

*Manuscript*

# Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism

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The resurgence of nationalism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in the last decade has sparked -- with only the shortest of lags -- an even stronger resurgence in the study of nationalism. As a certifiably "hot topic," nationalism has moved rapidly from the front pages to the journal pages, from the periphery -- often the distant periphery -- to the center of numerous scholarly fields and subfields.<sup>2</sup> This new centrality is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the robust demand for knowledge about -- and "fixes" for -- nationalism brings new opportunities, resources, and attention to the field. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of the field has strengthened analytically primitive currents in the study of nationalism,<sup>3</sup> threatening to erode (or

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<sup>2</sup> A partial listing of these would include international relations and security studies (as the end of the Cold War has fostered new understandings of "security" and "insecurity"); political science (as the study of nationalism has spread from its traditional home in comparative politics into more theoretically ambitious, self-consciously "scientific" areas of political science); rational choice theory (in sociology as well as political science); anthropology (as it has increasingly taken complex, "modern" societies as its object); sociology (especially with the "cultural turn" in comparative, historical, and political sociology); ethnic studies (with a partial convergence between the literatures on ethnicity and on nationalism); cultural studies; comparative literature; art history; women's studies; musicology; and a variety of area-studies fields including, in a spectacular instance of scholarly perestroika, post-Soviet and East European studies.

<sup>3</sup> In the post-Soviet field, this has happened as academic entrepreneurs, in search of windfall profits, have entered the field, unburdened by any but the most minimal acquaintance with the comparative and theoretical literature of the field, to say nothing of the wider theoretical and empirical literature of the social sciences, and hastily converting their intellectual capital from forms suddenly devalued by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet regime into newly revalued forms, for example, in the sub-field of "security studies," from a weapons-oriented understanding of security and insecurity to one centered on ethnic and national conflict. In other fields, far removed from the traditional disciplinary loci for the study of nationalism (cultural studies, musicology, comparative literature, etc.), the historical and social scientific literature on nationalism has been appropriated in a highly selective way.

simply -- given the volume of the new literature -- to overwhelm) the analytical gains previously made in sophisticated works by Benedict Anderson, John Armstrong, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, and a number of other scholars.<sup>4</sup>

Borrowing Charles Tilly's phrase, this paper addresses six "pernicious postulates,"<sup>5</sup> six myths and misconceptions that, newly strengthened by the dizzying expansion in the literature and quasi-literature on the subject, inform, and misinform, the study of ethnicity and nationalism. Although I draw illustrative empirical material mainly from post-Communist East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, the theoretical debates I engage are central to the study of nationalism generally.<sup>6</sup>

Nobody took greater pleasure, or displayed greater vigor, in demolishing myths than Ernest Gellner; and the trenchancy with which he punctured nationalists' own myths -- as well as other myths about nationalism -- was exemplary. I would like to think, therefore, that the present essay is Gellnerian in spirit. The essay is not, however, *about* Gellner's theory of nationalism; it engages his theory only incidentally. Gellner approached the study of nationalism from Olympian distance, situating the emergence and vicissitudes of nationalism in world-historical perspective. My concerns in this essay are rather less global and do not, for the most part, directly engage Gellner's arguments.

I begin by addressing two opposed appraisals of the gravity and "resolvability" of national conflicts. The first is the "architectonic illusion" -- the belief that the right "grand architecture," the right territorial and institutional framework, can satisfy nationalist demands, quench nationalist passions, and thereby resolve national conflicts. Most conceptions of grand architecture have involved the reorganization of political space along national lines, based on an alleged right of national self-determination or on the related "principle of nationality." Against this, I want to argue that nationalist conflicts are in principle, by their very nature, irresolvable, and that the search for an overall "architectural" resolution of national conflicts is misguided.

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<sup>4</sup> For a sampling of that literature, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983 [second edition 1991]); John Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984)

<sup>6</sup> Apart from the fact that my own recent work has concerned nationalism in this region, there are good analytical reasons for focusing on this region. Nowhere -- for reasons suggested in note 3 -- is the theoretical primitivism in the study of nationalism more striking than in the literature (and quasi-literature) on this region. Nowhere, moreover, do the myths and misconceptions I address have more superficial plausibility than in this region.

Sharply opposed to the meliorist optimism of this first view is the dire pessimism of the second. This is the "seething cauldron" view of ethnic and national conflicts. This gloom-and-doom perspective sees all of Eastern Europe -- and many other world regions -- as a seething cauldron of ethnic and national conflict, on the verge of boiling over into violence. More generally, it sees nationalism as *the* central problem in these regions, and sees national identities as strong and salient. Against this, I want to assert that ethnonational violence is neither as prevalent, nor as likely to occur, as is often assumed; and that national feeling is less strong, national identity less salient, and nationalist politics less central than is often assumed.

Next, I will address two opposed views of the sources and dynamics of resurgent nationalism. The first is the "return of the repressed" perspective. In its specifically Eastern European form, this view sees national identities and national conflicts as deeply rooted in the pre-communist history of Eastern Europe, and as subsequently frozen or repressed by ruthlessly anti-national communist regimes. With the collapse of communism, these pre-communist national identities and nationalist conflicts have returned with redoubled force. Against this, I'll stress the pervasive shaping and structuring of national identities and nationalist conflicts by communist regimes.

Categorically rejecting the primordialist understanding of nationhood that often accompanies the "return of the repressed" view, and refusing to see national identity and nationalist conflicts as deeply encoded historically, is the "elite manipulation" view. This perspective sees nationalism as the product of unscrupulous and manipulative elites, who are seen as cynically stirring up nationalist passions at will. While conceding, of course, that unscrupulous elites often do seek to stir up nationalist passions, I want to argue against this view that it is not always so easy for elites to stir up nationalist passions; and that it is mistaken to see nationalism in purely instrumental terms, to focus solely on the calculating stances of self-interested elites.

The fifth perspective I call the "the realism of the group." Based on a "groupist" social ontology, this view sees nations and ethnic groups as real entities, as substantial, enduring, sharply bounded collectivities. It sees the social world, like a Modigliani painting (to borrow Gellner's image), as composed of externally bounded, internally homogeneous cultural blocs. Against this, I will argue that the "Modiglianesque" vision of the social world is deeply problematic, that ethnic and national groups are not well conceived as externally sharply bounded, internally culturally homogeneous blocs.

Finally, I address the "Manichean" view that there are, at bottom, only two kinds of nationalism, a good, civic kind and a bad, ethnic kind; and two corresponding understandings of nationhood, the good, civic conception, in which nationhood is seen as based on common citizenship, and the bad, ethnic conception, in which nationhood is seen as based on common ethnicity. Against this, I will argue that the distinction between civic and ethnic nationhood and nationalism is both normatively and analytically problematic.

I

I begin with the "architectonic illusion." This is the belief that if one gets the "grand architecture" right -- if one discovers and establishes the proper territorial and institutional framework -- then one can conclusively satisfy legitimate nationalist demands and thereby resolve national conflicts. There have been many different conceptions of just what the proper grand architecture should look like. But most of these have appealed in one way or another to the idea of national self-determination or to the so-called principle of nationality.

The principle of national self-determination assigns moral agency and political authority to nations; it holds that nations are entitled to govern their own affairs and, in particular, to form their own states. The principle of nationality asserts that state and nation should be congruent; it thereby provides a powerful lever for evaluating, and redrawing, state boundaries, for legitimating, or delegitimizing political frontiers according to a kind of "correspondence theory" of justice.

These principles underlay, albeit imperfectly, the post-World War I territorial settlement in Central and Eastern Europe; the mid-twentieth century wave of decolonization in Asia and Africa; and the recent reorganization of political space in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In each of these cases, the period preceding the reorganization of political space along national lines was a period of intensifying nationalist movements. In each of these cases, the demands of these nationalist movements were viewed with sympathy by much of world public opinion. In each case, it was widely believed that a new "grand architecture," involving the reorganization of political space along national lines, would satisfy the demands of these national movements and contribute to regional peace and stability by resolving national tension.<sup>7</sup> Yet in each case, this expectation was disappointed. Political reconfiguration did not resolve national tensions but only reframed them, recast them in new (and in some cases more virulent) form.

I am not arguing that the reconfiguration of political space along ostensibly national lines in these cases was necessarily a bad thing (though I think in some cases - such as the former Yugoslavia - it was unfortunate). I am arguing, instead, against the idea that nationalism is a problem that can somehow be solved by "correct" territorial and institutional arrangements; and, more specifically, against the idea that nationalist demands can be satisfied and national conflicts resolved by applying the principle of national self-determination or redrawing political boundaries according to the principle of nationality.

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<sup>7</sup> It is an uncomfortable truth that, around the time of the 1938 Munich agreement, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia through the separation of the Sudeten German lands from the rest of the country was also presented and justified in Britain -- and not only in Germany -- in the name of national self-determination. See A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), Chapter 8; Mária Kovács, "A nemzeti önrendelkezés csapdája" ("The Trap of National Self-Determination"), *Népszabadság*, August 12, 1995.

Today, of course, this argument is less likely to be advanced than it was a few years earlier. Five years after the last major reorganization of political space along national lines, it's all too evident that national conflicts have not been resolved, and that the most virulent conflicts have occurred after rather than before the reorganization of political space. But it's worth remembering that only a few years ago, a great deal of hope was invested in national self-determination. The prospect of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was welcomed as a story of national liberation; the prevailing narrative was one of national imprisonment and liberation. The rising curve of enthusiasm for national self-determination, as communist regimes began to crumble, did not, to be sure, reach the apogee of 75 years earlier, when the first wholesale reorganization of previously multinational political space along national lines was undertaken. Yet the fin-de-siecle re-enchantment with national self-determination was substantial enough, incautious enough, and -- in view of the disastrous sequel to the early twentieth century experiment in national self-determination<sup>8</sup> -- puzzling enough to give us pause.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, even if the re-enchantment has since yielded to a new disenchantment, even if yesterday's narrative of national imprisonment and liberation today seems one-sided, mischievous, or even downright pernicious, still the underlying way of thinking about nationalism that has historically accompanied appeals to the principle of national self-determination remains robustly entrenched.

The principle of national self-determination and the related principle of nationality are of course normative, not analytical principles; and I don't want to make here an argument in normative political theory.<sup>10</sup> But for a century and a half, the appeal to the principle of nationality or to an alleged right of national self-determination has been closely related to a particular -- and I believe mistaken -- account of the sources and dynamics of nationalism. And it's this account that I'd like to dwell on for a moment.

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<sup>8</sup> For a classic, albeit highly compressed, statement of the sequel, see the epilogue to A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1976), 252ff; for a more extended, though still splendidly concise, account, see Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1974), especially Chapter One. It is problematic, to be sure, to assign responsibility for the disastrous developments in Central Europe in the two decades following the First World War to the principle of national self-determination -- not least because the principle was applied so selectively in the post-War settlement. One could argue that it was the failure to apply the principle more consistently -- for example, by allowing the peaceful accession of rump Austria to Germany -- rather than the application of the principle, that proved disastrous.

<sup>9</sup> See Mária Kovács, "A nemzeti önrendelkezés csapdája."

<sup>10</sup> For sophisticated recent discussions from the perspective of normative political theory, see Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, 1993); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 1995); and David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

This account is fundamentally a nation-centered understanding of nationalism. It is grounded, as Gellner observed,<sup>11</sup> in a "social ontology" that posits the existence of nations as real entities whose tendency or *telos* -- at least under modern social and political conditions -- is to seek independent statehood. Nationalism, on this view, is this nation-based, state-seeking activity.

If this understanding of nationalism were correct, then one might indeed expect the reorganization of political space along national lines to resolve national conflicts by fulfilling nationalist demands. The imagery here is that nationalism has a self-limiting political career. Fundamentally oriented towards independence, national movements in a sense transcend themselves, wither away in the very course of realizing their aims. When nationalist demands for statehood are fulfilled, the nationalist program is satisfied; it exhausts itself in the attainment of its ends.

However, I don't think nationalism can be well understood as nation-based, state-seeking activity. In the first place, nationalism is not always, or essentially, state-seeking. To focus narrowly on state-seeking nationalist movements is to ignore the infinitely protean nature of nationalist politics; it is to ignore the manner in which the interests of a putative "nation" can be seen as requiring many kinds of actions other than, or in addition to, formal independence; it is to be unprepared for the kinds of nationalist politics that can flourish *after* the reorganization of political space along national lines, *after* the breakup of multinational states into would-be nation-states. It is to be unprepared for the fact that nationalism was not only a *cause* but also a *consequence* of the breakup of old empires and the creation of new nation-states.

In the new or newly enlarged nation-states of interwar Central and Eastern Europe, and in the new nation-states of post-Communist Eastern Europe today, several kinds of nationalism have flourished as a *result* of the reorganization of political space along ostensibly national lines. Here I would like to briefly characterize four such forms of non state-seeking nationalism.

The first is what I call the "nationalizing" nationalism of newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states. Nationalizing nationalisms involve claims made in the name of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate "owner" of the state, which is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation. Despite having "its own" state, however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This weak position is seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence. And it is held to justify the "remedial" or "compensatory" project of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation. Examples of such nationalizing nationalisms abound in interwar Europe and the

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<sup>11</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 48.

post-Communist present.<sup>12</sup>

Directly challenging these "nationalizing" nationalisms are the transborder nationalisms of what I call "external national homelands." Homeland nationalisms are oriented to ethnonational kin who are residents and citizens of other states. Transborder homeland nationalism asserts a state's right -- indeed its obligation -- to monitor the condition, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, and protect the interests of "its" ethnonational kin in other states. Such claims are typically made, and typically have greatest force and resonance, when the ethnonational kin in question are seen as threatened by the nationalizing policies and practices of the state in which they live. Homeland nationalisms thus arise in direct opposition to and in dynamic interaction with nationalizing nationalisms. Prominent instances of homeland nationalism are furnished by Weimar (and in a very different mode) Nazi Germany, and by Russia today.<sup>13</sup>

The third characteristic form of nationalism found in the aftermath of the reorganization of political space along national lines is the nationalism of national minorities. Minority nationalist stances characteristically involve a self-understanding in specifically "national" rather than merely "ethnic" terms, a demand for state recognition of their distinct ethnocultural nationality, and the assertion of certain collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights. Salient examples include Germans in many Eastern European countries in the interwar period and Hungarian and Russian minorities today.

The fourth form is a defensive, protective, national-populist nationalism that seeks to protect the national economy, language, mores, or cultural patrimony against alleged threats from outside. The bearers of such putative threats are diverse but can include foreign capital, transnational organizations, notably the IMF, immigrants, powerful foreign cultural influences, and so on. This kind of nationalism often claims to seek a "third way" between capitalism and socialism, is often receptive to antisemitism, brands its political opponents as anti-national, "un-Romanian," "un-Russian," etc., is critical of the various ills of "the West" and of "modernity," and tends to idealize an agrarian past. The social and economic dislocations accompanying market-oriented reforms -- unemployment, inflation, tighter workplace discipline, etc.--create fertile soil for the use of such national populist idioms as a legitimization strategy by governments or as a mobilization strategy by oppositions.

Nationalism, then, should not be conceived as essentially or even as primarily state-seeking. Nor, as Gellner emphasized, should it be understood as nation-based, that is as arising

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<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of interwar Poland as a nationalizing state, with some concluding reflections on nationalizing states today, see Chapter Four of my *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> For a comparison of Weimar German and contemporary Russian homeland nationalism, see Chapter Five of *Nationalism Reframed*.

from the demands of nations, understood as real, substantial, bounded social entities. Nationhood is not an unambiguous social fact; it is a contestable -- and often contested --- political claim. Consequently, neither the principle of national self-determination nor the principle of nationality can provide an unambiguous guide to the reorganization of political space.

Claims to nationhood are often disputed -- think, for example, historically, about the Macedonians, or about the dispute concerning whether interwar Czechoslovakia was one nation or two. Or, more recently, think of the Kurds, the Palestinians, the Québécois, and of a host of West European ethnoregional movements. And even when the status of nationhood itself is not disputed, the territorial or cultural boundaries of the putative nation are often contested, as is the manner in which nationhood ought to be construed for purposes of implementing the right of self-determination or of redrawing frontiers along national lines.

Given the very large number of more or less serious (and often conflicting) claims to nationhood, how are we to identify the national selves who are to enjoy the right or privilege of self-determination? And once we have identified these favored national selves, how are we to determine their bounds and contours? This is not a theoretical quibble, but a question of the utmost practical import.

Take for example the case of Yugoslavia. Even if one could have agreed that the national selves who were to enjoy self-determination were the officially recognized constituent nations of Yugoslavia (but why not the Albanians? Why not the Hungarians in Voivodina?), one still could not have avoided the question of how those national selves were to be construed? To put the question in its simplest form, supposing we agreed that self-determination was to be exercised by Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. How, then, were these self-determining units to be construed? Was the right of self-determination to be exercised by Serbia or by Serbs? By Croatia or by Croats? By Bosnia-Herzegovina or by Yugoslav Muslims? By territorial entities, that is, or by boundary-transcending ethnocultural nations? Were all the inhabitants of the Croatian republic to enjoy a single right of self-determination? And similarly for all the inhabitants of the Serb republic, and of Bosnia-Herzegovina, by majority vote? Or rather, was self-determination to be exercised by it the Croatian, Serb, and Muslim ethnations, whose populations spilled over republican borders? In practice, the international community opted for the former - but perhaps without realizing the tremendous difference between the two modes of construing self-determination for the same national units.<sup>14</sup> And the consequences were catastrophic.

There are of course many other examples of conflicting claims about how national selves should be construed. The negotiations concerning the post-World War I settlement furnished a whole catalogue of such conflicting claims, many involving a clash between historic-territorial versions of nationhood and ethnocultural versions of nationhood, with parties typically

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<sup>14</sup> See *inter alia* Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 209ff; Kovács, "A nemzeti önrendelkezés csapdája."



opportunistically advancing whichever claim would benefit them.

On a more philosophical level, we arrive here at the inescapable *antinomies of national self-determination*. Self-determination presupposes the prior determination of the unit -- the national self -- that is to enjoy the right of self-determination. But the identification and boundaries of this self cannot themselves be self-determined: they must be determined by others. Just as the boundaries of the demos that is presupposed by democratic institutions cannot themselves be democratically determined,<sup>15</sup> so too the boundaries of the national self that is presupposed by national self-determination cannot themselves be self-determined. Only in practice, the problem with national self-determination is more serious than with democracy. For in the routine functioning of democracy, the bounds of the demos are simply taken as given and unproblematic. But since national self-determination is precisely about setting the initial boundaries of the demos, there is no analog in the sphere of self-determination to the routine functioning of democracy within the frame of a taken-for-granted demos. Since the whole point of invoking national self-determination is to change unit boundaries, such boundaries cannot be taken for granted -- especially given the pervasively contested, conflicting, and overlapping nature of claims to nationhood.

Against the architectonic illusion, then, against the illusion that nationalist conflicts are susceptible of fundamental resolution through national self-determination, I'm asserting a kind of "impossibility theorem" - that national conflicts are in principle irresolvable; that "nation" belongs to the class of "essentially contested" concepts; that chronic contestedness is therefore intrinsic to nationalist politics, part of the very nature of nationalist politics; and that the search for an overall "architectural" resolution of national conflicts is misguided in principle, and often disastrous in practice.

In criticizing this naively optimistic view I should emphasize that I don't want to adopt a gloom-and-doom perspective. In fact the next myth I want to criticize is precisely the gloom-and-doom view of the region. My point is not to substitute a pessimistic for an optimistic reading, but rather to suggest that the search for solutions and resolutions of national conflicts -- especially grand, "architectonic," isomorphic, "one-size-fits-all" solutions and resolutions -- is misguided. To assert the irresolvability of national conflicts is not to assert anything about their salience, intensity, or centrality. Indeed I believe, as I am about to argue, that their salience, intensity, and centrality are generally overstated. The search for some fundamental architectural resolution of national conflicts, then, is not only philosophically problematic and practically misguided; it is often, also, simply unnecessary.

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<sup>15</sup> As Robert Dahl put it, "We cannot solve the problem of the proper scope and domain of democratic units from within democratic theory. Like the majority principle, the democratic principle presupposes a proper unit. The criteria of the democratic process presuppose the rightfulness of the unit itself." See for a thorough exploration of this point Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 147-8, 193-209; the quotation is from p. 207.

To criticize the search for solutions and resolutions of national conflicts is not to suggest that institutional design does not matter. On the contrary, it matters a great deal.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, institutional design can either exacerbate or ameliorate ethnic and national conflicts. But it cannot solve such conflicts. Rather, good institutional design can give political actors incentives to work around ethnic and national conflicts, do disregard them for certain purposes, to frame political rhetoric and political claims in nonethnic or transethnic terms. Moreover, institutional design is unlikely to have even these limited (but very important) effects if carried out in a grand, architectonic, one-size-fits-all mode. Good institutional design is more likely to be subverted than informed by grand architectural principles like the principle of national self-determination or the principle of nationality. Good institutional design has to be context-sensitive in a strong sense, that is, sensitive not only to the gross features of differing contexts but to finer details as well; it presupposes relatively "thick" understandings of the local contexts in which it is to apply.<sup>17</sup>

In my view, national conflicts are seldom "solved" or "resolved." Somewhat like conflicts between conflicting paradigms in a Kuhnian history of science, they are more likely to fade away, to lose their centrality and salience as ordinary people -- and political entrepreneurs -- turn to other concerns, or as a new generation grows up to whom old quarrels seem largely irrelevant. We need to devote more attention to studying how and why this happens -- not only how and why politics can be pervasively, and relatively suddenly, "nationalized," but also how and why it can be pervasively, and sometimes equally suddenly, "denationalized."

## II

The second misconception that I want to discuss is in some ways the opposite of the first. If the architectonic illusion is characterized by the naively optimistic view that national conflicts are capable of a final resolution, the second misconception is characterized by a bleakly pessimistic appraisal of East European nationalism. I'll call this the "seething cauldron" view,

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<sup>16</sup> For penetrating analysis of institutional design and ethnic conflict, see Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), and *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> For an eloquent contextualist plea for the "adjustment of claims to circumstances," see Michael Walzer, "The New Tribalism," *Dissent*, Spring 1992, pp. 164-171. To argue that good institutional design must be context-sensitive in a strong sense does not mean that generalizing analysis of the workings of different types of institutions -- say, for example, different types of electoral systems -- is inappropriate. Horowitz undertakes such generalizing analysis, but it is a generalizing analysis of the very different effects that "the same" electoral system can have in differing contexts. And Horowitz's most sustained discussion of institutional design -- in *A Democratic South Africa* -- is densely contextual in my sense, blending relatively "thick" description of a particular context with generalizing arguments about the effects of particular institutions in a variety of settings.

since it sees the entire region as a seething cauldron of ethnic conflict, on the verge of boiling over into ethnic and nationalist violence, or, in another metaphorical idiom, as a tinderbox that a single careless spark could ignite into a catastrophic ethnonational inferno.<sup>18</sup>

It might also be called the "orientalist" view of East European nationalism, since it often involves, at least implicitly, an overdrawn, if not downright caricatural, contrast between Western and Eastern Europe, built on a series of oppositions such as that between reason and passion, universalism and particularism, transnational integration and nationalist disintegration, civility and violence, modern tolerance and ancient hatreds, civic nationhood and ethnic nationalism.

Indisputably, there are important differences, conditioned by historical traditions and present economic, cultural, political, and ethnodemographic realities, between prevailing forms of nationhood and nationalism in Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Yet one must reject the complacent and self-congratulatory account of Western Europe that is implicit or explicit in this orientalist, "seething cauldron" view of Eastern European nationalism. After all, the "Europhoria" that surrounded discussions of European integration a few years ago was dissipated by the unforeseen (and partly nationalist) resistance to the Maastricht treaty; and nationalist and xenophobic parties have established a secure place in the political landscape of almost all Western European countries.

One must also reject the "seething cauldron" account of Eastern Europe. It is this gloom-and-doom view of the East, rather than the paired complacent view of the West, that I address here. I focus on two problematic aspects of this account. The first concerns violence, the second the strength and salience of nationalism and national identities.

The violence in the region -- in the former Yugoslavia, in Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus, in parts of Soviet Central Asia -- has indeed been appalling. But the undifferentiated image of the region as a hotbed of ubiquitous, explosive, violent or at least potentially violent ethnic and national conflict is quite misleading. Violence is neither as prevalent, nor as likely to occur in the region, as is generally believed. Journalists and scholars have focused on spectacular but atypical cases of violence (the former Yugoslavia) rather than on unspectacular but more typical cases of "routine" ethnic and nationalist tensions, and they have tended to generalize from the atypical cases to the region as a whole. This case selection bias is one reason

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<sup>18</sup> Although I limit my remarks to Eastern Europe here, the gloom-and-doom view of putatively explosive ethnic nationalism has considerably wider currency. It is even used in the US, for example, to link multiculturalism to "Balkanization" and attendant bloodshed. Critical though I am of many multiculturalist pieties (see for example point 5 below), I find the argument of a "slippery slope" leading from the follies of multiculturalism *à l'américaine* to ethnic warfare just plain silly.

for the overemphasis on violence.<sup>19</sup>

Not only the actual incidence of violence, but also the danger of future violence is overestimated. Violence is often presented as an omnipresent possibility. "If it happened in Yugoslavia" -- so goes the argument -- "it could happen anywhere." I think this is mistaken. I've done some work, for example, on Hungarian minorities in neighboring states, especially Romania and Slovakia. In this setting, several forms of nationalism are intertwined. The most important are the autonomy-seeking nationalism of the Hungarian minorities; the "nation-building" or "nationalizing" nationalisms of Slovakia and Romania; and the "homeland" nationalism of Hungary, oriented to protecting the rights and interests of its co-ethnics in neighboring states. Yet I think the danger of large-scale ethnic violence or nationalist war is minimal in this case. This is not because these national tensions can somehow be "resolved." I don't think they can be. These interlocking, mutually antagonistic nationalisms of national minority, nationalizing state, and external national homeland are intractable and are likely to persist as chronic tensions and conflicts. But their intractability should not be conflated with explosiveness or with a potential to engender large-scale violence.

If I'm right about this, it raises the analytical question of what prevents these chronic, intractable, interlocking nationalist conflicts from escalating into violent confrontation. This neglected question of how to explain the absence or containment of violence, as political scientists James Fearon and David Laitin have recently argued,<sup>20</sup> is as important as the much more studied question of how to explain the occurrence of violence. In the case of Hungary and its neighbors, I would propose three reasons for the absence of violence.<sup>21</sup> The first is that Hungarians in the neighboring states have enjoyed an accessible and relatively attractive "exit" option -- the possibility of emigrating to or working in Hungary. This has functioned as a "safety valve" and has worked against the radicalization of ethnonational conflict, especially in Romania. Secondly, the embeddedness of national conflicts in regional processes of European integration has "disciplined" central political elites, especially in the foreign policy domain. This has induced Hungary to limit its support for transborder coethnics to support for Hungarian culture and to scrupulously avoid inciting destabilizing political activity on the part of its coethnics. This is true even of the national-populist Antall government of the early 1990s, despite its strong rhetorical commitment to transborder coethnics. Third, the absence of credible

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<sup>19</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." *American Political Science Review* 90(4), 1996, pp. 715-35.

<sup>20</sup> Fearon and Laitin, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> I should emphasize that this is a relative, not an absolute, absence of nationalist violence. There was one serious incident of violent clashes between Hungarians and Romanians, in Tirgu Mures in the spring of 1990, but this did not trigger further violence. Other forms of violence -- notably violent attacks on Gypsies in Romania and other East European countries -- have been quite serious; my attention here is limited to relations between Hungarians and majority nationalities in states neighboring Hungary.

narratives linking past ethnonational violence to present threat makes it difficult for radical, violence-oriented ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, whose stock in trade is fear, to succeed. By contrast, such narratives of danger and threat, linked to past violence, were strikingly evident in the former Yugoslavia before war broke out.<sup>22</sup>

Nor is this an isolated case. Estonia, for example, has been in the news a lot in recent years in connection with its bitterly contested citizenship laws and, more generally, in connection with the status of its large Russian minority. Rhetoric has been heated, indeed overheated: Russians (more frequently Russians in Russia than local Russians) have accused Estonia of apartheid and ethnic cleansing; Estonian nationalists have spoken of the Russian minority as colonists or illegal immigrants. Yet despite this overheated rhetoric, there is little fear of violence on the ground.<sup>23</sup>

It's not only violence that is overemphasized by the seething cauldron view. More generally, the strength, salience, and centrality of national feeling, national identity, and nationalist politics also tends to be overestimated. Consider for example nationalist mobilization. There have, of course, been dramatic, even spectacular, moments of high nationalist mobilization. One thinks, for example, of the "human chain" across the Baltics in August 1989, or of the great crowds that filled the main squares of Yerevan, Tblisi, Berlin, Prague, and other cities in 1988-90. These searing moments, transmitted worldwide by television, are etched forever in our memories. But they have been the exception, not the rule. Moments of high mobilization -- where they did occur -- proved ephemeral; "nation" was revealed to be a galvanizing category at one moment, but not at the next. On the whole, people have remained in their homes, not taken to the streets. In conspicuous contrast to interwar East Central Europe, demobilization and political passivity, rather than fevered mobilization, have characterized the political landscape. Much has been written on the strength of nationalist movements in the former Soviet Union; not enough has been written on their comparative weakness. And while the weakness of nationalism in certain regions (especially ex-Soviet Central Asia) has indeed been noted, too much attention has been given to variation across *space* in the intensity of nationalist mobilization, too little attention to variation over *time*. Declining

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<sup>22</sup> Fearon and Laitin, *op. cit.*, correctly caution against explaining ethnic violence by appealing to narratives of "loss, blame, and threat," arguing that such narratives characterize nonviolent forms of ethnic conflict as well. But not all such narratives are equal, or equally likely to be connected to violence. There is an important difference, in particular, between memories and threats of death and physical violence on the one hand and narratives of loss, blame, and threat in general on the other. Credible narratives of loss, blame, and threat are ubiquitous; credible narratives linking memories of past mass violence to threats of future mass violence are not. What was distinctive about the Yugoslav situation -- and in my view centrally connected to the violence there -- was the availability of plausible, and for some key actors, compelling narratives linking the occurrence of large-scale violence, in particular mass killings, in the past to the threatened recurrence of such violence in the present.

<sup>23</sup> David Laitin, personal communication.

curves of mobilization have been particularly neglected, although they are as common, as deserving of explanation, and as theoretically challenging as the more sexy ascending curves.

Even where national conflicts and national identity remain salient in the political sphere, they are not necessarily salient in everyday life. Nationalism may occur in the legislatures, in the press, in some branches of the state administration without occurring in the streets, or in the homes.<sup>24</sup> There is a loose coupling, or lack of congruence, between nationalist politics -- which seems to run in a sphere of its own, unmoored from its putative constituencies -- and everyday life. People don't necessarily respond particularly energetically or warmly to the nationalist utterances of politicians who claim to speak in their name. This general lukewarm responsiveness or even nonresponsiveness to nationalist appeals of politicians is a legacy of a more general cynicism towards and distrust of politics and politicians. An "us" versus "them" distinction was indeed central to the way people understood politics under Communism, and one might think this would be easily transposed into an exclusionary nationalism. Under certain circumstances, it may indeed be so transposed. In general, however, the "us" - "them" distinction divided not one ethnic or national group from another, but "the people" from "the regime." "They" -- representatives of the regime -- were assuredly not "us," even when they claimed to speak in our name (as they always did, of course, under Communism). Nor did this change with the collapse of communism: deploying the idiom of ethnonationalism (rather than that of class solidarity or socialist internationalism) is no guarantee that "they" will be able to persuade "us" that "we" belong together, separated not by position in the mode of domination but by ethnic nationality from an external "them."

Nor are national identities in the region as strong as is often assumed. I return to this theme below; suffice it to observe here that, given the overwhelming evidence of contextual and situational shifts in self- and other-identification, one should be skeptical of the oft-repeated emphasis on the deep historical encoding of national identities in the region, and alert to the danger of over-historicization.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In Estonia and Latvia, for example, the clash between the claims of the newly independent nationalizing states and those of their Russian and Russophone minorities, strongly amplified from outside by the homeland-nationalist claims of Russia to "protect" Baltic Russians, has remained intense and intractable at the level of high politics. But there has been little popular nationalist mobilization in the last few years on the part of majority nationalities or on the part of the Russian and Russian-speaking minorities (on the relative political passivity of Russians, see Neil Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia* [London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995]).

<sup>25</sup> There is, of course, a parallel danger of under-historicization. I address this below in my discussion of the failure of "elite manipulation" accounts to explain or systematically address the historically conditioned differential resonance of appeals made by manipulative or opportunistic nationalist politicians. (To the extent that historically conditioned differences in responsiveness to inflammatory nationalist rhetoric are addressed at all in the "elitist" literature, they are addressed in ad hoc fashion, relegated to the category of "other factors" or to an

Incipient but not insignificant cosmopolitan tendencies in the region, finally, have been obscured by the orientalist opposition between Western supranationalism and Eastern nationalism. Consider again Hungarians in Romania. It is no doubt true that, since the fall of Ceausescu, the Hungarian-national element in their self-understanding has become more pronounced. The linguistic, cultural, religious, historical, and economic ties that link them to Hungary as *anyaország* or "mother country" have become more palpable, more "real." But there is not necessarily an inverse relationship between national and cosmopolitan self-understandings. At the same time that they have become more aware of and concerned with their trans-state Hungarian nationality, they have also become more aware of and concerned with the wider European world.

Television has played an interestingly ambivalent role here. The establishment, relatively lavish financing, and diffusion from Hungary of Duna TV, a channel intended chiefly for Hungarians in the neighboring states, has reinforced the Hungarian-national self-understanding of Transylvanian Hungarians. At the same time, however, the high prestige of French, German, and English-language channels (Eurosport, BBC, etc) -- widely available in Transylvanian through cable and satellite systems -- has probably had a certain (though admittedly hard to measure) de-nationalizing or transnationalizing effect.<sup>26</sup> An anecdote reveals the national ambivalence of television. Romanian authorities were distressed when they learned that a particular cable package was to include MTV. To them, this meant Magyar TV, i.e. the state television from Hungary. In fact, of course, it was the American music video channel that was at issue. And to the Transylvanian Hungarians, the American MTV was no doubt far more interesting than the Hungarian.

In sum, ethnic and nationalist conflict has been both less violent, and less salient, than many commentators have suggested; and where such conflict has occurred, it has often been chronic and low-level, a kind of "background noise" occurring far from the focus of every day life, rather than acute and explosive.

### III

So far I've considered two overall appraisals of nationalist conflicts in the region, an optimistic view that sees them as resolvable through reorganizing political space along national lines, and a pessimistic view that sees them as deeply entrenched, pervasive, destabilizing, and on the verge of violent explosion.

I'd now like to turn to two opposed accounts of the sources and dynamics of nationalist

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undertheorized residual "context.")

<sup>26</sup> Both the Hungarian Duna-TV and the various West European channels have high prestige among Transylvanian Hungarians. Romanian TV, by contrast, has very low prestige. Its effect is mainly in contributing to the alienation of Transylvanian Hungarians from the regime, and, perhaps, from the state itself.

resurgence. The first of these is the "return of the repressed" view. The gist of this account is that national identities and national conflicts were deeply rooted in the pre-communist history of Eastern Europe, but then frozen or repressed by ruthlessly antinational communist regimes. With the collapse of communism, on this account, these pre-communist national identities and nationalist conflicts have returned with redoubled force.

This view can be expressed in (and often seems to draw at least implicitly on) a quasi-Freudian idiom. Lacking the rationally regulative ego of self-regulating civil society, the communist regimes repressed the primordial national id through a harshly punitive communist superego. With the collapse of the communist superego, the repressed ethnonational id returns in full force, wreaking vengeance, uncontrolled by the regulative ego. (The quasi-Freudian idiom makes clear the orientalist inflection of this view, and its close relation the myth of the seething cauldron.)

Obviously, communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did repress nationalism. But the "return of the repressed view" mistakes the manner in which they did so. It suggests that these regimes repressed not only nationalism, but nationhood; that they were not only *antinationalist* but *antinational*. It suggests further that a robust, primordial sense of nationhood survived in this period in spite of strenuous regime efforts to root it out in favor of internationalist and class loyalties and solidarities.

This view is fundamentally mistaken. Let me suggest why with a few words about the Soviet case.<sup>27</sup> To see late- and post-Soviet national struggles as the struggles of nations, of real, solidary groups who somehow survived despite Soviet attempts to crush them -- to suggest that nations and nationalism flourish today *despite* the Soviet regime's ruthlessly antinational policies -- is to get things nearly backwards. To put the point somewhat too sharply: nationhood and nationalism flourish today largely *because of* the regime's policies. Although *antinationalist*, those policies were anything but *antinational*. Far from ruthlessly suppressing nationhood, the Soviet regime pervasively institutionalized it. The regime repressed *nationalism*, of course; but at the same time, it went further than any other state before or since in institutionalizing territorial *nationhood* and ethnic *nationality* as fundamental social categories. In doing so it inadvertently created a political field supremely conducive to nationalism.

The regime did this in two ways. On the one hand, it carved up the Soviet state into more than fifty national territories, each expressly defined as the homeland of and for a particular ethnonational group. The top-level national territories -- those that are today the independent successor states -- were defined as quasi-nation states, complete with their own territories, names, constitutions, legislatures, administrative staffs, cultural and scientific institutions, and so on.

On the other hand, the regime divided the citizenry into a set of exhaustive and mutually

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<sup>27</sup> For a fuller version of this argument, see Chapter Two of my *Nationalism Reframed*.



exclusive ethnic nationalities, over a hundred in all. Through this state classification system, ethnic nationality served not only as a *statistical category*, a fundamental unit of social accounting, but also, and more distinctively, as an *obligatory ascribed status*. It was assigned by the state at birth on the basis of descent. It was registered in personal identity documents. It was recorded in almost all bureaucratic encounters and official transactions. And it was used to control access to higher education and to certain desirable jobs, restricting the opportunities of some nationalities, especially Jews, and promoting others through preferential treatment policies for so-called "titular" nationalities in "their own" republics.

Long before Gorbachev, then, territorial nationhood and ethnic nationality were pervasively institutionalized social and cultural forms. These forms were by no means empty. They were scorned by Sovietologists -- no doubt because the regime consistently and effectively repressed all signs of overt political nationalism, and sometimes even cultural nationalism. Yet the repression of nationalism went hand in hand with the establishment and consolidation of nationhood and nationality as fundamental cognitive and social forms.

Nationhood and nationality as institutionalized forms comprised a pervasive system of social classification, an organizing "principle of vision and division" of the social world,<sup>13</sup> to use Bourdieu's phrase. They comprised a standardized scheme of social accounting, an interpretive frame for public discussion, a dense organizational grid, a set of boundary-markers, a legitimate form for public and private identities. And when political space expanded under Gorbachev, these already pervasively institutionalized forms were readily politicized. They constituted elementary forms of political understanding, political rhetoric, political interest, and political identity. In the terms of Max Weber's "switchman" metaphor, they determined the tracks, the cognitive frame, along which action was pushed by the dynamic of material and ideal interests. In so doing, they transformed the collapse of a regime into the disintegration of a state. And they continue to shape political understanding and political action in the successor states.

Similar points could be made about Yugoslavia.<sup>28</sup> In other states of East Central Europe, to be sure, the case is somewhat different; and there was not the same degree of public support for and pervasive institutionalization of national identities. However, even in these cases, communist regimes made various, albeit limited, accommodations to the sense of nationhood; and the repression of nationhood, especially in the post-Stalinist era, was not so consistent as is widely assumed.

In emphasizing the codification and pervasive institutionalization of nationhood and nationality by the Soviet and Yugoslav regimes, I am not making a claim about the strength or depth of the ethnonational identities thus institutionalized. It's important to distinguish between the *degree of institutionalization* of ethnic and national categories and the *psychological depth, substantiality, and practical potency* of such categorical identities. The former was

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<sup>28</sup> See Veljko Vujacic and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Causes of Disintegration in the USSR and Yugoslavia." *Telos* 88 (1991): 120-140.

unprecedentedly great in the Soviet Union, but the latter were highly variable, and in some cases minimal. At the limit -- widely instantiated among some of the smaller officially recognized nationalities within the Russian Federation -- strongly institutionalized categorical identities masked the near-complete absence of distinct cultural identities or distinct ethnonational *habitus*. In this limiting case, members of different "groups" differed only in the official categorical ethnonational markers they bore; these categorical markers did not *represent* cultural or ethnic differences, but *replaced* them.<sup>29</sup> I don't mean to imply that this limiting case was the general one in the former Soviet Union. But the general point remains. A strongly institutionalized system of official ethnonational identities makes certain categories available for the public representation of social reality, the framing of political claims, and the organization of political action. This is itself a fact of great significance. But it does not assure that these categories will have a significant, pervasively structuring role in framing perception or orienting action in everyday life. Institutionalized categorical group denominations can not be taken as unproblematic indicators of "real groups" or of strong "identities."

There is a version of the "return of the repressed" argument to which I'm more sympathetic. This is relevant especially in Yugoslavia, but also in parts of the former Soviet Union. The argument is that the tabuization of certain themes -- in Yugoslavia the taboo preventing discussion of the fratricidal violence of the second world war -- prevented any kind of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (mastery of the past) of the sort that occurred in Germany. There was simply no way to publicly work through arguments about the massive wartime atrocities. This doesn't imply that discussing these openly would have resolved them: of course this wouldn't have happened. Discussion would have engendered bitter conflicts. But still, the public discussion of these might have deprived them of some of their potency forty years later when they were resurrected in public in a situation of pervasive uncertainty and insecurity without any previous attempt to master the past discursively.

In any event, what "returns" in the post-communist present is not something from the pre-communist past; it is something constituted in important ways by the communist past. Sometimes -- especially in Soviet case (and in the non-European parts of the Soviet Union) -- national identities themselves were constituted under communism. But even elsewhere in Eastern Europe, where this was not true, the national phenomenon was constituted in part -- if only negatively -- by communism, by the suppression of civil society, by the suppression of a public sphere where past atrocities could have been, in part, discursively mastered.

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<sup>29</sup> In Bourdieuan terms, two sets of persons might share exactly the same *habitus* (or, more sociologically, the same distributions of *habitus*); they might look at the world in the same way, speak the same language, dress in the same manner, consume the same goods, etc; yet they still might exist as two "groups" because of public categorical recognition.

IV

The return of repressed view often sees what returns as somehow primordial, or at least deeply rooted in the pre-communist history of the region. Hence the frequent reference to "ancient hatreds." Those who focus on unscrupulous and manipulative elites take the opposite view. Far from seeing nationalism as deeply rooted in primordial identities or ancient conflicts, they see it as stirred up by opportunistic and cynical fashion by unprincipled political elites. There is obviously much truth in this view. It's scarcely controversial to point out the opportunism and cynicism of political elites, or to underscore the crucial role of elites, whether cynical or sincere, in articulating national grievances and mobilizing people for nationalist conflict. And there are certain textbook-clear examples of cynically manipulative elites stirring up nationalist tensions and passions: perhaps Slobodan Milošević is the paradigmatic case -- a pure example of a nationalist of convenience, rather than conviction. The elitist, instrumentalist focus of this view is also correct in its rejection of the view that contemporary nationalist politics is driven by deeply rooted national identities and ancient conflicts.

As a general account of the sources and dynamics of nationalism in the region, however, the elite manipulation view has at least three problematic implications. The first is that nationalism pays off as a political strategy; that it is therefore a rational strategy for opportunistic elites to adopt; and that it is relatively easy for manipulative elites to stir up nationalist passions in a politically profitable manner. The second is that if elite-instigated ethnonational mobilization could engender ethnonational war and mass violence in Yugoslavia, the same thing could happen elsewhere (in the strong version: anywhere). The third is that this elite-driven nationalism is essentially a politics of interest, and that it therefore must be explained in instrumental terms.

I think all three implications -- or clusters of implications -- are mistaken. To begin with, nationalism is not always a subjectively rational or objectively "successful" political strategy. It is not always possible, let alone easy, to "stir up nationalist passions."<sup>30</sup> It is not always possible, let alone easy, to evoke the anxieties, the fears, the resentments, the perceptions and misperceptions, the self- and other-identifications, in short, the dispositions, the cast of mind against the background of which conspicuous and calculated nationalist stance-taking by elites can "pay off" politically. Nor is it always possible, or easy, to sustain such a nationally "primed" frame of mind, such propitiously "nationalized" dispositions, once they have been successfully evoked.

The loosely related political stances or strategies we call "nationalist" afford no generalized guarantee of political success, no generalized advantage over other political stances

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<sup>30</sup> The expression itself is problematic; presuming that nationalist passions are always already there to be "stirred up," it glosses over the difficulties involved in what might be called the "work of nationalization."

or strategies.<sup>31</sup> Investing in nationalism, *in general*, is no wiser than investing in any other political idiom or stance. At certain moments, to be sure, nationalist stances may yield higher returns. But it is hard to identify the boundaries of such moments *ex ante*. And once it is clearly that such a moment has arrived, both politicians and analysts are likely to err by conceiving it in overgeneralized terms. The collapse of communist regimes -- *a fortiori* those that ruled multi- or bi-national states -- was such a moment. But how do we define this moment and its boundaries? I would argue that political entrepreneurs, closely monitoring other political entrepreneurs within bounded fields of comparison, and seeking a share of the windfall profits won by early investors in late-communist (or early post-communist) nationalism, have tended to overinvest in this (momentarily) successful strategy, just as analysts, monitoring other analysts (as well as politicians), and seeking a share of the windfall profits won by early analysts of late-communist (or early post-communist) nationalism, have similarly tended to overinvest in the study of nationalism in general, and in the study of elite manipulation in particular.<sup>32</sup>

The history of post-communism is short; but it is long enough to make it clear that nationalism is not always a winning strategy, even in the specifically post-communist setting. The record of electoral failure by nationalists -- beginning with Lithuania in 1992 and including Hungary (1994), Ukraine (1994), Belarus (1994), Romania (1996), and others -- is by now quite substantial.<sup>33</sup> The failure of one particular kind of nationalist appeal -- the appeal to the need to protect transborder coethnics who are citizens and residents of other states -- has been particularly striking. It is a source of chronic frustration to Hungarian political elite, for example, how little the average Hungarian knows, or cares, about transborder Hungarians (in Romania, Slovakia, rump Yugoslavia, and Ukraine). What the average Hungarian "knows" about them, he or she doesn't like: the "fact" that the Hungarian government should be spending "our" money on "them," and the "fact" that "they" come to Hungary to take "our" jobs. "They"

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<sup>31</sup> For a sophisticated argument to the contrary, see Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 41-66, esp. pp. 64-65.

<sup>32</sup> In another sense, to be sure, analysts have underinvested in the study of nationalism; or, their investments have been short- rather than long-term. In search of a quick payoff, they have underinvested in the long-term study of nationalism, but over-invested in quick discussions and in "bidding up" the significance of the phenomenon of nationalism.

<sup>33</sup> One should not replace a global overestimation of the power of nationalist political appeals with a global underestimation. The "return of the left" does *not* mean that nationalism is no longer a viable political option in the region. The "return of the left" -- especially of a "left" whose economic policies have been (in some instances) far more "monetarist," far more acceptable to the IMF, than anything the preceding "right" government undertook -- may well be followed by the return of the "return of the right." Moreover, the "left" -- think of the Communists in Russia -- is quite as capable of nationalism as the "right" -- if these labels mean anything at all, which is doubtful. Nationalism had no fixed location on the political spectrum back when it made sense to speak of a political "spectrum"; still less does it have any such fixed location today.

are certainly not recognized as "us"; the most eloquent testimony to this is that Hungarians from Transylvania who come to work in Hungary are routinely called "Romanians."<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Russian politicians' attempts to mobilize on the issue of Russians stranded in the "near abroad" have been conspicuously unsuccessful. The one organization specifically devoted to this theme - the Congress of Russian Communities (KOR) -- failed even to clear the 5% threshold in the December 1995 parliamentary elections.<sup>35</sup>

The second problematic implication is that if elite manipulation drove the former Yugoslavia into ethnonational barbarism, the same could happen elsewhere. I've already criticized the conclusion to this syllogism, arguing that large-scale violence between Hungarians and Romanians in Transylvania is unlikely despite intractable national tensions. Here I would like to challenge the premise.

Elite manipulation was of course an important element in the unfolding Yugoslav catastrophe. But the elite manipulation thesis fails to specify the particular conditions that made key segments of the Yugoslav population especially *responsive* to elite manipulation as the state began to disintegrate; more generally, failing to account for the *differential success* of the mobilizing efforts and activities of elites, it overpredicts the severity and violence of ethnic conflict. In the Yugoslav case, a whole series of distinctive factors -- the massive intercommunal violence during second world war; the narratives of that violence that, deprived of a public hearing, circulated in familial settings, especially in certain key regions such as the Serb-inhabited areas of Croatian Krajina; the fear of the recurrence of that violence under conditions of rapid change in control over the means of state violence, especially when control over the means of state violence in Croatia was passing into the hands of a regime that incautiously (at best) employed certain symbols associated in the minds of Serbs with the murderous wartime Ustasha regime --help explain why people were responsive to the cynical manipulations originating in Belgrade.<sup>36</sup> Of course politicians distorted the past. But these distortions could be perceived as resonant and relevant in certain regions of Yugoslavia in a way that has no close parallel elsewhere, except perhaps in the Armenian -Azerbaijani conflict. Such variation in *conditions of responsiveness* to inflammatory elite appeals remains untheorized by the elite manipulation approach.

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<sup>34</sup> This is not, of course, peculiar to Hungary: "Germans" from Kazakhstan whom resettle in Germany are called "Russians," as are Jews from Russia (or elsewhere in the former Soviet Union) who resettle in Israel.

<sup>35</sup> The lack of electoral success of appeals to the protection of Russians outside Russia does not mean that this theme will disappear from Russian political discourse. Even if such appeals are unprofitable in the arena of domestic political competition, they may be useful in international contexts. I have developed this argument in "Homeland Nationalism in Weimar Germany and 'Weimar Russia,'" Chapter 5 of my *Nationalism Reframed*.

<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed statement of this argument, see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, pp. 72f.

The third problematic implication of the elite manipulation thesis is that nationalism is essentially a politics of interest, not a politics of identity, and that it therefore must be explained in instrumental terms, by focusing on the calculations of cynical, self-interested elites, not in primordial identitarian terms. We should not in fact have to choose between an instrumentalist and an identitarian approach to the study of nationalism. That this is a false opposition becomes clear when we think about the cognitive dimension of nationalism. Considered from a cognitive point of view, nationalism is a way of seeing the world, a way of *identifying interests*, or more precisely, a way of specifying interest-bearing units, of *identifying the relevant units in terms of which interests are conceived*. It furnishes a mode of vision and division of the world, to use Pierre Bourdieu's phrase, a mode of social counting and accounting. Thus it inherently links identity and interest - by *identifying how we are to calculate our interests*.

Of course "interests" are central to nationalist politics, as to all politics, indeed to social life generally. The elite manipulation view errs not in focusing on interests, but in doing so too narrowly, focusing on the calculating pursuit of interests taken as unproblematically "given" (above all politicians' interest in attaining or maintaining power), and ignoring broader questions about the *constitution* of interests, questions concerning the manner in which interests -- and, more fundamentally, units construed as capable of having interests, such as "nations," "ethnic groups," and "classes" -- are identified and thereby constituted. Elite discourse often plays an important role in the constitution of interests, but again this is not something political or cultural elites can do at will by deploying a few manipulative tricks. The identification and constitution of interests -- in national or other terms -- is a complex process that cannot be reduced to elite manipulation.

## V

The fifth idea I want to address is the "groupism" that still prevails in the study of ethnicity and nationalism. By groupism -- or what I'll also call the "realism of the group" -- I mean the groupist social ontology that leads us to talk and write about ethnic groups and nations as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring, internally homogeneous and externally bounded collectivities.

A similar realism of the group long prevailed in many areas of sociology and kindred disciplines.<sup>37</sup> Yet in the last decade or so, at least four developments in social theory have combined to undermine the treatment of groups as real, substantial entities. The first is the growing interest in network forms, the flourishing of network theory, and the increasing use of network as an overall orienting image or metaphor in social theory. Second, there is the challenge posed by theories of rational action, with their relentless methodological individualism, to realist understandings of groupness. The third development is a shift from broadly

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<sup>37</sup> The argument of this and the next paragraph is drawn from, and developed more fully in, "Rethinking Nationhood: nation as institutionalized form, practical category, contingent event," Chapter One in *Nationalism Reframed*, pp. 13ff.

structuralist to a variety of more "constructivist" theoretical stances; while the former envisioned groups as enduring components of social structure, the latter see groupness as constructed, contingent, and fluctuating. Finally, an emergent postmodernist theoretical sensibility emphasizes the fragmentary, the ephemeral, and the erosion of fixed forms and clear boundaries. These developments are disparate, even contradictory. But they have converged in problematizing groupness, and in undermining axioms of stable group being.

Yet this movement away from the realism of the group in the social sciences has been uneven. It has been striking -- to take just one example -- in the study of class, especially in the study of the working class -- a term that is hard to use today without quotation marks or some other distancing device. Indeed *the* working class -- understood as a real entity or substantial community -- has largely dissolved as an object of analysis. It has been challenged both by theoretical statements and by detailed empirical research in social history, labor history, and the history of popular discourse and mobilization. The study of class as a cultural and political idiom, as a mode of conflict, and as an underlying abstract dimension of economic structure remains vital; but it is no longer encumbered by an understanding of *classes* as real, enduring entities.

At the same time, an understanding of *ethnic groups* and *nations* as real entities continues to inform the study of ethnicity, nationhood and nationalism. In our everyday talk and writing, we casually reify ethnic and national groups, speaking of "the Serbs," "the Croats," "the Estonians," "the Russians," "the Hungarians," "the Romanians" as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes. We represent the social and cultural world in terms reminiscent of a Modigliani painting as a multichrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic or cultural blocs.

I want to say a bit more about this Modiglianesque image of the social world. The metaphor I borrow from Gellner. Towards the end of *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner invoked the contrasting painterly styles of Kokoschka and Modigliani -- shreds and patches of color and light in the former case, solid, sharply outlined blocs of color in the latter -- to characterize the passage from the cultural landscape of pre-national agrarian society to that of nationally and culturally homogenized industrial society.<sup>38</sup>

This is a striking image, but I think it is misleading. There are in fact two versions of Modiglianization argument. The first -- and this is Gellner's own argument -- is the "classical," nation-statist version. This is the argument that culture and polity gradually converge. Gellner was a master of compressed characterizations of vast, world-historical-social transformations; and no doubt in very broad historical perspective one can speak of a substantial cultural homogenization of polities, and of a consequent convergence of cultural and political boundaries. There are, however, two problems with Gellner's account.

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<sup>38</sup> *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 139-140.

First, Gellner's stress on the homogenization functionally required by industrial society seems to me to be trebly misplaced: in overemphasizing the degree of cultural homogeneity "required" by industrial society; in sidestepping the problem, endemic in functionalist accounts, of explanation (to note that something may be "required" or "useful" for something else is not to explain its occurrence; no mechanism guarantees that what is "required" will in fact be produced); and in neglecting the homogenizing pressures arising from interstate competition, mass military conscription, and mass nationalist public education in the classical age of the mass citizen army -- pressures more powerful, in my view, than those arising from industrialism as such.<sup>39</sup>

Secondly, Gellner does not specify whether the homogenizing forces of industrial society are still at work, or whether late industrial society is no longer culturally homogenizing. A differentiated answer is required to this question. In certain respects -- for example in the global diffusion of what is in many respects a single global material culture and dispositions associated with it -- powerfully homogenizing forces are still at work. In other respects, however, this is not the case. Thus, for example, the very logic of advanced capitalist/late industrialist/post-industrial society generates pressures for massive imports of immigrant labor, which tends to recreate a more Kokoschka-like cultural pattern.

It seems indisputable, however, that the homogenizing forces arising from militarized inter-state competition in the classical age of the mass citizen army -- at least in the advanced industrial world -- peaked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This was the maximally "Modiglianesque" moment, I would argue: it was the "high noon" of the citizen army, of the "nation in arms," of the highly assimilationist, homogenizing school systems that were linked in style and ideology to citizen armies, and of nation-states' claims to absolute internal sovereignty, claims that legitimated their attempts to "nationalize" their own territories at will, even ruthlessly. With the passing of this maximally "Modiglianesque" moment, there has been a certain relaxation in the homogenizing claims, aspirations, and practices of the state, at least in regions of the world (most strikingly in Western Europe) where states are no longer locked in fierce geopolitical and potentially military competition with one another.

But the classical, nation-statist version of the Modigliani-map argument is not the most current one. It is universally acknowledged today that culture and polity do not converge, that nearly all existing polities are in some sense "multicultural." Yet the multicultural landscapes of late modernity are themselves usually represented in Modiglianesque terms, in terms, that is, of juxtaposed, well-defined, monochrome blocs. I want to argue that this newer, "post-national" (or, more precisely, post nation-state) version of the Modigliani map is as problematic as the older, classically "nation-statist" version.

One might have thought that the mixed settlement patterns characteristic of most

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<sup>39</sup> Gellner of course does devote considerable attention to education: but he saw mass "exo-education" as arising from the logic of industrial society, not from the logic of interstate competition in the age of mass warfare. See *Nations and Nationalism*, Chapter 3.



contemporary "multicultural" polities would resist Modiglianesque representation. On this way of thinking, immigration-engendered ethnic heterogeneity, such as that of the United States, would be particularly refractory to representation in such terms; but so too would the intricately intermixed ethnodemographic landscape of Eastern Europe, and of East Central Europe in particular -- a *locus classicus* of ethnically and nationally mixed settlement.

But this mistakes the nature -- and the rhetorical power -- of the Modigliani map. The spatial aspect of the representation -- the image of continuous and homogeneous blocs situated next to, rather than interspersed with, one another -- should not be interpreted too literally; it does not necessarily imply corresponding spatial characteristics of what is represented. The Modiglianesque representation of heterogeneity as the juxtaposition of homogeneous blocs does not presuppose that the blocs be territorially concentrated. The constituent blocs may be intermixed in space, for their "blocness" -- their boundedness and internal homogeneity -- is conceptually located not in *physical* but in *social* and *cultural* space.<sup>40</sup> But the *conceptual* map is still groupist; it still sees the population as composed of definable, bounded, internally homogeneous blocs (for example, African-Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, and Euro-Americans, in the "pentagonal" multiculturalist account of America<sup>41</sup>). The implicit if not explicit imagery is that of internally homogeneous, externally sharply bounded, though not necessary territorially concentrated, ethno-cultural blocs.

The fact of pervasive territorial intermixing, then, is not itself incompatible with the Modiglianesque representation of ethnocultural heterogeneity. To challenge the Modigliani map, one must directly challenge the underlying groupist social ontology that informs most discussions of multiculturalism in North America (and indeed most discussions of ethnicity and nationalism throughout the world). There is by now an ample and sophisticated literature supporting such a challenge. As I noted above, moreover, a series of fundamental developments in social theory in recent decades have converged in problematizing assumptions of stable and bounded groupness. Yet these considerable theoretical and empirical resources have scarcely made a dent in the

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<sup>40</sup> Even mixed settlement patterns, though, are often imagined in mosaic-like terms as composites of bounded and homogeneous units. "Heterogeneity," in this mode of imagining it, is a distribution of homogeneous units. Heterogeneity is still conceptualized in groupist terms. Sometimes this finds literal representation on maps -- as for example when maps of ethnic "diversity" or "mixing" are represented as juxtaposed solid color patches. How to represent ethnic heterogeneity on a two-dimensional map is a difficult -- and philosophically interesting -- question. Certainly, though, the simple juxtaposition of solid color fields is often quite misleading, suggesting a much greater degree of local homogeneity than in fact exists, and relegating heterogeneity to a higher-level unit. That is, such maps imply that provinces (for example) are heterogeneous, but smaller regions and villages are not; and this implication is often mistaken.

<sup>41</sup> For critical discussions of conceptions of this multicultural pentagon, see David Hollinger, *Post-Ethnic America* (New York: Basic, 1995) and Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

groupism that continues to prevail -- that has indeed recently been strengthened -- in theoretical and practical discussions of ethnicity and nationalism, sustained by the combined force of casually groupist ordinary language, parochial scholarly tradition (especially in ethnic and racial studies and area studies, but now also in the rapidly expanding sphere of nationalism studies), the institutionalization and codification of groups and group "identities" in public policy, and the group-making, group-strengthening endeavors of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

The forces supporting -- and strengthening -- groupist social ontology and groupist social analysis are even stronger in Eastern Europe than in North America. The institutionalization and codification of ethnic and national groups, as noted above, went much further in multinational communist states than in North America. In Eastern Europe, moreover, the scholarly traditions associated with challenges to groupness -- rational choice theory, network analysis, constructivism generally, and post-modernist emphases on the transient and fragmentary -- have been much weaker than in North America. More fundamentally, Eastern Europe lacks the individualist traditions of North America, above all the fundamentally voluntarist conception of groupness originating in sectarian Protestantism but ramifying throughout social and political life, especially in the United States.

One might argue, moreover, that the prevailingly strongly groupist language of social analysis in Eastern Europe describes the ethnonational landscape of the region rather well. After all, this region has seen an enduring and conspicuous discrepancy between *national* boundaries -- strongly maintained *within* and *against* states -- and *state* boundaries. It has been the *locus classicus* of deeply sedimented, resilient, relatively stable ethnonational boundaries following, in much of the region, linguistic rather than political frontiers. The very forces that conspicuously hindered the Gellnerian convergence of culture and polity in the region, enabling ethnonational "groups" to sustain boundaries that cut across political divisions, would seem to warrant a Modiglianesque representation.

There have indeed been impressive instances of sustained "groupness" in the region -- in particular, of the maintenance of group boundaries and strengthening of group identities against the homogenizing, assimilationist pressures and practices of nationalizing states. One notable instance is that of Poles in Eastern Prussia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One cannot generalize, however, from this case to the region as a whole -- or even to other settings involving Poles and Germans. In other nearby settings, the boundaries between Poles and Germans proved quite weak and unstable, and a great deal of assimilation occurred in both directions. The maintenance and strengthening of national boundaries in this instance must be seen as reflecting particular circumstantial force and factors, not as somehow emanating from some properties putatively intrinsic to "Poles" as such. Groupness was strengthened in dynamic, interactive, organized response (involving a highly developed agricultural cooperative movement, credit associations, land purchase organizations, school strikes, and strong support from the Catholic church) to the harshly assimilative practices of the Prussian/German state. It was sustained by a strong basis in the Catholic church (and by religiously as well as ethnolinguistically sustained endogamy) in a region where linguistic and religious cleavages coincided (in regions where Catholic Germans encountered Poles, national boundaries were

much weaker). Groupness in this case was thus a product of politics and collective action, not a stable underlying basis for these.<sup>42</sup>

In other cases boundaries are much weaker. Consider for example late- and post-Soviet Ukraine. As we have noted above, the Soviet regime pervasively institutionalized nationhood and nationality as fundamental social categories. A key expression (and instrument) of that institutionalized scheme was the census, which recorded the self-identified ethnocultural nationality (*natsional'nost'*) of every person. At the time of the 1989 census, some 11.4 million residents of Ukraine identified their nationality as Russian. But the precision suggested by this census data, even when rounded to the nearest hundred thousand, is entirely spurious. The very categories "Russian" and "Ukrainian," as designators of putatively distinct ethnocultural nationalities, are deeply problematic in the Ukrainian context, where rates of intermarriage have been extremely high, and where nearly two million of those designating their ethnic nationality as Ukrainian in the 1989 census admitted to not speaking Ukrainian as their native language *or* as a second language they could "freely command" — a figure many consider to be greatly underestimated. One should therefore be skeptical of the illusion of bounded groupness created by the census, with its exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. One can imagine circumstances in which a self-conscious ethnically Russian minority might emerge in Ukraine, but such a "group" cannot be taken as given or deduced from the census.<sup>43</sup>

The boundary between Hungarians and Romanians in Transylvania is certainly sharper than that between Russians and Ukrainians in Ukraine. Even in Transylvania, however, group boundaries are considerably more porous and ambiguous than is widely assumed. The language of everyday life, to be sure, is rigorously categorical, dividing the population into mutually exclusive ethnonational categories, and making no allowance for mixed or ambiguous forms. But this categorical code, important though it is as a *constituent element* of social relations, should not be taken for a *faithful description* of them. Reinforced by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs on both sides, the categorical code obscures as much as it reveals about ethnonational identifications, masking the fluidity and ambiguity that arises from mixed marriages, from bilingualism, from migration, from Hungarian children attending Romanian-language schools, from intergenerational assimilation (in both directions), and from sheer indifference to the claims of ethnocultural nationality.

"Groupness" and "boundedness" must thus be taken as *variable*, as *emergent properties* of particular structural or conjunctural settings; they cannot properly be taken as given or axiomatic. Comparative studies of ethnicity and nationalism provide abundant support for this point, but it remains inadequately appreciated outside this specialized research tradition. The

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<sup>42</sup> For a general statement of this point, see Craig Calhoun, "The Problem of Identity in Collective Action," in Joan Huber, ed, *Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology* (Newbury Park, Calif., Sage, 1991), p. 59.

<sup>43</sup> The data on nationality and language are from see Gosudarstvennyi Komitet po Statistike, *Natsional'nyi Sostav Naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow: Finansy i Statistika, 1991), pp. 78-9.

point needs to be emphasized today more than ever, for the unreflectively groupist language that prevails in everyday life, journalism, politics, and much social research as well -- the habit of speaking without qualification of "Hungarians" and "Romanians," for example, as if they were sharply bounded, internally homogeneous "groups" -- not only weakens social analysis but undermines the possibilities for liberal politics in the region.

## VI

The final idea I want to discuss is the "Manichean" view that there are two kinds of nationalism, a good, civic kind and a bad, ethnic kind; and two corresponding understandings of nationhood, the good, civic conception, in which nationhood is seen as based on common citizenship, and the bad, ethnic conception, in which nationhood is seen as based on common ethnicity. This is often connected to an Orientalist conception of East European nationalism, for in general civic nationalism is seen as characteristic of Western Europe, ethnic nationalism as characteristic of Eastern Europe. But the civic-ethnic distinction is also used within regions, sometimes in an ideological mode, to distinguish one's own good, legitimate civic nationalism from the illegitimate ethnic nationalism of one's neighbors, and sometimes in a scholarly or quasi-scholarly mode, to characterize and classify different forms of nationalism and modes of national self-understanding. Today the distinction is often used to frame discussions of the new states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and to "keep score" on contemporary processes of nation- and state-building in the region; it provides a handy -- all-too-handy, in my view -- tool for classifying incipient processes of state- and nation-building as civic or ethnic.

By labeling this a Manichean view, I caricature it, of course, but not too violently. In its more nuanced forms, the distinction certainly has some analytical and normative merit. I myself have used a related (though not identical) distinction between state-centered and ethnocultural understandings of nationhood in my own previous work. Still, I think the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism, especially in the rather simplistic form in which it is usually applied, is both analytically and normatively problematic.<sup>44</sup>

One way of highlighting the analytical weakness of the Manichean view is by noting its uncertainty over how to conceptualize the cultural dimension of nationhood and nationalism. Roughly speaking, there are two very different ways of mapping culture onto the civic-ethnic distinction.

- On the one hand, ethnic nationalism may be interpreted narrowly, as involving an emphasis on descent, and, ultimately, on race, on biology. In this case, there is very little ethnic nationalism around, for on this view an emphasis on common culture, without any marked emphasis on common descent, has to be coded as a species of civic nationalism.

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<sup>44</sup> For a critique of the ethnic-civic dichotomy from the point of view of political theory, see Bernard Yack, "The Myth of the Civic Nation," *Critical Review* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1996), pp. 193-211.

But the category of civic nationalism then becomes too heterogeneous to be useful, while that of ethnic nationalism is underpopulated.

- On the other hand, ethnic nationalism may be interpreted broadly, as **ethnocultural**, while civic nationalism may be interpreted narrowly, as involving an acultural conception of citizenship, a sharp separation of citizenship from cultural as well as ethnic nationality. But in this case, the problem is just the opposite: civic nationalism gets defined out of existence, and virtually all nationalisms would be coded as ethnic or cultural. Even the paradigmatic cases of civic nationalism - France and America - cease to count as civic nationalism, since they have a crucial cultural component. (Interestingly, two recent books argue for the existence of an American cultural nationality: American nationhood, they argue, isn't purely political, founded on an idea; it is cultural; America is a nation-state founded on a common, and distinctive, American culture<sup>45</sup>).

The normative weakness of the distinction similarly pivots on the ambiguous place of culture:

- If ethnic is interpreted broadly as ethnocultural, then the blanket normative condemnation of ethnic nationalism is problematic, for in certain circumstances it is easy to have normative sympathy for the defensive power of ethnocultural nationalism (eg for that of Poland during the time of partition, for that of the Baltic nations under Soviet rule, indeed for minority cultures everywhere, whose nationalism cannot assume a civic form, though it need not, of course, be "ethnic" in the narrow, biologically based sense).
- If culture, however, is classified with civic nationhood and nationalism, then many nationalizing "civic" nationalisms, more or less suffused with cultural chauvinism, and seeking to reduce or (at the limit) eradicate cultural heterogeneity within a state, although indifferent to ethnicity in the sense of descent as such, are normatively ambiguous at best.

From a normative point of view, the joining of state power to nationalist or nationalizing practices should always be cause for concern. A skeptical stance towards statist nationalizing nationalisms (not to be equated with a blanket condemnation of them) is more adequate, and more supple, than the conceptually muddled blanket embrace of civic and condemnation of ethnic nationalism. The policies and practices of nationalizing states may be assimilationist, in a variety of modalities ranging from benign -- or not so benign -- neglect of ethnic or cultural differences to harsh or even coercive attempts to eradicate such differences. On the other hand, nationalizing policies and practices may be dissimilationist -- premised on, even constitutive of, fundamental differences between groups. The assimilationist stances are not necessarily "civic" in any normatively robust sense, while the dissimilationist stances are not necessarily "ethnic" in the narrow sense (not necessarily premised on descent-based group difference). Both assimilationist and dissimilationist nationalizing nationalisms warrant normative skepticism,

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<sup>45</sup> See Hollinger, *Post-Ethnic America*, and Lind, *The Next American Nation*.

though our normative evaluation of them will depend heavily on rich contextual knowledge -- knowledge that cannot adequately be captured, even in simplified form, by an impoverished and ambiguous coding of such nationalizing "civic" or "ethnic."

From an analytical point of view, a more useful (though of course closely related) distinction can be drawn between *state-framed* and *counter-state* understandings of nationhood and forms of nationalism. In the former, "nation" is conceived as congruent with the state, as institutionally and territorially "framed by the state; in the latter, it is conceived in opposition to the territorial and institutional frame of some existing state or states. This distinction can do the analytical work that is expected of the civic-ethnic distinction without the attendant confusions.

Clearly, there is not necessarily anything "civic" -- in the normatively robust sense of that term -- about state-framed nationhood or nationalism. It is the state -- not citizenship -- that is the cardinal point of reference; and the state that frames the nation need not be democratic, let alone robustly so. Moreover, the notion of state-framed nationhood or nationalism can accommodate linguistic, cultural and even ethnic aspects of nationhood and nationalism insofar as these are (as they often are in fact) framed, mediated, and shaped by the state.<sup>46</sup> Escaping the constricting definitional antithesis between civic and ethnic or ethnocultural nationalism, we can see that state-framed nationalisms are often imbued with a strong cultural content and may be (though need not be) ethnicized is well.<sup>47</sup>

Counter-state nationalisms, on the other hand, need not be specifically ethnic; nationhood conceived in opposition to an existing state need not be conceived in ethnic terms, or even, more loosely, in ethnocultural terms. Quite apart from the difference, mentioned above, between narrowly ethnic and broadly ethnocultural understandings of nationhood, counter-state definitions of nation may be based on territory, on historic provincial privileges, on distinct political histories prior to incorporation into a larger state, and so on. These are all cases of counter-statist but nonethnic definitions of nationhood -- of nation defined in opposition to the institutional and territorial framework of an existing state or states but without reference to a distinct ethnic or ethnocultural collectivity. Moreover, whether the counter-state nation in question is defined in ethnic or ethnocultural terms or in some other fashion, counter-state nationalisms may partake of "civic" qualities; indeed demandingly participatory counter-state

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<sup>46</sup> France may again be cited as a paradigmatic instance of state-framed nationhood. Culture is indeed constitutive (not - as I argued in *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* -- simply expressive) of French nationhood; but this is pervasively state-framed culture, not culture conceived as prior to and independent of the territorial and institutional frame of the state.

<sup>47</sup> Again, in this case, we would be talking about a *statist* ethnicization of nationhood, not some kind of pre-state or extra-state ethnicity. "Ethnicity" and "culture" thus may be found in state-framed nationalism, but only in so far as they themselves are state-framed or state-"caged" (to use Michael Mann's phrase). There is no opposition between the statist component -- which refers to the framing -- and ethnicity or culture.

nationalist movements may provide a particularly rich setting for the cultivation, display, and exercise of participatory and thereby in some sense "civic" virtue -- which the conventional civic-ethnic antithesis definitionally -- but misleadingly -- associates with "civic" and denies to "ethnic" nations and nationalisms.

## Conclusion

The "pernicious postulates" I have discussed -- some directly opposed to others -- do not add up to a single theory of nationalism. Nor have I sought to construct such a theory in my critique of these postulates. The search for "a" or "the" theory of nationalism -- like the search for "a" or "the" solution to nationalist conflicts -- is in my view misguided: for the theoretical problems associated with nationhood and nationalism, like the practical political problems, are multiform and varied, and not susceptible of resolution through a single theoretical (or practical) approach. What I have sought to provide, then, is not a comprehensive theory of nationalism, but a series of pointers away from a set of analytical cliches, theoretical dead ends, and misguided practical stances towards more promising ways of thinking about, writing about, and coping practically with nationalism and national conflicts.