

II. Nationalism, Nation Making, & the Postcolonial States of Asia, Africa, & Eurasia

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I HAVE BENEFITED ENORMOUSLY from Lowell Barrington's clarifying essays on ethnicity and nationalism. His distinction insisting on territoriality for the nation but not for ethnicity is very useful. At the same time, in our many discussions, I have argued that his definition of the nation remains, for my money, too objectivist. So I have amended the definitions he offers in his introductory chapter as a prelude to my own discussion of nationalism after independence. My additions are in brackets. "What makes nations different from other groups," writes Barrington, "is that they are *collectives* [who feel they are] *united by shared cultural features (such as language, myths, and values) and the belief in the right to territorial self-determination*. Put another way, they are groups of people [who believe they are] linked by unifying cultural characteristics and the desire to control a territory that is thought of as the group's rightful homeland."

My amendments here are meant to emphasize the unease I have about too concrete a notion of "cultural features" or "cultural characteristics." Having heard all my life about the importance of preserving ethnic culture and remaining unsure about what that entailed, I subscribe to a notion of culture as a "a system of symbols possessing a real but thin coherence that is continually put at risk in practice and therefore subject to transformation."¹

In this chapter, *nation* is employed to mean a group of people who imagines themselves to be a political community distinct from the rest of mankind, deserving self-determination, which usually entails self-rule, control of their own territory (the "homeland"), and perhaps a state of

their own. Nations, therefore, have to be made; they are not simply given by God, nature, history, or ethnic origins. And they can only exist in their full modern form when a discursive environment has been established in which cultural communities, however defined, are understood to have legitimate claims to political recognition, autonomy, independence, statehood, and control of a piece of geography.

Although arguably there were precocious instances of culture endowing power to leaders, such a discursive universe did not exist persistently and hegemonically anywhere in the world before the late eighteenth century. By the twentieth century, nations were the name of the game in politics, and the days of empires, dynastic realms, or class-derived polities were numbered. Even as they continued in various forms to coexist with nation-states, empires and non-nation-states spoke the language of the nation, dressed in national costume, and, joined by late-arriving theocratic challengers, defended the people in the form of the nation against rival forms of modernity and transnational predators.

Finding the "Radical Middle" in Ideas about the Nation

As several authors in this volume mention, our usual understanding of nations and nationalism is based on irreconcilable opposites, binarisms, or dichotomies. There is the good nationalism of the West, often referred to as *civic*, and the bad nationalism elsewhere, referred to as *ethnic*. There is the dichotomy between theories of nationalism that consider the nation to be ancient and primordial, natural and organic, and those—now hegemonic—that consider nations to be modern and constructed. Some see the nation as spontaneous, popular, and folkloric, while others talk about it as something created from the top down, elite generated, and manipulated by those in power. To those who see nationalism as inevitable, permanent, and relatively unchanging are counterposed those who see it as situational and constantly shifting.

Here, I propose a radical middle position. For me the nation is (1) modern and constructed *but* built on prior associations, communities, and identities, which in turn were constructed, though at a different time and in a different way. Ethnicity itself, for all the primordialism that accompanies its spokespersons, is like every other human category or group, a social construction—though one with deep roots and considerable longevity—and it evolves and changes over time, is contested by its members and out-

siders, and requires effort by actors to maintain some coherence or make changes.

The nation is (2) certainly influenced, shaped, often driven, even created by elites, *but* on the basis of themes, traditions, and symbols that resonate in the population. “Experience,” as understood and explained, is the context for the creation of the nation. “History” is doubly implicated: what is remembered as having happened, and what historians, journalists, and politicians select and promote as collective or official memory.

The nation is (3) more often both civic and ethnic than either one exclusively. As Barrington mentions, these forms of nationalisms are useful, perhaps, as ideal types but seldom exist in isolation from one another. They overlap and blend into each other. For one thing, civic requires a stable community, which in some sense is a culture, though the markers of it may be different from those more easily recognized as ethnic.

The nation is (4) both situational and constantly shifting. At the same time, it is much more persistent and indelible than many constructivists would have it. If nations are successful and maintain themselves, imagined communities are soon institutionalized communities.

The Postindependence Nationalisms of the Cases Covered in This Volume

As the chapters in this volume show, in many cases these various nationalisms operate simultaneously and in combination with one another. One might see the Yugoslav-Bosnian conflict as a clash between a nationalizing state nationalism (of Yugoslavia/Serbia) and a state-seeking nationalism (of the Bosnians), as well as the result of imperialist nationalisms (of Croatia and Serbia), not to mention the diasporic nationalism of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. In Africa, Asia, and Eurasia, such a mixing of nationalism variants has been common.

There is one additional, and important, feature that the countries discussed in detail in this volume share. Although treated separately in the book, the “postcolonial” and “postcommunist” cases (especially in the cases of the Eurasian states of the former Soviet Union) are, in my view, *all* postcolonial states. While scholars continue to debate whether the USSR was an empire and, if it was, what kind of empire, the justification of dominance from a metropolitan center in the Soviet case was not that different from the imperial rationalizations of the great European powers. Where race distinguished between the superior and the inferior and thereby served

to legitimize white rule over native peoples in Africa and Asia, an ostensibly egalitarian ideology in the Soviet Union made distinctions between superior and inferior classes, levels of development, and degrees of proletarianization and peasant backwardness that supported Moscow's dominion over peoples who required a helping hand. The Soviet system, like the great European empires, formalized boundaries, defined ethnicities and nationalities, and in its educational projects provided the basic elements to future nation-building.

The Postcolonial Cases of Malaysia, Rwanda, and Somalia

Diane Mauzy's chapter on Malaya stimulates an interesting question: why does nationalism seek independence? In a variety of nationalisms, certainly in those of imperial Russia and the late Soviet Union, there was a steady rise in political assertions—from cultural rights to autonomy to sovereignty to independence. There should be no mystery here. In the best-run empires, at least in their own vision, the greater good of the whole state, its interests and security, took precedence over any particular ethnicity or nation's interests. In actuality, this often meant the good of a particular dynasty or ruler, or the interest of a dominant, ruling nation. With nationalism came the conviction not only that sovereignty and the right to rule reside in the people constituted as the nation but that the people know best and can best realize their own interest.

Despite all the advantages that accrue with empire—such as greater security in the international arena and larger markets—nationalists make compelling arguments that as representatives of the nation they best reflect the mentalities and aspirations of the people. It may be that such rhetoric is self-serving and legitimizes a new national elite in power, rather than the now-delegitimized imperial rulers, but at least the leaders of the nation must be approved in some form by the people. Nation-states need not be truly democratic, but they are in some sense the expression of populism. Given the logic of the discourse of the nation, it is extremely difficult to stop the slide from cultural or linguistic demands to greater political participation and eventual self-rule and independence. The coincidence of nationalist rhetoric with the more mundane personal and political interests of leaders makes the drive to independence almost irresistible if the right thresholds and opportunities arise.

Yet for all the power of rhetoric and the logic of the discourse, national communities must also have the capacity to know themselves and act in

their own name. Here the various communication theories of the nation are particularly suggestive in giving us a prehistory of the nation.² The communities that could imagine themselves as nations were only in part the creatures of patriotic scholars and poets; they were also compelled by soldiers and government leaders to live under single sovereigns in given state boundaries. They were prodded by teachers and linguistic reformers, commercially minded printers and journalists, to learn a language that could be reproduced on paper and understood widely. And, finally, they were brought together physically in unanticipated ways by the growth of towns; the building of roads, railroads, and telegraphs; and the expansion of markets and new industries. The rise of nations and nationalism has a social as well as a discursive history, and the two must be told together.

A principal political problem in the twentieth century, and now in the twenty-first, is how to fit nation and state together, how to make the cultural community and the territorial political unit congruent. In Rwanda, as John Clark convincingly demonstrates, there was no “national” identification that bound Hutu and Tutsi together in a single Banyarwanda nation. Rather, two exclusivist, antagonistic nationalisms—Rawandan Tutsi and Rawandan Hutu—faced each other in a bloody contest for state power. The very formation of these “national” identities in colonial times had been part of a Belgian project of segregation and dominance of Tutsi minority over Hutu majority. Class and cultural distinctions, along with the ambitions of politicians, fed into perpetuating mutually exclusive identities. Without the imperial power to mediate, state power in the hands of one group created anxiety and insecurity, indeed the threat of annihilation, in the other. Once a small group of militants determined on a murderous course of extermination of its enemies and found an opportunity (with the death of President Habyarimana), difference, antagonism, and conflict degenerated into genocide.

The Somalian case presents a fascinating contrast with Rwanda. Peter Schraeder’s chapter underscores how difficult nation making is even in a country marked by ethnic, linguistic, and religious homogeneity, where elites elaborated a pan-Somalian nationalism to bind Somalians in various countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, British Somaliland, and Italian Somaliland—together in an inclusive Somalian ethnonational state. That ambitious irredentist project foundered when confronted by the resistance of Ethiopia, backed by the Soviets and Cubans, and the deep structure of clan loyalties and politics within Somalia. Here ethnic solidarity was over-

whelmed by regionalism and clan allegiances, and identification with a Somali nation proved less powerful than other loyalties. The unrecognized secession of the northern Somaliland Republic, the independence of Djibouti, and the collapse of Somalia into clan warfare seem to argue that this is a case less of a nation in search of a state than a nationalism in search of a nation.

What does Somalia tell us about constructivist versus primordialist and instrumentalist theories about identity? Primordialism assumes that identities are fixed, constant, and closely bound to “natural” ties like family and bloodlines. Schraeder argues that the enduring affective ties of all Somalis led them “regardless of clan groupings—[to] recognize their common identity and belonging to some overarching Somali ethnic group.” He identifies this pan-Somali identity, rather than the clan identity, as primordialist. Yet a constructivist would emphasize the ways in which identifications are mutable and multiple and how even the most “natural” of identities, like gender, tribe, or clan, are embedded in cultural understandings. The pan-Somali identification competes with the seemingly most primordial local or clan identity but is unable, except in some elite formulations, to become more salient than the allegiance to clan. Instrumentalism derives from constructivism and locates the construction in elites’ strategic calculations about their own interests. In Somalia the constructed nationalism of the elites, despite authoritarian and quite brutal impositions by governments, failed to take hold and overwhelm the more local and clan loyalties. Rather than being an argument for primordialism, the Somali story is an invitation to investigate precisely how clan identifications occur and are maintained, reinforced, and, perhaps, in some cases, overcome. The very process of clan identification itself may be an instrumentalist imposition by men with guns. Rupert Emerson’s perceptive reading of Africa as a continent “rich in nationalisms but poor in nations” may be supplemented with the observation that Somalia is a country rich in ambitious politicians but poor in effective nation-builders.

Malaya/Malaysia is an interesting example of how an ethnic nationalism might evolve into a more civic nationalism. The transition to independence was founded on a “bargain” that gave ethnic Malays dominance in the state but with specific rights for non-ethnic Malays. When that dominance was challenged, the very shape of the state was changed (the expulsion in 1965 of Singapore) and the democratic system suspended (after the 1969 elections). But with the growing demographic and economic weight of ethnic

Malays, with the Malay language solidly secured, and with the sense of threat to Malayness diminished, the more civic sense of *Bangsa Malaysia*, though fragile and contested, gained ground. The inimical Other was no longer the local non-Malay but the globalizing West. Mauzy's story illustrates the malleability of nationalism, within limits, and the strategic uses to which skilled leaders can employ alternatively primordial notions of identity and top-down constructions of civic identity.

The Postcolonial Cases of Eurasia

Taras Kuzio's provocative chapter expands the definition of civic nationalism to include what a number of scholars would call varieties of ethnic nationalism. By juggling categories, however, he forces analysts to think more carefully about how to distinguish—or whether it is worth distinguishing—between these two ideal types. He argues that the preindependence ethnic nationalism was marginalized after the achievement of statehood and that in Ukraine today there is simply a competition between varieties of civic nationalism. Ukrainian nationalism today is a pragmatic, even necessary, response to the large number of ethnic Russians and Russophone “Ukrainians” in the country. Ukrainian civic nationalists defend the idea of an independent Ukrainian state and its territorial integrity; its idea of belonging to the nation, reflected in its discourse and laws about citizenship, is inclusive. Ethnic nationalists, on the other hand, can be found among the Eastern Slavic and Russophilic parties who favor the merger of Ukraine with Russia or other Eastern Slavic peoples, and among Ukrainians who propose a pan-Ukrainian expansion to match state borders with ethnographic ones.

Kuzio buttresses his positive evaluation of Ukraine's civic nationalism by showing that most of the political parties in Ukraine favor the government's program of gradual Ukrainization while preserving polyethnic rights. A number of scholars, like Arel and Laitin, however, have taken a different tack and propose that the nationalizing policy of the Ukrainian state, promoting Ukrainian language, education, and culture, contradicts the stated civic ends of Ukraine's nationality policies.³ Kuzio does not examine, at least in this chapter, the baleful effects of Ukrainization on Russians and Russophones. Instead, he introduces a normative argument that this is a program of affirmative action “for righting some of the wrongs committed against the Ukrainian language and culture during tsarist and

Soviet rule.” By stretching some of the conventional uses of civic nationalism, as well as some other terms, he opens up a hornets’ nest of definitions. If, one may ask, the defense of a multinational state or empire by Russians in the past can be labeled (as Kuzio does) *imperialist* rather than *nationalist*, why should Ukrainian leaders not be considered imperialists for holding together a multinational state, pushing through a policy of (moderate) cultural homogenization, and favoring one ethnic nation over another?

Ukraine gives us an excellent example of the dilemma of the modern nation-state in formation. Just as early modern dynastic states carried out projects of cultural and administrative homogenization that eventually allowed them to be considered nations, so postcolonial states of the late twentieth century may find themselves acting like little empires, promoting the ruling nation, discriminating against minorities, or even, if the opportunity arises, expanding into neighboring territories to make the ethnic and state boundaries conform. Happily for the post-Soviet space, Ukraine and most of the other newly independent states have generally been satisfied with their Soviet borders, and pragmatic former Communists, now transformed into leaders of the nation, have been more interested in stability and material well-being (often for themselves and their cronies) than in grand irredentist adventures. Indeed, several of the most destabilizing cases in the post-Soviet world occurred where nationalists, rather than Communists, came to power (for example, Georgia and Armenia).

Lithuania is another country where the Communist Party contributed to ethnic peace. A republic in which a mass nationalist movement (*Sąjūdis*) threatened the very foundations of the Soviet state, Lithuania was the first union republic to declare itself independent of the Soviet Union. The Communists under Algirdas Brazauskas, who had already in the years of perestroika withdrawn from the all-Soviet Union party, won the first postindependence election, in part through the support of the non-Lithuanian minorities. A kind of tacit pact existed between the Communists and the nationalists, as the Communists adopted a more nationalist stance. Given the demographic hegemony in the country of the ethnic Lithuanians, there was little to be feared from adopting the “zero option” and granting citizenship to all who lived in the country. Terry Clark notes the problems with ethnic Poles in particular, but the picture drawn is one of relative tolerance and lack of tension in a setting where civic nationalism in the law coexists quite easily with ethnic nationalism among the dominant population. The very myth of the nation shared by Lithuanians—as

innocent sufferers with little to gain from outsiders—serves to consolidate Lithuanians within their own ethnic community and leave non-Lithuanians to make their own way.

One might have expected the Armenian story to have paralleled that of Lithuania. The most ethnically homogeneous of Soviet union republics, Armenia had no significant problems with internal minorities (though the 160,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled once the Karabakh conflict erupted). The Communist Party attempted, after some hesitation, to collaborate with the Armenian National Movement but was overwhelmed by the mass support for the claims to Karabakh and, later, the turn toward independence. Yet instead of developing a civic nationalism, Armenians articulated a primordialist ethnonationalism with irredentist claims to “Armenian lands” in neighboring countries. The country was well served, however, by a pragmatic moderate leadership under Levon Ter-Petrosian (1990–98), who curtailed the more excessive demands of militant nationalists until he fell from power after proposing a compromise solution to the Karabakh problem. Razmik Panossian argues that the original nationalism of the early independence period gave way to a “postnationalist politics” steadily from 1994 to 1995. Instead of politicians and ordinary people unified in seeking common national goals, intraelite rivalries over power and wealth at the top and the mundane problems of survival at the bottom divided the country and turned people toward political apathy, despair about their future, and emigration to Russia and Los Angeles.

Panossian’s concept of postnationalist politics is both revealing and problematic. Clearly, something was different in Armenia (and Lithuania, for that matter) in the ways in which political issues mobilized the population in the years just before and after independence. With sights set on founding a new state, or winning a war, the country could temporarily put aside quotidian difficulties of light and heat, food and water. But with the achievements of independence and victory also came consolidation of a new political and social order that fell far short of the anticipated democratic polity and prosperous market economy.

Yet one wonders whether, as Panossian claims, politics really became “postnationalist” in Armenia. Politics became “normal” or “ordinary,” yes, but as Panossian points out, political events and policies continued to be framed in the language of a particular nationalism. Karabakh remained the most salient political issue: it precipitated the fall of a government, it prevented the opening of borders and freer regional trade and development,

and it aligned a powerful neighbor, Turkey, with Armenia's local enemy. And it was nationalism, in a militant incarnation, that limited the country's options. A discourse in which language about exclusion from the nation, betrayal of national interests, and dehumanization of opponents became normal made compromise and collaboration both among Armenians and in international bargaining almost impossible. Rhetorical violence can turn quickly into physical violence not only in marriages but in domestic politics, and on October 27, 1999, two of the three leading politicians in Armenia were assassinated by extreme nationalists who saw themselves as defenders of Armenia against the "bloodsuckers" of the nation.

As instrumentalist, strategic, and calculated as the use of nationalist language may be at times by elites, it is extremely important that theorists and analysts of nationalism take seriously two propositions: (1) that nationalists are very often "sincere" and passionate about their cause and (2) that the receptivity in populations of nationalist appeals depends as much (or even more) on emotions as it does on rational calculation. In his chapter on Georgia, Stephen Jones emphasizes how the overwhelming support among ethnic Georgians for Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1990–91 was predicated on a widely felt sense of anxiety—the threat of Georgia's disintegration, fear of Russian military power, perceived neglect of Georgian interests by the Soviet state, and a deep sense of victimization in their own country. The demonstrations by Abkhazians and Ossetians, the killings by Soviet troops of Georgians on April 9, 1989, and a more generalized and long-experienced feeling that Georgians were losing their demographic hold on their own republic all fed into a toxic emotional commitment to a radically exclusivist Georgian nationalism. Enemies were everywhere; Georgians had to stand alone, united, against their internal foes. Gamsakhurdia's rhetoric belittling the one-third of the population that was not ethnically Georgian created a sense of threat among the non-Georgians, who sought protection from Russia, thus confirming the Georgian notion of betrayal of and danger to the nation.

Jones shows that Eduard Shevardnadze's arrival initiated a move from a self-destructive ethnonationalism toward a more tolerant and inclusive idea of the Georgian state. While not fully civic, since it preserved a privileged place for ethnic Georgians, the evolving ideology of Shevardnadze's government at least made pragmatic gestures toward greater respect for non-Georgians and even opened a discussion on federalism. The citizen-

ship law of March 1993, like that of Lithuania, recognized all residents regardless of ethnicity or language proficiency as citizens. While militants can still be heard, and minorities still experience discrimination, Georgians are less hyperbolic in their rhetoric than they were at the beginning of the 1990s. *Postnationalism* would be too strong a characterization of the situation in Georgia (as I believe it is in Armenia as well), but the atmosphere is certainly postchauvinist.⁴

Reconsidering Types of Nationalism & Their Transformations

Nationalism is an even more difficult phenomenon to define than the *nation*, a word as contested as any you are likely to find in social science. *Nationalism* is used to mean everything from loving folk culture and motifs in opera to state patriotism or racist imperialism. Although I believe that too many disparate phenomena have been labeled *nationalism*, I think it valuable to think of nationalism as an ideology or political movement that pursues (and here I borrow and revise Barrington's words) "*through argument or other activity . . . a set of rights and privileges for the self-defined members of the nation . . . [which may include] territorial autonomy or independence.*" Here I have left the door open to cultural nationalism, which in several cases, for example, the Estonians in the nineteenth century, preceded and for a long time seemed to be an adequate substitute for a political territorial nationalism. In other words, there are historical instances when nationalism exists even before and in the absence of the nation itself.

Taking into account the specifics of nationalism after independence in the cases discussed in this volume, I would like to review and expand upon Barrington's five variants of nationalism. The authors of the chapters in this volume have provided us with examples of the five variants, but they have also demonstrated the importance of considering the development of nationalism prior to independence and the way in which this development shapes the causes, trajectories, goals, and effects of nationalism after independence. At least two forms of nationalism exist before the full formation of independent nation-states.

State-seeking nationalisms involve movements or parties that accept or assume the reality of the nation and work to realize it in a polity. They can be in some contexts the same as anti-imperial, anticolonial nationalisms. Such nationalisms presuppose some shared features—such as language,

earlier historic polities identified with a people, an ethnonym, or belief in a common origin—that are then employed by nationalists to justify political claims. *Ethnic (or civic) identity-creating nationalisms* involve the activities of scholars, patriots, and politicians to construct a knowledge of the “nation”—to select its past, to invent its traditions, and “to recover” its folklore—all in service to an idea of continuity with a long, even ancient, past. This priority of primordiality and antiquity gives, in the global discourse of the nation, legitimacy to the claim to territory and statehood, or at least autonomy, and protection of cultural or linguistic rights. Ethnic (or civic) identity-creating nationalisms may exist prior to the actual existence of the nation.

Out of these two types of nationalism, and the often-revolutionary efforts of nationalists, come modern national states. With their arrival, as Barrington has detailed, a number of other specific forms of nationalism may appear, which we can broadly place into two categories related to the two forms of preindependence nationalism mentioned in the preceding. The first set of these variants focuses on the boundaries and sovereignty of the state. The *sovereignty-protecting* variant of nationalism justifies discrimination against minorities pursuing secession or irredentism. A subset of this nationalism is “mobilizing nationalism,” an effort to tap national or patriotic themes to move the population to undertake great efforts (defense, industrialization, etc.). Mobilizing nationalism is the nationalism that concerns Posen in his well-known article about the mass army.⁵ The other variant focused on state boundaries is an imperialist “hypernationalism.” This *external-territory-claiming nationalism* is the aggressive assertion of a state’s or nation’s superiority over others or other territories and willingness to use force to achieve subjugation of others.

The second set of nationalism variants flows from the identity-creating variant of preindependence nationalism. *Civic nation-building nationalism* is related to state patriotism. It involves developing loyalty and identification with a polity based on civic principles that supercede (or at least are not reducible to) ethnicity and religion, race, or other cultural, biological, or ideological differences. The *ethnic nation-protecting* variant of nationalism, on the other hand, involves the effort by the majority or dominant or titular ethnicity to consolidate and broaden its influence, culture, language, and power within a state that it seeks to establish as an ethnically national state. *Co-national-protecting nationalism* (Brubaker’s “homeland” nationalism) occurs when states look beyond their own borders for mem-

bership in the nation, seeking to represent or include members of its “nation” who live in another state.

Related to this last variant is a form of nationalism that Barrington does not address: *diasporic nationalism*. Nationalisms seeking to connect nationals need not develop only within an existing territory considered to be the “national homeland.” Fragments of the nation outside the homeland boundaries may seek unity with or protection from the homeland state. This disconnected minority, or “diaspora,” while not necessarily being disloyal to its state of residence, maintains its primary attachment to the national homeland. Some diaspora communities, geographically far from their homeland, like Armenians in America, may be involved in ethnic identity-creating nationalism prior to independence as well as efforts to protect the nation and its territory after independence.

The final amendment I will add to Barrington’s discussion of postindependence variants of nationalism is a brief comment on their fluidity. As the authors in this volume have highlighted, it is not only likely that two or more of these variants will exist in the same case at the same time. It is also likely that the postindependence nationalism will progress from one form to another. Again, several sequential combinations or “paths” are possible.

I will highlight one such path here that is particularly relevant to the postcommunist states, where ethnic understandings of the nation prior to independence were popular. Some governments continued this emphasis after independence, adopting policies to protect the ethnic nation. Estonia and Latvia are the most conspicuous examples on the territory of the former Soviet Union but not the only ones by any means. In these two Baltic states, ethnically driven policies regarding citizenship, language use, and education in the early and mid-1990s began to give way in the late 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century. Efforts at “integrating” the minority populations from 2000 to 2005 hint that ideas of a more civic national identity—though still centered around knowledge of the titular group language—may be taking hold. This evolution from ethnic “nation-protecting” to civic “nation-building” has been encouraged by European international organizations. But it is also consistent with a decreasing perception among Estonians and Latvians that the minorities in their countries pose a threat to their national cultures and to the states they now control.⁶ Such decreases in perceived threat over time are not unusual following the establishment of independence.

Conclusion

Two questions have been posed throughout this volume: Why after the nation has achieved statehood is there still nationalism? And what does it do? As Barrington puts it in his introduction, “If the national membership boundaries are well-established and accepted . . . *and* correspond to the borders of the new state, . . . nationalism after independence would be difficult to sustain.” But these are conditions that do not prevail in most of the countries under review in this book, nor should we expect them in postcolonial cases.

While they are immensely important moments of transition, independence and sovereignty are only way stations in the history of the nation. Nations are never fully made. Like other humanly conceived communities, they are always in process. As some nation-states in this volume are entering the international community of states and taking on new attributes of sovereignty, other, older states are cautiously negotiating away aspects of their sovereignty, surrendering what had earlier been so difficult to win to supranational entities like the European Union. Particularly in newer states, nationalism continues to function as a mobilizer of loyalty to the contested authority of the national state, the definer of boundaries and rules of inclusion and exclusion.

The very content of what a particular nation is, what it ought to mean to its citizens, can never be taken for granted or permanently fixed. Thus, returning to my “radical middle” propositions about the nation, national identity is more rigid than most constructivists acknowledge, but at the same time the nation must be constantly reinscribed in the consciousness of its members. As I write elsewhere:

Like other discourses, talk about and everyday embodiments of the nation both constitute the felt presence of the national and hide the fractures, divisions, and relations of power within the nation. But, then, that is why intellectuals and politicians, military bands and postage stamps, have so much work to do. Ultimately more fragile than it would admit, the nation must constantly be reproduced in thousands of ways until it becomes as ordinary and quotidian as the water in which fish swim. Ultimately, ordinary people must join in that daily plebiscite of which Ernest Renan spoke, or what at times seemed so evident and permanent can give way to more tangible concerns.⁷

This effort at constant reproduction highlights the other elements of my “radical middle” position. Postindependence nations are modern and constructed, *but* the reconstruction is built on existing foundations; the remodeling project is the task of elites, *but* it is a task that requires them to employ themes, traditions, and symbols that resonate more broadly. Elites must take account of what has gone before, what is thought to be primordial, even as they attempt to lead the nation in a more civic direction.

In the post-Soviet nation-states, identification with ethnicity (*natsional’nost’* in Russian) has remained very strong; in many cases much stronger than with the state in which people find themselves living. Citizenship might be granted by law or earned by learning the language of the titular nationality, but that legal identity often competes at a disadvantage with a deep, primordial sense of ethnic belonging. The chapters in this volume point out that many post-Soviet states have incorporated civic nationalist approaches in the early years of independence. As Ian Bremmer argues in his chapter, much of this has to do with pressure from the outside (from Russia and/or Europe). But the leaders of these states have also, for both strategic and emotional reasons, returned at times to the “existing foundation”—the ethnic symbols familiar to the masses and the ethnic lines of “us” and “them”—and promoted the primordialism that marked Soviet thinking on nationality.⁸

This balancing act that the “radical middle” approach seeks to capture is the task that postindependence elites faced (and continue to face). The comparisons between states generated in the British, French, and Italian empires and those formalized and developed in the Soviet Union (which increasingly in the literature is treated as an empire) present us with a range of postcolonial situations. The intentions and methods of different empires led to different outcomes. Divide and rule strategies, promoting one ethnicity over another, privileging a ruling metropolitan nation over peripheral peoples—all within a powerful racialized discourse of development—had powerful but different effects on the colonized peoples.

Yet there are also important similarities. In all of these cases a great “dialectic of empire” made it necessary for the peoples of the peripheries ultimately to take their liberation in their own hands. Empires justified themselves by proclaiming their civilizing mission (or the building of a higher form of human existence, capitalism, or socialism). But every step they took toward successfully building a more mobile, better-educated, more modern society undermined their very reason for maintaining their

dominance. Who needs European sahibs if native peoples have become educated and “civilized” enough to run their own affairs? Who needs Communist Party bosses from the center if the peoples of the non-Russian republics (and Russia itself!) have acquired the skills and consciousness to represent and govern themselves? The empire, by its very achievements (*dostizheniia*, a favorite Soviet word), provides the shovels with which its subjects dig its grave.

Nationalism remains a slippery term, difficult to define and to measure. In its place many analysts have concentrated instead on national identity or identification and sought to elucidate the intensity or salience of ethnic and civic identities.⁹ Identity, for all its changeability, forces us to look at where understandings of self, group, and place have come from. The chapters in this book demonstrate that postindependence states do not start from scratch with new national identities.

I have chosen to have the post-Soviet cases studied in this volume share the “postcolonial” label with Malaysia, Rwanda, and Somalia to highlight how elites must build their sense of nation, their nationalism, on the identities that have come from the (colonial) experience prior to independence. As fresh a start as independence must seem to those actually experiencing it, the specter of past generations weighs heavily on the new states. Analysts, as many in this volume have shown, can only begin to explore the present and future of postindependence nationalism with a serious look back into the past. The past takes its revenge . . . if we choose to ignore it.

NOTES

My thanks also to Lowell Barrington as well as Henry E. Brady for suggestions on how to improve this chapter.

1. William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 52.

2. See, for example, Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (New York: Wiley, 1953); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

3. David L. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); and Dominique Arel, “Language Policies in Independent Ukraine: Towards One or Two State Languages?” *Nationalities Papers* 23, no. 3 (1995): 597–622.

4. The Georgian political analyst Ghia Nodia once suggested to me that the progressive moderation of nationalism among Georgians is the result of their defeat in the

wars of the first years of independence, and I speculated that the intense (and often intolerant) commitment to ethnonationalism, particularly among the Armenian intelligentsia, may be related to the Armenian victory in the wars with Azerbaijan.

5. Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (autumn 1993): 80–124.

6. For more on this topic, see Lowell Barrington, "Integration Policies in Estonia and Latvia: Can They Serve as Models for Other Multiethnic States?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, New York, April 2003).

7. Ronald Grigor Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (December 2001): 871.

8. For a discussion of post-Soviet thinking on nationality in Armenia and Kazakhstan, see *ibid.*, 862–96.

9. See, for example, Laitin, *Identity in Formation*; the discussion of this book and others by Lowell Barrington, "Russian-Speakers in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan: 'Nationality,' 'Population,' or Neither?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 2 (April–June 2001): 129–58, and comments by Laitin and Barrington, 159–66; as well as the very suggestive papers forthcoming by Henry E. Brady and Cynthia S. Kaplan, "Categorically Wrong? Nominal versus Graded Measures of Ethnic Identity," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35, no. 3 (fall 2000): 56–91; "Ethnicity and Context: Mass Mobilization during Transitions" (unpublished); and "Frames, Groups, and Events in Estonia" (unpublished).