Let us begin by congratulating Andreas Wimmer on a masterful defence of his argument. His breadth of knowledge in the fields of nationalism studies and postcolonial ethnic conflict is as impressive as it is unusual. This debate illuminates much common ground between us, but also some important differences. Along the way, the discussion extends the frontiers of debate by repositioning the well-worn dispute over the origins of nations onto new analytical terrain - namely that of contemporary dominant ethnicity. Like Wimmer, we agree that modernity may take the form of a wholesale reconfiguration from non-ethnic to ethnic politics. Thus we accept Wimmer's contention that there are cases in premodernity (of which the Khanats and the Toucouleur empire are the most colourful!) in which ethnicity does not play a role. Likewise, Wimmer accepts our alternative path to modernity, that 'there is a shift to ethnic majority rule which delegitimizes ethnic minority rule where it existed'. So we all agree that a shift from premodern dominant minority to modern dominant majority ethnicity *can* take place, and that this provides fruitful insights into contemporary realignments in the ethnic politics of third wave democracies. This was a major aim of our article, and has never been said before.

The vexed question of whether the dominant ethnic minority or non-ethnic path to modernity is paradigmatic revolves around the historical evidence. We concur with Wimmer that a definitive answer is possible only through systematic, large-scale comparative-historical work which does not 'select on the dependent variable' by choosing cases which support a pet theory. Of course this means it is just as slippery to pull the non-ethnic Khanats and Toucouleurs from one's hat as it is to offer up the ethnically conscious elites of England or Japan. Waving the Kedourie-Grillo standard, as Wimmer does, is as suspect as nailing Hastings and Grosby to the mast. As the second generation of scholars, let us accept that both schools exaggerate (Anderson's

myopic villager is as much an exception as van den Berghe's five hundred person ethny) and move forward. No less an instrumentalist than Paul Brass offers a possible way to cut the Gordian knot when he states that ethnicity is not always the basis for premodern politics, but can become so when elites within or between premodern polities come into conflict. (Brass 1996: 89) Definitions are also crucial. Wimmer raises a maximal hurdle for dominant ethnicity based on officially promulgated ethnic boundaries. We instead allow for a minimal 'ethnic category' definition in which dominant ethnicity can be assimilative and exist informally through cultural exclusions and elite myths of descent. Such myths can exist among urban patricians (the German-speaking elite of old Tallinn come to mind) as they can in empires like the Ottomans, where genealogies were prized and historical consciousness prominent.

But our principal concern is to discriminate between dominant ethnicity and national identity: the two are empirically quite distinct. The Ba'th regimes in Syria and Iraq neatly demonstrate that Arab nationalism and a narrower Alawi or Sunni ethnic dominance can exist simultaneously. Note that the Ba'thists of Syria don't shout 'Syria for the Alawis' from the rooftops. Nor do Americans currently blow the 'white America' trumpet. As we discuss, the mechanisms are often more subtle. Speaking in broad strokes (and we agree with Wimmer that grand generalizations obliterate complex details but also think that general trends can be identified and the benefits that emerge are worth the trade off), the process of modern state formation since the French Revolution was premised on a specific relationship between state, nation and ethnie. The national identity has generally been an expression of a particular part of the population, usually the titular group. Thus, French, Turkish, Spanish, and other so-called civic nationalisms that were supposedly inclusive, do express the identity of the dominant ethnicity (As Anthony Marx (2003) usefully demonstrates, the process of

state formation in some of these cases involved further exclusion on a religious basis as well). The challenges these countries face with assimilation-resistant minorities, namely practicing Muslims in France, Kurds in turkey, Basques in Spain, and so forth serve as a testament to the distinction between dominant ethnicity and the nation that are so frequently conflated because of the relationship between the titular group and the state. In Eastern European states, the relationship is more apparent as ethnic minority parties (for example, Hungarian parties in Romania and Slovakia) have emerged to highlight the distinction between dominant majority and minority despite the formally inclusive citizenship regime (Hungarians in Romania are Romanian citizens). Even when there is no explicit titular group, dominant ethnicity has played a decisive role. Most members of the dominant ethnie in Canada are probably oblivious to the fact that their nation's culturally inherited artifacts and myths of origin are rather particularistic. On the other hand, even the most optimistic and enthusiastic members of minority groups will find it hard to imagine a significant portion from outside the two dominant ethnies in the Canadian corridors of political power. This is not to say that boundaries of exclusion are static or that there are no leakages that allow social mobility for previously excluded groups. To be sure, as boundaries of exclusion change over time, so does the meaning of dominant ethnicity. The splash created by the historical nomination of Senator Barack Obama as the Democratic candidate to the American presidency demonstrates both the power of institutionalized dominant ethnicity (otherwise why would we see this event as historical?) and its permeability.

Wimmer claims that the racialization school have already made the point about white domination, but such writers focus exclusively on whiteness as boundary without considering dominant ethnic narratives and why they matter to people in both

'white' and 'nonwhite' contexts. (See Kaufmann's debate with David Roediger in *Ethnicities*, 6:1, 2006) The pluralists are a vast improvement on whiteness theorists because they take a global view, but again, they focus mainly on power relations to the exclusion of the 'softer' ontological dimensions, the *ethnicity* of dominant ethnicity. Recall that members of dominant groups are as ethnic as minorities, *even if* the former's elites pretend otherwise.

Pluralists also fail to grasp the nettle that national identities and dominant ethnic projects are *both* meaningful social forces and are not reducible to one another. Alawis would not be content to annihilate their historical identity within pan-Arabism any more than Hutus would within Rwandism or *pur laine* Quebecois within an inclusive Quebec nation defined strictly by preserving the 'French fact in North America'. We also foreground informal mechanisms. French or white American dominant ethnicity, for example, is reproduced through social networks and residential segregation among all classes, and is expressed through associations like churches or fraternities whose official remit is trans-ethnic. Politically, dominant groups tend to disproportionately support one of the main parties, occasionally finding a focus in third party populism or far-right movements. Such groups can be open to intermarriage and occasionally alter their boundaries (assimilated Jews are members of both dominant ethnies today but weren't in the 1920s), but their narratives (i.e. 'nos ancêtres les Gallois', American Founders or western settlers) retain a connection to the ancestors. None of this takes away from the real universal national identities based on the Revolutions of 1776 and 1789 which are not mere fronts for ethnic dominance as the whiteness theorists would have us believe. That said, members of dominant ethnies often view the nation through a dominant ethnic lens, i.e. as 'theirs'.

The same is true of Switzerland, Canada, India or the rainbow nations of the Caribbean, where we would argue for the co-existence of dominant ethnicity with an inclusive national identity. Dominant ethnicity in Switzerland is manifested at the cantonal or communal level (witness the recent citizenship debates); in Canada, few 'visible minority' residents of Quebec or English Canada will fail to locate native-born whites as the dominant group; in the Caribbean, Creoles are central, and in India who would deny Hindu dominance even when Congress holds the reins. The dominant are not merely the faceless amalgam who avoid exclusion from the nation, but an often self-conscious group with links to ancestors and dominant ethnic narratives ('*we* were here first', '*we* built this country'). Today, members of dominant groups tend not to dissolve themselves within the wider national tale of multicultural universalism and their ethnicity cannot be reduced to the *national* 'we'. Can one think of a truly non-ethnic nationalism which excludes outsiders but does not contain dominant ethnicity? In theory, yes. Iran has repressed Persian ethnic nationalists as well as Kurds and the Soviets disdained bourgeois Russian nationalists alongside the Tatars. But the dominant ethnic project went underground in both cases and even became useful for Stalin and Khomeini during wartime.

In his comments, Wimmer reflects the current state of play in the literature by conflating the dominance of ethnic groups with that of states, such as the thinly disguised Habsburgs (Megalomanians) who dominate Gellner's Ruritanians. He speaks of undifferentiated 'majority dominance': of the 'dominant national (or ethnic) majority', and again of 'ethnic or national dominance' as if the two are interchangeable. This is precisely the category error we are trying to get beyond. Andreas Wimmer has broken fresh ground in calling our attention to the exclusions entailed by the modern nationalising process, but could profit by better distinguishing

dominant ethnicity from nationalism. We would urge future scholars to zero in on one or the other, and prove, rather than assume, the connections between the two.

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