

John Hutchinson Interview for H-Nationalism **December 2006**

This is the latest in a series of H-Nationalism series of interviews with leading figures in contemporary Nationalism studies. John Hutchinson is a colleague of John Breuilly's at LSE, and the other heir to the LSE 'tradition' of Nationalism Studies. He gained his Ph.D. at LSE under Anthony Smith, where he was Smith's first doctoral student. He has written numerous articles and three books, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism* (Routledge 1987), *Modern Nationalism* (Fontana 1994) and, most recently, *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (Sage 2005). Hutchinson provides a nice counterpoint to Breuilly as Hutchinson's work emerges out of a more ethnosymbolist and Smithian perspective. For more on John, see <http://www.lse.ac.uk/people/j.hutchinson1@lse.ac.uk/>

Here John is interviewed by Eric Kaufmann, Senior Lecturer in Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London, and director of the Birkbeck Masters programme in Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict. See <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/polsoc/staff/academic/eric-kaufmann>

EK: Since I've done a lot of research on Unionism in Northern Ireland, I'll begin with a biographical question. You have a Protestant background from South Down which is a relatively Catholic part of Northern Ireland and there have been disturbances there since the 1950s such as the Longstone Road Parade controversy. It's interesting that another scholar of nationalism and consociationalism is John McGarry, who has a Catholic background from a heavily Protestant part of Northern Ireland. Is there any connection between being sort of a local minority and having an interest in nationalism, a biographical connection?

JH: Yes. Well it's likely. I was brought up as a Presbyterian in Warrenpoint [in predominantly Catholic South Down, Northern Ireland], but my parents were liberals and probably in the current context Alliance [Party] people.

EK: Like David Trimble and his parents.

JH: Well, let's see, I went to primary school with Daphne Orr who [became] Trimble's wife. She was in my brother's class but no, I wasn't terribly aware of any sectarianism. I realized there were two separate worlds but many of my father's close friends were Catholics and we were brought up in a mixed housing estate. When I was ten, my family moved to Campbeltown on the west coast of Scotland in part that my brother and I could escape sectarian future. It was in Scotland that I became aware that I was Irish because everyone told me so. I didn't really feel at home in Campbeltown, and when I was 14 or 15, I became interested in Irish literature, though not Irish nationalism. My heroes were Joyce and Yeats both critics of nationalism at one level, or critics of the authority of little orthodoxies. At Edinburgh University (the city of the enlightenment was a great liberation after small town life) I studied modern history. I didn't study Irish history except in my final year, when I was taught by [the well-known] Owen Dudley Edwards, whose specialty was Irish American history. But, it was at that stage that I thought it would be quite interesting to do a dissertation on Ireland, probably because of this kind of Scottish-Irish sort of

thing, being a product of both traditions. Within a couple of years of my starting a Ph.D., I got a lectureship at Griffith University in Brisbane so I was doubly distanced from Ireland and it was really after a number of years teaching in Australia I decided I wanted to go ahead with a Ph.D. on Irish cultural nationalism at the London School of Economics.

EK: And then the *Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, which is your first book, grew out of this thesis. What then drew you specifically to nationalism, or were you just interested in Ireland?

JH: Well I was interested in Ireland, but particularly the cultural revival of the late nineteenth century (i.e., Yeats, Joyce). I had quite a corpus of materials together in Australia and I didn't really know what to do with them. I had thought initially of doing a Burkhardt! I didn't have a framework, however, and then I read Anthony Smith's book *Theories of Nationalism* (1971), and this took me in a completely different direction. His final chapter on the dual legitimation thesis, where he argues that nationalist movements have their origins through the intersection of revivalists and modernist intellectuals and intelligentsia made enormous sense, and I could suddenly see a way in which that offered a model how an Irish cultural nationalism began to crystallize. He also called out in his book for more interdisciplinary research to test some of the more general theses on nationalism and I thought this was an ideal opportunity, so I wrote to him. He was then at Reading University. I was all prepared to leave Brisbane, Australia for Reading, and then suddenly at the last moment I discovered he had moved to the LSE so I had to rapidly shift to the LSE.

EK: Not a bad move though.

JH: No, not a bad move at all. I turned out to be his first and for a year or so his only Ph.D. student, and so I got a lot of attention. So that's how I came to be studying cultural nationalism, and of course the book developed out of the thesis.

EK: OK, so, do you want to tell us a little bit about the thesis of your book?

JH: Yes, I was interested in the role of these romantic intellectuals: artists, poets, also historians and their role in the formation of national identities. Their significance was very clear in Ireland, but no work had been done of a sociological nature. I wished to understand why groups of such intellectuals formed, then were drawn to nationalism, often initially from heterodox religious interests and also the circumstances under which these identities became politically salient. Here one sees the utility of Smith's model which examined why humanist intellectuals are drawn to the past, particularly a golden past, as well why other types of thinkers, especially journalists like Thomas Davis and Arthur Griffith looking for a politics different from that of the established political nationalism adopt and adapt their vision and translate sometimes esoteric cultural projects into social, economic and political programmes. There was also the issue of at what point does this minority project and scholars, artists and political journalists attract a social constituency that can form the basis of a significant socio-political movement. So on the one hand, I was looking at Smith's dual legitimation thesis to understand the origins of the intellectuals and their attraction to nationalism, and on the other hand I was looking at what you might call a more 'blocked [elite] mobility' thesis that predicts when a sizeable social movement will develop, based on a frustrated intelligentsia.

I was originally going to look simply at the late nineteenth century Gaelic revival, which provided the leadership of the Irish war of independence and shaped the trajectory of the Irish nation state. But then it became clear when I was actually tracing the origins of national identities that this was at least the third in a series of revivals and so I started charting cultural nationalism from the eighteenth century onwards, and the development of the early institutions around which the historicist projects developed. I could then see that there were recurring patterns in which these ideas were being taken up by intellectuals and certain periods in which they were or were not attracting constituents and then I was able to draw the empirical evidence to try and test out the hypotheses.

EK: It's definitely an interesting book. And, at the time were you aware that you and Anthony Smith and maybe the odd other were very much in a minority camp. Were you aware that somehow you were going against the grain of the majority of scholarship?

JH: Yes. Much of the scholarship then saw nationalism as really quite either an ephemeral phenomenon which was waning in western Europe. It might still be a force in the developing societies of Asia and Africa, still struggling against colonialism or its heritage, but sooner or later it would just fade away as these societies matured. In the Sociology department [at LSE] it looked rather odd and also there was a anti-culturalist bias in Sociology at that point: that ideas must be epiphenomena of material forces so it was very much a minority thing. I should say, though, there were very distinguished scholars in the department at that time, Michael Mann and Percy Cohen who were interested in nationalism. Of course, at the LSE there were other major figures in nationalism principally Gellner and Elie Kedourie. Gellner was clearly hostile to any study that privileged the role of culture as an independent variable, and Kedourie was hostile to the idea of cultural nationalism as having any society-forming possibilities. So, yes, I did feel that I was in a minority at that stage.

EK: Right, and this was clear even in the literature that had come out in the early 80s.

JH: Yes. There actually wasn't all that much to go on. Anthony Smith had me to read Durkheim, Weber, Shils and Geertz but at that stage there weren't all that many models. I was influenced by John Pocock's and Quentin Skinner's work on tradition and moral innovation: focusing on the complex debates that can occur when intellectuals seek to legitimize radical change by transforming the customary meanings of concepts central to their societies. This seemed to be much more subtle than an 'invention of tradition' approach which implied manipulation and imposition. So I was influenced by that in looking at how cultural nationalists reconstructed their pasts in a different guise as a way to outflank traditionalists, and the complex negotiations and arguments this generated, often producing quite unintended consequences. Amongst the historians, I was most influenced by Joseph Levinson's work on China and Chinese intellectuals.

EK: The term 'cultural nationalism', is that your term or had it been used?

JH: No, it had been used before. You can find it in Hans Kohn and also Elie Kedourie but he's really talking about its initial forms, the Herderian form. But for these scholars as for Ernest Gellner, cultural nationalism is a transient , regressive (all that looking back to golden ages) and

conservative. They subsume it into a state-oriented politics or argue it will be replaced over time by such a politics. My argument was that it was a recurring, often a modernizing movement, legitimizing innovation through apparently conservative arguments. Importantly, it presented a communitarian, not statist concept of the nation, and where it was a powerful force it was able to shape the agenda and direction of nation-states.

EK: Well, I will confess we both had the same doctoral supervisor, Anthony Smith, and you were his first doctoral student. But when did you first become aware of Smith's work? Was it when you were in Australia?

JH: Yes, as I said, I read *Theories of Nationalism* in 1979, and there wasn't much other relevant work at the time.

EK: One thing I should ask you a little bit about is LSE when you first came here because when I came in '93 there was the Masters seminar with Anthony Smith, Brendan O'Leary, James Mayall and George Schöpflin which I saw the notice for on a corridor wall. I decided I'd go to that and as a result I changed course to study with Anthony but when you came here was there some sort of similar gathering of nationalism people in one place?

JH: No. I arrived in January 1980. Anthony [Smith] had arrived in October 1979 and I think one of his first actions was to put up a notice about an interdepartmental seminar for the study of nationalism and that's how it got established with James Mayall and Percy Cohen and George Schöpflin during 1980. At that point it was just a question of finding who was interested in nationalism. There was another Ph.D. student, Marianne Heiberg, who was a student of Ernest Gellner, doing work on the Basques, and a year or so later there was Kosaku Yoshino, who also was studying nationalism with Anthony and Percy Cohen, and Aleksa Djilas was another. But we were the only three Ph.D. students that I knew of.

EK: That were studying nationalism.

JH: Studying nationalism. There might have been a few others in the history department, but I wasn't aware of them.

EK: Right. And what about this sort of *Ethnic And Racial Studies* crowd. Were they looking at completely different issues?

JH: I wasn't really aware of them at that point, no. The MSc Seminar began in 1980. When I left in 1985 after obtaining my Ph.D., there was only a handful of doctoral students. That changed in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and that enabled the establishment of the Ph.D. Workshop, but after my departure.

EK: Right now, just turning to the theory perhaps a little bit more, the period since the collapse of the Berlin Wall saw a large flood of work on nationalism of varying quality. Can you name several books that you view as the most important or theoretically innovative of that post-1989 strain?

JH: There's been a great explosion of work on nationalism but there hasn't been great theoretical innovation since 1989. Most of the seminal texts predated that, for example, those of Anderson, Armstrong, Breuilly, Connor, Gellner, Hobsbawm, Horowitz, Hroch, Kedourie and Smith. Of course there have been interesting works since, for example by James Mayall, Michael Hechter, Michael Billig, Rogers Brubaker, and recently Andreas Wimmer. Montserrat Guibernau's work on stateless nations is significant. But apart from Adrian Hastings's book, and perhaps Michael Mann's work, it is hard to think of works presenting a distinctive *general* perspective on nationalism.

EK: Have they altered or revolutionized what was already there or just mainly built on top?

JH: I think that Mann has made a significant contribution in his work on the *Sources of Social Power* (1994). This focuses on the interaction between militarism, the state, and class mobilization, but it is weaker on the emotional appeal of nationalism. Clearly, he is indebted to Charles Tilly's important work. Adrian Hastings (*The Construction of Nationhood* [1997]) is original as one of the few to focus on the religious sources of nationalism, particularly the Bible. Billig is innovative, in bringing into focus the banal or routinised nationalism within settled nation-states. We have too often focused on what he calls 'hot' nationalism. Kosaku Yoshino's work on the consumption of nationalism adds new elements to Billig's work insofar as he's applying an anthropological approach to the way people use nationalist assumptions in solving the problems of everyday life in a globalised environment. His 'consumption' approach which he labels, nationalism from a market-place perspective which is differentiated from a didactic nationalism of state institutions and 'producer' elites has great potential. Brubaker's work too is interesting, but again, it's not creating a kind of alternative theoretical account of nationalism. Not yet anyway.

EK: How about Eric Kaufmann's work now?

JH: Oh well, I'm excluding present company! (laughter) To be serious, I think it's only a matter of time before several of the graduates of the LSE doctoral workshop will break through as major scholars.

EK: OK, now I just want to talk a little bit about John Breuilly's interview which has just gone up on H-Nationalism, and he made a few points. I know Oliver Zimmer (at Oxford University) shares some of these views and I just wanted to ask you about them. John Breuilly made the argument that too many nationalism theorists -- and I presume he means by this perennialist theorists -- adopt what he calls a 'pick and mix' approach, latching on to incidences of nationalist language say in the premodern period and taking them out of context and then 'connecting the dots' to trace what seems to be a narrative of premodern nationalism. He argues against this kind of an approach for a sort of a more historically immersed approach whereby we can see all the different nuances and different identities crosscutting and interacting. Do you think Breuilly is right or is there something we can salvage from a different approach?

JH: Well, I suppose a general criticism is that people select that evidence which most closely fits their approach or theory and I think it's really kind of a local version of that kind of criticism. That is a potential problem. But, equally there is the problem of a kind of definitional purism:

defining nations in such strict terms that the only way they can possibly appear is in the post-eighteenth century period. So, no matter what kind of apparent similarities there might be to premodern communities you simply rule it out because they lack something like citizenship or mass participation. Gellner's work is an example. The premodern period is the opposite of the modern period, i.e. it's static, it's localized, elites are insulated from the masses. So almost by definitely you can't get a nation forming.

Breuilly is an outstanding historian, and hence defending his craft's sensitivity to the ambiguity of historical evidence. He is right to say we must recognize the cross cutting allegiances present in the past and that we must relate ideas and sentiments to forms of belonging and collective action. But in my book *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, I argue we have to apply this also to the modern period, and one discovers that nationalism appears to be a much more fluctuating phenomenon than conventional accounts imply. In other words, may be there isn't such a big divide between the premodern and modern.

There is a problem in evaluating the debate between the different schools, that of specialization. We all have only a limited knowledge both of period and also of place. I think one of the virtues of Oliver Zimmer's book (with Len Scales, *Power and the Nation in European History* (2005)) is that he brings together historians of the medieval and modern periods. Even if a different term from 'nation' is being used, people may be simply employing this as essentially the same concept (and vice versa). [Susan] Reynolds' work on regnal identities seeks to explore this without the assumptions of nationalist anachronism. We should question an assumption that there is this enormous cleft in history which makes earlier collective identities completely different in kind. Do we regard the idea-world of Shakespeare or Carravaggio as alien to us? I think people have to look at this empirically to see whether this is the case. Maybe in some cases it will be and in other cases it won't be.

EK: This view that the premodern period was sort of static and that people had localized identities, which you see in Gellner and Anderson and Giddens as well. How do you view that position and where do you think it comes from, that view of the premodern?

JH: I think it's to be found in all kinds of intellectual analysis. We've got to focus on what is really distinctive about our problem and we locate it in a particular locale so we define this situation outside the locale as being different. You know, if ours is white, that's black. I think it's just a question of that. The assumption is that nations and nationalism are phenomena of the modern period, and undoubtedly they are, they're pervasive. But then there is the exaggerated contrast with the premodern period because nations and nationalism have proliferated. They clearly have been institutionalized in the modern period, and so there must be some qualitative difference. Thus we must find the explanation of the rise of nations and nationalism in processes such as industrialization, the bureaucratic state, and the Enlightenment. Since they are not there in the premodern period they [nations] can't possibly exist. Instead we have this static picture. But I think this has all kinds of problems because many processes germane to nation-formation in the modern period (interstate warfare, imperial expansion and colonization, ideological or religious conflict; economic competition) are also found in many periods of history. This is, of course the theme of my latest book.

EK: Another point that [John] Breuilly makes and some historians often make is that good history is based on immersing oneself in a case or in a particular situation and noting all of the conflicting identities that individuals possess and the different pulls they are under and the contingency and the many factors that are acting in a given situation. His [Breuilly's] argument, if I read it correctly in the debate, is that those who abstract from that rich picture and look at, for example, just the statements that use the word 'nation' or 'ethnie' or sound like they are using that statement, aren't being true to the subject, aren't being true to their material. What is your view of this and do you concur with it at all?

JH: Well I think if you look at John Armstrong's work or indeed Susan Reynolds' work, I think these are criticisms that can't be made. They do identify the many different identities and levels of governance and make important distinctions between religious identities, class identities, ethnic identities. It is important to acknowledge that there are always there are always multiple loyalties. That's true. But equally it's true of the modern period that people have these multiple identities and again, the criticism that can be made of many modernist scholars is that they exaggerate the importance of nationalism in the modern period, failing to take account of the fact that nationalism allies with and is in conflict with religious and regional loyalties, with liberalism, fascism, communism and racism. We should be looking at the interaction with different identities. Under what circumstances does one become more significant? But I would say this is a problem for both the modern period and the premodern period.

EK: Breuilly speaks a lot about the historical method, about getting immersed into a case. Would you argue as well for kind of a more theoretical method?

JH: It comes from his training as an historian and that's what he feels comfortable with. Anthony Smith is a historical sociologist whereas I would see myself as more a sociological historian. Anthony Smith quite clearly is a theoretician in the in the school of Weber and Durkheim and is interested in constructing frameworks although with great attention to empirical particularities. John Breuilly would agree, however, you can only study a particular case in detail if you already have some perception of what is important within that case. So you have to have prior criteria of what to look for. So, theory, using the term in a relatively loose sense, comes prior to the empirical detail. After all you can immerse yourself forever in a case. At what point do you stop?

Obviously there are people who are happier starting from one end rather than the other but both parts of the spectrum have to come together. The problem with the historian is that once you start with a particular case it's very difficult to move away from that. You start using that particular case as the norm by which you judge others, and given the fact that most people have only got a limited language competence and have only a limited time available to immerse themselves, how do you select your cases? There's going to be an arbitrary dimension there in the very first place. So, at some point you have to justify your study at the more general level. I don't really think it matters where you start as long as you realize there is an interaction between the two and that if you start off from the theoretical you have to test your theory constantly by reference to empirical particularities. Equally if you're starting off with the empirical, you have to begin to place your particular study within a more general typology or framework of nationalism studies and modify that if necessary.

EK: The next question really has to do with the distinction between the ethno-symbolist school which is relatively new and primordialism since many scholars and probably a lot of people reading this do not tend to make a distinction. They just tend to see primordialists on one hand and constructivists or modernists on the other hand. So how would you distinguish ethno-symbolism from primordialism?

JH: I'm quite suspicious of these labels because there is both the danger of creating straw men and also of putting people into boxes, which often means you don't need to deal with their specific arguments. You see the problem if you look at someone like Walker Connor who appears to be a primordialist in the way he defines nations. It's the largest community who share a myth of descent. But he insists that it is a *myth*, and he argues that nations only come into being by the late nineteenth century for it is then the nation has a mass dimension. Does one try to chop Walker Connor in two; part of him as primordialist and part of him as modernist. I think the question is what's the problem that we're trying to understand and trying to answer, and then these labels are only useful insofar as they help identify specific threads of argument.

Anthony Smith has constructed this 'ethno-symbolist' label as a way of forcing people to differentiate him from primordialism. He claims he is a critical modernist. In other words, he has accepted most of the premises of the modernists that nations and nationalism are predominantly a post-eighteenth century phenomenon. However, one has to take into account the impact on this of premodern sentiments, ties and institutions on the ways nations formed and define themselves, and he also argues we cannot decide by fiat that there were no nations or nationalism before the age of modernity. He has described ethno-symbolism not as a theory but more as a framework of analysis emphasizing the subjective dimension, the importance of myths, symbols and memories, and the role of culture, but recognizing that when these are embedded in powerful institutions (especially religions) they possess great durability.

At the same time, as I understand it, this is compatible with the fact that collective identities do change over time -- often quite dramatically -- if there are traumatic events like religious reformations or warfare. In other words there is nothing fixed about national identities.

EK: Right, but what's interesting is that particularly if you look at political science or IR in, particularly the United States, there is an almost taken for granted assumption that ethnic identities and national identities are constructed, fluid, malleable, and to go against that is ... not very common at all. I'm just thinking of people like David Laitin, for example, or others who've written with this assumption in mind. What's interesting is that while most people out there on the street view ethnicity as something that is very difficult to change and handed down with its content relatively fixed, most scholars of ethnicity and nationalism, especially social scientists, see it as fungible and constructed. So what do you think accounts for this interpretation of reality? Are the scholars simply smarter or is it the case of hope against history?

JH: Perhaps, constructionism is so popular in the USA because it is the land of the melting pot! As scholars we are all children of the Enlightenment (even if knowingly or unknowingly we are also shaped by Romanticism) and its vocation to unmask through critical reason myth, and free us from superstition and from those oppressive actors who legitimize themselves through them. This is being transposed onto the field of nationalism, as something all too frequently associated

with reaction, with authoritarianism. Indeed we can see all too many cases where populations are mobilized for very unpleasant goals, and the role of the scholar or the critical intellectuals is to try to speak the truth to save people from the passions.

Part of it may be guilt in some respects because historians and perhaps anthropologists have played a role in the construction of national identities and so it's the duty of the academy as it were to purge itself of its errors. Political actors legitimize themselves by reference to the nation, often using it quite unscrupulously, so academics are showing that national identities are malleable, are often used instrumentally, and so as part of their contribution to a rational civil society. But I think one has to distinguish these good moral emancipatory goals from the actual realities. The problem is that ethnic identities are nothing like as malleable as these scholars would like. Hence the incessant emphasis on invention and construction.

EK: Do you see a danger if one views identities as very malleable ... if you think of conflict situations like the former Yugoslavia or Iraq. Do you see that as a dangerous assumption?

JH: Yes, the whole talk about 'nation-building' [in Iraq] when they're really engaged in state-building. This displays the confusion so eloquently exposed by Walker Connor of conflating nation with state. It lends itself to the behaviorist belief that by constructing a set of institutions (a new environment) you can just change collective identities. This can lead to all kinds of follies. One saw that in the Soviet Union and we can also see it in the case of American foreign policy, and indeed, one fears in many peacekeeping situations. The easy assumption that you can change ethnic identities just by tinkering with constitutional machinery is, I think, in the end, deluded. You may have to change political institutions to enable co-operation between contending populations, but that's a different matter.

EK: OK, let's move on to your second book, *Modern Nationalism*. Do you want to just tell us a little bit about that?

JH: This was an attempt to move away from a specific case, Ireland, to do something a bit more general and in theoretical terms look at a series of debates in the field of nationalism and how they applied to contemporary politics. I examined the question of how modern were nations, and the extent to which nations were cultural or political. I related them to contemporary challengers to nationalism. These arose from religious fundamentalism, Soviet communism, the European Union, and apparent alternatives to the nation, such as multicultural models. I was then involved doing a comparative study of the Australian bicentennial as a nation-forming event. So, that was the context in which I was working. I was particularly interested in how what you might call ethno-symbolic frameworks could be applied to immigrant nations such as Australia, Canada and the USA, although ethno-symbolism hadn't been devised at that time.

EK: OK, when moving from that to your recent book, *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (2005), how did your thinking change between those two books?

JH: There were several influences.

One came from teaching a course on world history that convinced me that globalisation was a much older phenomenon and took many more forms, including religious, than was conventionally acknowledged. It was clear, as John Armstrong, argues that long range conflicts between religious civilisations (Islam and Christianity) were formative for the crystallisation of ethnic identities. The premodern world was much more dynamic than many modernists had maintained and had ethnogenetic potential.

Second, Mann's work on the multiple sources of social power that showed the state was only one power actor amongst others reinforced my scepticism about modernist emphasis about the homogenising capacities of the modern state. We tend to look at nationalism from the producer side as if identities are constructs of elites, but there isn't much on how nationalism is received. It also seemed to me that internal conflict between competing ideas of the nation was pervasive and that indeed that national identities might be constituted through conflict.

Thirdly, I was aware of the postmodernist critique of the idea of the unitary nation in favour of the idea of contestation, and I could see from my work in Ireland there was something in this (namely the struggle between Anglo-Irish and Gaelic conceptions of the nation). But many postmodernists seemed to wish to imply thereby that it was easy to deconstruct nations as mere ensembles of discourse. It appeared to me that there were long-ranging cultural wars within nations but that these were embedded and explicable by reference to profound historical cleavages, that were institutionalised and that then channeled emerging social groups. I wish to examine the origins of these differences why they persisted as well as their significance for nations.

Finally, I was sceptical about the linear models of nation-formation found in the literature (that there clear phases of intellectual origins, middle class politics and then mass incorporation in the manner of Hroch). It seemed to me that nationalism and nation-formation was a much more episodic phenomenon, that waxed and waned, and instead of assuming teleologies associated with the development of industrial capitalism or the modern state, we should identify actual factors that cause either an intensification or attenuation of national identities.

EK: One thing I found quite interesting in the book was this, because quite often in reading some sociologist of modernity, people like Giddens or some of the postmodern theorists, they argue that we live in an age when the nation is fragmenting. Not only the nation but often older 'traditional' ethnic identities of any kind are fragmenting because of the reduced coercive power of the state, because of the sort of expressive possibilities opened up by the 1960s and the general liberal individualism and hedonism that's prevailed since then. But in opposition to that you kind of argue, if I read it right, that in fact nationalism can adapt to multiple identities. It doesn't actually fragment. Do you want to say something about that?

JH: Well yes, indeed. We have to acknowledge that as modernisation has proceeded there is increasing and unpredictable social differentiation that sees the rise of new groups and intensive competition. But what is noticeable that in many contexts emerging classes or rival religions express their objectives through a national idiom and that they are able to do so because there are alternative traditions within the 'national' past, deposited by past conflicts.

The other point to note that as I said that national identities are most of the time implicit (banal in Billig's usage), and individuals combine these with other allegiances in an unproblematic fashion. It is only at times of great crisis, especially when faced by some kind of external threat, that nationalists (re)emerge to try to totalise the national identity, so that it regulates explicitly all other identities. The idea that nation is under threat was one of the dynamic elements in the formation of nationalism and that the idea that there is ever a time when nation or nation-state formation is complete is I think a fallacy. I examined some of the threats that actually caused nationalists to mobilize and overcome the 'fragmentation' namely, warfare, economic competition, large-scale migration and so forth. As has been pointed out by many scholars, the greatest period of free trade and international specialization in the world economy occurred before the First World War -- which is a period of heightened nationalism -- so these things go together.

EK: That was another point which I got, which was that various phases of globalization and nationalism [came] together. Because another argument of some theorists of globalization is that globalization is eroding the nation state. I'm thinking of people like [Kenichi] Ohmae or [Daniele] Archibugi.

JH: Yes, well that came out of my world history course, realizing that you're defining globalization as a sort of sense of the increased interconnectedness between world populations on a series of levels and you could say that globalization began very early. Most globalization theorists were saying globalization is all relatively recent, as a kind of successor to the process of internationalization. And I was saying that if globalization has been going on for a couple of millennia then there's obviously a real problem with arguing that it necessarily leads to the death of nation states. It [globalization] indeed might be a causal factor in the origins of nation states. So I think you have to have a much more interactive model whereby factors of globalization such as warfare, mass immigration and so forth may be catalysts of ethno-genesis, but equally ethnic actors may also be sponsors of global networks. For example, the role of the Arabs as spearheads of Islam.

EK: One can see now with the European Union losing force, particularly since the late 80s, and with other developments, the argument that globalization has maybe not led to the decline of the nation state. But what about a different line of argument that sees a shift from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism. For example, it's not only true of nations with a dominant group like Germany which have moved to incorporate the Turks more readily into citizenship but also the US which ended its National Origins Quota immigration scheme in 1965 or Australia with the end of the White Australia Policy [by 1970] and even minorities like the Quebecois or Scots who talk about their nationalism being inclusive and civic. Whether it is or not is another question, but the fact that there is this discourse, could it not be said therefore that ethnicity is under pressure from the liberal discourses of modernity and I think Yasemin Soysal, who is going to be speaking here at the LSE soon, spoke about the new norms of universal personhood, somehow undermining that ethnically-based citizenship. What do you make of this thesis?

JH: Well, I think the ethnic and the civic are to be found in all nations. It varies from case to case as to which is predominant; it varies from over time within individual countries. But, in a sense they are both there. As people of the modern world we believe in universal rights, but at

the same time nationalism has encouraged populations to believe that they are bound by a unique history, and each society must find its own path to progress. Universality is conceived in very different ways by different collective actors. French conceptions of democracy and human rights are very different from those of USA. So you have this uneasy tension.

It is also the case that a civic nationalism is rarely culturally neutral: minorities are expected to assimilate to a public culture which is expressed in the language and culture of the majority. There is also a difference between civic and multicultural concepts of the nation, and you see countries oscillating between all three modes of identification. Australia before 1945 rested on an ethnic Anglo-Hibernian hybrid core); after 1945 there was shift from this because of military geo-political and economic imperatives. The choice was articulated as 'populate or perish' after the Second World War when Australian political elites realizing the vulnerability of Australia's small population, broadened immigration policy to include first Southern Europeans and (over time) Asians, breaking with the 'White Australia' policy. At first the conception of nationality was civic and there was the promotion of assimilation to a 'British' norm, but it eventually evolved into a multiculturalist model. Now, however, with fears growing of possible mass migration (for all kinds of political or economic reasons) from Asia, there's a panic growing and a 'fortress Australia' is being reconstructed with a reemphasis on the core values of Australia which are effectively Anglo-Irish, and a demand that migrants recognize these core values as prior to their own culture. So, I think these things shift.

EK: Looking ahead now, what direction do you see nationalism studies taking or what would you like to see?

JH: Well, there are many possibilities. How one views this is based on how one sees one's own research going.

EK: How do you see this?

JH: Well, at the moment I'm working on warfare and national identity because I think that has been a neglected area. There is interesting work in the field. I'm thinking of George Mosse, Anthony Smith, Charles Tilly and Michael Mann, but I think warfare needs to be built much more into theories of nations. There are many other topics that need more attention from nationalism scholars, and we need to break out of Europe as far as our theoretical perspectives go. So in terms of subjects and themes, the role of the economy again is only now being re-examined. There is the work on economic nationalism by Eric Helleiner, and Andreas Pickel, and also Leah Greenfeld's important discussion of the relationship between nationalism and economic modernity. I think religion too has been relatively neglected. The recent religious revival shows that we need to look much more closely at the relationship between religion, nationality and secularism in the modern world.

Since most of our theories are still Eurocentric we need more work -- such as the work you're doing! -- on so called 'immigrant' or settler societies to see how far our frameworks apply. Recently there was Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlov's collection *Asian Forms of the Nation*, and for Latin America, Miguel Centano's penetrating monograph on warfare and the nation-state in Latin America.

EK: My last question has to do with the whole tradition of Nationalism Studies at LSE. Of course, ASEN (the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism) and the journal *Nations & Nationalism* both founded -- I think -- in 1995, or is ASEN older?

JH: Yes, ASEN was founded in 1991, the journal in 1995. ASEN emerged with its first conference, on the subject of nationalism and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

EK: How do you see that going in the future! (laughter)

JH: Well, you are part of the future, it depends on people like you! (laughter) ASEN has always been student-run, and it's the energy of its talented and self-sacrificing doctoral students (aided by MSc students) who have sustained it over the years. From the academic perspective, if you look at the people at LSE who are carrying it on after Anthony Smith's retirement, there's John Breuilly and myself. Really, we are the centre of the programme, so it's rather narrowly-based. In a sense, it's sown its seeds in other colleges around London where you and your peers have obtained lectureships at Birkbeck, Queen Mary, UCL, and elsewhere. I don't know how long the tradition will continue at LSE. Anthony Smith as president of ASEN and as editor of *Nations and Nationalism* continues to be an inspiration as well as offering much practical help, even in retirement. It was he who was founded the tradition, even if there are competing myths of its origins, he and his afternoon teas for postgraduate students in London.

EK: What about these tea parties?

JH: In the 1980s, there were only about two or three students involved at Ph.D. level. Toward the end of the 1980s and with the end of the Soviet Union, you did get a sizeable cohort of students emerging -- you were I think one. At that point, Anthony's tea parties became a major 'civilizing' device, as Norbert Elias might have put it, bringing all the different nationalities together! So by learning common manners at the table and speaking to each other, you formed the human basis of ASEN

EK: Because there was almost nobody of the same nationality.

JH: That's right. By creating these bonds, it made ASEN possible, and enabled it to reproduce itself. Of course the Workshop [Ph.D. workshop] offered an important intellectual basis -- which we didn't have in my day. That deepened these networks, then of course the journal (*Nations & Nationalism*) and the bulletin (*Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*) were building further on this. So you got layer upon layer, but certainly Anthony was the key. Hopefully now it's self-generating. But it depends on institutional support [from LSE], and also on the products of that 'Golden Age' continuing that heritage! (laughter)

EK: You mean *fluctuating* institutional support [from LSE].

JH: Yes, that's correct. (laughter)

EK: Thanks a lot John.

John Hutchinson will be debating his recent book, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, at the LSE on February 7, 2007 at 5 pm with Andreas Wimmer, Gerard Delanty and Umut Özkirimli. See <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/ASEN/Debate/debate.htm>

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