Andreas Wimmer. *Nation Building: Why Some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart.* Princeton Studies in Global and Comparative Sociology Series. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. Illustrations, tables. xxiii + 345 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-691-17738-0.

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Why do ethnic groups form inclusive nations in some places but exclusive nations in others? This is the research question that animates Andreas Wimmer's magisterial fourth major book. In it, he lays out the full scope of his macrosociological theory of nation-building that draws on decades of qualitative and quantitative research that he and his colleagues gathered on social exchange relations and national identification in countries around the globe. His central claim is that *longue-durée* social processes are central to nation-building, specifically the scope and structure of societal exchange relations prior to and following state formation. In sum, the density of voluntary organizations, the state capacity to deliver public goods, and linguistic homogeneity serve to build political constituencies that span ethnic boundaries, yielding more inclusive national identities.

Wimmer acknowledges that his macrosociological theorizing goes against the current fashion of micro-level research in the field, which models short-term social processes using survey experiments and randomized controlled trials (RCTs). While conceding that there are clear benefits to micro-level research, Wimmer argues that the monumental impact of long-term processes are rendered invisible in such models and argues for

"revitalizing the macro-political and historical tradition by adding theoretical precision and methodological rigor to the old endeavor" (p. 40).

What are the long-term generational processes that determine the level of national integration in a country? To answer this question, Wimmer develops a relational theory of nation-building that draws on features of exchange theory. The central logic is that nations, like all large organizational forms, are based on relations between individuals and organizations at the community, tribal, canton, and state levels. The alliances that form between these organizations, and between organizations and individuals, serve as the foundation for the nation that ultimately emerges. The features of the alliances that matter are their provision of public goods to the population, the organizational form of pre-national exchange networks, and the means of transacting across exchange networks (usually, the language of communication).

According to Wimmer, these are the three main pathways to inclusive national identities. In non-colonial settings, inclusive nations are formed where a political class emerges on the backs of voluntary associations across ethnic (regional, linguistic, religious, or other communal) lines rather than segmented in mono-ethnic silos.

In Switzerland, voluntary associations—such as rifle clubs, reading circles, and chorus groups—spanned linguistic boundaries, forming the basis for a liberal political class that included German, French, and Italian speakers in numbers roughly proportionate to their respective populations. This stands against the otherwise similar Belgium case, where foreign occupiers—such as Napoleon and later the Dutch king, William I—prevented the emergence of civic associations across Belgian territories. These processes led to segregated linguistic communities and an exclusionary power configuration concentrated in Francophone Wallonia.

In postcolonial contexts, inclusive nations can develop where the new administration provides public goods not to an ethnic subset of the population but to the broader state population, including minority groups that might otherwise be excluded. In Botswana, for example, a liberal indigenous administration emerged, creating a national Botswana identity that, although based on the dominant Tswana culture, encompassed all citizens of the state. Because all groups benefited from public goods that were distributed by the state without ethnic favoritism, individuals began to identify with an inclusive national identity. In Somalia, by contrast, absentee British colonialism in the North and Italian settler colonialism in the South militated against the incorporation of all clans into an inclusive power configuration. In the postindependence period, a clientelist system emerged that favored certain clans over others. Strongman Said Barre ruled the country for decades through a hegemonic exchange relationship based on patronage ties to his and his mother's clan, restricting access to state resources to other clans.

Inclusive nations can also be built through communicative integration. In China, state administrators conducted their business using Monografia, a sacred written script unrelated to any lived language or culture in the country. This mode of communication gave no advantages to any ethnic group, permitting the entrance of all groups into the state bureaucracy. This helped to forge an inclusive Han national identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries over and above local ethnic identities. The contrast is Russia, whose nineteenth- and twentieth-century rulers elevated Russian to the status of imperial administrative language, creating exclusionary national hierarchies in the different imperial units. This gave rise to linguistic nationalism among subjugated groups, serving to break up the imperial state not once but twice in the twentieth century.

To test the structural argument laid out on page 20, Wimmer employs a creative mix of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques. He then tests the nation-building effects of various exchange relationships by using a series of paired case studies—Switzerland versus Belgium, Botswana versus Somalia, and China versus Russia. Wimmer justifies each paired case study due to their maximum variation on the core independent and dependent variables, and minimal variation on potentially confounding variables, such as the level of economic development, colonial legacy, and regional context. Using comparative historical analysis, he then demonstrates how the density and structure of voluntary organizations, the provision of public goods, and mode of exchange transaction generated power configurations that explain why one case in each pair developed an inclusive national identity while the other failed to do so.

To counter concerns that these comparisons hardly yield definitive causal proof of his hypothesized social mechanisms, Wimmer follows the paired comparisons with a series of regression analyses using the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset supplemented with extensive cross-national survey data on national identification and national pride that he and his colleagues compiled, showing that the level of ethnopolitical in-

clusion across countries is positively associated with literacy rates, the density of railway tracks, linguistic homogeneity, and the density of political and civic organizations. Finally, he employs an innovative mixed methods research design on post-9/11 Afghanistan, using quantitative data analysis to demonstrate that both foreign and state provision of public goods are associated with higher rates of support for the Afghan government, suggesting that public spending facilitates the creation of an inclusive Afghan identity, other conditions permitting.

Wimmer makes a persuasive argument that "slow-moving historical trends" are the most important drivers of nation-building (p. 38). While acknowledging that "faster-moving factors," such as skilled politicians, victory in war, and pressures from rival states, play a role in whether a state develops an inclusive national identity, he writes that "none of them steered the course of nation building in an entirely different direction, as we will see. They seem to modify rather than reengineer the long-term historical forces on which this book focuses" (p. 39).

Nonetheless, nation-building is not always a one-way street: national identities sometimes fade and disappear due to endogenous factors or exogenous shifts in the wider identity landscape. The story is not yet finished for any national form in existence today. Nations that once seemed robust might later fail (Yugoslav, Czechoslovak), and national identities that were once marginal might later succeed (Bulgarian, Macedonian). The Belgian story looks very different today than it did in the early half of the twentieth century before linguistic divisions became strongly politicized. Other national identities have gradually deconsolidated, as in the case in Montenegro, or were summarily discarded, as in the case of Bosnian identity during and after the Bosnian war.

One might also ask whether the external environment does not crucially mediate nation-building processes. Wimmer warned us in his earlier work that, by taking present state borders as given rather than essentially porous and interpenetrated by outside actors and forces, "the web of social life [is] spun within the container of the national society, and everything extending over its borders [is] cut off analytically."[1] That outside actors influence the success of nation-building is something Wimmer readily concedes, as the effects of outsiders are interwoven into his case studies of nation-building in Somalia, Belgium, and Russia, among others. It is notable here that several cases that are poorly predicted by Wimmer's model (Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, Israel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Ethiopia) suggest that the presence of rival neighbor states and regional conflict nexuses select for exclusionary political configurations.[2] It would be fascinating to see the impact of outside factors on domestic power configurations explored more systematically through Wimmer's exchange theory analysis.

Students of nationalism and conflict will find this an essential text for understanding the critical questions of why some nations cohere whereas others do not. Wimmer has succeeded marvellously in building a macrosociological argument that is sure to stand the test of time. He shows how certain features of exchange networks—and their conjunction with the stage of political development and other factors—can make the difference between an inclusive and exclusive national identity decades or even centuries into the future. This book propels the reader forward if only to see whether his empirics succeed in supporting his ambitious claims. Wimmer brilliantly showcases the potential for revitalizing macrosociological analysis at a time when the field has turned decisively micro.

Notes

[1]. Andreas Wimmer, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 301-334, quotation on 307.

[2]. Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees and Minorities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Idean Sahleyan, *Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

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