

## Nationalism and Globalisation

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**ABSTRACT.** This article argues that the current wave of nationalism has to be understood as a response to globalisation and not as evidence for the enduring nature of the national idea, as Smith suggests. It defends the modernist paradigm as a way of explaining nationalism and emphasises the role of war in the construction of nationalism. It puts forward an explanation for the current wave of nationalism in terms of changes in the division of labour, in communications and in war and it describes the key characteristics of what the author calls the 'new nationalism'. The final section defends the idea of a cosmopolitan or European identity.

Eric Hobsbawm argues that the current wave of nationalism will be short-lived. Nationalism, he suggests, is an anachronism best suited to an earlier historical period dominated by industrialisation and print technology. In a much quoted passage, he wrote: 'The owl of Minerva, which brings wisdom, says Hegel, flies out at dusk. It is a good sign that it is now circling round nations and nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990: 181).

Anthony Smith takes the opposite view. He does not think that nations have been transcended in the global era. On the contrary, the current wave of nationalism to be observed in various parts of the world testifies to the enduring nature of the national idea, the way in which it responds to some deep-felt human need.

'It would be folly to predict an early supersession of nationalism and an imminent transcendence of the nation. Both remain indispensable elements of an interdependent world and a mass-communications culture. For a global culture seems unable to offer the qualities of collective faith, dignity, and hope that only a "religious surrogate" with its promise of a territorial culture-community across the generations, can provide. Over and beyond any political and economic benefits that ethnic nationalism can confer, it is the promise of collective and territorial immortality, outlasting death and oblivion, that has helped to sustain so many nations and nation-states in an era of unprecedented social change and to renew so many ethnic minorities that seemed to be doomed in an era of technological uniformity and corporate efficiency' (Smith, 1995: 160).

In addressing this debate, I want to emphasise the political character of nationalism. I do not agree that nationalism necessarily possesses the kind of transcendent character attributed to it by Anthony Smith. Like Renan,

I consider nationalism to be a political process, a 'daily plebiscite', a subjective affirmation and re-affirmation; nationalism will only persist to the extent that individuals, movements, and groups choose to be nationalists. On the other hand, I do not think that nationalism will necessarily go away in an era of globalisation. We are in the midst of a period of political experimentation, as earlier political ideas and institutions have been eroded by dramatic socio-economic and cultural change. Various political ideologies are currently in competition, including market fundamentalism, global Islam, cosmopolitanism, Europeanism, and, of course, nationalism. Some of these ideologies are forward-looking or reformist, that is to say, they offer a policy prescription for coming to terms with underlying structural change, ways in which individuals are expected to be able to benefit from globalisation. Others are backward-looking or regressive, appealing to an imagined past, and proposing to reverse at least some aspects of the current changes. Future developments will be determined by the outcome of this competition; unfortunately, there is no *a priori* reason to suggest that the more forward-looking ideologies will triumph over the backward-looking ideologies.

One of these ideologies is nationalism. What I call the 'new nationalism' is both shaped by, and shapes, the various phenomena we bunch together under the rubric of globalisation. I would argue that the 'new nationalism' is regressive, and, in so far as it persists, will contribute to a wild, anarchic form of globalisation, characterised by violence and inequality. I do not exclude the possibility of forward-looking small nationalisms, as suggested by Guibernau (1996), but I would argue that they have to be situated within a broader cosmopolitan perspective.

In developing this argument, I will start with some preliminary remarks about the theoretical debate on nationalism and how the changing global context alters the parameters of this debate. I will then describe some of the key features of the 'new nationalism', with particular attention to global Islam, which is a new phenomenon, sharing some but not all of the characteristics of the new nationalism. Finally, I will discuss the potential for cosmopolitan and/or European ideologies. In the conclusion, I will sketch out the possible scenarios that might follow from different ideological combinations.

### **In defence of the modernist paradigm**

What Smith has dubbed the modernist paradigm, argues that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, inextricably linked to the rise of the modern state and to industrialisation. Perennialists, primordialists, and ethno-symbolists criticise the modernist paradigm on several grounds (see, for example, Smith 2001; Özkirimli 2000).

First, they argue that the modernists, and in particular the work of Ernest Gellner, are too functionalist. Gellner suggests that the modern state and modern industry requires what he calls 'modular man'. The term 'modular' is

taken from the idea of modular furniture in which components can be fitted together in different ways, while maintaining a harmonious whole. Modular man has certain basic skills including a shared language and can adapt himself to a variety of positions in modern society. Modular man is 'capable of performing highly diverse tasks in the same general cultural idiom, if necessary reading up manuals of specific jobs in the general standard style of the culture in question.' (Gellner 1994: 102) Nationalism, the principle that the cultural and political unit is congruent, is a collective ideology, ideally suited to the construction of modular man, making possible every day encounters with the state and modern industry.

Gellner contrasts the vertical territorially based national cultures typical of modernity with the more differentiated cultures of traditional societies. Before the invention of printing and the spread of writing in vernacular languages, it was possible to distinguish between horizontal, i.e. non-territorial, 'high cultures' generally based on religion and a scholarly written language, e.g. Latin, Persian or Sanskrit, and a variety of local vertical low cultures (Gellner 1983). The emergence of national cultures is associated with the rise of the modern state and the spread of primary education. One of the many local cultures is elevated through printing and education and spread within a territorial area bounded by the state.

The functionalist critique, in my view, fails to take into account the complex relationship between agency and structure. Structural arguments, which are typical of the modernist paradigm are not necessarily determinist arguments. Rather they point to the importance of structural change and the ways in which different political initiatives or ideologies are helped or hindered by structural conditions. Politics is always about experiment; some policies succeed in the sense of increasing the legitimacy of political institutions and others fail. Success, at least to some extent, depends on underlying structural conditions. The validity of the modernist argument does not derive from a linear relationship between nationalism and industrialisation or the rise of the modern state. The modernist argument, for example, does not need to hold that nationalism arose in order to create the conditions for industrialisation nor that nationalism is an inevitable outcome of industrialisation, although I do think that one aspect of industrialisation, namely print technology is a critical component in the rise of nationalism. The rise of the national idea may come about autonomously as a consequence of a variety of factors; the point is rather that as an ideology it fits the modern state and industrialisation. Nationalism, industrialisation and the modern state reinforce each other, although not always harmoniously.

A second related criticism is that the modernist paradigm is too instrumentalist. Modernists, like Gellner or Hobsbawm, suggest that nationalism is inculcated from above through the state's control of culture, particularly language policies and education. Hobsbawm talks about 'social engineering' and 'invention'. Even the variant of modernism put forward by Anderson that the nation is 'imagined' through the spread of secular literature

in the vernacular like the newspaper or the novel, is criticised on the grounds of artificiality (Anderson 1983). Even though there are important elements of mobilisation from above, the critics would argue that nationalism only succeeds where it has some popular resonance, appealing to 'authentic' sentiments among ordinary people that derive from folk memories, traditions and customs. I share the view that the populist appeal of nationalism has to reflect populist sentiment. But that sentiment is not necessarily cultural or ethnic; indeed the view that ordinary people need ethnic or cultural symbols seems to me to be over paternalistic. Popular sentiment can also be based on political demands – for democracy, for example, or anti-colonialism. This difference between the political and cultural bases of nationalism mirrors the distinction between civic or ethnic nationalism or between Western and Eastern nationalism. According to Hans Kohn, the Western 'nations emerged as voluntary unions of citizens. Individuals expressed their will in contracts, covenants and plebiscites. Integration was achieved around a political idea and special emphasis was laid on the universal similarities of nations. In the non-Western world, the nation was regarded as a political unit centering around the irrational pre-civilized folk concept. Nationalism found its rallying point in the folk community, elevating it to the dignity of an ideal or a mystery. Here emphasis was placed on the diversity or self-sufficiency of nations' (Quoted in Özkirimli 2000: 42).

Anthony Smith argues that this distinction is overdrawn and that in both variants of nationalism, both political and cultural elements are to be found. This is probably true but I would argue the more open and democratic a society, the more likely it is that nationalism is a forward-looking political project, and the more authoritarian and closed the society, the more likely it is that popular mobilisation will build on cultural and religious traditions.

Related to the instrumentalist criticism is the charge of 'blocking presentism', that modernists focus exclusively on the present generation. Those who argue that nationalism has to have some ethnic popular resonance insist that the nation has to have some pre-history. Nationalism, they say, is not invented or engineered; rather it is reconstructed and reinvented out of the past. Smith strongly disagrees with Gellner that any old 'cultural shred or patch' will serve the nationalists purpose (quoted in Smith 2001: 65). He says:

We need to understand nationalism as a type of collective conduct, based on the collective will of a moral community and the shared emotions of a putatively ancestral community and this means that we need to grasp the nation as a political form of the sacred community of citizens. (Smith 2001: 82)

But I am concerned about 'blocking pastism'. The focus on the history or pre-history of the nation often obscures the everyday experiences and concerns of present generations, why, for example, people who have lived together for centuries as is the case in many less modernised and therefore culturally rich societies, should come into conflict with each other. It also carries with it a sort

of determinism, that can be very oppressive, the notion that people cannot escape from their ethnic pasts.

A third and related argument is about passion. The modernists, says Smith, cannot account for the passion of nationalism. They cannot answer the question: why die for the nation? For Smith, the answer lies in the 'sacred community' of shared memories and ancestry. I would suggest another answer and that is war. Passion and, indeed, religious feelings, are closely connected with death, as Smith himself argues. Indeed, I would invert the argument and suggest that war constructs nationalism rather than the other way round. That is why military heroes and battles are such an important part of the nationalist narrative. Nationalism has to be understood, I would argue, as a nodal point in the intimate relation between the modern state and war. This is a point made by both Charles Tilly and Michael Mann. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the state's monopoly of violence was established through war, which led to increases in taxation, conscription, war loans and the increased reach and efficiency of public administration, as well as the consolidation of the idea of the 'nation'. This idea was reproduced through conscription and military drill in an imagined war. Both the idea of the 'nation' and the idea of the 'other' were given substance in war. Earlier wars were about religion or about a variety of overlapping and competing sovereignties (fiefdoms, city states, princely states, etc.) and created similarly differentiated loyalties. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, national wars between states became, in Europe, the predominant form of warfare. Clausewitz well expounded the extremist logic that followed from popular mobilisation for war.

The sharp distinction between the internal and external functions of the state dates from this period. The internal functions had to do with the preservation of the rule of law, public services, cultural and socio-economic policies, and, at least in the west, respect for individual rights and citizenship. The external function of the state was defence of the nation as a whole.

The link between nationalism and war was well understood by contemporary thinkers. One of the earliest theorists of nationalism, Heinrich von Trietschke, argued that: 'It is only in the common performance of heroic deeds for the sake of the fatherland that a nation becomes truly and spiritually united.' Echoing Hegel, he insisted on the role of war and bravery in upholding the collective idea:

'The individual must forget his own ego and feel himself a member of the whole; he must recognise what a nothing his life is in comparison with the general welfare. The individual must sacrifice himself for a higher community of which he is a member; but the state is itself the highest in the external community of men' (quoted in Guibernau, 1996: 8).

Of course, there were liberal nationalist thinkers like Mill, Hugo or Mazzini, who conceived of nationalism as a democratic project and who thought that the spread of nationalism would end wars. But these were modernist thinkers. For them, nationalism was about reason not passion and they entertained the possibility of the nation as a temporary historical phenomenon.

The argument of Hobsbawm and others that nationalism is a passing phenomenon no longer suited to current structural conditions is sometimes used by critics of the modernist paradigm as evidence for the weakness of the paradigm. Guibernau, for example, suggests that Gellner's argument about the way in which industrialism's demands for homogeneity leads to 'culturally unalloyed nations' is much too simple 'when applied to a world in which globalisation processes favour constant cultural interconnectedness. If Gellner is right, we should be witnessing a tendency towards a single uniform world nationalism. But in fact, the effect is exactly the opposite' (Guibernau 1996: 78). But this is an overly simple description of globalisation. The modernist paradigm is about the construction of ideology in the context of structural change. Globalisation processes do not only favour cultural interconnectedness, they favour cultural disconnectedness as well. Globalisation breaks down the homogeneity of the nation-state. Globalisation involves diversity as well as uniformity, the local as well as the global. I would like to point to three changes, in particular, that have implications for the future of nationalism.

First of all, the rise of the information-based economy reduces the importance of territorially based industrial production. The global economy is both more transnational and more local. Growing sectors of the economy like finance and research and development are increasingly global. At the same time, markets are increasingly specialised and local as profits are increasingly derived from catering to a differentiated market (economies of scope) rather than from low cost mass production (economies of scale). What we are witnessing is a profound change in the division of labour. On the one hand, there is a growing class of what Robert Reich calls 'symbolic analysts', people who work with abstract symbols in finance, technology, education, or welfare. These are the graduates of the explosion in tertiary education, who communicate across borders and generally speak a global language, usually English. On the other hand, there is a growing underclass of people who service the new symbolic analysts, who work in the informal sector and who trade in cultural diversity through a variety of menial tasks. The classic industrial worker who formed the backbone of the nationalist ideology is increasingly marginalised.

Secondly, the shift from print technology to electronic communications has momentous implications, which it is probably much too soon to describe. On the one hand, as many analysts of globalisation point out, Internet, satellite television, faxes and air travel make possible new global virtual communities (Kaldor-Robinson 2002). On the other hand, radio and television reach out to local communities that do not have the reading habit and make possible much more rapid and dramatic political mobilisation.

Thirdly, a crucial change is in the nature of war. War between states as in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century is becoming increasingly rare. I agree with Smith when he says that globalisation does not mean a decline in the nation state but rather a change in its functions. 'What we have been witnessing is a shift in state functions and powers from the economic and the

military to the social and cultural spheres, and from external sovereignty to internal domestic control' (Smith 2001: 125). But I believe he underestimates the extent to which the loss of external sovereignty and the decline of the military function weakens the potential for reproducing the national idea. Instead of war, we are experiencing new kinds of political violence that are both local and transnational – terrorism, 'new wars', and American high tech wars. And these new forms of violence are constructing new ideologies as I shall discuss below.

One of the developments often neglected by theorists of nationalism is blocism, which, for 50 years, supplanted nationalism, at least in Europe. Writing in 1945, E. H. Carr wrote that nationalism is under attack.

'On the plane of morality, it is under attack from those who denounce its inherently totalitarian nature and proclaim that any international authority worth the name must interest itself in the rights and well-being not of nations but of men and women. On the plane of power, it is being sapped by modern technological developments, which have made the nation obsolescent as the unit of military and economic organisation and are rapidly concentrating effective decision and control in the hands of 'great multi-national units' (quoted in Özkirimli 2000: 47). These 'great multi-national units' were held together through new non-nationalist ideologies constructed out of a great imaginary war far surpassing anything nations had ever achieved. The west was bound together in an imagined struggle of democracy against totalitarianism, while the Eastern bloc cast the struggle as one between socialism and capitalism (Kaldor 1990). Blocism, I would argue, was a transitional phenomenon, combining both the new 'post-modern' elements of horizontal transnational association with a traditional emphasis on territory. Blocism was ideally suited to the Fordist large-scale model of mass production. Blocism failed, I would argue, both because new communications made it impossible to sustain ideologies within closed territorial units and because it was not possible to sustain the imminent idea of war. The collapse of blocism created an ideological vacuum into which rushed a range of new ideologies, including the revival of nationalism.

### Contemporary nationalisms

A friend from Nagorno Karabakh was visiting England at the time of the Jubilee celebrations. He had been one of the founders of the Karabakh Committee, established in the last years of Soviet rule, to demand that Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan, should become part of Armenia. A bloody war followed after the break-up of the Soviet Union – some 150,000 people were killed and over a million people were forced to flee their homes from Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as Nagorno Karabakh. My friend joined the crowds in the Mall, waving flags as the Queen and the royal family passed by. 'So what do you think of British nationalism?'

I asked him afterwards. 'That's not nationalism' he replied, 'that was a Soviet crowd. Nationalism is about passion.'

The jubilee celebrations, like the May Day parades in the Soviet Union or the images of Bush on an aircraft carrier at the moment of supposed victory in Iraq, are one form of contemporary nationalism, what I would call 'spectacle nationalism'. Spectacle nationalism is an evolution from the more militant nationalism of the first half of the twentieth century. It is official ideology, that is to say, the ideology that serves to legitimise existing states. It requires passive participation, watching television or joining a crowd but its capacity to mobilise active participation such as paying taxes or risking one's life in wars is greatly weakened. It has something in common with 'banal nationalism' although it involves consciously mediated construction, spectacular events like the Jubilee celebrations.

What I call the new nationalism is to be found in places like Nagorno Karabakh or Bosnia-Herzegovina and is bred in conditions of insecurity and violence. The new nationalism is exclusive, that is to say, it excludes others of a different nationality, and has much in common with religious fundamentalism, the insistence that religious doctrines be followed rigidly and imposed on others. Indeed, there is a considerable overlap between militant nationalist and religious movements (see Kaldor and Muro, 2003). This is not only because of the religious character of nationalism but also because many nations are defined in religious terms – Bosnian Muslims, for example, or Hindu nationalists – and many religions are described in national terms – Judaism, for example, or Islam.

In the last two decades, we have seen an increased political presence of these groups both in electoral terms and through their involvement in violent episodes, both terrorism and war. These movements have to be understood, not as throwbacks to the past, but as phenomena closely connected to contemporary structural conditions. Just as earlier nationalisms have to be explained in terms of the first phase of modernity, so the new nationalism is both shaped by and shapes what is variously described as globalisation, post-modernity, or late modernity. It is often claimed that the new nationalism was repressed or frozen during the Cold War years only to burst forth when the Cold War was over. I would argue that, on the contrary, the new nationalism has been constructed or invented in the post- Cold war period. Both the electronic media and new forms of violence have been important tools of construction.

Like earlier nationalisms, the new militancy was constructed both 'from above' and 'from below'. Political leaders have tended to use nationalist and religious appeals when other tools of political mobilisation have failed. Often it was secular leaders who opened the space for these ideologies. Thus the Congress Party in India began to use Hindu rhetoric long before the rise of the BJP. In the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, nationalism grew within the administrative confines of the centrally planned system because other forms of ideological competition were excluded. In Africa, patrimonial leaders used



tribal networks as a way of rationing out scarce governmental resources. And in the Middle East, the failures of Arab nationalism led many leaders to emphasise a religious identity and the conflict with Israel.

Smith would argue that these efforts at political mobilisation only succeed if they appeal to some popular sentiments derived from memory and tradition. It is undoubtedly true that memories of violence, especially not too long ago, facilitate mobilisation. Today's Hindu-Muslim clashes reproduce the clashes of previous generations, while in former Yugoslavia, living memories of atrocities during World War II provide a fertile source for contemporary nationalism. All the same, it is insecurity and frustration resulting from dramatic structural change that provides a more convincing explanation for why today's generation, often brought up in multi-cultural environments, are so vulnerable to exclusive ideologies. The last two decades have witnessed, in many regions, substantial decline in state provision and public employment, rapid urbanisation, the growth of an informal criminalised economy and large-scale migration from countryside to town and from poor countries to the industrialised West. Typical recruits to these movements are the restless young men, often educated for roles that no longer exist because of the decline of the state or of the industrial sector, often unable to marry because they lack income, and sometimes needing to legitimate semi-criminal activities in which they can find their only source of income. Membership in nationalist or religious groups offers meaning, a sense of historical relevance, and also adventure.

Related to the sense of insecurity is the encounter with globalisation and the sense of impotence that arises when crucial decisions that affect every day life are taken further and further away. The young men that committed suicide on September 11 were all educated in the West. This is typical of many nationalist and religious militants. Seselj, the leader of the extreme nationalist Serb party, had written his PhD at the University of Michigan. Many of those who are mobilised are migrants, either from countryside to town or from South to West, who have experienced the loss of ties to their places of origin and yet do not feel integrated in their new homes.

The ideologies of these movements can be described as both modern and anti-modern. Most new nationalists believe in territorially based sovereignty and their goal is to control existing states or to create new states, in the name of the nation or the religion. But their ideology is anti-modern in its rejection of the doubt and questioning that characterises modern society; in its vision of a pure and unpolluted past, on nostalgia for a golden age when the aspirations of the nation or religion were fulfilled; and, above all, in the idea of a cosmic struggle between good and evil that is the most common shared characteristic of these movements. These ideologies are backward-looking in that they want to revert to a modern, e.g. pre-globalisation, conception of the nation-state.

The organisation and strategies of these movements, on the hand, are typical of 'late modernity' and make use of the various phenomena that are known as globalisation. In organisational terms, the new nationalism tends to be transnational. Although the goals are often local, the organisation depends

on the construction of a horizontal network of supporters, involving migrant communities in other countries – Diasporas often play a critical role. In many cases, these movements create parallel structures – religious schools for example or humanitarian NGOs – that fill the vacuum left by the decline in state provision. Funding comes from wealthy supporters in the Diaspora or else through a range of criminal and informal activities.

All of these groups make use of the 'new media' – television, Internet, videocassettes – both for linking the network and for political mobilisation. Many groups have their own TV or Radio Channels. Hindu nationalists benefit from the new Satellite Channel, Star TV. Serbian television paid a critical role in the years leading up to the Yugoslav wars in promoting nationalist propaganda, interchanging contemporary events with the Second World War and the 1389 Battle of Kosovo. Bin Laden's speeches are circulated through video cassettes world-wide. In Africa, the radio is literally magic, and it was Milles Collines Hate Radio that incited the genocide in Rwanda.

For many of these movements, violence is a central strategy for political mobilisation. In earlier wars or guerrilla struggles, violence was directed against strategic targets such as the capture of territory or attacks on radio stations or important officials as part of a clear strategy; political mobilisation was needed to implement the strategy. Nowadays, violence is directed against symbolic targets and against civilians. Symbolic violence, is a form of message, a way of making a statement. Terrorist attacks against civilians are typical of 'symbolic violence'. Violence is 'deliberately exaggerated' and often macabre. The Lord's resistance Army in Uganda cuts off ears and lips. Hamas suicide bombers put nails in their bombs so as to kill as many people as possible. Juergensmayer likens 'symbolic violence' to theatre – these are what he calls 'performance acts' – 'stunning, abnormal and outrageous murders carried out in a way that graphically displays the power of violence – set within grand scenarios of conflict and proclamation' (Juergensmayer, 2000: 222). The targets of such attacks are often important symbols – the World Trade Towers, the Federal Building in Oklahoma that symbolised welfare and gun control, the Mosque in Ayodha. These 'rituals of violence' carry with them an otherworldly significance and produce the sense of struggle, of Armageddon or Jihad, or of cosmic war.

The theatrical character of much violence is illustrated by the way many of the perpetrators dress up for killing as though it is not they themselves who perform the acts. The notorious Frenki's Boys, who were responsible for atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo, wore cowboy hats over ski masks and painted Indian stripes on their faces. Their trademark was the sign of the Serbian Chetniks and a silhouette of a destroyed city with the words 'City Breakers' in English. Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, wears aviator sunglasses and dresses his hair in beaded braids hanging to his neck; sometimes he wears women's clothes.

But violence is not merely symbolic, not just 'letters to Israel' as one Hamas activist described the suicide bombers. In many of the recent armed conflicts,

the aim has been deliberate elimination or indeed extermination of the 'other'. The Hutus in Rwanda wanted to get rid of the Tutsis, just as Hitler wanted to get rid of the Jews. The goal of the wars in the former Yugoslavia or the South Caucasus was to create ethnically pure territories. In these cases, exaggerated violence was aimed at making people hate their homes. Systematic rape, for example, was widespread in the former Yugoslavia. This was rape, not as a side effect of war, but as a deliberate weapon of war with the aim of making women, particularly Muslim women, feel ashamed and defiled so that they would not want to return to their homes. Likewise violence against symbolic targets was aimed at removing any trace of the culture of the 'other'. In Banja Luka, during the Bosnian war, two unique sixteenth century Ottoman mosques were razed to the ground. They were blown up on a Friday and a Monday, the bulldozers came and grassed over the site so that you would never know they ever existed.

These new forms of violence can be understood the way that the extremist groups succeed in mobilising extremist sentiment. It is in situations of pervasive insecurity that fear and hatred, passion and prejudice, are more likely to come to dominate political choices. For example, it is difficult to explain the suicide bombers in Palestine as a way of achieving a Palestinian state, just as it is difficult to explain the brutal Israeli responses as a way of improving security. But if the goal is to strengthen extremist sentiment – support for Hamas or the extreme Zionist groups, what is happening is much easier to explain.

In the former Yugoslavia, the killings and displacement in the various conflicts generated the very ideologies that were supposed to have been the cause of the conflict. They left a legacy of fear and hatred, of memories of lost relatives, which provide the fuel for a grass roots nationalist passion that is much more pervasive than before the wars. Indeed this may be the point of the violence. People in Bosnia will tell you that 'the war had to be so bloody because we did not hate each other'. Something similar happened in Nagorno Karabakh. The idea that political control depends on the expulsion of those with a different nationality, says one commentator, 'spread as the scale and intensity of the conflict increased' and was 'converted into a deadly ideology by fears of pre-emption and memories of past blood shed' (Melander 2001: 65).

In the late 1990s, a new variant of the new nationalism emerged with wholly novel features. This was the ideology of global Islam promulgated by Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Of course, this is a religious movement but the ideologists of the movement talk about the 'Islamic nation' and the basic idea of uniting around a common culture, Islam and a religious language, Arabic, is a nationalist idea. It is a network, typical of the global era. It is built up through new forms of communication (Internet, the circulation of video cassettes, the use of satellite television, i.e. Al Jazeera, as well as air travel) and new forms of violent struggle.

The ideology seems to have emerged some time in the mid-1990s when Bin Laden spent time in Sudan and made contacts with a range of Islamic groups, including those who had fought in Southeast Asia and in Bosnia and Chechnya. The elements that mark this ideology out as a new phenomenon are:

- First, the global character of the discourse. There are huge differences among Islamic groups both in doctrine and in goals; most political groups are oriented towards local institutions. Bin Laden's hero was Saladin, the Kurdish commander who united Islamic groups against the Crusaders in the twelfth century. Bin Laden's aim was to copy Saladin and to unite these disparate Islamic groups in a global struggle. In August 1996, he issued his 'World Declaration against the Americans occupying the lands of the two holy places', which was the first time the focus of political Islam had been directed towards the USA. 'It should not be hidden from you' says the Declaration that 'the people of Islam have suffered from aggression, iniquity, and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist-Crusaders Alliance and their collaborators...[Muslim] blood was spilled in Palestine and Iraq. The horrifying pictures of the massacre of Qana in Lebanon are still fresh in our memory. Massacres in Tadjikistan, Burma, Kashmir, Azzam, the Philippines...Ogaden, Somalia, Eritrea, Chechnya, and Bosnia-Herzegovina...send shivers in the body and shake the conscience' (quoted in Burke 2003: 147).<sup>1</sup>
- A second novel element is the focus on spectacular violence, using 'martyrs' (suicide bombers) in 'raids'.<sup>2</sup> The targets are no longer local but global and the 'raid' is designed for maximum media impact – hence both the symbolic character of the targets and the high level of civilian casualties. The raids are viewed as 'jihad as testament', demonstrating to spectators an incredible self-sacrifice for the faith or the nation.
- Thirdly, global Islam is much more 'anti-political' than earlier variants of political Islam, which were directed at winning power in local contexts. In part, the rise of Al Qaeda reflects the marginalisation of political Islam – many commentators have argued that political Islam had passed its peak by the late 1980s. The current version of global Islam is much more preoccupied with political mobilisation than with specific goals. Of course, Bin Laden and others do express specific demands – for the withdrawal of Americans from Saudi Arabia, or for a Muslim caliphate in the Middle East. But as Bin Laden put it in 1999: 'We seek to instigate the [Islamic] nation to get up and liberate its land' (Burke 2003: 35). The attack on the World Trade Towers succeeded probably beyond the wildest dreams of the perpetrators, in publicising the global Islamic idea. In December 2001, in a videotaped message to Al Jazeera, he said: 'Regardless if Osama is killed or survives, the awakening has started, praise be to God' (Burke 2003: 238). A parallel can be drawn with revolutionary terror. The discourse legitimises nihilistic acts of anger and frustration. And where the idea is millenarian, i.e. conceived around some future utopia of liberation, what matters is mobilisation not the achievement of specific goals.

Al Qaeda as an organisation had its heyday in the period 1996–2001, when its infrastructure in Afghanistan was able to provide a focal point for training, funding and expert advice on what appear to have been relatively autonomous operations by different local groups (see Glasius and Kaldor 2002). This

infrastructure was destroyed in 2001. Nevertheless, the ideology appears to be more powerful than ever. The American 'war on terror' has fed the idea of cosmic struggle and elevated the movement to a worthy enemy of America. The apparent swarming of Islamic militants into Iraq bears testimony to its continuing appeal. As Burke puts it:

The legitimising discourse, the critical element that converts an angry young man into a human bomb, is now everywhere. You will hear it in a mosque, on the Internet, from friends, in a newspaper. You do not have to travel to Afghanistan to complete the radicalising process; you can do it in your front room, in an Islamic centre, in a park (Burke 2003: 248).

### **Cosmopolitan or European politics**

There is, of course, another type of contemporary nationalism and this is the small nationalism of ethnic minorities who survive in states where national homogenisation was incomplete but which, unlike the new nationalism described above, are non-violent, open and inclusive. I am thinking of Scotland, Catalonia, or Transylvania. Some would say that the distinction between these nationalisms and the new nationalism is artificial just as Kohn's distinction between Eastern and Western nationalism is overdrawn. But the distinction is important because it is about cultural diversity as opposed to cultural homogeneity. The new nationalism favours cultural homogeneity both large (i.e. Hindu nationalism or global Islam or anti-immigrationism in Europe) and small (i.e. Croats, Abkhazians, Chechens) and is therefore closed and exclusive. But small nationalism can also be about enhancing democracy at local levels, and the defence of cultural diversity. There are, of course, both camps in places like Scotland or Transylvania, though in these two cases, the democratic process has tended to override ethnic division (see Gruber 1999). It is important to stress the distinction between the two types because it illustrates what is meant by cosmopolitanism.

Critics of the modernist paradigm also tend to be critics of the cosmopolitan idea. This is because modernists argue that the nation is a temporary phenomenon. 'The nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end.' (Renan, 1990: 20). Modernists, therefore, tend to favour what they see as more forward-looking ideologies better suited to the structural conditions associated with globalisation.

Two kinds of criticism are levelled by the critics of the modernist paradigm against the cosmopolitan, and by implication European, idea. One is that there is no such thing as a global culture or if there were, it would be a grey, technological uniform culture, incapable of generating passionate loyalties. This is a misunderstanding of the meaning of the term 'cosmopolitanism'. Culturally, cosmopolitanism means openness to different cultures. According to Urry, cosmopolitanism is 'a cultural disposition involving an intellectual and aesthetic stance of 'openness' towards peoples, places and experiences

from different cultures, especially those from different 'nations'. Cosmopolitanism should involve the search for, and delight in, the contrasts between societies rather than a longing for superiority or for uniformity' (Urry 2000). Politically, cosmopolitanism must be distinguished from humanism. Humanism is about universal human values, what we now call human rights. Cosmopolitanism combines humanism with a celebration of human diversity. In *Perpetual Peace* from which the political meaning is derived, Kant describes a world of nation-states in which cosmopolitan right overrides sovereignty. Kant says that, the condition for perpetual peace, is that cosmopolitan right be confined to the right of hospitality. What he means by this is treating strangers with dignity. Kant, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, was opposed to colonialism but he also criticised those natives who maltreated their European visitors. The right of hospitality means both respect for human rights and respect for difference (Kant, 1991).

A similar point is made by Anthony Appiah (1996) in his article on 'Cosmopolitan patriots'. Appiah talks about the importance of the notion of a 'rooted cosmopolitan', someone who loves his or her homeland and culture and feels a responsibility towards making that homeland a better place. But a cosmopolitan is also free to choose the place where he or she lives and the practises in which they take part; you can migrate out of choice not through pressure and choose to respect some traditions and not others. Patriotism can mean freedom not exclusion. A cosmopolitan politics would be one which insisted both on global guarantees for human rights and on a global strategy for promoting the survival of cultures. What makes Sarajevo, for example, such a vibrant place, is precisely the fact that different cultures have survived side by side for so long – the mosque, the orthodox church, the catholic church and the synagogue are all within a few hundred yards of each other. A cosmopolitan is proud of such diversity. A cosmopolitan respects these different practises and rejoices at the fact that they can co-exist.

The second criticism is that a cosmopolitan or European culture has no memory. According to Smith:

[A] timeless global culture answers no living needs and conjures no memories. If memory is central to identity, we can discern no global identity in the making, nor aspirations for one, nor any collective amnesia to replace existing "deep" cultures with a cosmopolitan "flat" culture. The latter remains a dream confined to some intellectuals. It strikes no chord among the vast masses of people divided into their habitual communities of class, gender, region, religion and culture (Smith 1995: 24).

Indeed, Smith goes even further and suggests that a European culture would need to forget all the bad things that have happened – wars, imperialism, and the holocaust. This astonishing claim illustrates the way in which the critics of modernism tend to neglect the political character of ideology. Just as national ideologies in Western Europe arose out of demands for democracy, so a European ideology is being built out of demands for human rights and an end to wars. The two main waves of Europeanism were after 1945, when the European movement was founded in the Hague in reaction to the horror of

war, and, after 1989 and the end of the Cold War with the coming together of peace and human rights movements.

Far from forgetting the horrible experiences of European history, these form the basis of a new cosmopolitan memory. Both Robertson and Shaw argue that the Holocaust and Hiroshima have become global memories that underpin our conception of ourselves as part of a global community. Levy and Sznajder show how memories of the holocaust are being reproduced through museums, education and scholarly conferences and the ways in which this memory construction influenced the humanitarian thinking that led to interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo (Levy and Sznajder 2002).

People in the West are no longer willing to die for the spectacle brand of nationalism. Despite Smith's assertions, I see no reason why people should not be willing to risk their life for human rights as human rights activists and humanitarian agencies already do. Policemen and fire fighters, after all, risk their lives to save other people, whatever their nationality. Defending human rights is, of course, different from national wars in which people are willing not only to risk their lives but to kill for their nations and to destroy their enemies. Surely, we are better off without that kind of passion.

### Conclusion

I have defended the modernist argument that nationalism is a constructed or imagined idea and that its success is derived from the fact that the idea suited the structural conditions associated with modernity. It provided the glue that made possible the modern state and modern industry. I have also argued that the strength of the idea depends on politics as well as culture and that politics is more important than culture in open democratic societies. I explain the passion associated with nationalism not in terms of the strength of culture but as a consequence of war and the role of war in constructing nationalism.

The structural conditions that gave rise to modern nationalism have changed. The information economy is supplanting industrialism and requires a much more differentiated workforce. Electronic communications are now much more important than print technology making possible new horizontal or transborder cultural communities. Wars between states are becoming an anachronism and new forms of violence are constructing new militant nationalist and religious ideologies.

The vertical homogeneous cultures of the nation-state survive as a sort of spectacle. This form of nationalism is supplemented by new horizontal ideologies. On the one hand, we are witnessing new exclusive and fundamentalist political networks including nationalism (that is nowadays both local and global because of Diasporas) and global Islam. On the other hand, cosmopolitan and European ideologies, are being mobilised, that include small open nationalisms, are being mobilised not only from above but also from below by human rights and peace movements.

So will nationalism be transcended? This is a political question. A world in which spectacle nationalism, as in the USA, depends on the idea of a struggle against new nationalism or global Islam, is at odds with underlying socio-economic developments. This is why they are backward-looking. It is extremely difficult to sustain closed national societies in a global era and this can only be done through violence and terror. But if spectacle and small nationalisms could be harnessed to a cosmopolitan politics that reflected the complexity of contemporary conditions, then this would allow for global standards combined with cultural and democratic devolution. A cosmopolitan world would prioritise reason and deliberation as opposed to passion. Violence unfortunately squeezes the space for reason and deliberation. The fact that a good case can be made as to why cosmopolitanism is more likely to contribute to progress does not mean that such a world will come about.

The choice between these two ideal type worlds depends on the actions of individuals, groups and movements. It depends on debates like this one. I do not agree with the critics of the modernist paradigm, which I believe does explain earlier nationalisms, but as a late or reflexive modernist, I am much more doubtful about the future than some of the earlier proponents of the modernist paradigm.

### Notes

1 Nationalist parties captured power in the Balkans, for example, or in India. Islamic parties are ruling in Iran and Turkey and have done well in elections in Pakistan and Algeria, where electoral victory led to a military coup. In Western Europe, right-wing anti-immigrant parties have increased their share of the vote and in the USA Christian fundamentalist and Zionist groups are increasingly influential in the Republican Party.

2 In the last ten years before his death, the Prophet redefined the notion of a 'raid', which had been characteristic of pre-Islamic nomad groups, as part of Jihad, to mean a raid aimed at the benefit of the whole community and not individual gain. Al Qaeda have resurrected the term and it is used to describe their form of action, for example the attacks on the World Trade Centre and other operations (Mneimneh and Makiya 2002).

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