a methodological slip, and one shared by all scholars in the
 31 field (including himself!) who from time to time appear to give independent
 32 volition to 'nationalism', 'nation-state', and the 'international system'.³

33 So, far from being a romantic ontologist, I argue (in Chapter 2) that
 34 nationalists are typically outsiders, who sometimes work against ethnic
 35 traditions, that their movements are often weak and divided, that they
 36 typically achieve power only by default because of a collapse of the state in
 37 war, and that the most secure means of nation-formation is the possession of a
 38 state of your own. Still more to the point, I repeatedly state that ethnic
 39 identities are often destroyed and that they are more likely to survive when
 40 embedded by multiple institutions, especially religious, that are generally
 41 more stable and socially penetrative than polities before the modern period
 42 (pp. 15, 25–7, 37). Such identities persist into the present because they 'are
 43 carried into the modern era by powerful institutions (states, churches, armies,
 44 legal systems)' (p. 41). I also provide a similar explanation for the recurrence
 45 of competing ethnic and national repertoires which are often the product of

1 traumatic historical episodes 'memories of which have been carried by social
2 institutions' (p. 88). I name these institutions, which are various. In Russia,
3 for example, the divisions between Westerners and Russianists are embodied
4 in rival 'capital' cities St Petersburg and Moscow as well as religious and
5 literary institutions (pp. 86, 88).

6 His discussion suggests that I do not specify conditions under which
7 ideological shifts occur. But I do this at many points of my book.⁴ In Chapter
8 2 I discuss why novel strains of nationalism emerge to try to trump older
9 forms of attachment (pp. 65–73), and why state elites and intelligentsia
10 oscillated between rival national conceptions in France and the Tsarist
11 Empire (pp. 94–8). In Chapter 4 I locate factors that cause the decline of
12 nationalist in relation to religious, socialist and Pan-European identities.

13 Am I then already a post-ethno-symbolist offering an institutionalist
14 equivalent to 'historically-constituted cultural frames'? On the contrary, I
15 reject sociological (and all other) reductionisms as applied to ethnic and
16 nationalist myth-histories. Like all belief systems, true and false, these are
17 transhistorical and belong to Popper's world of 'objective knowledge' that
18 exists independently of the knowing subject (Popper 1972: ch. 4), even when
19 they are transmitted by oral vernacular genres. What descriptor other than
20 'transhistorical' is applicable to the myth of Anglo-Saxon liberties? Originat-
21 ing soon after the Norman conquest, this acquired new meanings when
22 historicised in the seventeenth century by common lawyers, a core element in
23 English parliaments, became part of the insurrectionary Civil war under-
24 ground, and was adopted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by radical
25 and conservative movements (Hill 1968: ch. 3). It continues into the
26 contemporary period in the discourse of Margaret Thatcher and Tony
27 Benn. Where such myths are produced or transmitted by vernacular high
28 cultures that encompass *written* histories, literatures, law codes, political
29 charters, and religious texts, each with their specialists and reflective tradi-
30 tions, there may be a bank of such myth-histories capable of being invoked
31 (see Kidd 1999). Of course, competing myths are often associated with
32 different power interests, but they are not reducible to them, as the Anglo-
33 Saxon example indicates. When individuals regard particular myths as
34 combining cognitive and affective solutions to pressing problems, myths
35 may operate as causal agents. They resurface and become reinforced in social
36 life because they *appear* to explain crises as manifestations of older challenges.
37 This is particularly true when old friend-enemy stereotypes are revived with
38 respect to geo-political rivalries which can be presented as expressions of an
39 archetypal struggle (pp. 41–2, 109–12).

40 This brings us to the heart of the matter: our difference over the
41 explanatory significance of ethnicity and the constitutive role played by
42 historical experiences and their interpretation. Wimmer believes that moder-
43 nity rests on ethnic and national principles, but argues for the primacy of
44 politics. The key to nation-formation lies in the capacity of the modern state
45 to use citizenship and the welfare state as mechanisms of inclusion and

1 exclusion, that bind conflicting classes within the dominant ethnic into a
2 bordered society and at the same time exclude ethnic 'others' (Wimmer 2002).
3 His model is powerful, but since Andreas has offered intellectual assistance to
4 me, let me repay him by suggesting his modernism requires radical ethno-
5 symbolic revision.

6 His model fails to give weight either to the history or the content of the
7 ethnicity *in the name of which nationalists act*. This history is important when
8 ethnicity has crystallised out of the collisions of populations in war, religious
9 conflict and economic competition. The dominant and subordinate ethnicities of
10 which he speaks are often historically laden with specific (though competing)
11 concepts of homeland, geo-politics, friend-foe relations, cultural exclusiveness
12 and historical destiny. Were he to recognise this, he would have to admit that
13 although in some respects nations are modern, in others they are often
14 profoundly unmodern. Nationalists may reinforce through the state much
15 older collective identifications with religion: for example, with Catholicism in
16 Poland. They may seek to mobilise their societies to regain ancient territories
17 as when nationalists drove the Greek state's long disastrous quest through
18 several wars to reconquer the lands of the Byzantine Empire, at the expense
19 of its socio-economic development (Pepelassis 1958).

20 Moreover, these older identifications often continue to have dynamic
21 properties even as nationalist state-builders attempt to establish more
22 routinised collective loyalties. Throughout the modern period the impact of
23 war and transnational ideological movements reverberates, making nations-
24 states unstable entities. They can be overthrown in war, subject to dramatic
25 territorial contractions or expansions, or be shaken by ideological competitors
26 from outside, such as ultramontane Catholicism, Communism and Islam,
27 which can appear to threaten core collective values. This means we cannot
28 conceive of nation-states as enclosed worlds or cages in which populations are
29 formed into stable identities by elite co-ordination and mass propaganda.

30 Because the very nature of the territorial state *around which political*
31 *interests assemble* comes periodically into doubt, nationalists are forced
32 regularly to consider *existential* (and ontologically prepolitical) questions of
33 who they are, where they should be, and on what moral basis the nation
34 should be constituted. Inevitably they are drawn to consider the relevance of
35 the stock of older geo-political and cultural images, where these are available,
36 in order to reformulate programmes and mobilise populations in defence of
37 the nation.⁵ Nationalists then can only form the nation in recurring waves
38 with the support of the population from below, and it is of great advantage
39 then to have both a bank of 'historical' memories and a solid popular heritage
40 on which to build.

41 Transhistorical questions of identity (linking past, present and future), the
42 stock of historical repertoires available to actors, and the debates through
43 which options are sifted lie then at the heart of nationalism in its 'hot'
44 manifestations. They are not secondary to the politics of resource competi-
45 tion, important though these are (see Hutchinson 1987: ch. 8). They are the

1 *ground* on which politics rests, though political interests enter into their
2 resolution. Can we then independently assess the strength of ethnic traditions
3 and predict successful nation-formation? This is to confuse ethno-symbolism
4 with an ethnic determinism. As I show, ethnic traditions are strong where
5 they are institutionalised, and if they are tied to conservative groups, they may
6 act as a block on nationalist movements. One example is the prolonged
7 resistance of Orthodox Judaism to secular Zionism. The permutations of
8 identity politics are too complex to allow for sociological prediction. A
9 historical approach is more suitable, especially since there are not stable
10 societal units for rigorous comparison, when the terrain on which nationalists
11 act changes.

12 Do then ethno-symbolists focus only on the dependent variable, ignoring
13 difficult cases? By no means. We recognise that ethnic communities disappear
14 from history and also advocate its relevance for political communities that at
15 first sight appear to be modern constructs. This approach, still relatively
16 young, has been applied fruitfully to the cases of the USA (Grant 2004), the
17 Middle East (Gerber 2004) and Turkey (Canefe 2002; Gerber 2006), and by
18 me to the identity politics of Australia, Canada and the USA, where the
19 relatively thin sense of distinctiveness and a focus on the future rather than the
20 past as justification of a national identity has consequences for internal and
21 external relations (Hutchinson 1994: ch. 6). What ethno-symbolists maintain
22 is that historical myths and a sense of cultural distinctiveness lie at the core of
23 national identity, and that you cannot understand the options of nation-
24 builders unless you include in your analysis their cultural assumptions and
25 symbolic resources, as well as the political setting in which they act. This is
26 precisely an agency-based approach, and one that must inform the analyses
27 of coalition-building and political mobilisation.

28 Finally, Andreas Wimmer asks (somewhat rhetorically), 'Does nationalism
29 breed violence or violence breed nationalism?', and condemns me for
30 concentrating on the latter. This, however, cannot be an either/or issue. The
31 violent effects of nationalism were not the focus of this book.⁶ They deserve a
32 study unto themselves, and this is my current research project. It is too simple
33 to speak of 'the war-proneness of nationalism'. It invites the response –
34 compared with what other belief and political systems?⁷

35 Umut Özkirimli's witty discussion makes several interesting points. Dub-
36 bing my work 'futuristic ethno-symbolism', he claims it marks a substantial
37 shift from the 'classical' formulation of Anthony Smith (1986). As a
38 nominalist, I see no virtue in seeking an 'essentialist' definition of 'ethno-
39 symbolism', which is a theoretical *framework* only (ie not a *theory*), and can be
40 inflected in different ways, depending on the *problem* to be investigated.⁸ He,
41 however, states there is a contradiction (asserted also by the other discussants)
42 between my emphasis both on the embeddedness of ethnic repertoire and on
43 the transformational character of nationalism. I see a tension, not a contra-
44 diction. I argue that (ancient and modern) global processes are often ethno-
45 genetic, resulting in populations having layered pasts, but that globalisation is

1 an unpredictable and unending phenomenon that can erode established
 2 identities, as well as being a catalyst for new ethnic crystallisations. I admit
 3 I am interested in the making and remaking of nations as a recurring process
 4 as well as in examining how far older ethnic values and forms influence the
 5 routes to modernisation. That is simply a different use of the framework to
 6 grasp another aspect of the protean problem of nationalism. This inflection is
 7 particularly useful when examining how ‘new’ nations, such as the USA,
 8 form. In my book I also look at nationalist strategies of ‘mythic overlaying’,
 9 but there is room for more work on how new ethnic or national repertoires
 10 interrelate with older identities, and on the circumstances under which one
 11 becomes dominant .

12 Nonetheless, how can one argue that national identities are embedded
 13 but also variable in their reach and intensity? My answer is twofold. In
 14 the first place, individuals always operate with many layers of attachment
 15 and that nationalists are *strategic* about when to adopt a national
 16 lens, normally viewing their family or religious ties as compatible with their
 17 core national identities. It is impossible to maintain a single identity in this
 18 world. There is also variability in a second sense to refer to *identity shift*. I
 19 argue that if powerful experiences (such as collective participation in war) are
 20 important factors in the crystallisation of national identities, so other such
 21 experiences can undermine national loyalties. For example, if your nation
 22 engages in wars stigmatised as genocidal. Indeed, the rise of the European
 23 Union is a response to the perception of many of the peoples of Europe after
 24 the Second World War that unbridled nationalism was the road to mutual
 25 destruction.

26 Özkirimli also asks if there is no single ethnic past, why cannot nationalists
 27 select the past that will serve present needs, and suggests that the success of
 28 nationalism is due to the work they put in to promoting their version of the
 29 world. I agree in part. All our decisions about the world arise out of current
 30 preoccupations, but equally our perception of current problems is framed by
 31 assumptions that are (necessarily) historically given. In my book I speak of
 32 the past in two senses. There is the past as sets of unexamined assumptions
 33 which inform our view of the world as well as our practices – this is the lived
 34 past, of traditions, including ethnic traditions. Then especially (though not
 35 exclusively) in the modern world where history becomes a surrogate religion,
 36 there is also the past as ideology, as source of meaning, and this is more free-
 37 floating. Historicist nationalist ideologies by finding new ‘solutions’ to present
 38 problems may operate as causal agents, for example by legitimising social,
 39 economic and political borrowing.

40 These pasts – the past as experience and the past as ideological programme-
 41 may clash. I argue that nationalists in order to justify socio-political innova-
 42 tion may seek to import new meanings into a touchstone age or find an
 43 alternative. There may be many alternative pasts available to nationalists.⁹
 44 But to be successful, nationalists must speak to their constituencies
 45 in languages the latter understand. If they fail to do so, their project is

1 still-born and they may be overthrown by counter elites. It is in this sense that
2 I speak of trial and error, which implies an interaction between elites and their
3 target population.

4 It might be argued that in many, if not most, cases there are several 'live'
5 competing ethnic traditions, and this gives political elites room to select. In
6 nineteenth century Ireland there were three main traditions. There was the
7 constitutionalist nationalism of the (largely) Catholic urban middle class elite
8 who argued for Irish political autonomy within the British Isles, invoking the
9 memory of the Irish parliament abolished in 1801, and still older Anglo-
10 Norman institutions. Many constitutional nationalists were active also in
11 British radical movements and hoped for a union of hearts between the Irish
12 and British democracies. There was the Ireland of Catholic martyrdom
13 promoted by the Catholic hierarchy, suspicious of secular politicians, which
14 saw itself as the patriarchal leader of a rural conservative people. Thirdly,
15 there were millenarian traditions of a peasantry (feared by constitutionalists
16 and Bishops) who dreamed of reversing the land settlement of the seventeenth
17 century conquest and of overthrowing British and Protestant power. Revolu-
18 tionaries sought to co-opt this radicalism. To obtain power constitutional
19 nationalists *had* (rather than chose) to build coalitions with the other two
20 forces, but they were united only in their anti-Britishness, and this was like
21 trying to drive a wagon with three horses pulling in different directions. From
22 time to time the wagon overturned; and there were recurring civil conflicts
23 within Irish nationalism out of which an alternative Gaelic revivalist separa-
24 tist nationalism formed, a section of which joined the revolutionary under-
25 ground. During the First World War when constitutionalist nationalists were
26 co-opted to the British war effort, they were usurped by the revolutionaries,
27 thanks to the British response to the Easter revolt in 1916, when the rebels
28 were executed, military rule was imposed and conscription threatened. At that
29 point a new constellation of forces emerged, with the revolutionaries in
30 informal alliance with the Church and the bulk of the Catholic people. When
31 a new Irish nation-state emerged it was culturally separatist, Catholic, and
32 rural-populist, though also strongly democratic (a tribute to the legacy of the
33 constitutionalists).

34 This outcome was not ethnically determined but neither is it explicable by
35 elite autonomy. Successful politicians do not typically operate above their
36 society, as if unaffected in their goals and strategies by the traditions of their
37 upbringing.¹⁰ Only an analysis that recognises the interplay between political
38 elites, as they circulate with competing ideological programmes, institutional
39 power, circumstances, and the range of popular ideas and sentiments that
40 constrain and inspire such elites can account for the *character* of the nation
41 (state) that emerges. I do not accept, therefore, postmodernists' claims about
42 nationalists' freedom to select national identities or that nationalists win
43 because they manufacture consent.¹¹

44 I conclude then, Umut, that I fear your identity crisis must continue. You
45 are not an ethno-symbolist, but whether you are Veronika or Veronique, I

doubt if you can be a postmodernist. Postmodernists, to my knowledge, do not have identity crises. For all of us, however, the debate continues.

Notes

1 This is in part the aim of the *Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, in Delanty and Kumar(2006).

2 I argued that the Italian nation-state was weakened not just, as Wimmer claims, because of 'a weak ethnic stratum' but also because, it was rejected by the Papacy, the central Italian medieval institution. As Adrian Lyttelton (1993: 100) states: 'Under the shadow of the Vatican, 'the new Rome' far from assuming a role of universal significance, failed even to fulfil the functions of a true political and cultural capital.'

3 For example, the quotation from p. 94 could easily be reformulated as 'strengthening the attachment of populations to national identities as they navigate the many challenges ...'.

4 This is explored at much greater length in Hutchinson 1987. I examine the pattern of alternation between a communitarian cultural and statist nationalism in Ireland over two centuries, and the existence of rival strains of cultural nationalism, Anglo-Irish and Gaelic. I discuss patterns of state centralisation, of social mobility, and of political opportunity structures in order to explain the rise and fall of varieties of nationalism.

5 Catastrophic defeat compelled Greeks after 1922 to surrender the Byzantine adventure, and there was a shift to a Hellenic civic republicanism.

6 He cites me asserting that nationalism is essentially a pacific movement, but here I was referring to cultural nationalists who often explicitly reject a statist politics. The problem I was posing is: why do such movements often switch into violent revolutionary mode? In Chapter 3 I do discuss the circumstances under which cultural conflicts descend into internecine violence.

7 Much of the destructiveness of the modern period derives from the organisational capacities of the industrial state and the killing power of military technology. Wimmer forgets that the conflict between capitalist democracy and Soviet communism came close on one occasion to annihilating much of humanity. Moreover, the Revolutionary wars which conventionally initiate the era of nationalism were only the last in a series of conflicts between Britain and France that began 100 years before, and for much of the eighteenth century Europe was wracked by Imperial and dynastic wars, so vividly satirised in Voltaire's *Candide*. Before that there were the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century that culminated in the devastation of Central Europe. The fifteenth century saw the end of the Hundred Years War between the English and French crowns, the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain, and the beginnings of the Hispanic colonisation of the Americas that resulted in the deaths of most of the inhabitants. Before that we have the Crusades. Should we go back for a model to the Roman empire which, in the words of Tacitus, 'created a desert and called it peace'?

8 This contrast between Anthony Smith's and my work, however, not only overlooks Smith's pioneering analysis of competing myths of descent (Smith 1984b), but also presents a static image of his corpus. It fails to recognise that his (1986) merely *launched* a paradigm shift in the field of nationalism, one that he has continued to develop. His perspectives have broadened to consider the religious foundations of nations (Smith 2003).

9 In theory all the pasts of a community are recuperable to nationalists, if historical techniques and sources allow, but *only* in this abstract sense. The past, if it is to be mined to inspire programmes and movements, must be alive in the minds and practices of individuals, as well as being embedded in social institutions.

10 This manner of viewing political actors is conveyed by the term 'political entrepreneur' an analytic term that many social scientists apply unproblematically as empirical description. Some nationalists may be so described, but, as Donald Horowitz has observed, many nationalist leaders are primordialists (Horowitz 2004).

11 This also applies to the case of Jeanne d'Arc, the choice of whom was not arbitrary. Although not a continuous symbol of a French identity, she was employed so intermittently, and was

certainly not obscure (Winock 1998). There were good reasons why republicans and anti-republicans converged on her. Both required a broader legitimation after the revolutionary period: republicans because of the failure of the revolution through the excesses of its Jacobin elite; anti-republicans because in a democratic age, monarchical symbols, now associated with foreign restoration, were losing their power. Moreover, all sides believed in the historic political grandeur of France and its cultural leadership of Europe. This could be traced back to the later Middle Ages, when the French kingdom was unified, led Christendom during the Crusades, developed European vernacular styles such as Gothic architecture, and, of course, expelled English 'invaders' in the era of Jeanne from its territories. Jeanne became increasingly potent as an inspirational symbol in a century that saw France occupied wholly or in part by foreign powers several times, in 1814, in 1870 (with the loss of Alsace and Lorraine), and in the First and Second World Wars. The cult of Jeanne enabled different French traditions to link past and present in order to articulate hopes for the future.

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