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Theoretical Considerations: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Antiquity

HISTORIANS OF THE JEWS IN ANTIQUITY HAVE OFTEN USED THE words “nation,” “nationalism,” and related terms when writing of their subject. In some cases this was a conscious choice. For an author committed to the Zionist cause like Michael Avi-Yonah, referring to the Jews in antiquity as a nation in 1946 had an ideological motivation.¹ But even authors innocent of such commitments show no hesitation in using these terms. Three late twentieth-century illustrations of this phenomenon will suffice here. E. Mary Smallwood’s *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian* has long been a standard survey. A glance at her index shows a considerable number of entries under “nationalism, nationalist, Jewish in Palestine.” Martin Goodman, in his *Ruling Class of Judaea*, puts “Jewish nationalism” in quotation marks when speaking of the treatment of this subject by other scholars. But he goes on to mention the Jews’ “hopes for national restoration” without qualification. Finally, Erich S. Gruen discusses embellishments and rewritings of biblical narratives by Hellenistic Jews in his *Heritage and Hellenism*. He concludes that these fictions “display a strong sense of identity and national

¹ See Michael Avi-Yonah, *In the Days of Rome and Byzantium* (Third Edition; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1962), p. 10 [Hebrew]. Other twentieth-century authors used the terminology of “nation” from equally ideological positions. An example of a non-Zionist ideological historian using it is Simon Dubnow. See the recent summary of his position in David H. Weinberg, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Haim Zhitlowski, Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha-am, and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identity* (New York/London: Holmes & Meier, 1996), pp. 185–216. This position seems to have influenced Salo Baron, who echoes Dubnow when writing of “the emancipation of Jewish nationality from state and territory.” See Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), Vol. I, pp. 25, 31, 93–6, 237. Like Dubnow, Baron paid a lot of attention to the history of nationalism, including in antiquity. See especially his *Modern Nationalism and Religion* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), pp. 7–8, with references to older literature in n. 6, p. 275.

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self-consciousness.”² In addition to these examples of casual and occasional usage of such concepts, I am aware of three monographs devoted to Jewish nationalism in antiquity from the beginning, middle, and end of the second half of the twentieth century. They are William Farmer’s *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus: An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period* (1956), Wilhelm In der Smitten’s *Gottesherrschaft und Gemeinde: Beobachtungen an Frühformen eines jüdischen Nationalismus in der Spätzeit des Alten Testaments* (1974), and Doron Mendels’ *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (1992/97).³

As common as these concepts are in historiography on the Jews in antiquity, their use has its problems. In the preface to the second edition of his book, Doron Mendels notes that “some of my readers were uncomfortable with the term ‘nationalism.’”⁴ The reasons for this discomfort are not hard to find. Over the past century the social sciences have devoted considerable attention to the notions of nation and nationalism. Even though there is a wide variety of opinions, there is also a broad consensus that these are modern phenomena. Thus, to cite a recent study, “Most scholars agree that nationalism is a creature only of the past 200 years of history.”⁵ Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, to cite two influential students of the subject, differ on the nature and origins of nationalism but agree that it cannot be found before the early modern era. This conclusion was not the product of late twentieth-century thinking. The great nineteenth-century orientalist Ernest Renan asserted, “The idea of nationality as it exists today is a new conception unknown to antiquity.”⁶ Even those who argue that nationalism has premodern roots concede this point.

² See E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian. A Study in Political Relations* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 20, Photomechanical Reprint with Corrections; Leiden: Brill, 1981), p. 588; Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea. The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 17, n. 30; Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society XXX; Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1998), p. 188.

³ William Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus: An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Wilhelm In der Smitten, *Gottesherrschaft und Gemeinde: Beobachtungen an Frühformen eines jüdischen Nationalismus in der Spätzeit des Alten Testaments* (Bern: Herbert Lang and Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1974); Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992; Second Edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).

⁴ Mendels, *Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism*, p. ix.

⁵ Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 24.

⁶ See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Revised Edition; London/New York: Verso, 1991). Renan is quoted by M. Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation. The Construction of National Identity* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), p. 42.

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Walker Connor, while stressing the “tribal” origins of nationalism, admits there were no real nations until the nineteenth century. Anthony Smith, who emphasizes the ethnic origins of nations, avoids the latter term when treating earlier periods and uses “*ethnie*” instead. And John Armstrong prefers to speak of “proto-nationalism” or “precocious nationalism” when discussing premodern times.⁷

If the preceding views are correct, then using a term like “nationalism” when writing ancient history is inappropriate and misleading. The point is made explicitly by Richard Horsley in an essay about the Judean revolt against Rome in 66 C.E. For many scholars this revolt is a parade example of ancient Jewish nationalism. Horsley disagrees. He notes, “While some peoples may have a certain awareness as *ethnos*, ‘nationalism’ is a modern concept that is anachronistic when applied to ancient societies.”⁸ Even Mendels, echoing Renan, conceded in the original edition of his book that we cannot speak of nationalism in the ancient world “in the sense it has in modern times.” He defended his use of the term by noting that historians of antiquity frequently use terminology that originated in more recent times.⁹ Unfortunately he refrained from attempting to define what nationalism might mean in the context of antiquity. In any case, Mendels says, he will deal “with the issue of ethnicity, which will for convenience be called here ‘nationalism.’” Ethnicity is not defined either, though from the continuation it appears to involve the way “peoples” differ from one another “in terms of language, territory, history, culture and religion.”¹⁰ In the second edition he still insists that the concept of “nationalism” is applicable “in many of its aspects to the world of antiquity.” And he still appears to merge the latter concept with that of ethnicity.¹¹

The belief that the concept of ethnicity is less anachronistic than that of nationalism may derive from the work of A. D. Smith.¹² The thrust of Smith’s

⁷ See Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford/New York: Blackwell, 1987); idem, *National Identity* (Reno/London: University of Nevada Press, 1991); John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

⁸ Richard Horsley, “Power Vacuum and Power Struggle in 66–7 CE,” in Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman, eds., *The First Jewish Revolt. Archaeology, History and Ideology* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 87.

⁹ Compare the remarks of John P. Meier, “Is There Halaka (the Noun) at Qumran?” *JBL* 122 (2003), p. 151. He observes that “our vocabulary may be anachronistic” as long as “our concepts and affirmations” are not.

¹⁰ Mendels, *Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism*, pp. 13–14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹² See n. 7, this chapter. Mendels, *Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism*, p. 27, n. 1 cites an earlier book of Smith.

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works is summed up in the title of one of his books, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. That is, nations may be modern phenomena, but ethnic groups have a longer history. So concepts like “ethnic identity” and “ethnicity” may be appropriate when discussing the ancient world. Irad Malkin makes the point explicit: “Whereas nationalism is certainly a modern phenomenon, ethnicity is not.”¹³ Whatever the inspiration, the use of the concept of ethnicity has become fairly common among a number of ancient historians. In a lecture delivered in 1999, Frank Walbank looked back at his article from 1951 on the problem of Greek nationality. He observed, “Certainly ‘ethnicity’, however we define it, has taken the place of ‘nationality’ as a historian’s tool for interpreting Greek history and trying to understand how Greeks saw themselves.”¹⁴ Indeed there have been several recent studies on ethnicity in both Greek and Jewish antiquity that show considerable theoretical sophistication.¹⁵ Perhaps an argument from etymology is at work, at least on some

¹³ Irad Malkin, “Introduction,” in idem, ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Cambridge MA/London: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001), p. 16.

¹⁴ Frank Walbank, “Hellenes and Achaeans: ‘Greek Nationality’ Revisited,” in Pernille Flønsted-Jensen, ed., *Further Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (*Historia Einzelschriften* 138; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), p. 19. The date of the lecture appears on p. 31, n. 57.

¹⁵ Koen Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1988); Catherine Morgan, “Ethnicity and Early Greek States: Historical and Material Perspectives,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 37 (1991), pp. 131–63; P. Bilde et al., eds., *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization III; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992); J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); idem, *Hellenicity. Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997); the essays collected in Malkin, ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*; see also Butcher, *Roman Syria*, pp. 270–334, though this author prefers to speak simply of “identities” rather than ethnicity; E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic History and the Creation of Israelite National Identity*, SBL, Semeia Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); idem, *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel. Prolegomenon to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998); Gary G. Porton, *Goyim. Gentiles and Israelites in Mishnah-Tosefta* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 288–98; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1999); A. I. Baumgarten, “The Jewish People in the Second Temple Period as an ‘Imagined Community,’” in I. Gafni, ed., *Center and Diaspora in the Second Temple Mishnah and Talmud Periods* (Jerusalem: Shazar Center, 2004), pp. 17–36 [Hebrew]. Modern scholarship on ethnicity also informs some recent work on Jewish identity in the ancient diaspora. See for example D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (Swansea: Duckworth with the Classical Press of Wales, 2000); Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (TSAJ 86; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); Gideon Bohak, “Ethnic Continuity in the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity,” in John R. Bartlett, ed., *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 175–92; Carl R. Holladay, “Paul and His Predecessors in the Diaspora: Some Reflections on Ethnic Identity

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level. We recall the assertion of Horsley that the concept of nationalism is anachronistic in the ancient context, although some peoples were aware of themselves as an *ethnos*. The terms “ethnic,” “ethnicity,” and so on derive from this Greek word, which was widely used in antiquity to refer to groups of people we might classify as ethnic or national entities.¹⁶ But the Latin *natio*, whence our “nation,” can make the same claim. Clearly we must take a closer look at the definitions of the two concepts. How is national identity distinguished from ethnic consciousness? And isn’t ethnicity as modern a category as nationalism? If so, why would its application to antiquity be any less anachronistic?

The literature on ethnicity now rivals that on nationalism.¹⁷ Definitions of both concepts abound, but so does confusion. In fact, each term is used in a variety of ways. In contemporary American English “nation” tends to be

in the Fragmentary Hellenistic Jewish Authors,” in John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White, eds., *Early Christianity and Classical Culture. Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (SNT CX; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 429–60. Note also M. Liverani, “Nationality and Political Identity,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, pp. 1031–7; and the collected papers of Steven Grosby in his *Biblical Ideas of Nationality Ancient and Modern* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002). As the titles suggest, both are comfortable using the term “nationality.” On the specific problem of the “ethnogenesis” of Israel, see Israel Finkelstein, “Pots and People Revisited: Ethnic Boundaries in Iron Age I,” in Neil Asher Silberman and David Small, eds., *The Archaeology of Israel. Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present* (JSOTSS 237; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 216–37; David Small, “Group Identification and Ethnicity in the Construction of the Early State of Israel: From the Outside Looking In,” *ibid.*, pp. 271–88; Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (London: SPCK and Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); Avraham Faust, *Israel’s Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance*, forthcoming. See further Chapter 4 in this book.

¹⁶ The point is more or less explicit in Uffe Østergård, “What Is National in Ethnic Identity?” in Bilde et al., eds., *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*, pp. 31–2, though he also allows use of the term “nation.” For a detailed treatment of one example of ancient Greek usage, see Christopher P. Jones, “ἔθνος and γένος in Herodotus,” *Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996), pp. 315–20.

¹⁷ For general orientation, see Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996). There are also several studies comparing the two concepts. For a brief overview of recent research, see Thomas Spira, “Ethnicity and Nationality. The Twin Matrices of Nationalism,” in Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World. Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 248–68. Among the full-length studies are Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi/Newbury Park/London: Sage Publications, 1991); Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives* (London/Boulder, CO: Pluto Press, 1993; Second Edition, London/Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002); James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (Second Edition; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); and Peter Krüger, ed., *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Case Studies in Their Intrinsic Tension and Political Dynamics* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1993). For a sense of the extent of social scientific literature on the two concepts, see Thomas Spira, ed., *Nationalism and Ethnicity Terminologies. An Encyclopedic Dictionary and Research Guide* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1999), Vol. I. This volume runs to 757 pages, and two more volumes are forthcoming!

used in the sense of “state, country” with “nationality” having the sense of “citizenship in a state.” Relying on the model of the United States, such citizenship has nothing to do with race, geographic origins, religion or culture. In contrast, an ethnic group is commonly understood to be a subdivision within the body of citizens. Membership in the ethnic group is based precisely on such factors as race (e.g., African Americans), geographical origins (e.g., Polish, Samoan), religion (e.g., Jews, Muslims), and culture (e.g., the category “Hispanic” – though there is considerable overlap between the cultural criterion and the previous three).¹⁸ In this usage “ethnic group” appears to have replaced the older term “race,” which was widely applied to such groups as the Jews and the Irish before World War II, when it was discredited by association with Nazi practice.¹⁹ Be that as it may, other languages reserve terms derived from the Latin *natio* for what Americans would call ethnic or cultural categories. Examples include German *Nazionalität*. For citizenship in a state, German has the self-explanatory *Staatsangehörigkeit*, “state-belonging.” Similarly, internal passports issued by the USSR distinguished between *grazhdanstvo*, citizenship, and *natsional’nost*, ethnic-cultural affiliation.²⁰ Thus in the United States the nation transcends ethnicity, while in Germany and Russia it equals ethnicity.

A third option in common discourse allows nationality to include either state citizenship or ethnicity, adding modifiers to specify which of the two phenomena is meant. Thus some distinguish between “political nationalism” and “cultural nationalism.” Interestingly enough, this approach appears in the work of Salo Baron, one of the greatest twentieth-century historians of the Jews. For obvious reasons the concept of a kind of nationalism without sovereign political institutions seemed a good fit for the stateless Jewish people.²¹ A detailed application of distinction between political and cultural nationalisms in the context of ancient Jewish history appears in the work of Moshe and David Aberbach. They argue that the suppression of the revolt

¹⁸ A further variation emerged in the concluding third of the twentieth century: the ethnic group as a marginal, deprived, or oppressed group. See, for example, E. Cashmore, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Third Edition; London: Routledge, 1994), p. 106.

¹⁹ See Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998), pp. 16, 46.

²⁰ See Lewis, *Multiple Identities*, pp. 15–16. Modern Israel also distinguishes between “citizenship” (*ezrahut*) (e.g., Israeli) and “nationality” (*le’um*) (e.g., Jewish or Arab). On the Russian terms, see the discussion in Banks, *Ethnicity*, p. 23.

²¹ See Baron, *Modern Nationalism and Religion*, pp. 7–8; idem, *Social and Religious History*, pp. 27–8. Mendels, *Rise and Fall*, p. 15, distinguishes between “the *ethnos* (people, nation) and a political state.” On p. 22, he uses the term “political nationalism” in the sense of “statehood.” The nonpolitical nation would presumably be characterized by cultural nationalism.

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against Rome in 70 led the Jews to focus their identity on factors such as religion, language, and sacred texts. As they put it,

Largely deprived of the territorial, social and political bases of their nationalism, the Jews were forced to base their identity and hopes of survival not on political but on cultural and moral power. . . . The forced split between political and cultural nationalism was a major factor in Jewish survival.

This development, they suggest, is “a possible antecedent of the modern nationalism of defeated peoples.” The Aberbachs ignore the kinship element in Jewish identity, ignore precedents from the Persian and Hellenistic eras, and overstate the effects of the suppression of the revolt in 70. On the positive side, they provide a detailed exposition of the distinction proposed by Baron and show how nationalism can survive the loss of state institutions.²²

A related dichotomy contrasts “modern nationalism,” democratically encompassing all the citizens of the state, with “ethnic/tribal nationalism.”²³ A less judgmental version appears in some recent theoretical discussions. Eriksen, for example, distinguishes between “ethnic nationalism” and “polyethnic or supra-ethnic nationalism.” And Krüger similarly contrasts the “ethnic nation” and the “political nation.”²⁴ However, one wonders whether these distinctions do not reflect a blurring of the concepts of “state” and “nation” as they are commonly used in English language discourse. The political, polyethnic, or supraethnic “nation,” or the “nation of all its citizens,” is simply a state not organized on an ethnic

²² See Moshe Aberbach and David Aberbach, *The Roman–Jewish Wars and Hebrew Cultural Nationalism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire/London: Macmillan Press and New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000). The quotes are from p. 5 and p. 4, respectively. The theoretical inspiration for their approach appears to come from John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (Hemel Hempstead, Herts/Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

²³ See Y. Lior, “*Baderekh la’etniyut* [= “On the Way to Ethnicity,” Review of Yig’al Elam, *Yahadut bastatus qvo*],” *Ha-arets*, March 9, 2001, p. B 15 [Hebrew]. “Nationalism” is the Hebrew *le’umiyut*. Lior’s approach is typical of anti-Zionist and post-Zionist Jewish and Israeli intellectuals. Some of these intellectuals apply the dichotomy not to nationalism, but to the state. Thus Sammy Smooha distinguishes between a “multicultural civic democracy” and an “ethnic democracy.” One of his articles where he elaborates on these concepts, “Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archtype,” *Israel Studies* 2 (1997), pp. 198–241, appeared in a special section devoted to “The State of the Israeli State.” That these concepts apply to the state is explicit in the title of the article by As’ad Ghanem, “State and Minority in Israel: The Case of Ethnic State [sic] and the Predicament of Its Minority,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21 (1998), pp. 428–48. See the discussion immediately preceding it in the text.

²⁴ See Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 119; Krüger, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, “Introduction,” p. 10.

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basis.²⁵ Using the word “state,” rather than “nation,” for the political organization would avoid confusion.

Further confusion results when the same definition is proposed for both ethnicity and national identity. For example, Walker Connor writes, “A nation is a group of people characterized by a myth of common descent.” He acknowledges his dependence on Max Weber’s definition of *ethnicity*: “We shall call ethnic groups those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent, . . . it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.” This suggests the two terms are synonymous. Connor’s definition of “nation” is not original with him. He cites an old European joke that runs, “A nation is a group of people united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors.”²⁶ In any case, in view of the same definition for both terms, it is not surprising that Connor admits his terminological combination “ethnonationalism” has “an inner redundancy.”²⁷ Mendels also used “nationality” and “ethnicity” interchangeably, as noted above, though he apparently defines ethnicity in terms of culture rather than kinship.

Other similarities between definitions of ethnicity and nation emerge from the quotations cited earlier. Those quotations all acknowledged the subjective and artificial nature of the belief in a shared identity that constitutes nationalism. Contemporary definitions of ethnicity as socially constructed also acknowledge the invented character of the concept.²⁸ Similarly, the psychosocial dimension of ethnicity emphasized by contemporary scholarship has parallels in recent discussions of national consciousness. I refer to assertions that the origins of ethnic consciousness lie in self-differentiation from others, or from “the Other.” The same is argued for the origin of the

²⁵ Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 7, suggests that in “academic discourse” nationalism is the demand that the political boundaries of a state be coterminous with the cultural or ethnic boundaries. On this view, which Eriksen himself does not share, nationalism is simply the political expression of ethnicity. See there, pp. 117–19. See further discussion later in the chapter.

²⁶ For Connor’s definition, see *Ethnonationalism*, p. 75. He discusses Weber’s definition of ethnic groups and of nation there, p. 102, citing Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 3 Vols. (New York: Bedminster, 1968), Vol. I, p. 389. The joke is cited by Connor, p. 114, n. 10, from Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Knopf, 1969), p. 3.

²⁷ Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, p. xi.

²⁸ See the comment of Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 8. Compare George A. De Vos, “Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation,” in George A. De Vos and L. Romanucci-Ross, eds., *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict and Accommodation* (Third Edition; Walnut Creek/London/New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1995), pp. 24–5. For national identity as socially constructed, see also both Gellner and Anderson, *passim*.

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nation, already implied in the joke cited in the previous paragraph.²⁹ Even the debates concerning ethnicity reproduce the debates over nationalism. Thus for both concepts we have disagreement between “primordialists” and “instrumentalists.” And some suggest that “core/periphery” tensions contribute to the creation of ethnicity, while others have them play this role for national identity.³⁰

What then are the differences between ethnic identity and national consciousness? Is it that the nation does not rely on a belief in shared kinship? Instead, following Anderson, national identity involves “an imagined political community.” By the latter he means that “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”³¹ But how different is this sense of commonality from socially constructed kinship ties? That difference, if it exists, shrinks even more when we recall how pre-modern societies were ready to assimilate outsiders through “adoption” and related procedures (see later). In other words, kinship was to a certain extent a metaphor for community. Be that as it may, the “imagined community” sounds like a deracinated, partially demythologized version of the subjective belief in common descent. Whether it results from a belief in shared DNA (to use modern terminology) or something else, it is the sense of community and shared fate that counts. And the latter is common to both the ethnic group and the nation.

Let us look at other attempts to differentiate between the two concepts. Eriksen argues that when an ethnic movement demands its own state, “the

²⁹ See Østergård, “What Is National in Ethnic Identity?” pp. 35–6; F. Barth, “Introduction,” in idem, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), pp. 11, 13f. Compare Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 11, where the distinctions ancient peoples drew between themselves and others provide “striking parallels” to modern notions of national identity. See J. M. Hall, *Hellenicity*, p. 175, nn. 10, 11, for literature attributing the emergence of Greek ethnic or national consciousness in opposition to the Persian empire, and Shaye Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, pp. 105–6, on the role of opposition to the Seleucids in the emergence of the Judean ethnoreligion. For a suggestion regarding an earlier period, see P. Machinist, “The *Rab Saqeh* at the Wall of Jerusalem: Israelite Identity in the Face of the Assyrian ‘Other,’” *Hebrew Studies* 41 (2000), pp. 151–68. Hall himself takes a much more nuanced position, suggesting, on pp. 172–89, that it was the concept of the barbarian that emerged from the Persian wars. For Hall’s own suggestion regarding “the ethnogenesis of the Hellenes,” see there, pp. 125–71.

³⁰ For ethnicity see the references in Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel*, p. 17, n. 50, and p. 19, n. 59. For nationalism see Østergård and Anderson. In general see Banks, *Ethnicity*, p. 154, who favorably cites Eriksen on the “parallelism between the theories (and manifestations)” of ethnicity and of nationalism.

³¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

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ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement.”³² This suggestion seems to be based on the American usage that interprets “nation” in the sense of state. As we saw earlier, there are other understandings of “nation,” allowing us to speak of “nations without states.”³³ Thus adopting Eriksen’s distinction could lead to confusion. Kellas suggests other distinctions. In his view the ethnic group is “more rooted in social psychology” while nationalism has “explicitly ideological and political dimensions.” The former is more clearly based on common ancestry; the later, more defined by culture. Ethnic groups are exclusive; nations, inclusive.³⁴ The first two sets of distinctions sound relative rather than absolute, and this raises the problem of how and where one should mark the dividing line. The third distinction seems to be contradicted by many instances of exclusionary nationalism.

Connor suggests a different way to distinguish between the two concepts. Actually, he comes very close to equating ethnic and national groups. Yet ultimately he restricts the latter phenomenon to modern times. Nations can only appear when “a sufficient portion of a people has internalized the national identity so as to cause nationalism to become an effective force for mobilizing the masses.”³⁵ This seems to suggest that national identity and nationalism can exist before a nation. A nation emerges only when national identity and nationalism are sufficiently widespread. Perhaps we can avoid using the concept to define itself by substituting the term “ethnic” for “national.” That is, Connor seems to suggest that an ethnic group evolves into a nation when ethnic consciousness achieves a mass audience. Krüger adopts a similar position. He concedes that the movement from “ethnic consciousness with political intent” to “the development of nationalism and a national movement” involves only “a gradual change.” What marks this transition is when ethnic consciousness moves from being the preserve of an intellectual elite to a broader “social basis” and finally to a “mass movement.”³⁶ These ideas owe a lot to Anderson’s notion of an imagined community constructed by mass print media in a vernacular, compulsory standardized education, and the like. But

³² Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 7, and compare p. 119.

³³ See, for example, Monserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States. Political Communities in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

³⁴ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, p. 3. He does note, “it is often possible to trace the origin of nations and nationalism to ethnic groups and their ethnocentric behaviour.”

³⁵ Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, pp. 223–4.

³⁶ Krüger, “Introduction,” *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 12–16.