

Working papers



**Entity or Idea, Property or Process?
Rethinking the Nation under
Globalization**

Andreas Pickel

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Why does the nation need rethinking?

The nation as idea, concept, and social reality has not been treated kindly by globalization. Associated with the backlash against irresistible historical forces, doomed to obsolescence by global culture, deprived of its institutional shell by the decline of the state, and with a questionable reputation among social scientists to boot, the nation appears to be rapidly fading into little more than a historical phenomenon. Many scholars in the social sciences and humanities have contributed arguments, diagnoses, reconceptualizations and empirical evidence in support of this globalist perspective. Many others, to be sure, have produced significant theoretical arguments and empirical evidence to the contrary. The research program of which this paper is a part aims to “rehabilitate” the nation in the face of globalism. This effort at rehabilitation is not motivated by any particular political sympathies for national collectives or opposition to "globalization," nor by a normative agenda in defense of nation-based theoretical approaches deemed obsolete. It is written based on the conviction that by radically deemphasizing the significance of the national the globalization debate is drawing attention away from some central mechanisms of social change.

As new transnational and global phenomena are identified and theorized, their extent and significance can easily be exaggerated. Methodologically, there is a tendency to employ concepts and approaches that focus on the transnational to the exclusion of the national. The (national) state, society, economy, and culture, it is rightly argued, no longer constitute realities that can be understood apart from the global – if indeed they ever did. On the whole, this is a progressive shift in the agenda. However, one should not assume that there is little point in studying the national, even if the speed of its demise actually matched some of the more extreme predictions. Whatever the favoured metaphor – decline, erosion, dissolution, demise – all refer to processes that are sure to affect the course of current social and political transformations in fundamental ways. Simply dismissing the old as obsolete and no longer important may well be an ideologically effective strategy, but it is not an option for the social sciences. One key for explaining the rise of new social formations in the current age of global

transformations lies in the ways that old social formations have functioned and disintegrated – certainly one of the major lessons of postcommunist transformations.¹

What is the significance of nation and nationalism for social science theory?

That nations and nationalisms are alive and well is reflected in the vibrant multidisciplinary field of nationalism studies. With a large and growing scholarly literature, several specialized journals and professional associations, the field can certainly not be dismissed as a transient endeavour in “backlash (to globalization) studies.” Perhaps more surprisingly, the continuing significance of “the national” – nation, national identity, nationalism, nationality – is recognized, and to some extent theorized, in a broad range of well-defined scholarly literatures in the social sciences, biosocial sciences, and humanities. They include, among others:

- multiculturalism, immigration, citizenship, transnationalism, gender, identity
- family, friendship, sexuality, health, crosscultural psychology
- civilization, religion, social integration and coordination, legitimation, institutional change
- economic culture, international business, organizational sociology, systems of technology and innovation
- postcommunist transformations, democratization, European integration

While the nationalism literature proper is primarily interested in explaining the origins, forms, and consequences of nationalism², other literatures are using the national to help explain their central objects of study. The nationalism literature is historically and empirically rich and analytically increasingly sophisticated, but, as any empirical field of study, thematically circumscribed. The many “other literatures” as a whole are thematically rich and diverse, but often superficial and

¹ See also Elias (1991, 281-299) on other regions and earlier historical periods. He identifies a “lag effect” according to which a population’s social habitus “sticks” to an earlier stage of social formation as the dynamic of unplanned social change is moving into the next stage.

² For a synoptic view of the nationalism literature, see e.g. Smith 2001.

inadequately conceptualized in their treatment of the national. In numerous instances, the national is treated as some sort of independent variable, reflecting the investigator's sense that it is significant, but lacking the tools to define what it is, let alone how it works. In short, nationalism specialists are focused on a limited range of phenomena, whereas specialists using the national in order to explain other phenomena from a diversity of contexts usually adopt a black-box approach in which nationally specific values somehow manifest themselves in social reality. With few exceptions, both groups of specialists have not systematically conceptualized how the national works outside of the more traditional areas mapped by the nationalism literature. This is the challenge of the proposed research program in the most general terms.

In order to examine how the national actually operates in a variety of contexts, we have to begin by defining in general terms what it is. For those tempted to stop reading at this point because they fear yet another more or less idiosyncratic definition of nation or nationalism, I hasten to promise a novel conceptualization of the national as process rather than entity and a methodology that suggests how it can be put to work in a large variety of contexts. Instead of treating nation and nationalism as social and/or ideological *systems* with certain properties, I will argue that the national should be understood as a complex and multilayered *process* that occurs in social systems and cognitive systems from the global level to the level of families and individual psychology. Achieving a deeper understanding of how this process unfolds may give us new leverage in explaining current social and political transformations, especially those at the intersection of political economy and culture.

Mechanisms-Based Explanation

At the centre of the project's methodology is mechanism-based explanation. It has been championed recently by a group of eminent social scientists who promote it as the central part of a new research program {McAdam, et al. 2001, 311-313}. This approach to explanation is designed to strike a balance between abstract theorizing and atheoretical description. Adopting this approach does not

mean abandoning the attempt to explain large-scale processes – in fact, McAdam et al. apply the mechanistic approach to elucidate such broad macrohistorical processes as revolution, nationalism, and democratization. Various dimensions of a mechanism-based approach are explored in a recent volume entitled *Social Mechanisms. An Analytical Approach to Social Theory* {Hedström & Swedberg 1998}.³ The best general treatment of the mechanistic approach in social science has been presented by philosopher of science Mario Bunge {1997}.⁴

A social mechanism is a process in a social system. (More on social systems below.) The difference between a process and a mechanism is that the mechanism explains how a particular process works.⁵ In other words, a mechanism is a process that is well understood. The macro processes examined in the study of world politics are usually highly complex and result from a combination of mechanisms. Thus postcommunist transformation, globalization, marketization, democratization, etc. are large-scale processes that contain a number of mechanisms.

Each concrete case of social change is likely to have its own particular combination of change mechanisms. Examples of general social mechanisms are cooperation, competition, diffusion, assimilation, emulation, market (decentralized) coordination and hierarchical (centralized) coordination. McAdam et al. (2001) identify, among others, brokerage, opportunity/threat spirals, and category formation. Elias (2000) suggests the monopolization mechanism. The concept of mechanism in general usage often refers to specific institutional arrangements or policies (e.g. privatization as a mechanism of transformation). These are designed mechanisms, a special case of mechanism that is perhaps less confusingly called social technology. Social technologies such as economic policies are *normative* mechanisms that may or may not work the way

³ As Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg point out in an earlier article {Hedström & Swedberg 1996}, a social mechanisms approach was advocated by Robert Merton {Merton 1967}, but for at least three decades has played little role in the social sciences dominated by general social theories, on the one hand, and a variable-centred mode of theorizing, on the other (Hedström and Swedberg 1996: 282-83).

⁴ I am currently editing a symposium on Bunge's mechanisms-based explanation, to be published in two issues of *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (June and September 2004).

⁵ "A description of process, without reference to the underlying mechanism(s), may be said to be *kinematical*. Kinematical accounts are devoid of explanatory power. Any study of mechanisms of some kind may be said to be *dynamical*. (Regrettably, nearly all of the so-called dynamical models of social change are actually kinematical)" {Bunge 1997, 425-26}.

they were intended. This will depend on how they perform as *empirical* mechanisms in combination with other mechanisms in a specific context. The challenge for those using a mechanistic approach to explanation (and *a fortiori* for those developing and implementing social technologies) is to identify significant mechanisms and combinations of mechanisms that advance and deepen our understanding of specific processes.

The Nationalizing Mechanism

I propose that there is a central mechanism that can help us make sense of a great variety of phenomena and processes discussed in the globalization debate. This is the nationalizing mechanism (NM). As explained earlier, a mechanism is a process in a concrete system. “Nationalizing mechanism” is the generic name for the actually existing, different NMs in the international society of states. Individual states and societies have their own specific NMs. The NM is a process that occurs at global, regional, national and subnational levels, and is therefore a linkage between social systems at various levels. In addition to linking systems operating at global and national levels, the NM occurs in political, cultural, economic, and biosocial systems and organizations of all sorts. The NM works in systems and processes as diverse as the state and political system, economic growth, industrial organizations, identity construction, and the family – subjects traditionally under the jurisdiction of different disciplines and subfields. The fact that a particular mechanism occurs in so many different systems does not necessarily mean that identifying it in general terms constitutes a major contribution to the explanation of particular processes. Think, for example, of cooperation and competition, basic mechanisms that work in almost all social systems, but on their own can rarely provide deep explanations of basic processes in concrete systems. Much the same is true for the NM. Few scholars would call into question either that nationalism has some significance in world affairs or that it plays some role in various spheres of social life. Clearly, in order to make a strong explanatory claim for the NM, much more has to be argued for. At the same time, however, it is important to keep in mind that any claim for the explanatory significance of a particular mechanism in macrosocial

processes is necessarily limited since such processes are the result of combinations of mechanisms (see above).

The nationalism literature is of great value for the study of NMs, but it also has some distinct limitations. The most important of these is that this literature treats nationalism above all as the explanatory problem (*explanandum*). Why is there nationalism, what kind of nationalism is it, how does it manifest itself, what are its prospects? These are the primary questions addressed in this literature. The potential contribution of the NM lies in its largely unrecognized explanatory function (*explanans*). True, nationalism is invoked to account for a variety of phenomena from anti-neoliberalism to parochialism but such accounts usually rest on questionable, highly normative conceptions of nationalism and are not very deep. If a noun were to be associated with the NM, nation, nationality, national identity or nationness might be less misleading than nationalism. The NM is at the intersection of nation, state, and society.

While general public discourse often conflates the meaning of nation, state, society and country, social scientists are usually clear on the distinction between nation and state. Unfortunately, the same is not true for the distinction between nation and society. The two are often used interchangeably, and even if they are kept separate, there is no agreed-upon set of definitions for them.⁶ The globalization debate has further confused things as nations, societies, and states are described as being in various states of decomposition, transnationalization, etc. This unsatisfactory situation makes it necessary to remain a little longer on the conceptual and definitional terrain.

A thin, realist and materialist conception of state and society

Mechanisms are processes in systems. Nationalizing mechanisms are processes in contemporary social systems. In my conception states and societies are not simply analytical categories like the levels discussed above but are real social systems, concrete entities. Globalization discourse has contributed further to the ambiguity of major social science concepts such as state and society. Weakened by the postmodern assault on their material reality, their very existence has been further called into question by allegedly

⁶ For an excellent review of the literature from historical sociological perspective, see Spillman and Faeges (forthcoming).

new, global realities. Contrary to these fashionable trends, I propose a simple realist and materialist conception of state and society.

A social system is composed of people and their artefacts.⁷ The concept of society refers to social systems physically bounded by a territorial state. All residents of the territorial state are members of society. This does not prejudge the nature or extent of the *ties* that various components, both systems and individuals within that society, have with each other and with "external" systems or individuals. Nor does it prejudge whether a society is globalizing, transnationalizing, fragmenting, renationalizing, or whatever. In fact, the thin conception of society as a concrete social entity is designed to assist us in explaining those very processes. A society is composed of political, economic, cultural, and biological subsystems to which the same caveats apply.

How does the state fit into this conceptualization? Social scientists have debated the state-society problematic long and hard. Waves of "bringing the state back in" to the analysis have alternated with waves of "bringing society back in." "Bringing the nation back in," and bringing it back as a process, gives us a different way of dealing with the state-society problematic. As with respect to society, I propose a thin conception of state, avoiding questions about its autonomy, coherence, etc. Michael Mann's (1993: 55) definition is useful here:

1. The state is a differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate to and from the center, to cover a
2. territorially demarcated area over which it exercises
3. some degree of authoritative, binding rule making, backed up by some organized physical force.

State institutions and personnel represent a society externally vis-à-vis other states and govern a society internally. The theory of sovereignty is the modern state's normative

⁷ "A system is a complex object whose parts or components are held together by bonds of some kind. These bonds are logical in the case of a conceptual system, such as a theory; and they are material in the case of a concrete system, such as an atom, cell, immune system, family, or hospital. The collection of all such relations among a system's constituents is its structure (or organization, or architecture)" (Bunge forthcoming). The concept of social system is highly controversial, being frequently associated with systems theories such as those of Parsons and Luhmann (Müller 1996, ch. 13-15). As a result, most contemporary social scientists adopt a different nomenclature even if their approach is systemic in Bunge's sense. Sites (Tilly), fields (Bourdieu), structures (Giddens), figurations (Elias), formal and informal institutions (North) are widely used alternatives. The systemic ontology, or systemism, on which my argument is based follows Bunge (1979; 1996; 1998a; forthcoming).

foundation. In this sense, all modern states are variations on the Western model. They share basic formal institutions that, normatively, have common functions in the exercise of external and internal sovereignty. States “cage” their societies to varying degrees, and are “polymorphous” rather than unitary and coherent. Thus whether, how, and to what effect particular state institutions discharge those general functions, and which other functions besides, depends upon the society in which these state institutions operate, the historical evolution of state institutions, as well as the state’s regional and global environment. Nationalizing processes are at the centre of these interactions.

Nation as entity or system

Like societies and states, nations too appear to be real entities, above all in the minds of their members. That is, while qua symbolic systems (social representations) nations are real, they do not have any *social* existence.⁸ If nations were social systems, they would be social systems of a peculiar kind since nations “act” only through the medium of other social systems – formal institutions of state and economy, informal institutions such as social movements or social networks. This is decidedly not the case with respect to other social systems in society which are capable of collective action on their own. For their social existence nations are in this sense “forced into symbiosis” with (real) social systems. In a more realist and materialist turn of phrase, a variety of social systems “act through the nation” by constructing and reproducing the nation through discourse and practice, and not the other way round. This, in short, is what I refer to as the nationalizing *process*. The nation as an imagined entity is an *emergent property* of this process in each of those social systems.

Nation as a property of social systems

A nation can be defined as a collective composed of individuals and groups who see and experience themselves as members of a nation and who are so recognized by others.⁹ In this sense, a nation is “only” an imagined community, as such a social *fact*, but not a real

⁸ I presuppose a realist and materialist ontology of the social. Further on this, see Bunge 1998b.

⁹ This definition attempts to incorporate the subjective, intersubjective and objective dimensions of nation. The statement itself is objective (it reports a widely held social representation), recognition is intersubjective, and experience is subjective.

(material, concrete) social *system*. To illustrate: the gradual, halting, and incomplete inclusion of African Americans into the American nation represents an ongoing change in the boundaries of the imagined community (i.e. in terms of individual experience and recognition), but not in the boundaries of U.S. society as a social system. A state-cum-society is usually dominated by one nation¹⁰ which claims to represent society as a whole and which has "cultural hegemony" in the definition and reproduction of societal identity. Every state also contains subordinate nations, defined ethnically (most common), racially (e.g. US; South Africa), or culturally (e.g. *Auslandsdeutsche*). Subordinate nations are politically, economically, and culturally integrated into society in different forms and to varying degrees, as mediated by the society's concrete nationalizing processes.¹¹ Other examples of subordinate nations are aboriginal populations and migrant workers. Regardless of nationality, however, all members of a society partake of its nationness – whether as insiders or outsiders, dominant or dominated groups. Thus politically, economically, and culturally, a particular society's nationness may be inclusive or exclusive, egalitarian or inegalitarian with respect to resident members of other nations.

Nation as process: the basic elements of nationalizing mechanisms

The previous section has portrayed the nation as an emergent property of social systems. This is what makes it possible to imagine social systems as being nations, or parts thereof. The next, decisive step in the conceptualization proposed here is to view the nation as process.¹² The “nation as process” is in fact a complex set of processes that occur in and between societies and states. Since nationalizing processes often have considerable constancy over time, and since the discourse of nation reinforces the appearance of constancy, it certainly makes sense to speak of the nationness (a property)

¹⁰ In states with more than one numerically and politically strong nation, cultural hegemony may to some extent be shared (cf. Canadian case). In all other states, the dominant nation's cultural hegemony may be more or less openly contested, both from within the dominant nation and by the subordinate nations.

¹¹ To take the case of Germany, *Auslandsdeutsche* are politically fully integrated as citizens, yet culturally barely integrated (therefore "subordinate nations"). Second and third-generations Turks, on the other hand, may be fully integrated culturally but not politically if they don't have German citizenship.

¹² My conception shares with the important contribution by Brubaker (1996) the opposition to treating nation and nationalism as entities. However, it tries to improve on his somewhat vague view of “nationness as event” occurring in “political fields,” a suggestive programme rather than a systematic methodology. Most important, while Brubaker's research problems are firmly in the nationalism field, the agenda proposed here seeks to transform the national from explanandum to explanans, to serve in a variety of other research areas.

of a society (e.g. typical practices seen as part of its “national character”) as a social fact. Describing nationness, especially as contained in the self-descriptions of a national discourse, is an important contribution to mapping nationalizing processes. But conceptualizing nation explicitly as process opens up the whole range of social processes in which the national is in one way or another involved – from political legitimation to economic action. Rather than just explain nationalism, this allows us to explain *with* nationalism (Pickel 2003).

Many scholars outside the field of nationalism studies consider the social things to which terms and phrases such as nation, national culture, and national identity refer as sufficiently significant for the particular aspects of social life they study, to incorporate them in their explanations. In contrast to the mechanistic conception adopted here, the national in those studies is usually presented as an independent variable, frequently operationalized in terms of specific values such as individualism, collectivism, etc. Such conceptions can be illuminating but are ultimately unsatisfactory since they cannot explain how values produce the effects for which they are held responsible.¹³ Thus empirical studies can show that certain values are prominently held in some cultures but not others, and theoretical models can produce correlations between such values and different social outcomes. But values are abstracted from their larger symbolic and social contexts at considerable cost, and values in any case don’t act. As a result, the relationships between the national and other social phenomena remain obscure. It is these relationships that I seek to elucidate.

My conception of the national comprises the cognitive systems, social systems, and social actions that together “make” a national process.¹⁴ The major constituents of “nation as process,” or to use a less awkward phrase, of “national culture,” are:

- the production and reproduction of common cultural knowledge
- national discourse

¹³ See, for example, the work of Geert Hofstede and the literature it has spawned.

¹⁴ This conception of the national therefore includes individual cognition, social discourse, and social structure (usually studied separately by psychology, discourse analysis, and sociology). It also takes to heart Elias’s point that “[i]t is not enough to seek structures in language, thought or knowledge as if they had an existence of their own independently of the human beings who speak, think or know. In all these cases one can connect characteristics of the structure of language, thought or knowledge with the functions they have in and for the life of human beings in groups.” (1991b, 68)

- collective identity
- national habitus and characteristic social practices

Let us look at these four mechanisms in more detail.¹⁵

- **National culture as repertory of common knowledge**

The nation as process produces and reproduces general, cultural knowledge that is the basis of all group-specific beliefs, including ideologies. Such *cultural knowledge, or cultural common-ground*, may be defined as the (fuzzy) set of those beliefs that are shared by (virtually) all competent members of a national culture, and that are held to be true by those members by similarly shared criteria of truth. We can simply call this the repertory of ‘common knowledge’ of a national culture. It is this knowledge that all new members of a culture have to learn (e.g. during socialization, formal education, through the media, etc.) in order to become competent members. The repertory of common knowledge also provides a *shared epistemic and moral order*. All specific group beliefs as well as the very interaction, communication and mutual understanding of members of different groups in society presuppose such cultural knowledge. Cultural knowledge is therefore also the basis for all evaluative beliefs.

- **National discourse as meta-discourse**

The nationalizing process occurs in large part as and through discourse. National discourse refers to all the text and talk, or the discourses of a whole national culture, in a particular historical period. We may also use the very abstract and generic notion of the ‘discourse’ of that period, community or culture – including all possible discourse genres and all domains of communication. In this sense, the national discourse is a meta-discourse.

- **National identity as social representations and process**

In the same way that national groups may be said to share knowledge and attitudes, we may assume that they share a social representation that defines their identity or ‘social self’ as a national group. “National identity as process” refers to

¹⁵ This breakdown closely follows, but is not identical with vanDijk 1998, esp. 37, 39,120, 126,196. VanDijk’s project is to develop a new concept of ideology “that serves as the interface between social structure and social cognition” (8). He is however opposed to the concept of habitus (47).

the permanently changing set of cognitions and social representations of the nation. Identity thus becomes a process in which a national collectivity is engaged, rather than a property of individuals and collectives.

- **National habitus as characteristic social practices**

While national identity refers primarily to the cognitive realm, national habitus may be defined in terms of the characteristic social practices of group members, including typical forms of collective action. National habitus thus refers to concomitant practices from speech to non-verbalized social behaviour.

The following section will briefly explore how these four core mechanisms play out in different social systems.

Nation as process: how the nationalizing mechanism works

NMs are processes in social systems of many different types – families, firms, government institutions, political and cultural organizations – from global to local levels. The major effect of NMs in social systems is to facilitate, reproduce, or undermine *coordination* and *legitimation*. As is increasingly recognized, these effects of NMs are crucial preconditions for generally sought after social outcomes such as economic growth, good governance, or successful social and political transformations. Both coordination and legitimation are basic social mechanisms in their own right. Market, hierarchy, and community are three widely used ideal-typical mechanisms of coordination and legitimation. (Concrete NMs, which are nationally-specific, can therefore be partially modeled as particular combinations of the three (cf. varieties of capitalism literature).)

The major NMs at the *global level* operate in the international political system. Major actors are states and increasingly international and global political organizations and movements. Whether or not we are seeing a qualitative shift in the functioning of the international political system is the subject of debates in the field of international studies. The global economic system, in contrast, is recognized as a major locus of globalizing mechanisms, though here too, NMs are prominent since (at least some) nation-states are major actors in this system. Moreover, although widely hailed as the vanguard of globalization, it is controversial to what extent and in what sense MNCs are global rather

than primarily nationally based entities. To what extent movements and organizations of “global civil society” promote and are driven by globalizing mechanisms rather than NMs is another open question. To what extent the European Union is driven by, and in turn promotes, transnationalizing mechanisms rather than NMs, is far from clear. As these controversies attest, NMs operate in all political and economic systems at the global level regardless of the strength of any overall trend towards globalization or regionalization. Methodologically, the central question is therefore not the relative significance of global vs national variables, but the specific combinations of NMs and other, transnationalizing or globalizing mechanisms.¹⁶

The *national level*, specifically the territorial state-cum-society, is the major locus of NMs. NMs operate in political, economic, and cultural systems that incorporate virtually all of society’s collective and individual members as actors. In addition to these social dynamics, NMs are in part also driven by psychological mechanisms at the level of the individual. While NMs operate primarily in and out of a state-cum-society, they also play a major role in systems at *transnational and global levels*. This is because international actors are always simultaneously national actors. This is most evident in the case of representatives of national governments, say in the UN, but it is also at least to some extent true for multinational corporations, as well as a variety of political and cultural actors in international organizations with an explicit global agenda. The reason is that there are no counterparts approximating the scope and depth of national cultures (nations in process) at transnational or global levels. As suggested earlier, nationalizing processes include the four core mechanisms of: production and reproduction of common cultural knowledge; an ongoing national discourse; the definition and redefinition of collective identity; as well as characteristic social practices and forms of collective action. And at the global level NMs operate in a variety of ideologies, norms, informal regimes, discourses and practices that revolve around the normative doctrine of sovereignty and national self-determination.

¹⁶ Such an analysis of combinations of mechanisms presupposes a clear conception of “globalizing” mechanisms. For an exemplary study of this kind, see for example Dale 1999. While not explicitly framed in terms of mechanisms, Scholte (2000) offers a very systematic discussion of globalization processes and actors.

This is not to say that transnational cultures or a global culture do not exist, at least in incipient form, nor that they may not be the wave of the future (Elias 2000). But to gauge the scope and depth of transnationalizing and globalizing mechanisms, it may be useful to examine them in comparison with the four core mechanisms of nationalizing processes. Are comparable transnational or global identities emerging; is there a transnational or global meta-discourse? Methodologically speaking, to reemphasize an earlier point, there is no competition between various mechanisms, even if in some instances they may have opposite effects. For explanatory purposes, what matters is to identify relevant combinations of major mechanisms involved in a particular process. Contrary to methodological holism and individualism, social systems are reproduced and changed in both top-down and bottom-up directions. Thus social mechanisms, such as NMs, have to be modeled accordingly. Instead of accepting the false choice between structuralist and individualist approaches (cf. Elias 1991a), I adopt a process-oriented systemic framework (Bunge 1996). This is reflected in the following rough sketch of a general model of how NMs work at different levels and in various social systems, i.e. both top-down (holistically) and bottom-up (individually).¹⁷ We start with the top level of global structures and work our way down to the level of the individual. For each level, I will indicate what are the central social systems in which NMs occur, and who are the major actors.

NMs working at global level

system: international political system¹⁸

major actors: states and their representatives, transnational organizations and movements

1. System→Action: top-down application, use and implementation of general, abstract doctrine of sovereignty and national self-determination in concrete political practices.¹⁹

¹⁷ This general model of nationalizing mechanisms has drawn on vanDijk's model of the reproduction of ideologies (1998, 229-30). As mentioned above, I view nationalism/nationality/national identity, in short the national, as a meta-ideology and a meta-discourse based in concrete social systems.

¹⁸ NMs also operate in the global economic system and in "global culture," but these global structures are more controversial and more difficult to model. This is why they were not included here.

¹⁹ Such practices include what in the international relations literature is referred to as "international regimes."

2. Action→System: bottom-up sustaining, continuing and changing the international system by its daily uses in political practices. Along this dimension, political ideologies – both by defenders and challengers of the status quo – are effectively being constructed, constituted and changed by political practices, including discourse.
3. “International society” of states→Individual states: ideological communication and political action by dominant states and other transnational actors.
4. Individual states→“International society” of states: acceptance and compliance or non-acceptance, resistance or dissidence of one or some states, transnational organizations and movements against the ideology or actions of international society or its elites.

NMs working at national level

systems: territorial state-cum-society with all its component systems

major actors: all collective and individual actors (state and non-state; political, economic, cultural)

1. System→Action: top-down application, use and implementation of national culture (common epistemic and moral order, national discourse, identity and habitus) in concrete social practices.
2. Action→System: bottom-up sustaining, continuing and changing the national culture by its daily uses in social practices. Along this dimension, national cultures are effectively constructed, constituted, challenged and changed by social practices, including discourse.
3. State-cum-society→Members: ideological communication, inculcation, teaching, socialization and initiation of new members into the national culture by knowledgeable group members/institutions.
4. Members→ State-cum-society: acceptance and compliance or non-acceptance, resistance or dissidence²⁰ of some group members against the dominant ideology of the nation or its elites.

²⁰ Brubaker (1998, 300), for instance, similarly distinguishes between “state-framed” and “counter-state” forms of nationalism. Tilly (1998, 475-76) speaks of “state-led” vs “state-seeking” nationalisms.

5. National→Global: generalization, extension, decontextualization of nationally-specific experiences and policies of “leading nations” to other national contexts, experiences, cases or circumstances; social learning, “best practices,” overgeneralization, stereotyping, prejudice formation and ideology construction. (Note: Nationally specific experiences, policies, and ideologies can become globalized and may then be promoted through globalizing mechanisms such as isomorphism, conditionality, etc. in international organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, and UN.

NMs working at individual level

“*systems*”: individual members of state-cum-society²¹

major “actors”: subselves (subsystems of personality) (Moessinger 1999, ch. 3)

1. System→Action: top-down, emotional and metaphorical appeals tying national symbols to the strong forces of primary group identification; personalizing nations; mobilizing altruism and strong emotional bonds (Stern 1995); commemorative practices (Olick and Robbins 1998); commemorative rituals creating performative memory, which is bodily memory, encoded in postures, gestures, and movements (Connerton, cited in Foster, 243)
2. Action→System: bottom-up, search for social status and prestige in return for individual loyalty and commitment; sentimental attachment to homeland (affectively involved), motivated to help one’s country (goal-oriented), sense of identity and self-esteem through national identification (ego involved) (Druckman 1994)

Concluding Remarks

NMs are involved in a large number of social processes, from social integration, cultural hegemony, and national economies to individual acts of discrimination, the news, the norm of punctuality and other elements of the “national habitus” (*homo nationis*). They

²¹ In Bunge’s systemic ontology, individual human beings are both members of social systems and constitute socio-biological systems themselves (cf. Bunge 1979).

are not products of NMs alone, but the fact that NMs are involved along with other mechanisms implies that they may play a fruitful role in explanations of cases where their influence was previously not recognized or insufficiently understood. As part of this research program, I have explored economic nationalism (Pickel 2003) and contributed to a collective reexamination of the conventional view of economic nationalism.²² The potential significance of my reconceptualization of nation and nationalism as nationalizing process also becomes evident in a recent analysis of the faltering international effort at nation-building in Bosnia (Donais and Pickel 2003). I recognize that these brief concluding remarks are a poor substitute for a more detailed and sustained empirical application of NMs, which will have to be undertaken elsewhere.

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²² A volume I'm coediting with Eric Helleiner, *False Oppositions? Rethinking Economic Nationalism under Globalization* is currently under review.

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