

# Inter-Ethnic Relations in Europe

## Class 4 Theories of the nation

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web: [tatk.elte.hu](http://tatk.elte.hu)  
email: [titkarsag@tatk.elte.hu](mailto:titkarsag@tatk.elte.hu)

address: H-1117, Budapest,  
Pázmány Péter sétány 1/A

## Opposite approaches

- “continuity” vs. “discontinuity”
- “essentialism ” vs “constructionism”
- “cultural” vs. “political”
- “collective” vs. “individual”



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Pázmány Péter sétány 1/A

# What we are talking about?

- “The nation is a historically formed, stable community of people, united by community of language, of territory, of economic life and of psychological make up which expresses itself in community of culture” Stalin, I.V. 1913.



- “A nation is a named community of history and culture, possessing a unified territory, economy, mass education system and common legal rights” (Smith, A, 1989)

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# Fuzziness

- The nation is not a 0-1 concept
- Ongoing process
- Scenes of human drama
- Brought about by language
- Collective memories



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# Nation and nationalism

- Nationalism is the blood in the body of the nation
- Ideology setting the goal of self-determination of the existing or potential nation
- Dream vs. Reality
- Program vs. “business as usual” (Miklós Szabó)



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# Perennialism

- Antiquity and Middle Ages
- Equation of ancient (Greek, Persian, Egyptian) nations with present day nations
- The view of lineal descendancy of the medieval counterparts
- Nations as “organic” and “natural” units



## Arguments for perennialism (or primordialism)

- Enduring cultural communities
- Culture that remained recognizably distinct to their own populations and to outsiders
- “ethnic communities” of history and culture
- Common name
- Myths of common history and descent
- Territorial stability
- Religion
- Solidarity (“we”-ness)

# Modernism

- The nation is a construct of elites
- Transition from agriculture to industrialisation
- Mass-education system
- Common legal rights
- Common market
- Territorial separation



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# 'Ethnies' (A. Smith)

- Common name
- Common myths of descent
- Canonized historical memories and heroes
- Traditions
- Common fate
- Endogamy
- Economic localism
- Underlying sense of historical and cultural community



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## The transition from ethnies to nation

- Minority takes the lead
- Claim for a demarcated territory
- Naturalization of the nation
- Reconstruction (not invention) of the past
- Economic unification
- Bureaucratic control
- Mass scale identity-building
- Media



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## Imagined communities (B. Anderson)

- Imagined because of the size of the group
- Limits of imagination (self-segmentation)
- Sovereignty
- Solidarity
- Printing (mass communication)
- God is dead (Long live the nation)

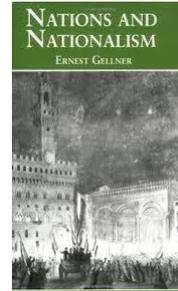


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# Arguments for modernism

- It is nationalism which engenders nations and not the other way around
- Selection, transformation, invention
- Nationalism as a means of class rule
- Nationalism as a means of social mobility
- Industrialization and the need of broad social communication
- Acceleration of social entropy

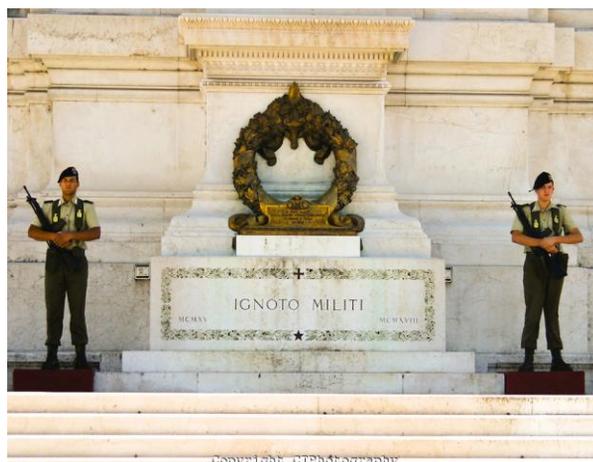


# Social entropy

- Demolishing the barriers based on previous, pre-industrial social structure
- Regional, kin, professional and rank groupings with ordered elements
- Replacement of this structure with a new structure where the actors are distributed random
- The need for a shared culture
- New loyalty (to the state unequivocally)

# Invention of the tradition

- Calendar setting (national holidays)
- Heroes, graves, birth-houses, battlegrounds
- Fake linguistics
- Archeology
- Rites, celebrations, songs, texts







## The threshold of becoming a nation

- Historic association with a current state
- Existence of a long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary and administrative vernacular
- Capacity to conquest

## Core elements of the nation state

- Pre-existing networks of common language, culture and tradition
- Common myths as starting points of “reconstructing” the nation
- National semantic universe
- Territorial claims justified as rights
- Readiness to fight
- Patriotism/Chauvinism
- Symbols
- Sovereignty
- Capital
- Bureaucracy
- Armed forces (army, police, borderguards)
- International recognition
- Borders
- Common market
- Legal system



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## Volk

- Volk, collective entity
- Soul, culture, custom, “folkways”
- Sentiments, feelings, emotions
- Ancestry-ascribed membership
- Führer-Volk relationship



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# People

- Collection of individuals
- Contract
- Participation
- Representation
- Taxation
- Rights (“habeas corpus”)
- Citizenship-achieved membership



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# Relevant literature

- Anthony D. Smith's The Ethnic Origins of Nations
  - Organic concept of nation building – essential approach
  - Nationalism builds on pre-existing kinship, religious and belief systems
  - Historical roots
- Benedict Anderson
  - Constructivist theory
    - Nation as political and cultural construction
- John Hutchinson
  - modernization
  - rationalization
  - political institution
  - centralization
  - homogenization
  - Secularization
- Rogers Brubaker



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# Literature

- Benedict Anderson Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1983)
- John Hutchinson Modern Nationalism (1994)
- Rogers Brubaker. "Ethnicity, migration, and statehood in Post-Cold War Europe" The Fate of the Nation-State. Ed. Michel Seymore. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004. 357-374.



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# Homework

- Can Transnistria be considered as a nation state or not? Write a short essay!



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