

1 **Conceptualizing nationalism**

An introduction to Walker Connor's work

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Vastly neglected until around twenty years ago, nationalism has become the pivotal theme in a number of scholarly, as well as popular, publications. In the wake of the Communist order's dissolution, the number of published works on various aspects of nationalism has been steadily rising, turning into a sweeping tide and a fashionable industry. Walker Connor is one of the scholars of nationalism and ethnic conflict who has contributed most towards establishing a conceptual grounding for this emerging discipline. His pioneering work has tackled systematically the most relevant problems in the field, while identifying its primary fault lines and clarifying its key concepts. Connor's prescience in forecasting current international developments is now widely acknowledged, making him one of the most quoted authors in the field over the past thirty years. In the 1970s and 1980s, when few dared to contemplate the underlying strength of nationalism and secession, he advanced some of the most challenging arguments in this direction. When fewer than a handful of savants indulged in writing on the resilience of ethnic roots, Connor was producing a set of seminal essays. Indicative of the continuing relevance of Connor's contribution is the considerable output of new thinking on the subject that has recently emerged.

This volume brings together a number of specialists who are investigating this area in new ways, adding to the debate pioneered by Connor. Here, a group of the most prominent American and European scholars of nationalism join together to offer a new perspective on themes and issues that have been focal points in Connor's approach and which remain critical to our understanding of nationalism. The contributions reflect approaches drawn from a wide range of disciplines. Before briefly introducing each chapter, we shall first highlight Connor's contribution to the socio-political literature by describing some of the key themes he has addressed.

Key concepts in the study of nationalism

Walker Connor was one of the first scholars to address systematically the lack of an appropriate terminology in the study of nationalism, particularly in political science.¹ This was a crucial issue, given also that nationalists themselves thrive on such ambiguities.² The need for a clear and unequivocal definition of key concepts in

the field has been essential. The opening chapter of this volume offers one of Connor's most significant achievements in conceptual clarification.

Political philosophers have pointed to the existence of 'essentially contested concepts'.³ In the philosophers' view, such an 'essentially contested' character has more to do with the neutrality of these concepts, than with their clarity. Clarity, however, encompasses neutrality: those rare concepts whose definition is universally and univocally accepted are less prone to be misused and tied to the ideological convenience of each scholar and practitioner.

The term preferred by Connor, and since then incorporated in most of the nationalism literature, is '*ethnonationalism*'. This denotes both the loyalty to a nation deprived of its own state and the loyalty to an ethnic group embodied in a specific state, particularly where the latter is conceived as a 'nation-state'. In other words, ethnonationalism is conceived in a very broad sense and may be used interchangeably with nationalism. For instance, Connor subsumes within the same spectrum anti-EC feelings in Denmark, Britain or Norway (Connor 1994a: 168, 1994b), as well as anti-immigrant feelings such as emerged, say, in Switzerland in the 1970s (Connor 1994a: 35, 154 and 177) and, generally, racism and xenophobia. As nationalism refers simultaneously to state and non-state nationalisms, the distinction between the two forms of nationalism is blurred: the emotional attachment to lineage, ancestry and continuity is shared by both those who have power and those who are deprived of it.

However, since such a broad usage of the term lends itself to criticism, further clarification is needed. What all the phenomena described above have in common is a deep emotional thrust and, most importantly, the effect of privileging co-ethnics versus outsiders. This involves a strict form of favoritism or, in van den Berghe's (1987) words, ethnic 'nepotism'. Such favoritism (and accompanying exclusionary practices) derive from the irrational belief that, descending from common ancestors, we all are related and form part of the same 'extended family'. Both Horowitz and Smith have explored this powerful link in depth, and both their contributions to this volume highlight this dimension by relating it to Connor's approach. Ethnicity, then, remains the most central and powerful element in the development of nationalism. But what is 'ethnicity'?

Ethnicity normally refers to a belief in putative descent: that is, a belief in something which may or may not be real. It is a perception of commonality and belonging supported by a myth of common ancestry. Therefore, it does not necessarily suggest tangible elements of culture. It is somehow immaterial. Connor (1993) has stressed the *subjective* and psychological quality of this perception, rather than its objective 'substance'. More generally, 'identity does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions, perceptions are as important or more than reality when it comes to ethnic issues' (Connor 1997: 33). The term ethnicity is a relatively recent acquisition in the English language. According to Glazer and Moynihan, its first sociological use dates back to David Riesman's work in 1953.⁴

In line with coeval mainstream politicians, modernization theorists tended to confusingly substitute the word nation for the very different concept of *state*. For example, at least up to the 1970s, the concept of *nation-building* was meant to define

a top-down élites-led project of 'national' construction almost totally detached from any pre-existing popular feeling or socio-anthropological reality. Connor stripped such an undue appropriation of its ambiguous meaning (1972, 1978), revealing that the term provided an ideological disguise for state-building – often in its most authoritarian form. Any process of nation-building insensitive to ethnic nuances and local subjectivities implies a parallel process of *nation-destroying* among minority groups.

The tendency to conflate nation and state also led to a confusion between (1) ethnic (national) consciousness/loyalty and (2) civic (state) consciousness/loyalty. For a long time, political scientists avoided the use of the word 'nationalism' in reference to either separatist or autonomist movements developing outside, or against, the existing state. The nationalism of stateless nations was therefore labelled in several ways, for instance, sub-nationalism, micro-nationalism, ethnic nationalism, ethnism, ethnicism, ethno-regionalism, parochialism, regionalism, or linguistic nativism.⁵ By contrast, state nationalism was treated as a given, whereas daily practices of 'banal nationalism' were blatantly ignored (Billig 1995). Most often, state nationalism was assumed to be intrinsically 'civic' (Brown 2000), especially when opposed to the nationalism of stateless nations, which was seen as quintessentially 'ethnic', hence 'primordial'.⁶ Connor has very effectively revealed and denounced this blunder. All the chapters in this volume share an awareness of this terminological conundrum.

Connor (1994a: 42) defines the nation as a self-differentiating ethnic group.⁷ Two main consequences stem from this definition. First, it postulates a continuity between the ethnic and the national dimensions. Second, the emphasis on self-awareness implies a stress on perception and, hence, on the psychological realm. Given this subjectivity, the *nation* is a self-defining category, that is, it is often not definable externally.⁸ In other words, it is the subjective experience of self-awareness that brings the nation into being. And given the connection between ethnicity and nationalism, it also follows that the most quintessentially modernist construction, the true nation-state, is *au fond* an ethnic state.⁹

As stressed by Smith in this volume (Chapter 3), most forms of nationalism have been, and are, ethnic. Connor goes further, maintaining that all nationalism is ethnically predicated, and those who employ the term nationalism to refer to a civic identity or civic loyalty are confusing *patriotism* with nationalism. *Ethnos* and *nation* are equivalents: the former derived from ancient Greek, the latter from Latin. It follows that the term *ethnonationalism* is largely tautological, since ethnicity permeates nationalism anyway.¹⁰

Is hence the nation the modern garb through which previously existing *ethnies* 'modernized' themselves into a world of nation-states?¹¹ If this is the case, we can then subsume within nationalism all possible trends aimed at the survival and self-preservation of an ethnic group. However, as Connor has pointed out, it is impossible to define nationalism in terms of its own goals, in part because the latter are often shifting. If we do that, we end up with endless and imprecise definitions of nationalism.

Challenging the dogma of economism

During much of the Cold War, econo-centric theories permeated socio-political accounts of past and present events. Conflicts were customarily explained as a consequence of backwardness, economic crisis, uneven development or relative deprivation. The prescriptive coda was hence that conflicts could be cured by addressing economic grievances. In the apogee of welfare state politics, economic development became the panacea. This was obviously the flip side of the Marxist dogma reigning in the Eastern bloc. In a classical twist of the human psyche, alleged arch-enemies (liberals and Marxists) ended up resembling each other in their diagnoses and prescriptions. But their titanic clash transformed all other struggles into irrelevant distractions or epiphenomenal appendages.

The powerful direct or indirect influence of Marxism in the social sciences until the 1980s can account for much of the intellectual débâcle. In the 1970s, Connor began what would eventually become an eight-year research undertaking into the relationship between Marxist-Leninism and nationalism. The result was the seminal *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Connor 1984a). As a student of comparative nationalism, Connor felt compelled to undertake this project because, as he stated in the book's Introduction, 'The experiences of sixteen states, most of them ethnationally heterogeneous and accounting *in toto* for approximately one-third of the world's population, are simply too significant to be ignored, particularly when these states claim to have the formula for harnessing and dissolving nationalism.' The formula was called 'Leninist National Policy' and, as analyzed by Connor (1984a: 38), consisted of three injunctions:

- (1) Prior to the assumption of power, promise to all national groups the right of self-determination (expressly including the right of secession) while proffering national equality to those who wish to remain within the state.
- (2) Following the assumption of power, terminate the fact – though not necessarily the fiction – of a right to secession, and begin the lengthy process of assimilation via the dialectical route of territorial autonomy for all compact national groups.
- (3) Keep the Party free of all nationalist proclivities.

Connor documented that the Leninists' first injunction paid handsome dividends. This stratagem was a key element in the assumption and consolidation of power by Lenin, an essential element in the rise to power of Mao-Zedong, and probably the single most important factor in the success of Ho Chi Minh and Tito. By contrast, Connor documented the failure of injunctions 2 and 3. Rather than dissipating within Marxist-Leninist societies, nationalism was growing at both the mass level and within the confines of the parties.¹² It would be difficult to exaggerate the gap between Connor's analysis and the prevalent opinion at the time. At least until the late 1980s, the overwhelming number of scholars, as well as Western governments and their intelligence agencies, in effect accepted the contention that the Leninist

states had solved their national question. Those few who, along with Connor, maintained the contrary were treated patronizingly at best.

In the Soviet Union, particularly during the Stalinist years, the entire territory seemed to be firmly under central *apparatchiky* control. George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, clearly described 'Oceania' as a highly centralized bureaucracy, not a federation of semi-sovereign republics. Indeed, federalism in the Soviet camp was largely fictitious and nominal, as control remained firmly in the hands of the Communist Party. The original Marxist postulate had to be adapted to reality: Lenin's answer to the national question was skilfully devised to keep the empire together. The 'solution' was to give a high degree of formal autonomy to the empire's constituent nations, including a nominal right to *self-determination*. Local élites were either coopted or eliminated. The centre of everything became the Party with its pyramidal disposition of power down to the 'federal' level. But this was supposed to provide a mere provisional framework: in the long run, national loyalties were to be overcome by the creation of a new, allegedly a-national, Soviet man. The granting of autonomous status to most ethnic groups was to be a prelude to the fusion of all nations and races into a mythical *homo sovieticus*. With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to say that Connor's diagnosis (that national appeals were to prove more irresistible than socio-economic class and ideology) has been fully vindicated by history.¹³

Connor had underlined the sharp distinction in position between Marxists and nationalists. Most socialist regimes subsumed two conflicting flanks within themselves: a Marxist and a nationalist one. This cleavage corresponded to the familiar one present in most Marxist movements: 'The nationalists would therefore contend that, in a test of loyalties, national consciousness would prove more powerful than all *intra national* divisions, including that of class. Marxists, on the other hand, would maintain that class consciousness would prove the more powerful' (Connor 1984a: 5). As Connor anticipated, the contrary did indeed occur: nationalism triumphed over socialism virtually everywhere. Indeed, this triumph of nationalism was particularly pervasive in the Socialist camp, that is, among socialist or post-socialist intellectual and political élites.

However, Marxist political praxis also emblazoned the right to self-determination, notably in the works of Lenin and Stalin. Such incongruity between proletarian internationalism and the right to self-determination originated in the specific historical circumstances (post-Wilsonian Europe) and geographical area (crumbling Russian empire) in which Marxist political strategists were simultaneously compelled to operate. 'Thus, Marxist-Leninist movements have learned to cloak their pre-revolutionary appeals in ethnonational garb' (Connor 1984a: 357). As Fishman shrewdly pointed out, 'classist Marxists joined these movements only when they triumphed and then only to capture them from within, since Marxism failed to destroy them from without' (1980: 80). But nationalist movements have been quick to seize on this ambiguity, by either denying (if already possessing a state) or exalting (if deprived of it) the right of self-determination.

Despite developments in Eastern Europe, economism still represents a conspicuous element within the literature on nationalism, notably among instrumentalists

and constructivists (see Chapter 5 by Fishman). As such, it runs counter to a sharp – and so far as this author is aware, publicly unchallenged – criticism of the explanatory power of economic forces set forth in an article by Connor (1984b). The article substantiates that ethnonationalism appears to operate independently from economic variables and that perceived economic discrimination can merely work as a reinforcing variable, as a ‘catalytic agent, exacerbator, or choice of battleground’ (ibid.: 356). To put economic issues at the centre of the analysis means to miss the primary point, namely that ethnic movements are indeed ethnic and not economic.

Modernity and legitimacy: a contrast with Ernest Gellner

In Max Weber’s classical aphorism, the state is that institution which exercises ‘the monopoly of the *legitimate* use of physical force within a given territory’;¹⁴ the emphasis should rightly be on the adjective ‘legitimate’. Nationalism is indeed a movement aimed at challenging or capturing the existing political order’s legitimacy; moreover, its goal is the state’s ‘de-’ and ‘re-legitimation’. Connor’s own contribution in this volume is a seminal analysis of the centrality of the principle of legitimacy in the study of nationalism. Here he shows how political legitimacy is indeed central to the sustenance of any nation. By their very existence secessionist movements reflect a lack of legitimacy on the part of the central state. The state is no longer seen as representing one’s own nation (or nations), hence it is challenged on its own ground.

To take a significant example, the legitimacy of the Francoist state in Spain (1939–75) lasted only insofar as it could guarantee the monopoly of legitimate violence, through a mixture of coercion and consensus. The consensus partly stemmed from the Civil War trauma, which had caused nearly a million deaths, placing Spain on the verge of self-annihilation. The memory of war horrors, including those perpetrated by intra-Republican factionalism, had led most Spaniards to accept Francoism as a lesser evil.¹⁵ Its main justification resided in its ‘order and peace’ programme, in spite of ruthless repression.¹⁶ Yet, control through both coercion and consensus was shattered by the rise of Basque nationalism in its most radical form to date. As the regime opened up to the West, the state’s monopoly of violence was challenged on its own ‘terrain’, while the emergence of terrorism revealed in turn the regime’s widespread lack of consensual legitimacy (Conversi 1997).¹⁷

But how does state legitimacy relate to the rise of ethnic conflict and competing nationalisms? When the state is unable to reform itself, it is often tempted to use coercion. However, by enacting repressive policies to deal with ethnic dissent, the state further loses credibility, hence legitimacy. The adoption of drastic measures reveals the state’s critical weakness. In other words, violence itself may delegitimize the state. In self-perpetuating dictatorships, there are fewer open clues to any underlying lack of legitimacy. But the authoritarian system’s illusory façade normally collapses as soon as coercion loosens its grip. Coercion and repression figured prominently in pre-democratic Europe. Nation-formation was preceded by long

sanguinary wars, which sapped the living strength of ordinary people and their capacity to counter-mobilize.

Like most of the contributors to this volume, Connor grounds his definition of nationalism on Weberian postulates.¹⁸ This orientation is shared by Ernest Gellner, who has produced what is probably the most commented upon theory of nationalism.¹⁹ Both Connor and Gellner regard nationalism as an organizing and a legitimizing principle. For both, *legitimacy* lies at the core of nations and nationalism. Gellner defines nationalism as the principle that ‘the rulers should belong to the same ethnic (i.e., national) group as the ruled’ (1983: 1). Note that the inverse formula gives *ipso facto* legitimacy to ethnic cleansing: to claim that the inhabitant of a specific constituency must share the same ethnic lineage of its leaders is to give *carte blanche* to mass expulsion and the drastic re-drawing of boundaries to suit the group’s pedigree. Moreover, this political precept holds that ‘nation and political power should be congruent’ (ibid.: 1). This longing for congruence is the historical hallmark of all national–totalitarian attempts to erase ethnic opposition by homogenizing entire areas of the globe.

Gellner, like Connor, envisages the nation as a product of modernity. Yet, there is a difference in the timing and the quality of their assessment. Gellner sees industrialization as the catalyst of nation-formation, whereas for Connor the nation – as a mass, in contrast to an élite phenomenon – materializes as a tangible social formation only with late modernity, notably with the diffusion of compulsory education and conscript armies.²⁰ Challenging perennialist accounts of the antiquity of nations, Connor’s approach is more ‘modernist’ than Gellner’s. In this way, Connor can be identified as a ‘late modernist’, an interpretation clearly stated in Smith’s contribution in this volume (see Chapter 3).

The methodological quality is also dissimilar. Connor and Gellner share much more than is normally acknowledged, but what is implicit in Gellner is made explicit in Connor: Gellner’s overarching theory moves in a conceptual vacuum. Nation, ethnicity, language and culture are often blurred in his otherwise crystalline and fascinating explanation of the rise of nations and nationalism. Despite some clear-cut and memorable definitions, a careful reading of Gellner’s work reveals that the core of his explanations is *culture* as an organizing principle: a highly formalized standardized culture needs, and is needed, by a state, which in turn becomes its political roof and ultimate protector. Despite the fact that it underlies much of Gellner’s definition of the nation, ethnicity is only vaguely addressed as such. The nation is rather the end product of epochal forces of social change. Culture is central to it, but culture is defined mainly in terms of language: thus Gellner’s vision can also be said to be ‘glotto-centric’. Connor’s chapter on nationalism and legitimacy in this volume takes care of some of this confusion by offering a much more parsimonious and trenchant set of definitions.

Modernization and modernism

Various assumptions about the diffusion of nationalism underlie scholarly research. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and, to a certain extent, during the 1980s, the

modernization paradigm dominated political science.²¹ Modernization theorists, epitomized by Karl Deutsch and other post-war political scientists,²² emphasized that increased communications would erase ethnic cleavages and result in the successful achievement of ‘nation-building’.²³ As mentioned earlier, this model was analogous to the one blazed abroad by its Soviet ‘anti-thesis’: both mirrored each other. According to Deutsch (1966), modernization is characterized by the presence of ‘social mobilization’, that is, the process through which the ancestral bonds within the individual’s value system are eroded, and by which these individuals become freely available to new forms of socialization. Such theory remained the unchallenged dogma in social science for nearly thirty years following World War II.

In his own adaptation of modernization theory, Connor (1972, 1973, 1987) perceived a very different consequence for nationalism flowing from increasing contacts and communications: nationalism spreads as communications spread.²⁴ In particular, this is the foreseeable reaction by peoples who undergo the steam-rolling action of nation-building:

The rapid spread of literacy, the greater mobility of man, made possible by revolutionary strides in the form of transportation and communications, have rapidly dissipated the possibility of cultural isolation . . . These developments not only cause the individual to become more aware of alien ethnic groups, but also of those who share his ethnicity.²⁵

Connor’s approach has hence been identified as belonging to *conflictual modernization theories*, which replaced the previous *melting pot modernization theories* of Deutsch and others (Newman 1991).²⁶ The former stresses that modernization leads to the reinforcement of current ethnic identities, the latter that it leads to amalgamation, fusion (in Marxist-Leninist jargon), assimilation, or the merging of identities. Most classical modernization theory generalizes and extrapolates such conclusions from the experience of immigrants into the American context. It is an entirely different matter to apply the same concepts to territorially-based, indigenous minorities. For this purpose Connor has distinguished ‘homeland’ from immigrant societies (Connor 1994a: 81–82 and 154–155; and 2001: 53–57).²⁷ As policy-makers can no longer ignore, assimilation, especially forced assimilation, of homeland-based minorities is not a harbinger of integration. On the contrary, it has often a boomerang effect. More often than not, conflict and assimilation are consummate bed-fellows (Conversi 1999). Even in immigrant societies there is now a debate whether assimilation is feasible or even desirable, although it is still expected to occur.

The importance of modernity for the rise of nationalism is accepted almost universally by scholars of nationalism, with a few partial exceptions (for instance, Hastings 1997). Even ethno-symbolists, notably Anthony D. Smith, agree that nationalism is an intrinsic characteristic of the modern world (Smith 1981: 37).²⁸ Other scholars, such as Tom Nairn (1977), go as far as seeing modernization as the foremost cause of international conflicts. By dismantling local boundaries, economic development and market forces provoke ‘atavistic urges’ leading to

conflict, hatred and wars. Contrary to the vision of Kant and other philosophers, the global spread of trade and commerce did not lead the world on a highway to universal peace. The century of trade expansion and unmitigated Western supremacy has also been the century of total war, genocide and unequaled miseries, often under the double banner of rapid modernization and the defence of the homeland. Thus, there is a direct link between modernization, animosity and nationalism (Nairn, cited by Smith 1981: 39). My own research suggests that the impact produced by industrialization and modernization was perhaps the most relevant factor in the rise of anti-state nationalism in Spain (Conversi 1997).

Anthropologists, since at least Frederick Barth (1969), also envision ethnic identity as the outcome of intense interaction and transactions between groups.²⁹ Indeed, both modernists and perennialists (in particular, Armstrong 1982) concur that ethnic boundaries are strengthened in response to intense interaction. However, the ultimate price may be at the expense of culture, and cultural erosion is apt to lead to further and deeper conflict.³⁰

Nationalism as an emotional bond

Perhaps the most commonly attacked of Connor's viewpoints is his focus on the non-rational, emotional and unaccountable nature of nationalism. The three chapters of this volume by Smith, Horowitz, and Fishman deal specifically with this dimension. Academic criticism has often targeted any alleged 'psychologist' emphasis on the 'need to belong'. Therefore, this need remains largely disregarded, neglected or at least unexplored, in spite of its universality. At the same time, many studies assume it as a background, supplementary or even underlying theme. Waking up in amazement to the 'revival' of ethnic feelings, scholars were belatedly compelled to address the unexpected endurance of ethnic attachments. But any such academic bewilderment had to confront the issue of the *persistence* of the 'need to belong'.³¹

Nationalist movements are often thought to manifest a solipsist attitude. Connor rightly points out the 'general insensitivity that one national group and its leadership customarily exemplify towards the rights of other groups' (1973: 15–16). This clearly points to the deep non-rational character of even the most rationally-looking nationalist movement: 'irrationality' resides precisely in the incapacity to coordinate one's efforts with those of potential allies, simply because the latter do not belong to the same ethno-biological pool.³² His anti-universalist bent is incompatible with rational thought. On the one hand there may be a sensible motive in many people's historical aversion against universalism and cosmopolitanism. On the other hand the incapacity to coordinate efforts with other groups is often self-defeating, as most twentieth-century wars have demonstrated. However, there have been instances in which 'inter-nationalist' cooperation has worked well, at least for some time.³³

But Connor's crucial point on the unreasonable, illogical, unsound character of most nationalisms must be underscored:

The peculiar emotional depth of the ‘us’-‘them’ syndrome which is an intrinsic part of national consciousness, by bifurcating as it does all mankind into ‘members of the nation’ versus ‘all others’ appears thereby to pose a particularly severe impediment to coordinated action with any of the ‘others’.³⁴

It seems that one group, as soon as it has grasped the levers of state power, is unable to recognize any legitimacy or validity in the anti-state sentiments of other groups. This has indeed happened in post-Soviet Eastern Europe: Azeri versus Armenians in Nagorno-Karabagh, pan-Romanian nationalists fighting Russian separatists in Moldova, Georgians suppressing Ossetian autonomy immediately after achieving independence. It has occurred during the early stages of de-colonization (as in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Israel and many other states). The phenomenon dates back to the very inception of nationalism as *the* legitimizing political principle (whenever one wishes to identify its birth). In his London exile, Giuseppe Mazzini had discovered how the supra- or inter-national project of a Young Europe had ineluctably foundered in the face of the instinctive solipsism of all the various ‘Young’ movements (Young Italy, Young Ireland and the like), eventually leading several decades later to its most xenophobic and bloodthirsty avatar, the Young Turks. This irrationality leads ultimately to a widespread sense of *sacro egoismo* and an all-pervasive moral relativism: ‘Though very sensitive to real or imagined threats to the survival and aspirations of one’s own group, appreciation of this same sensitivity among other groups is apparently very difficult to project’.³⁵ As Zygmunt Bauman rightly reminds us:

few known nations enthusiastically endorsed the right of the others to the same treatment they claimed for themselves . . . The national game has been a zero-sum game: sovereignty of the other has been an assault against one’s own. One nation’s rights were another nation’s aggression, intransigence or arrogance.

(1989: 54)

In this extreme form of Hobbesian individualism, nationalism reveals its non-rational, often self-defeating, character. The abdication of universal reason is, however, shared by nationalism with many other forms of group behaviour. But, as Connor puts it, it is the particular link between groupness (and hence exclusion) and ethnicity (hence, putative descent and kinship) which makes it particularly impermeable to rational reasoning.

The European Community is supposed to provide one of the first contemporary historical alternatives to the irrationality and mutual exclusiveness of nation-states. But, shortly after the time of the Maastricht Treaty signing (7 February 1992), when ‘European Union’ was the incontrovertible shibboleth, Connor (1994b) anticipated that the project was failing to achieve a popular mandate, while ethnic sentiments were stirring below the surface in the form of both state and stateless nationalism.

A critique of intellectual elitism

One of Connor's most intriguing themes is his critique of Western intellectual elitism (Connor 1994b). This refers to two aspects: first, the prevalent attitude of post-war scholars dismissing ethnonationalism as a quaint phenomenon whose days were numbered – and irremediably so; and second, and most importantly, the almost exclusive focus on élites as key, indeed unique, protagonists of mass political processes.³⁶ As for the first, the issue of scholarly estrangement from reality and ivory towers is touched upon by John Stone (Chapter 7). A cavalier tradition of superciliousness has percolated through most post-war studies of nationalism in Western, particularly British, academia. One obvious reason has been the reaction to the extreme horrors brought about by nationalist excesses associated with the two World Wars. But much of the patronizing top-down language is often derived from several overlapping traditions: part of mainstream Liberal thought, as in the case of Kenneth Minogue (1967) and Elie Kedourie (1960);³⁷ or of the competing Marxist viewpoint, as in the case of Eric Hobsbawm (1983).³⁸ Or it may be a question of blasé inflection: even Benedict Anderson's (1983) wonderfully evocative portrayal of the rise of vernacular nationalisms betrays an occasional condescending tone in his choice of words (especially, the all-famous and oft-misquoted title of his book, *Imagined Communities*) from Britain's Liberal-Marxist tradition – though without a hint of imperial arrogance. But, despite the technological stress on 'print' and the materialist emphasis on 'capitalism', the idea of an 'imagined' community remains the pinnacle of subjectivism.

As for the second issue, the analytical focus on élites as the only significant factor is a widespread practice: Gellner's approach is elitist insofar as he considers urbanized masses as a vacuum needing to be filled from above with cultural content. Gellner was also unable to resist the use of elitist jargon, although this often involved a recourse to witty irony, as in his famous representation of 'Ruritania'.

An author who followed precisely the opposite trend was Liah Greenfeld (1992), who can be usefully compared to both Gellner and Connor. Greenfeld's work can be seen as vindicating the prominent place of ideas in human development, hence as representing an implicit, but cogent, critique of Gellner's structuralism.³⁹ Yet, in doing so, she adopted an even more élite-focused approach: Gellner may have been an elitist in virtue of his Oxbridge academic upbringing, but he was not theoretically nor methodologically so. Indeed, nationalism in his view is the product of epochal wide-ranging social changes permeating the whole social spectrum, not just the whimsical outcome of elitist dreams. Moreover, whereas modernization for Gellner inevitably led to nationalism, for Greenfeld the opposite holds true: nationalism is the causal factor leading to modernity. In other words, it is the nationalist idea which creates the basis for the advent of modernity. But, in order to determine that ideology prevails over material conditions, the focus must be on the spread of ideas rather than on social structure. In turn, this inevitably implies a focus on *élites*, particularly the intellectuals as creators and producers of those ideas.

In contrast, Connor (1990) argues that a nation is not brought into being when its élites decide it to be so, but when the 'subjective' experience of nationhood

pervades the larger social body. In order to be called such, a nation has to exist in the feelings and daily experience of ordinary people. A nation does not rise in the mind of intellectuals alone, but is realized when there is a widespread belief in belonging to a nation.⁴⁰ A certain resemblance to Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) view of subjectivism (the nation as a 'daily plebiscite') can be recalled here. However, Connor's *analytical* subjectivism can be opposed to Renan's *political* subjectivism, as Renan simply identifies popular human experience as the central feature of 'nation-ness'. In Connor, subjectivism is the upshot of common political experiences and shared feelings, not merely of an élite's vision. Such a subjective feeling can be brought about by *longue durée* processes in which institutions such as the state, the army, the Church and mass education are involved, but it cannot be treated as the invention of arbitrary attempts by nation-builders, especially if the latter clash with a deeply established sense of ethnic continuity.

Outline of the book

This book is divided into four parts. Part I deals with Connor's central emphasis on emotions (which is often mis-branded as 'primordialism') and, at the same time, his conception of the modern character of nationalism. Part II is concerned with three case studies, the Basque Country, South Africa and Quebec, where Connor's theoretical framework is tested against historical and contemporary developments. Part III relates to the broader applied political dimensions of Connorian analysis, such as the case of federalism, third-party intervention and political religion. Part IV explores the wider implications of Connor's approach in the realms of geography and terminological tools, followed by an epilogue on theories of nationalism.

We have already discussed Connor's own opening Chapter 2. The book's first section analyses Connor's vision of the continuity and the emotional character of ethnonational feelings. The first issue to be tackled then is whether nationalism is the expression of something recent or historically deeper and more continuous. From an *ethno-symbolic* perspective, Anthony D. Smith (Chapter 3) disputes Connor's assertion that nations were absent before late modernity. He discerns instead that the major attributes of nationhood had been established before the modern age. Yet, in doing so, he deploys the same critical arsenal utilized in this book by Connor himself in Chapter 2: both would agree that one cannot simply infer the absence of ethnic feelings from the 'silence' of the peasant 'masses', considering that their 'silence' (possibly related to their lack of access to written communication and cognate media) might have extended to other forms of allegiance, notably religion and place. In other words, there is no way of ascertaining that the majority of the population in pre-industrial societies had no notion of ethnic self-awareness or kinship. This remains a critique of Connor's modernist approach, by emphasizing the continuity between pre-modern ethnic institutions and modern nations. Some groups persisted, other disappeared or melted away, such as various barbarous hordes. For instance, the latter's cohesion, continuity and persistence despite moving across vast continents can be explained by the existence of a belief in collective descent and election: being long deprived of a defined

territory of their own, they had to stress ancestry myths even more in order to maintain that group's cohesion and social order that only can derive from a sense of collective kinship. Finally, kinship ties are emotionally binding to a far greater degree than other forms of allegiances. Scholars are therefore right in focussing on their emotional impact.

This is the main task adopted by Joshua A. Fishman's in Chapter 5 with his 'insider's view'. He reinstates the importance of the affective, non-rational bond in the study of ethnicity, arguing that *primordialism* tends to become a self-view, whereas *constructivism* is normally a 'view of the other'. Each view is found to be situationally advantageous to each protagonist at different times. His is also a plea for the rediscovery of the emotive component of human relations in place of the uncharitable, narrow, hidebound, one-sided limits of cold reason and rationalist analysis. Therefore, this chapter represents a useful distillation of the 'primordialist' approach, whereas the unaccountable, mysterious force of ethnicity is considered paramount. The language-ethnicity link is deemed to be central to this primordial perception. Fishman argues that the perceived importance of language has a long tradition predating modernity. However, the modernist view can be easily encapsulated by saying that the old European principle *cuius regio, eius religio* has turned into the more modern *cuius regio, eius lingua*. In some way, this chapter is unique in advocating openly and uncompromisingly the scholarly legitimacy of primordialism. But what has the primordialist approach brought to theories of nationalism? Is there a 'primordialist school'?

In Chapter 4, Donald Horowitz attempts to identify an underlying primordialist stream in some of the founding theories of ethnicity and nationalism. The main contention with 'the primordialists' is not their assumption of an uninterrupted essence and continuous endurance of ethnic identities, but a series of confusions stemming from the unwillingness to analyse ethnonationalism as a relevant phenomenon in its own right. Among other things, this leads to the lack of an appropriate distinction between mobilization in defense of one own's culture and the political use of ethnicity for boundary-rising purposes. Scholars must distinguish between (*in-group*) solidarity and (*out-group*) conflict, on the one hand, and between ordinary maintenance of social cohesion and the creation of new (hence non-primordial) enmities, on the other hand. Group identity should be conceptually distinguished from antipathy toward outgroups, because groups can live side by side without the need of particular animosities. Ethnic boundaries can be socially constructed only over relatively long periods of time. Therefore, the contribution of rational actors and their decisions remains limited. Horowitz finally proposes a theory of 'evolutionary primordialism', according to which the ability to cooperate in groups would provide an evolutionary advantage likely to be associated with cooperation in kinship-based communities. Self-homogenization and conformism will be related to the propensity of individuals to assume a high degree of homogeneity within groups.

Part II consists of three distinctive case studies. In the first one (Chapter 6), William Douglass explores the depth of the emotional bond in the making of Basque ethnonational identity. Following Connor's depiction of the nation as a

self-aware ethnic group, he enquires whether the racial component makes up an intrinsic part of the ethnicist discourse and whether race and ethnicity could really be separable. But if ethnicism (the celebration of one's own ethnic identity, in either a pluralist/tolerant way or an hierarchical/intolerant way) can be conceived as a positive phenomenon, the same cannot be said of exclusionary practices: forms of exclusion may be extremely variable, from acceptance of those who share the same cultural markers and symbols, to rejection of foreigners. The exacerbated racist overtones of Sabino de Arana (1865–1903), the founder of Basque nationalism, are put into the wider picture of a clash between immigrants and natives following the advent of modernity and industrialization. A focus on the historical legacy of the Spanish state brings Douglass' analysis to the quest for purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) inherited by Spain's early attempts of 'nation-building'. But the idea of a Basque 'race' was not simply the offshoot of increasing self-awareness (itself a consequence of increasing contacts and encroachment by the state): it was simultaneously the product of the outer imaginary and external categorization by non-Basques in an epoch, the late nineteenth century, when racialist 'scientific' discourse was fully legitimate and largely undisputed.

John Stone's Chapter 7 on the end of apartheid in South Africa is also deeply informed by a Connorian perspective. He concurs with Connor's anti-elitist approach and his sobering warnings about the difficulty of predicting outcomes in ethnic conflicts with traditional social/political science tools. As with Fishman's piece, he also attacks the persisting 'ivory towers' attitudes of elitist academics who failed to anticipate the end product of the anti-apartheid struggle. The major underplayed factors were: the end of Cold War bipolarism with its all-pervasive impact, the opposition élites' ability to negotiate, the capacity of accommodation of the existing regime, and the relative absence of widespread personal animosities between black and white peoples despite the official doctrine of racial segregation. Stone explores two central themes found in Connor's writings. The first considers the power of ethnonationalism as a source of group identity in a racially divided society. The second assesses the ability of sociologists, political scientists and historians to understand and predict the dynamics of social change in a society characterized by such deep racial and ethnic divisions. South Africa has become a textbook case and role model: ethnic conflict resolution has rarely been so smooth and relatively harmonious, at least in periods of democratic transition. Would it hence be advisable to extend the analysis beyond the unusual case of apartheid South Africa to a few instances bearing some resemblance with it? For instance, in Milosevic's Serbia, apartheid was applied *de facto* (rather than by law) against Albanians and other minorities. But here apartheid was preceded, accompanied, and followed by a mixed bag of policies, from centralization to genocide, from anti-Constitutionalism to 'secession by the centre'.⁴¹ However, by examining the case of South Africa during the apartheid era (1948–90), the importance of Connor's scholarship can be appreciated and the value of his insights demonstrated.

In Chapter 8, John Edwards offers a robust critique of the idea of 'civic' nationalism, by drawing on the case of Quebec within the Canadian federation. Like

Connor, Edwards argues that all nationalisms are *au fond* ethnic, but that they tend to present themselves more fashionably in 'civic' disguise. The reality is that nationalism can rarely (if ever) be civic.⁴² He therefore joins Connor in questioning the possibility of a 'civic' form of nationalism, and of a purely 'patriotic' (non-ethnic) attachment to state institutions.⁴³ Edwards also points to the dangers of questioning the legitimacy of multi-national polities *per se*. He argues that 'civic' nationalism is a misnomer, as it remains at heart a matter of preference for co-ethnics: despite nationalist pronouncements of providing an inclusive arena and sharable platform for the entire society, ethnicity stays implicitly in the background. Of course, to have a universal validity this argument needs to be applied to other cases, especially those usually quoted as prototypes of civic nationalism. The recent upsurge of vindictive, revengeful 'nationalism' in the United States has shown to the world the non-inclusive nature of American patriotism, a phenomenon that has been systematically studied by only a few scholars (Marvin and Ingle 1999; see also Billig 1995: 154–173). In several ways, such a purportedly 'civic' identity can hardly exist without an external enemy or without externalizing internal strife: according to scholars like David Campbell, US identity is founded on the identification of an external enemy (Campbell 1998), while others consider of paramount importance the internal outsider (Zulaika and Douglass 1996). However, Edwards' important critique is limited to Quebecois nationalist discourse, where the emphasis is shifted from the negative terms 'secession' or 'separation' to a more positively marked one: 'sovereignty'. This is again in tune with Connor's critique of the use and misuse of nationalism-related terminology: it is this confusion which benefits nationalists and populists, while it obfuscates political analysis.⁴⁴

In the first chapter of Part III, Brendan O'Leary (Chapter 9) addresses another aspect of Connor's problematics: whether federal arrangements can re-legitimize existing multi-national policies at a time of ethnonational turmoil. O'Leary pays tribute to Connor's pioneering work on how federations were deployed as systems of control in multi-national and multi-ethnic Marxist-Leninist regimes, and then asks whether the same might be suggested of federations in liberal democracies. Reformulating Connor's and Gellner's emphasis on the homogenizing repercussions of nationalism, O'Leary then addresses whether federations conform to an 'iron law', requiring a dominant people or *Staatsvolk* if they are to remain democratic, majoritarian and stable. He finds provisional evidence that they do. However, federations lacking a dominant people may be democratic and stable only if they adopt non-majoritarian devices and procedures. Consociationalism is hence needed to redress possible imbalances in federations without a hegemonic core. He finally speculates on whether this limited optimism has any significance for the future of the European Union. But O'Leary's focus on the *Staatsvolk* is *not* a throwback to Deutsch's school of social communication, which postulated the need of an assimilationist or hegemonic core in order to run cohesive political communities.

In Chapter 10, William Safran addresses the issue of third-party interventions as tools of conflict resolutions, on the ground that there are discrete and cohesive entities such as 'the French', 'the Germans', and other ethnic groups. Accordingly, the latter's sense of groupness has its bearing on international relations and must be

taken into account in any attempt to mediate. The mandate of third-party interventions should therefore be merely to terminate violent conflict, rather than to establish more comprehensive long-term solutions. Safran seems to argue that third-party interventions could only be successful if they become more genuine, real, sincere, detached, disinterested, honorable and just. But, if this is the case, can there be any agreed criterion of inter-ethnic fairness and impartiality? There are legitimate fears that once one abdicates to ‘cultural’ or ‘historical determinism’ (on these, see Chapter 14), no conflict resolution seems possible except by Divine Intervention. If one assumes that third-party arbitration is bound to fail because of its intrinsic flaws (rather than because of the choices of incumbent politicians and the features of exiting ethnic conflicts), then we come up with a drastic primordialist view of international relations. If no universal, non-partisan behavior is conceivable, groupness simply renders groups resilient to any single political engineering solution.⁴⁵ Safran also highlights the gloomy side of international relations, namely that political élites are bound to turn a blind eye on, and even support, other states’ oppression of their minorities – unless they oppress ‘kin’ minorities. Following a Jacobin archetype, the state and its organic intellectuals tend intrinsically, nearly unthinkingly, to uphold state centralism, abroad as well as at home: that may perhaps explain, say, Western support for Milosevic’s regime until around 1999.

John Coakley (Chapter 11) draws upon Connor’s warning that ethnic strife cannot be shallowly discerned as being predicated upon tangible elements. Among a few possible ‘core values’ of nationhood, language is conceivably the predominant one, but other markers can be chosen by proto-nationalist élites.⁴⁶ Whereas in Chapter 6 Douglass focused on ‘race’, here Coakley focuses on an even more contentious core value of nationalist mobilization, religion. Three sets of questions are addressed: (1) Do religious belief systems have particular political implications such that religious communities may form a basis for ethnic mobilization – analogously with linguistic communities? (2) Are there particular structural conditions that have the potential to encourage the manipulation of religious forms and symbols as mechanisms for enhancing ethnic solidarity? and (3) To what extent does reliance on religious criteria promote inter-ethnic contact or shape the character of ethnic conflict? Pointing to the need to distinguish between *ethnic* and *religious* conflict, Coakley argues that in twentieth-century Europe most religious conflicts were *not* ethnic in nature, whereas most ethnic conflicts did *not* have a significant religious dimension. Europe’s most bitter ‘religious’ wars took part in an age that would conventionally be seen as pre-national, although their echoes are allowed to continue into the contemporary period. The empirical evidence relies mainly on the Catholic–Protestant, Protestant–Orthodox, Catholic–Orthodox and Catholic–Orthodox–Muslim interfaces in Europe, with the Balkans and Northern Ireland providing most of the illustrative evidence.

In Part IV, Robert Kaiser (Chapter 12) focuses on the geopolitical dimension of Connor’s work and, in particular, on the importance of national homelands and geographical space for ethnic groups. He examines the ways in which homeland images, myths and symbols have been used to nationalize space and territorialize national identity. In doing so, Kaiser picks up on a number of themes raised by

Connor about perceptions of homelands in ethnonationalism and inter-ethnic relations. After a brief review of the reasons for the centrality of homeland making in nationalization projects, the chapter focuses on the instruments through which national homeland images are constructed, maintained, and communicated to populations undergoing nationalization. Among the tools of nation-making which nationalists have at their disposal is the drawing of maps. In the final section, the chapter assesses the impact of globalization, transnationalism and the rising numbers of people living in diaspora on national homelands and territorialized nations. Although accentuated by modernity, territoriality is not its offspring.⁴⁷ Against modernization theory, territoriality is unlikely to disappear at a time of global secularization and individualism. The chapter concludes that national homeland images continue to exert a powerful influence on popular perceptions of identity, and remain among the most effective instruments that nationalists have at their disposal to mobilize their national communities. Transnationalism and the rising number of people living in diaspora have not undermined the ability of national homeland myths and symbols to territorialize identity and call the nation to action, and may actually have enhanced their potency in these regards, not least among those members living in diaspora themselves.

In Chapter 13, Thomas Spira returns to the terminological conundrum. He argues that the twin-concepts of ethnicity and nationality are inextricably linked in both research and practice. In an ideal world, the two expressions would be neatly segregated, each with its own meaning and definition clearly enunciated by members of the scholarly community. Unfortunately, such is not the case. These terminologies have evolved over the past few decades, subject to the varied interpretations of numerous social science specialists, their viewpoints sharpened by their own disciplinary, ideological, national, and other, affiliations and inclinations. Noting the conspicuous resemblances between ethnicity and nationality (most of their features intertwine and overlap, whereas few characteristics diverge), Spira points to the need for scholars to identify at which point ethnicity and nationality diverge – a task in which they have not so far succeeded. Further to Connor's terminological breakthroughs, such research is necessary in order to lend precision and accuracy to investigations in the etiology of nationalism. It should be possible to distinguish nationality from ethnicity by invoking a more rigorous 'dimensionalistic' approach to the problem, wherein the items measured are given values according to the intensity of the standard against which they are judged.

The Conclusion (Chapter 14) provides a general assessment of the status of the discipline, as well as a critique of some underlying trends, including some emerging in this book. Three stumbling blocks are identified in the form of underlying approaches: *essentialism*, *cultural determinism*, and *historical determinism*. Further directions of research are pinpointed in the intersection between studies of nationalism and the gray, undefined, and chaotic area of globalization studies – where the very word 'globalization' still lacks a minimum standard of clarity and definition.

Chapter 15 provides an exhaustive bibliography of Connor's works, ordered according to type of publication (books, journal articles, contributions to anthologies, and occasional papers).

Notes

- 1 See, in particular, Connor (1978).
- 2 For instance, for most Catalan nationalists Catalan nationhood long predates modernity, so they question the usefulness of the terms 'ethnie' or 'ethno-nation'? Wouldn't that downplay or detract from our claims? Why should we adopt the term 'ethnie' if the more conventional and clear term 'nation' is readily available? (Conversi 1997: 6–7). See also Keating (2000), McRoberts (2001) and Payne (2000).
- 3 John Gray (1978: 394) argues that 'a concept moves into an area of essential contestability when any use of it involves taking up a partisan non-neutral standpoint with respect to rival forms of life and their associated patterns of thought'.
- 4 See Glazer and Moynihan (1975: 1), also quoted in Connor (1994a: 101).
- 5 For a criticism of many of these terms, see Connor (1972, reprinted in Connor 1994a).
- 6 Critics of this position include Agnew (1997: 317–24) and Guibernau (1999).
- 7 See, in particular, Connor (1994a: 102–103), as well as Chapter 2. Elsewhere Connor (1994a: 202) offers a compatible and empirically testable definition of the nation as the largest group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related, the largest group that can be aroused or energized by appeals to a common blood-link.
- 8 As the nation is itself a tool of definition, it cannot be defined in universal terms, that is, abstractly and extra-contextually (Conversi 1995). Sami Zubaida (1978) claims that 'from the point of view of the . . . social theorist, there cannot be any systematic way of designating a "nation". Any attempt to do so can only be a purely arbitrary definition'.
- 9 See also van den Berghe (1996).
- 10 Connor (1972, 1973, 1978, 1987, 1990). See also Gellner (1983).
- 11 See Smith (1998); Conversi (1995).
- 12 In August 1979 Connor presented his findings at a tension-filled meeting of the International Political Science Association held in Moscow.
- 13 Scholars of different persuasions, such as Ernest Gellner, anticipated the same 'manifest destiny' for mankind.
- 14 Weber (1991: 78, my emphasis).
- 15 Aguilar (1998) has argued that this had an effect which reverberated through the transition to democracy as well.
- 16 This bears considerable similarities with former Yugoslavia. After the Partisan victory following World War II, people were fed up with violence and longed for a strong state which could protect them. Thus, all ethnic groups supported Tito.
- 17 This is a widely recognized phenomenon: for instance, George Schöpflin (2000) has argued that not merely nationalism, but ethnicity itself is the crucible of consent for the modern rationalizing state.
- 18 Weber placed 'ethnic group' and 'nation' on the same level, while arguing that 'the sentiment of ethnic solidarity does not by itself make a nation' (1991: 173).
- 19 Gellner and Connor belong to two very different academic traditions. Gellner initially knew about Connor's work through Anthony D. Smith (and as Smith's supervisor at the LSE). Mutual contacts between Gellner and Connor date to the 1980s when they attended numerous conferences together, culminating in Connor's visiting position at Cambridge (1990).
- 20 The sub-text is that culture and violence are the two alternative ways of moulding the nation (Conversi 1999).
- 21 The modernization paradigm is not to be confused with *modernism*. On the latter, see Smith (1998).
- 22 For a critique of the modernization paradigm, see Ferrarotti (1985) and Gusfield (1967). Moreover, after the Iranian revolution in 1979, the conventional view that modernization automatically leads to secularism has also been questioned. This of course may overlook the fact that 'political religion', as Gellner would argue, is merely a form of nationalism and modernization, rather than a return to tradition. The collapse of the

- Soviet Union has dealt a *coup de grâce* to the 'social mobilization' paradigm still held by Deutsch's imitators and epigones.
- 23 Deutsch is the principal source of the modernization theory as applied to the studies of nationalism. For a devastating critique of Deutsch's view, see Connor (1972).
 - 24 See Connor (1972, 1973).
 - 25 Connor (1973: 3–4).
 - 26 Conflictual modernization theorists eventually include Anthony D. Smith (1998) and Tom Nairn (1977). Eric Hobsbawm (1994) has also reckoned the spread of nationalism as a reaction to several aspects of modernization, particularly secularism.
 - 27 From a political philosophy viewpoint, Will Kymlicka (1995, 2000) has also stressed the conceptual difference between the immigrant experience and that of indigenous, ethnonational or homeland people. For the 'border case' of the Mexican-Americans, see Connor (1985).
 - 28 This thesis is shared by most historians (Kohn 1955: 10–15; Hobsbawm 1994; Seton-Watson 1977) and anthropologists (Gellner 1983).
 - 29 In Barth's words, 'though the naïve assumption that each tribe and people has maintained its culture through a bellicose ignorance of its neighbours is no longer entertained, the simplistic view that geographical and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity persists' (1969: 9).
 - 30 On the relationship between cultural erosion, assimilation and the spread of ethnic violence, see Conversi (1999).
 - 31 It should be noted that Connor has never employed the phrase 'need to belong'. A 'need to belong' can relate to all sorts of groups – social, professional, peer, class, civic, etc. Connor avoids the phrase because, standing alone, it does not explain why the ethnic group should exert a particularly emotional magnetic attraction.
 - 32 In discussing the nature of the ethnonational bond, Connor insisted on the adjective '*non-rational*' rather than 'irrational'. In doing so, he hoped to convey that the bond was not opposed to reason, it was simply outside the sphere of reason or, to quote the title of one of his articles, it was 'Beyond Reason' (Connor 1993).
 - 33 On the solidaritarian relationship between different nationalist movements (Basque, Catalan, Quebecois, Irish, etc.), see Conversi (1993). Note the wave of sympathy for the Baltic peoples and the rush for recognition of their self-determination as independent nation-states in Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, etc.) and Northern Europe (Iceland and other Scandinavian countries). A common feature was the ideal that small nations should support each other (George Schöpflin, personal observation).
 - 34 Connor (1973: 17).
 - 35 Connor (1973: 16).
 - 36 In contrast to Walker Connor, my own approach is more centered on the role of culture and institutions and, consequently, on the role of *élites* who have been shaping both of them. Particularly crucial is the binding role of a distinctive culture or, in its absence, more confrontational forms of political mobilization (Conversi 1997, 1999). In this respect, my position explicitly departs from Connor's emphasis on mass emotions.
 - 37 For a critique of the limits of mainstream liberal thought in this respect, see Kymlicka (1995).
 - 38 For a critique of Hobsbawm, see Hastings (1997) and Smith (1998).
 - 39 Yet, Gellner is mentioned only briefly in a footnote as representative, with Ben Anderson, of 'the conventional view' (Greenfield 1992: 496).
 - 40 This contrasts with Liah Greenfeld's argument that a nation is when the intellectuals begin to conceive it. See Greenfeld (1992, 1997).
 - 41 On the idea of 'secession by the centre', see Conversi (2000).
 - 42 For Connor's approach to this, see Chapter 2.
 - 43 This view is also expressed by A.D. Smith, while it is rejected, among others, by the Canadian Charles Taylor, whereas Michael Billig has identified the pervasive presence of ethnic symbolism in daily rituals of civic patriotism. See also Marvin and Ingle (1999).

- 44 One may wonder whether the concept of civic nationalism might share some of the chimera-like semblances of another imperfect concept, democracy. Like democracy, civic nationalism is always imperfect because in the name of representation it inevitably involves the rule of the few. In the case of all forms of nationalism, it is the rule and culture of the few which are imposed in both cases, ethnic and civic nationalism – even though a ‘perfect’ civic nationalism, like a ‘perfect’ democracy would involve a two-ways, even and fair distribution of information with a parallel process of bottom-up diffusion of culture.
- 45 In this view, behind any mediation there may well be a conspiracy. If one were to follow this logic *à la lettre* and to its conclusions, the first casualty would be US foreign policy: should one interpret US successive failures to deal with various post-Cold War conflicts emerging in and around Europe as a deliberate attempt to weaken the inter-European fabric? Wouldn’t the US primeval instinct be of weakening European stability in order to warn off any steps towards the establishment of an improbable competing superpower – however remote this prospect may really be?
- 46 On the concept of ‘core value’, particularly language, see Conversi (1997: 164ff.).
- 47 Similarly, Grosby (1995) and Smith (1998) argue that territorially-bound identities are not a modern phenomenon, but an ancient and long-lasting, as well as universal, human characteristic.

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