



## **TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF ETHNICITY TO NATIONALISM: COMPARING GELLNER AND SMITH**

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“There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality.”

Emile Durkheim

### **Introduction**

The ethnic root of nationalism felt into the agenda of international relations theory, particularly since the 1970s, when resurgence of ethnic nationalism has witnessed in many parts of the world. Today, it is widely acknowledged that ethnicity plays a crucial role in nationalism, especially after the recent ethnic based conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in the former Soviet Union. However, there are few detailed studies that focus on the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism and especially among the comparison of Anthony D. Smith and Ernest Gellner, as two distinctive scholars on these concepts. In this article I simply sought to bridge this gap.

Accordingly, ethnicity and nationalism are highly inter-related but what is the relationship between them? This analysis attempts to shed some light on this issue by considering the works of two aforementioned authors who made considerable contributions in developing of theories relating ethnicity to nationalism. It is worth stressing that it is not the purpose of this essay to analyse and focus on the causes and consequences of the recent ethnic conflicts in particular parts of the world. Therefore, the reader of this essay will not find a particular analysis related with ethnic conflicts that are caused by nationalism. The unique aim of this paper is

to compare and contrast the literature of Smith and Gellner and analyse the role of ethnicity on nationalism. Ultimately it will be argued that Ernest Gellner's modernist approach fails to account for contemporary trends in ethnicity and nationalism in some respects and therefore, Anthony Smith provided comparatively better explanation on ethnic root of nationalism.

This paper initially sets out to define exactly what each author means by 'ethnicity' and 'nation'. In both cases Smith's definitions would be considered more valid. After conceptualisation of the key concepts, the discussion then addresses the arguments of A. D. Smith and Ernest Gellner on ethnicity related to 'nationalism' that are the core issue at the sake of this paper. Specifically, Smith's ethno-centric approach will be compared to Gellner's modernist approach. It will be shown that Smith's *theory* has better explanatory power of the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism, as there are several other weaknesses to Gellner's modernist approach that would be also presented in the final section.

### **Ethnicity and Nation**

Ethnicity is a very recent term. Its earliest dictionary appearance was in Oxford English Dictionary in 1972.<sup>1</sup> However, as stressed by many scholar the meaning of this new term is still not clear. It could mean kinship, group solidarity and common culture, as well as "foreign barbarians" and "outsiders" as used to characterise non-Romans and Greeks during the ancient times. Nevertheless, there are some common points that led scholars to agree in similar terms on definition of the ethnic groups. For instance Schermerhorn defined ethnic group as:

A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood.<sup>2</sup>

Smith explains the examples of such symbolic elements as kinship patterns, physical contiguity, religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these.<sup>3</sup> In his survey of the field, Smith gave a special focus to the emotional intensity and historical heritage of ethnies. Smith believed that nationalism derives its force from "inner" sources like history and culture.<sup>4</sup> According to Smith, ethnicity mainly relies on myth, values, memories and symbol where myths are tales that

widely believed and therefore it links the present with a communal past. Moreover, through its symbolism, myths unify classes by spreading ethnic culture.

Smith identified six criteria for the formation of the ethnic group as:<sup>5</sup>

1. Ethnic group must have a name in order to developed collective identity.
2. The people in the ethnic group must believe in a common ancestry.
3. Members of the ethnic group must share myths (common historical memories).
4. Ethnic group must feel an attachment to a specific territory.
5. Ethnic group must share same culture that based on language, religion, traditions, customs, laws, architecture, institutions etc.
6. Ethnic group must be aware of their ethnicity. In other words, they must have a sense of their common ethnies.

If we summarise all these points, Smith defines ethnic community as:

A named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements, a link with an historic territory or homeland and a measure of solidarity.

Smith stresses the importance of ethnicity by arguing that ethnicity is anything but primordial for the cohesion and self-awareness of that community's membership. Thus he argued that ethnicity may persist even when "long divorced from its homeland, through an intensa nostalgia and spiritual attachment".<sup>6</sup> Finally, Smith argued that ethnicity always remains in some form and could only be eliminated by two ways: Either by genocide (mass death of a cultural group like Nazi policies against Jewish and Gypsies) or by cultural genocide (the assimilation of culture by another dominant culture). However, Smith stress that very rarely is ethnicity completely extinguished.

Accordingly, Smith's definition of ethnicity is a valid and complete one especially on reflecting contemporary cases. Arguably, the notion that ethnicity (and ethnic consciousness) may persist even if the members of an ethnic group live outside their country is a convincing one. For example, the existence of strong and influential Jewish, Greek and Armenian lobbies, notably in the United States of America, proves that identity of these ethnic groups has remained through their *diaspora* despite the changes of their territory, economic and social activities. The ethnic conciseness within these groups are very strong and solid (although they are living

separately from their countries for a long time, in most cases almost a century) through “an intensa nostalgia and spiritual attachment” as Smith stated. In addition, the cultural attachments of expatriates’ communities as reflected in the development of particular religious institutions, specialized shops and other facilities that all serve to reinforce and validate Smith’s definition.

Greenfeld suggests that the idea, which lies at the core idea of nationalism, is the idea of the nation.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, if the nation is the core idea of nationalism, then we should focus on the concept of ‘nation’ itself in order to identify the main differences between Smith and Gellner in which neither Gellner nor Smith denied the importance of the nation in the formation of nationalism.

Smith argued that any attempt to explain how and why nations emerged must start from ethnic ties and identities, which have commonly formed their cultural basis. Smith claimed that the nation is a community of common myths and memories as in an *ethnie*. In other words, Smith suggests that there is continuity between pre-modern ethnies and modern nations, because modern nations commonly formed by pre-modern ethnies ‘cultural basis’ and nations are inconceivable without that cultural basis. Smith defined cultural basis as “cohesive power, historic primacy, symbols, myths, memories and values” of the ethnic group that formed the nation. Thus, Smith defined nation as:<sup>8</sup>

Population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.

Smith claims that ethnic differences and ethnic nationalism are unlikely to be eroded mainly because of the constantly renewed impact of ethnic myths and ethnic heritages on modern nations. As a supportive point to his argument, Smith claims that ancient Egyptians like the Assyrians had an ideal typical nation because they were a named population with historic territory, myths, memories, mass culture and even a common economy and legal code.<sup>9</sup>

More significantly Smith also has emphasised that the first modern states like Britain and France are founded around a dominant *ethnie*. Eventually, since Britain and France were the dominant colonialist powers, both of them influence their colonies along with other communities with their Anglo-French state-nation model. In other words, historical priority of the Anglo -French state-nations model presented a basic model for the rest of the world as to how a national society and national state should be formed and sustained.<sup>10</sup> Smith claimed

that only in several exceptional cases, have states formed nations without an immediate antecedent *ethnie*. The United States of America, Argentina and Australia could be examples of this category. In these countries, there was the elite class who began a process of nation formation because of the absence of distinctive *ethnie*.

To sum up, Smith argued that ethnicity is the most influential origin of the nation-states. Smith based this argument on three main reasons: First of all first nations were formed on the basis of pre-modern ethnic cores. Therefore “being powerful and culturally influential, they provided models for subsequent cases of the formation of nations in many parts of the globe”.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, ethnic model of the nation has become popular because “it sat so easily on the pre-modern demotic kind of community that had survived into the modern era in so many parts of the world”.<sup>12</sup> Finally, ethnic unity is a necessary condition for the national survival and unity because it would be very hard for a community to survive without a coherent mythology, symbolism of history and culture.

Contrary to Smith, Gellner defined nations as “groups which will themselves to persist as communities.”<sup>13</sup> Crystallisation of these groups could be by “will, voluntary identification, loyalty and solidarity, as well as fear, coercion, and compulsion.”<sup>14</sup> Gellner suggests that ethnicity is neither a prerequisite nor a required element in the formation of nations. Gellner argues that the nation depends upon political and intellectual elite imposing a shared culture on the whole population in a territory particularly through the national education system. In this way, all the members of the nation have minimum flexibility to fulfill a variety of roles. Kohn<sup>15</sup>, like Gellner, argued that only nation-states could form the ideal form of political organisation as the source of all creative cultural energy and of economic well being. Therefore the supreme loyalty of man is to his nationality rather than his ethnicity. To sum up, Gellner suggests that nations are not a universal necessity like states. In other words Gellner has argued that states emerged without the help of the nations and therefore nations could not be prerequisite for the state.

After, comparing the different perspectives of Gellner and Smith, this article suggests that Smith’s definition is more cohesive. For instance Smith suggests that the first modern states, namely Britain and France, had

founded around a dominant *ethnie*. Thus, because Britain and France were the dominant colonialist powers, they influenced their colonies as well as other communities with their Anglo-French state-nation model. In other words, as Smith argued, accordingly, historical priority of the Anglo-French state-nation model presented a basic model for the rest of the world how a national society and national state should be formed and sustained. Given the legacies of colonialism, this is a convincing argument. Moreover, the necessity of ethnic unity for the national survival is proved by the Yugoslavia example. Different ethnic communities without a coherent mythology, symbolism of history, culture and religion, could not form a national identity and unity under one state. Similarly the separation of the Republics into two different territories both by peaceful or militarily terms such as Cyprus and Czechoslovakia (that have two major different ethnic groups within one country) further supports this argument.

### Nationalism

Having identified, conceptualised and compared the ethnicity and nation within the analysis of Smith and Gellner, now we are in a position to probe in greater detail the concept of “nationalism”. Arguably, Kohn’s definition of nationalism satisfies a good departure point on the conceptualisation of the term. Kohn defined nationalism as an idea that fills a man’s brain and heart with new thoughts and new sentiments, and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organised action.<sup>16</sup> Kohn argued that the growth of nationalism is the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common politicized form. Nationalism therefore presupposes the existence, in fact or as an ideal, of a centralised form of government.

In his survey of discipline, Gellner’s diagnosis of nationalism seems quite different from Smith’s diagnosis. For instance, Gellner focus on specialism within society, rather than its ethnic roots, as the basis of the nationalism. The key assumptions of Gellner’s paradigm suggest three stages of the human history:<sup>17</sup>

1. Pre-agrarian society where hunting and gathering bands were too small to allow the kind of political divisions.
2. Agrarian society where only a minority of the population were specialists on military economic, political or religious.

3. Industrial society where the state is the protector of the community and there are distinctive factors such as mobility, universal literacy and individualism.

Gellner argued that in pre-agrarian and agrarian societies nationalism could not develop mainly because of the small size of the society where ethnic differences were neither visible nor thought of as the ideal political boundary and states. Moreover, cultural or political homogeneity did not represent any importance, because people were struggling with poverty and starvation during that period. Nevertheless, the transition to industrial society, could be also the transition to nationalism, because the violent readjustments in political and cultural boundaries could lead nationalism. In other words, according to Gellner, industrialisation created a culturally homogenous society that had egalitarian expectations and aspirations, which were not possible before industrialisation. Ultimately Gellner suggests that in the industrial age only high cultures will survive. This high culture will like and resemble each other more than ethnic cultures because cultural differences will diminish with globalisation, economic interdependence and co-operation and extended international communication systems.

To epitomise, Gellner's main assumption is that both nations and nationalism are inherently modern phenomena that emerged after the French revolution. Thus, modern conditions like industrialism, literacy, education systems, mass communications, secularism and capitalism shaped the nations and nationalism. Eventually, all the pre-modern eras, will end at modernity simply because industrial society is an inescapable phenomenon, whose productive system is based on cumulative science and technology. Therefore, Gellner argued that nationalism is the "new form of social organisation, that is based on deeply internalised, education-dependent high cultures each protected by its own state".<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Gellner maintains that the new homogeneity that is created by the industrialisation and nationalism will reduce the chance of ethnic revival within the nation mainly because of the 'strength' and advanced organisational capabilities of new form of social organisation that stressed above.

In contrast to Gellner, Smith defined nationalism as:<sup>19</sup>

An ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.

In other words, Smith argued that nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity and identity of a nation.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Smith maintains that political mobilisation of lower strata is important for the rise of nationalism that any *ethnie* that desired to become a nation should be politicized.<sup>21</sup>

Smith, identified the goals of the ethnic nationalist movements as:<sup>22</sup>

1. The creation of a literary 'high culture' for the community where it was lacking.
2. The formation of a culturally homogenous 'organic nation.'
3. Securing a recognised 'homeland,' and preferably an independent state for the community.
4. Turning a hitherto passive *ethnie* into an active ethno-political community, a 'subject of history'.

To sum up, according to Smith, nationalism is the politicisation and territorialisation of an earlier sense of ethno-centrism. Hence, the main difference between Gellner and Smith derives from the cause of nationalism. On one hand, Smith support the ethnic origin of nationalism, by claiming that nationalism is the desire for independence, territory and self rule for the culturally based ethnic group. On the other hand, Gellner argues that nationalism aims to create new form of social organisation that depends on high cultures. In other words, Gellner suggests that it is the nationalism that forms the nations rather than *vice versa*.

As a result, this paper argues that Gellner's modernist theory is useful in evaluating and explaining the social roots of nationalism. However, Smith's explanation on ethnic roots of nation and nationalism that relies on unity and the identity of the *ethnie*, arguably, gives him a comparable advantage that provides a more cohesive theoretical explanation on the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism. In the next section I will try to further elaborate upon this argument.

### **The Relationship of Ethnicity to Nationalism**

After analysing the definitions of ethnicity, nation and nationalism, now we can turn to core issue at the sake: The relationship between ethnicity to nationalism.

In explaining for the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism, Gellner stated that a necessary 'precondition' is that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones and ethnic boundaries should not separate the power holders from the rest. Gellner argued that 'ethnicity' enters the political sphere as 'nationalism' at times when cultural homogeneity or continuity is required by the economic base of social life



and when, consequently, culture linked class differences become noxious, while ethnically unmarked, gradual class differences remain tolerable.<sup>23</sup> Gellner argued that nationalism could use existing cultures but can not be caused by them simply because there are too many ethnic cultures. Thus, they can not be more influential than modern states' high and superior cultures. Moreover, not all-ethnic groups could become nation-state because there is only a limited amount of 'space' for them in this world. Simply, Gellner contend that nationalism is the construction of long process and since many ethnic groups can not manage to become nation, nation-states are not the ultimate destiny of ethnic or cultural groups. Therefore, ethnicity could not cause nationalism simply because nationalism can not emerge without a nation and industrial society (that is mobile, literate, interchangeable and culturally standardised) and therefore will not be influenced by their periphery low (ethnic) culture. Thus, ethnicity can not cause nationalism even if they have territory and energetic intellectual class.

In contrast, according to Smith, ethnic nationalism is the mobilisation of ethnic groups by using language, ethno-history, religion, traditions and customs. In other words, Smith argued that through the rediscovery of an ethnic past, national identity could inspire ethnic communities to claim their rights as nations. Smith suggests that the desire to protect a cultural heritage and tradition inspire a sense of superiority to ethnic group. Moreover, discrimination in division of economic beneficiaries, along with cultural oppressions to a cultural group, could lead ethnic nationalism, because in each case it would be centralised state itself that is held to blame. Thus, Smith argues that ethnic identity could cause nationalism because of its power to convince people. Ethnicity could convince people, if people thought that their homeland is 'God-given', it is the place where their fathers and mothers lived, their heroes fought, their saints prayed and their forefathers laid down their lives for the freedom of their territory. Furthermore, this conviction (that caused by myth and ethnic identity) about possessing 'only true faith', higher morality and civilisation could cause war. Arabs *jihad* against non-Muslims, Armenians war in Caucuses, Western nations 'white civilisation' wars against Asians and Africans demonstrated as supporting examples of to his argument by Smith.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Smith asserts that after ethnic category transformed into an ethnic community and spread to the relevant area, ethnic intellectuals should apply the ideas of self-determination to *ethnie*. In other words, for the emergence of ethnic nationalism, intellectuals should mobilise the *ethnie*. Guibernau also confirmed Smith argument by suggesting

that when a nation faced resistance from ethnic groups within the country, it could cope with it either by destroying them or granting them a degree of autonomy. Guibernau concluded “if state fails to do either of these, ethnicities themselves may develop in the direction of ethnic nationalism, seeking to establish their own states”.<sup>25</sup>

Gellner like Smith does not deny the importance of ethnicity in nationalism. However according to Gellner the formation of new social organizations, where social life has an economic base and depends on high culture, is more important in the formation of nationalism than ethnicity. Another basic difference between two theorists is their preconditions for the development of nationalism. On one hand, Gellner stresses the importance and the necessity of the political and cultural proximity of the ethnic groups as the cause of nationalism, on the other, Smith stressed the importance of the pre-existing *ethnicities* on nationalism.

### **Some Contradictory Points of Gellner and Smith on Education, Violence and History**

So far, this article tried to elucidate the different analysis of Gellner and Smith on the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism. Thus what are the some other major points of contention between these two authors? In this section I will try to present some of the other major contradictions between Gellner and Smith related to nationalism, its origins and means. Three unit of analysis will limit this section: Education, violence and history. The first main contradiction between two authors is on their different approaches to ‘education’. Gellner defined the function of the education system as that entrusts loyal and competent members to the society whose occupancies will not be hampered by factional loyalties to sub groups within the total community.<sup>26</sup> Gellner believed that identity of the individual is shaped by their education and by the culture. For instance he stated that “modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture”.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, Smith argues that dominant literate culture could not assimilate ethnic groups by education system because these groups can survive only through maintaining the network of ethnic and tribal loyalties.

One other contradiction between two authors is on their explanation of ‘violence’ that is caused by nationalism. Gellner argued that the most violent phase of nationalism could happen in early industrialism. The sharp political, economic and educational inequalities between ethnic groups could “impel new emerging units

to place themselves under ethnic banners”.<sup>28</sup> Therefore Gellner argued that ethnic groups that industrialised earlier than the others could cause conflict if they try to implement their culture as a dominant culture. Gellner claims that during the industrialisation almost everyone feels unjustly treated for certain periods. At this stage if the ones who benefit more or early from industrialism, accept and help the ones who suffer from the industrialism; than as a consequence, nationalism could emerge. However, according to Smith violence is the product of demands for political recognition that stem from ethnic nationalism and from *vice versa*.

Their different understanding of ‘history’ and myths also differentiates Gellner and Smith. Gellner attacks less importance to the common history and myth of ethnicity. Gellner asserts that the real history of a nation starts when they became a state. Therefore he argues that pre-state period is actually pre- historical. Conversely, Smith stresses the importance of myths and symbols for the unification of a population. Smith contends that myths and history, are the essential vehicles for the nation building.

### **Critical Analysis of the Modernist Theory: What are the Weaknesses of Gellner’s Modernist Theory?**

In the previous sections this article have sought to clarify the key concepts on the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism, such as nation and ethnicity by comparing and contrast Ernest Gellner’s modernist approach to Anthony Smith’s ethno-centric approach. Simply it has been implied that Smith provides a better theoretical explanation of the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. In this section, I will provide further evidence to supplement this argument. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this chapter *supplements* the previous argument. Therefore, although, it should be more analytical to examine the criticisms of Smith’s approach, such analysis is beyond the scope of this paper mainly because of the limited space available in this article.

Initially, Gellner argued that nationalism and the sovereign nation-state system is a comparatively new phenomenon that emerged in the late eighteenth century after the French revolution. However, this implies that Gellner and other modernists generally ignore the period in which communities transform to modernity. They overlook ethnic social and cultural elements in the formation of nations. As Smith argues, it is also possible to see the growth of national sentiments that transcend ethnic ties back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For instance, as Archer stressed, the Peace of Westphalia (1648), that ended the Thirty Years

War, and Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, laid the basis for the sovereign state system in Europe, that extended to the rest of the world.<sup>29</sup> In other words, the ‘Westphalia conception’ includes the idea that national governments are the basic source of order in international society. Thus as emphasised by Smith most modernists fail to understand and explain the relevance of pre-modern ethnic ties and sentiments in providing a base for the nation.

Secondly, Gellner advances that industrialisation will create a culturally homogenous society. Moreover Gellner claimed that men would like this new culture because now they ‘perceive’ a cultural atmosphere instead of taking it for ‘granted’. Therefore, pre-existing cultures would gradually disappear during the process of the formation of a nation-state. This paper has argued that the establishment of the new institutions (or as Smith defined it, “national myth” of the dominant *ethnie*) does not necessarily mean the abolition of the pre-modern cultures and traditions. In contrast, it could promote an ethnic culture like the strong revival of Catalan culture and the expose of Catalan language publications during Franco’s repression.

Thirdly, Gellner claims that ethnic nationalism can not revive in industrially advanced countries. However, as Smith highlights, ethnic nationalism could occur in a less violent form even in most advanced industrial societies like Quebec of Canada and Catalina of Spain. Recently, devolution in Scotland and Wales of the United Kingdom is another example. Gellner’s theory fails to explain these ethnic-based movements that developed independently from modernity and industrialisation along with the recent escalation of ethnic nationalism in Germany (that is one of the most advanced industrial country of the world) especially against Turkish and other ethnic groups.

Fourthly, Gellner support that with modernity, there will be better socio-economic living standards for the nation. For instance there will be greater access to education, jobs, better housing, and health care. Furthermore, the cultural differences between nations will ease with globalisation, international economy, economic co-operation and extended communication systems. Therefore, nationalism will not be able to develop because ethnic, political and cultural differences will ‘disappear’ as the great majority of citizens in developed countries increasingly gain access to the modern-global ‘high culture.’ However, arguably, it is highly debatable whether the ‘majority of the citizens’ in developed countries will have (equal) access to all that facilities that Gellner stressed. Moreover, Gellner ignored the fact that what will happen, if discrimination is exercised against poorer and less educated ethnic communities. What will happens if an industrialised class

excludes a cultural group from the prosperity of industrialisation and access to high culture? And even more dramatically what will happens if that cultural group can be distinguished by their religion, language colour?

Fifthly, Gellner could be right when he claims that ethnic consciousness will be eliminated by the modern high culture through a central education system, globalisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, and mass communication. Nevertheless, Gellner fails to explain the possibility that ethnic intellectuals and leaders (who have full access to these facilities) could use their status and these facilities for the 'revival' of 'ethnic identity'. Gellner suggests that technology and the spread of communication will promote new modern identity and this will 'disappeared' ethnic ties. Conversely, this paper argues that spread of communication could revive the ethnic ties of many communities through the establishments of ethnic TV channels, radios, internet sites etc.

Finally, Gellner assumes that at the end, nationalism will turn to internationalism and will lose its influence on causing violence especially among well-communicated nations. Arguably, Gellner's theory is quite optimistic on this regard. If this would be the case, then how can the wars (at the turn of the century) could be explained even at the heart of Europe? For instance, there is no doubt that the ethnic groups living in Kosovo were aware of each other's culture. They engaged in mutual economic activities, they have broad communications and they share the common identity of so called 'Yugoslavians'. Arguably, ethnic nationalism has a dynamic effect that could lasts for centuries and it revive or appeared within the surface when the exact political atmosphere exists. Additionally, as Smith had emphasized, certain symbols and heroes of the past could carry new national meanings like the transformations of Prophet Muhammed and Moses to a national hero rather than religious figures.

To sum up, this paper believe that the main reason of modernists failure to explain ethnic revivals within states is mainly due to their failure to fully comprehend the 'ethnic origin' of nations and nationalism. Although it may appear to be true that nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon that emerged in the late eighteenth century after the French revolution, its roots went earlier. Therefore, arguably an analysis about nationalism would not be complete one if it is restricted with the post French-revolution era as a starting point.

### **Concluding Comments**

This article sought to explore some preliminary questions about the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism within the works of Ernest Gellner and Anthony D. Smith. The main problem of this research was

the ambiguity and the complexity of the term 'ethnicity'. In other words, the ambiguity of the concept 'ethnicity' presents an obstacle for this paper to conduct definite solutions. Furthermore, different explanations about nationalism, make it very complicated to elaborate the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism. Moreover one would also recognise the difficulty of make comparisons between Ernest Gellner and Anthony D. Smith that both have very massive contributions. Eventually, this paper did not have enough space to completely analyse the issues like ethnic origins of nations and ethnicism in history.

Despite the weaknesses above, this article revisited and contributed to the comparison and contrast to the theories of Anthony D. Smith and Ernest Gellner on relationship of ethnicity to nationalism. In other words it was the absence of comparison based studies between these distinguished scholars that makes this paper remarkable. It simply advanced that Smith provides a better theoretical explanation of the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism mainly because modernist approach fails to account for contemporary trends in ethnicity and nationalism. Furthermore time and technology additional to changing world conditions also favours the ethnic origin revival rather than to be in sole service of the states. Thus forced identities by the states upon ethnic based groups bound to erode and ethnic consciousness revive in both violent and non-violent forms varies from the political structure and political culture of a country. Accordingly, the validity of this argument also confirmed by the series of explosive ethnic revivals across the globe and especially within the former territories of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union. Nevertheless, as a last word, it should be also mentioned that uniqueness of Gellner's theory should be benefited by any research especially about the evaluation of nationalism.

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### **Notes:**

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- <sup>5</sup> Smith, A.D. (1991). National Identity. London: Penguin, p. 94.
- <sup>6</sup> Smith, (1991:23).
- <sup>7</sup> Greenfeld, L. (1992). Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>8</sup> Smith, (1991:52).
- <sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion about Egyptians and Assyrians, *see* Smith (1991) and (1986).
- <sup>10</sup> Smith, A. D. (1995). Nations and Nationalism in the Global Era. Cambridge: Polity Press, p.115.
- <sup>11</sup> Smith (1991:41).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Gellner, E.(1983). Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Blackwell Press, p.15.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Kohn, H.(1961). The idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origin and Background. New York: Macmillan Press.
- <sup>16</sup> Kohn (1961:4).
- <sup>17</sup> Gellner (1983).
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 48.
- <sup>19</sup> Smith (1991:73).
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.126.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Gellner (1983:94).
- <sup>24</sup> Smith (1996:194).
- <sup>25</sup> Guibernau, M.(1996). Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 273.
- <sup>26</sup> Gellner (1983:36).
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid, 111.
- <sup>29</sup> Archer, C. (1992). International Organizations. London: Routledge Press, p. 4.