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Nationalism in a Global World

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Introduction

This book concerns the paradox of the general and the particular. The general is the worldwide process known as 'globalization', the particular is a form of division termed 'nationalism'. It is about interconnectedness wrought by globalization and at the same time the separations of nationalism. The interconnections and separations are not uniform to all groups. They differ profoundly according to the particular nation and class. But qualifications should not be used to obscure the extent of globalization as measured by, among other things, the growth of trade, the volume of international financial shifts, the transfer of culture and the reach of communication. This is something not difficult to document. Trade grew fifteenfold between 1950 and 2000 and it now accounts for over 30% of world economic output (Gomes, 2003, pp. 309–12). By April 2007, over \$3,210bn of foreign exchange were traded on international markets each day, an increase of more than double in three years (Garnham, 2007). Hollywood's latest blockbusters reach a global audience through a variety of media – cinemas, DVDs, websites, games and so on. Communication systems that enable forms of contact across time and space that would have seemed fantastic even 10 years ago are now routine. Ever greater numbers of migrants (of all categories) shift and settle across national borders. Their numbers are dwarfed by tourists whose movement within and between continents is temporary. One of the arguments of this book is that 'globalization lasts a long time'. With that in mind, it is worth stating that with some adjustments – both up and down – the same sort of claims could have been made 100 years ago. Indeed, one could argue, for example, that the leaps in technological advance of the telephone and its influence on interactions were greater than, say, the internet. However, while I argue that globalization is a process that has been with us for a while, it is also the case that it is now a more extensive and profound feature across human societies than at any point in history. Therefore the relationship of the general to the particular, of globalization to nationalism, demands particular attention. It is with this that the book is concerned – a relationship, not something that should be considered a necessary contradiction.

However, as indicated, try as we might, binaries, oppositions, perceived contradictions, call them what you will, are difficult things to escape from as they organize our thoughts and allow us to think through complex problems. It is for this reason that the question of globalization and nationalism is often posed by commentators in this fashion, specifically through discussion of whether globalization equals the accentuation or attenuation of nationalism.

This kind of approach is, for example, common to the consideration of culture: is globalization leading to cultural homogenization or is it providing the potential for greater diversity between and within national cultures – ‘glocalization’ as it is sometimes referred to? The general answer to this question about culture and other things is that both are true.

The real problem with the globalization versus nationalism dichotomy is that it can too easily be used by those who are sceptical about globalization. That is because it is easy enough to show that globalization has little significant impact on the resilience of nationalism. Certainly, as an ideology of mass mobilization, it remains central to mass politics and culture. It continues to fire national liberation struggles across a world beset by manifold territorial disputes and injustices. More than 60 years after the advent of the United Nations, various national wars smoulder and flare – although now the hostile parties can potentially contact each other by mobile phone and internet while watching coverage of the fighting on international television channels. Even within the one area of the world where something like a post-national, more specifically post-nation-state, organization exists, the European Union, the centrifugal nationalist forces it comprises make political federalism highly unlikely. Furthermore, there are good reasons for thinking that the very inequalities wrought by globalization sharpen national (and ethnic) divisions and its communication forms enable the further reach of the ‘imagined community’. The demarcated national patches of the world might be porous to ever greater migration flows, but this hardly means that governments are relaxed about the matter. Fearful of rising public resentment of foreigners, they spend ever greater sums trying to keep out the unwanted, and monitor those they are prepared to tolerate for economic purposes. Whatever liberalization there has been of national economies over recent decades, it is hardly as if economic protectionism is a thing of the past. It is an irony that the term given to the hegemony of neoliberal economics, ‘the Washington consensus’, derives its name from a city where a national government, the US Congress and the presidency, oversees entrenched protection of American markets. So rather than posing the relationship between globalization and nationalism as one of straight opposition and trying to assess which force, nationalism or globalization, is coming out on top, for the most part it is more profitable to set out to assess their relationship at this present conjuncture. This will involve accentuation and attenuation questions, strengthening and weakening. However, it is not a case of a crude polarity of who is ‘winning’.

If the division of nationalism versus globalization is overplayed, we might go further and suggest that the very terms are questionable. In particular, there is a danger of treating the term ‘nationalism’ both as an analytic magic talisman and/or a blanket description that covers just about everything that somehow smacks of the national as opposed to the global. For example, as certain forms of economic protection are in some instances attributable to

complex alliances of state and business lobbies, the term 'nationalism' is not particularly helpful in conveying their motivation. Simultaneously, globalization has become one of those words that are useful because it conveys a vague reality without being tied down by a specific definition. When one asks a user for an explanation, they receive either further generalities like 'the world is getting smaller', 'the global village' or actual examples like a well-known multinational company. However, while I provide initial definitions in this chapter and try to be attentive to the meaning of the key terms at issue as they are found throughout the book, to some extent we simply have to accept that nationalism and globalization are inevitable catch-alls.

With this in mind, this chapter examines how and why writers, from within the study of globalization and the study of nationalism, have suggested that the heyday of nationalism has passed and that it faces an inevitable decline in its role and relevance with the globalized contraction of the world's polity and economy. In Chapter 2, we look at theorists, again from within the study of both subjects, who have suggested the opposite, that is, they argue that globalization only serves to heighten nationalist antagonism. Chapter 3 examines the relationship between globalization and economic nationalism. Chapter 4 looks at the case that minority nations within larger states are able to flourish in a globalized world. Chapter 5 considers the relationship between national cultures and globalization. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses whether or not a globalized religion, specifically neofundamentalist Islam, is overcoming national divisions among Muslims.

The list of chapters is not exhaustive. For example, although I deal with migration in the chapter on culture, the subject could arguably command a whole separate consideration, given its importance in undermining stable zones of culture, that is, national cultures. And while for the sake of clarity I have tried to steer away from the nation-state as distinct from nations and nationalism, a complete consideration of the subject would inevitably merge into a fuller examination of the changed role of the state in a global world. But that is the subject of another book.

This book relies very much, not wholly, on the work of others, rather than providing any empirical examination of the issues. It is intended to provide an overview of the work of published authors for students studying courses on globalization and nationalism. The publications of others provide crucial intellectual stepping stones through the relatively diverse issues that I cover. I am aware that there may, at times, appear to be a certain arbitrariness to the discussion: why, the reader might ask, include consideration of a particular writer when another is only mentioned in passing or omitted altogether? To some degree this is inevitable as the book presents a series of case studies; it is not intended to be an encyclopedia. However, I have tried to hone in on key authors in the field. For better or worse, it is certainly the case that the writers discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 have been highly influential in the study of

nationalism and globalization. Similarly, those dealt with in Chapter 4 on small nations have made key contributions to their academic study. Arjun Appadurai and Olivier Roy in Chapters 5 and 6 on culture and religion respectively have, I think, made influential contributions, and they also present useful arguments to work discussion around. The choice of inclusions in Chapter 3 on economic nationalism is perhaps the most questionable. Possibly key authorities have been left out. However, in contrast to the other parts of the book, my discussion here is constructed through a historical examination of the fortunes of economic nationalism, rather than an overview of key contributors. This is because I think that the subject of economic nationalism has been somewhat overlooked in the literatures on nationalism and globalization. Whatever the shortcomings of the book, I think it does, at least, cover a fairly wide set of readings and debates. It remains in this chapter to provide definitions of the terms at issue and say something about the nature of the discussion about them.

Definitions

Nations and Nationalism

Definitions of nationalism and nations are far from straightforward. The same can be said of globalization. That is because there is fundamental disagreement about the nature of the two phenomena among scholars. In the vast academic literature on nationalism, questions of definition of what nations and nationalism are cannot be neatly separated from understandings of how and when they arose. Different understandings of the development of nations and nationalism rest on and shape the different definitions of what they are. Key within the debate is the relationship between ethnicity and nation. Although in this debate, as many others, there is a temptation to exaggerate the scale of the disagreement between the various accounts and to neatly group them together to face off against each other, it is permissible to draw a definite distinction between ethnosymbolist and modernist accounts of nations and nationalism. The term 'ethnosymbolism' is one taken from the later writings of Anthony D. Smith. The emphasis in this approach is with the historical gestation of nations and nationalism from earlier sociological formations: ethnicities. Nations have, in the title of Smith's (1986) best-known book, 'ethnic origins', a thesis he has subsequently reiterated on numerous occasions. The modernist account of nations and nationalism denies, by contrast, that there is any intrinsic relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. Instead, the various writers associated with this approach argue that nations and nationalism are of far more recent vintage, the product of social, economic and political transformations of the past 250 years of human history.

We can see how issues of definition are handled by writers from within the opposing positions. For example, Geoffrey Hastings, a strong critic of the modernist account of nations and nationalism, is concerned to differentiate a nation from an ethnicity in an account that emphasizes the full formation of the former in early medieval Europe. Hastings (1997, p. 10) suggests that:

A nation is a far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity. Formed from one or more ethnicities it possesses or claims the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory'.

This definition, like the slightly different variant on nations and nationalism of Anthony D. Smith, indicates a historical growth of nations from one or more ethnicity. In this kind of account, the nation, certainly some European nations at least, is thought to have had a proper existence prior to what modernists consider the coming of the modern age of nationalism, the nineteenth century. As Hastings (1997, p. 9) continues:

If nationalism became theoretically central to western political thinking in the nineteenth century, it existed as a powerful reality in some places long before that. As something which can empower large numbers of ordinary people, nationalism is a movement which seeks to provide a state for a given 'nation' or further to advance the supposed interests of its own 'nation-state' regardless of other considerations.

So nations give rise to nationalism and nationalisms demand nation-states to further their interests. Chronologically, he claims that English nationalism 'of a sort was already present in the fourteenth century in the long wars with France' (p. 4). More generally, nations and nationalism are not the social constructions of a particular historical conjuncture, but have a genuine lineage. So the order of definitions and academic enquiry should fit the order of development: nations are followed by nationalism.

The approach of modernist writers, especially (notwithstanding important differences of emphasis) Breuilly (1985), Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1992), reverses this ordering, and simultaneously suggests a more limited definition of nation: the principle that the polity and culture of a group should be coterminous, that is, state boundaries should reflect cultural ones. The doctrine of nationalism insists that the political responsibilities of the citizen to their nation override all others. There is no necessary ethnic precursor in this. On the contrary, such writers are generally sceptical of the notion that there is an indispensable link to an earlier ethnicity, an 'ethnic origin' (Smith, 1986). Modernists concede that there may be such a link – there are obvious examples – but such a forerunner is not inevitable, and the presence or absence of an ethnic link does not in itself bestow any particular characteristics (a point made by Gellner (1996) in a debate with Smith). There are,

for example, no grounds for thinking that a historic ethnicity makes for an essentially unchanging continuity of composition; nations, no matter how formed, are not unchanging social entities. Such writers have emphasized the 'creation' of nations. As Hobsbawm (1992, p. 10) puts it:

I would stress the element of artifact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations. Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent . . . political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality. In short, for the purposes of analysis nationalism comes before nations.

These then are the well-worn questions that preoccupied students of nations and nationalism over recent years: are nations the creations of the political, social and economic transformations of the nineteenth century in which the 'invention of tradition' was central, or are they entities that have deeper and more profound historic roots and/or an ethnic core? I do not intend to pursue this ethnosymbolist versus modernist debate in itself further here, certainly not at a historical level. Suffice it to say that the debate does enter directly into questions of the future of nationalism discussed in this book, for plainly those less inclined to view nations as comparatively recent and arbitrary will be less receptive to projections of their demise.

It remains to say that I think that Umut Özkirimli (2005, pp. 61–2) is correct in saying that there is now something of a consensus that, at least on one level, it is pointless to try to pin down with any precision quite what a nation is. Rather, it is better to let its meaning emerge in actual historical or contemporary discussion. However, we need some kind of framework to square with the manifold references one finds to nations and nationalism. Simply to give up on definitions altogether and conclude that they are positively unhelpful would allow the nationalist, the journalist or anybody else free rein to assert that a nation is whatever they assume it to be. In framing the parameters of a conceptual framework of what a nation is about, the following four-part explication of Miroslav Hroch (1993), a Czech historian, is useful. No doubt Hroch's approach has a central European ring to it. Without wishing to open up another time-honoured debate – the distinction between Western (republican) and Eastern (ethnic) conceptions of nation – an alternative definition to that of Hroch would play down the notion of common ancestry. It should also be noted that in using the definition of Hroch below, we are not so much concerned with the actual reality of nation – which is not, of course, to suggest that nations do not have objective features as clearly they do – as with the issue of what a people have in mind when they think and talk about a nation.

According to Hroch (1993, p. 5), a nation hinges on:

- 1 A collective memory of a common past.
- 2 A myth of common descent.
- 3 A density of cultural ties that enable a greater degree of communication within the group than outside it.
- 4 A conception of an essential equality within civil society that rests on a horizontal unity.

Straightaway one can begin to see how globalization both extends and undermines 'the nation' as set out in this way. For example, modern communication systems allow a national citizen of a given country greater facility to communicate both within the zone of their nation and with those outside it. The key point is that the above can act as a framework that, without constantly trying to evaluate and re-evaluate in an age of globalization, will be useful to refer to as a point of reference.

Globalization

As with nations and nationalism, so with globalization: definitions quickly run into analytical tangles, yet are necessary. They are necessary because although the lustre of the term 'globalization' has now worn off, it still exists as a journalistic and political cliché that approximates to general perceptions about the extent of world markets, the ubiquity of multinational companies, and the reach of information technology. In the face of this, we cannot lapse into an 'anything goes' approach and defer to fragments of experience and knowledge that are expressed through references to technological and social innovation – the 'Google generation', for example, to take one among many passing shibboleths, in this instance a reference to the globalized younger age group. However, in trying to move beyond mere description to establish what globalization is, one enters into the realm of theoretical explanation and political opinion. The various definitions that writers have made about globalization reflect the intellectual purpose of their discussion.

A clear example is found in the influential case made by Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson in their text *Globalization in Question* (1999). We are not concerned here with the validity of their account, but to see how they go about affixing a definition of globalization. Hirst and Thompson (1999, pp. 7–13) claim that globalization should be taken to mean 'the development of a new economic structure, and not just the conjunctural change towards greater international trade and investment within an existing set of economic relations'. They thus emphasize that the term should mean the culmination of existing trends to produce something quite new, a qualitatively different economic world system from that which existed in previous historical eras. Therefore, it should not be evoked to characterize more of the same, a mere

ramping up of international economic activity. This is because they were highly sceptical of a casual acceptance in the mid-1990s by academic and media commentators alike of the originality of the latest phase of the economic developments, something the very term 'globalization' took for granted.

In this light, one can see how they set, as it were, a high bar for the term 'globalization' to be justified in their further definitional clarification. Hirst and Thompson (1999, pp. 7–13) say that in a global 'system distinct national economies are subsumed and rearticulated into the system by international processes and transactions'. The consequences of such a system, should it be proved to exist, would be that:

- 1 governance would be 'fundamentally problematic'
- 2 multinational companies would be 'footloose' 'transnational companies'
- 3 the bargaining power of labour would further decline
- 4 the emergence of a 'fundamental multipolarity in the international political system' as 'the hitherto hegemonic national power would no longer be able to impose its own distinct regulatory objectives in either its own territories or elsewhere'.

The authors counterpoise this global model to 'a simple and extreme' international model, in which 'the principal entities are national economies' with trade serving to integrate world market relationships.

Now this definition of Hirst and Thompson is not an exaggeration for the sake of polemic. On the contrary, it is rigorous. At the same time, the definition – and that of an international model – are, in the words of the authors, 'ideal types' designed to specify the difference by putting, as it were, clear water 'between a new global economy and merely an extensive and intensifying international economic relations'. Hirst and Thompson (1999, pp. 7–13) argue that 'too often evidence compatible with the latter is used as though it substantiated the former'. The burden of their book is devoted to substantiating what Held et al. (1999, pp. 2–14) describe as a 'sceptical' account of globalization through examining the extent of global, as opposed to international, economic activity.

The late Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), and others, suggests – in a reflection of a leftward political turn towards the end of his life – that the very term 'globalization' is a saccharine conceit of politicians, media pundits and academics to foster the illusion of the general involvement of populations. What is really taking place, Bourdieu (2002) argued, is an ever greater market penetration of societies for profit. In this account, the extent of economic globalization is not denied; at issue is the ideological camouflage it provides for neoliberalism. There is some similarity between this radical understanding of globalization and Justin Rosenberg's (2001) scathing critiques of the general

sloppiness of so much writing on the subject. Rosenberg (2005, p. 65) suggests that such is the 'conceptual bankruptcy' of the word, something that has only been underlined by general national retrenchment since 9/11, that the only valid conclusion to draw is that "'globalization" did not even exist' (for further coverage of these issues, see Held and McGrew, 2007).

By contrast, writing at about the same time as Hirst and Thompson in the mid-1990s, Martin Albrow (1996), a writer whose account is included under the heading 'hyperglobalist' by Held and McGrew, suggested that such is the epochal shift that globalization involves, the term itself is inadequate because it implies continuities with the vectors and theories of modernity and post-modernity. Instead, he suggests the term 'globality' is a more appropriate one to capture the 'comprehensive social transformation' that it involves. Rejecting suggestions that what is afoot is principally to be understood as an economic phenomenon, Albrow (1996, pp. 4–6) suggests that: 'The Global Age involves the supplanting of modernity with globality and this means an overall change in the basis of action and social organization.' The overall changes are in respect of the environment, security, communication, the economy and reflexivity. The latter has implications for the co-subject of this book, nationalism, as it involves 'people and groups of all kinds referring to the globe as their frame of reference'. It is also the latter that seems to stimulate Albrow's excitement about what globality involves. He encourages the reader to 'escape the stifling hold of modern on the imagination' as 'we live in our own time and the Global Age opens worlds up to us in unprecedented ways'.

To pursue this discussion any further will anticipate later coverage of theories of globalization as they relate to nationalism that we will shortly consider. Our problem remains trying to affix a definition. In doing this, the point should by now be clear: it is impossible to avoid theoretical anticipation if the definition is to have any analytic purchase. Therefore, while Held et al.'s definition is both in line with their 'transformationalist' perspective on globalization and clearly does not seek to assign priority to any particular variable, their definition as set out below has a number of benefits:

Globalization can best be understood as a process or set of processes rather than a singular condition. It does not reflect a simple linear developmental logic, nor does it prefigure a world society or a world community. Rather, it refers to the emergence of interregional networks and systems of interaction and exchange. In this respect, the enmeshment of national and societal systems in wider global processes has to be distinguished from any notion of global integration. (Held et al., 1999, p. 27)

From this the authors emphasize the complex transnational networks that arise between communities, states, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations; the penetration of

globalization into most areas of social life; the stretching of space away from a territorial principle as the site of political and economic activity; and, relatedly, the expanding scale of power.

There are four points in particular that deserve emphasis and extension within this definition:

- 1 It is vital to see globalization as a process, and not as a point we have or have not reached. Seeing it in this way logically allows us to track globalization backwards and recognize that there have been key stages in its development. Although some disagree, notably Hirst and Thompson (1999) in relation to some indices, there is good, indeed obvious, reason to think that the current phase of globalization has resulted in the most intensive and extensive level. The statistics given at the beginning of the chapter on trade and finance are obviously not the whole story, but they give some measure of this.
- 2 The ability of states, peoples and classes to shape global flows according to their interests reflects differentials of wealth and power. Having said that, it is also the case that aspects of globalization have a momentum that is virtually impossible for even the most powerful actors, states, to control. Financial markets would be one example, migration another.
- 3 Globalization should not be considered a juggernaut that proceeds along all axes (trade, communication and so on) at uniform speed and reaches all societies and all parts of a society simultaneously. There has been much debate over whether globalization is of general benefit to humanity as a whole. What is in less doubt is that world inequalities have increased while some societies have been largely cut off and marginalized from globalization. There have, in fact, been attempts to measure how globalized various societies are. The *Foreign Policy* website (www.foreignpolicy.com/index.php) produces an annual league table measuring both economic and cultural indicators. The results are interesting but we should note that the shorthand of referring to a society as a whole as being 'globalized' or not is an oversimplification. Within all societies there are profound differences of exposure and access to global finance, communication, travel and so on, according to class, particular geographic location and age.
- 4 Given the inequalities referred to, globalization should not be considered something that means mutual interdependence, cultural homogeneity or universalism. The relationship between economies and societies is not generally one of mutual interdependence. It is logically possible to conceive of globalization as giving rise to greater disparities of dependence between economies and states, cultural diversity and political disharmony. The binaries of homogeneity versus heterogeneity are, as indicated, in themselves misleading, although inevitable. The point is that both features are observable.

One could go on endlessly refining the above definition. But, as stated, definitions are always only provisional and are outstripped by the messiness of reality. Key for our purposes in the consideration of globalization and nationalism is how previously isolated groups are connected in time and space. Held (2005, pp. 1–2) refers to this in a more recent publication:

We no longer inhabit, if we ever did, a world of circumscribed communities. Instead we live in a world of what I like to call ‘overlapping communities of fate’ where trajectories are enmeshed with each other. In our world, it is not only the violent exception that links people together across borders; the very nature of everyday living – of work and money and beliefs, as well as trade, communications and finance, not to speak of the earth’s environment – connects us all in multiple ways with increasing intensity.

It is worth noting that the term ‘communities of fate’ is how Max Weber referred to nations over 100 years ago. With these provisional definitions in mind, we conclude with an overview of how writers have dealt with the relationship between globalization and nationalism.

Accounts of Globalization and Nationalism

How, then, have writers on the subjects of globalization and nationalism considered the relationship between the two things? No total answer can be made to this kind of question and, given the specificity of the question, the reflections made have often been brief. Moreover, in trying to identify intellectual trajectories that suggest that the power of nationalisms will decline with the advance of globalization in Chapter 1, writers are grouped together who have approached the relationship from contrasting disciplinary starting points. Some writers I have identified as contributing to the industrial convergence school have been primarily concerned with the study of nationalism and some with globalization. The same is true of the so-called ‘hyper-globalist’ position. Here I make some general remarks about the study of the subjects.

The first thing to be said about the study of nations and nationalism is that it is obviously far older than that expressly of globalization as a named term, and is vast. Most serious accounts of nationalism have been undertaken by professional historians. Insofar as that subject’s influence is possible to discern, Anthony D. Smith (1992) suggests that they have tended to view nationalism with a certain scepticism as its advocates – nationalists – generally rely upon myths to embellish their nations’ pasts. Inasmuch as the professionalism of historians obliges them to objectively assess the past,