Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism

MANU GOSWAMI

History and East Asian Studies, New York University

Our current historical conjuncture is marked by a global proliferation of nationalisms that have fundamentally, and often violently, transformed the inherited geopolitical configuration of the post-war era. The apparent resurgence of nationalism has been matched by a growing convergence across disciplinary divides on the problematic of nationalism. A few salient prior works notwithstanding, it is mainly in the last two decades that nationalism has emerged as a central preoccupation of contemporary historical and social-scientific analyses. Remarkably, the stubborn persistence of nationalism in the current context of neo-liberal global restructuring and the dizzying expansion of nationalism research have not enhanced analytical consensus on core theoretical and methodological issues. Indeed, the rush for an analytical "fix" on nationalism has tended to fortify rather than resolve inherited methodological divides, especially that between objectivist and subjectivist approaches to nationalism.

This essay critically reconstructs Benedict Anderson's concept of modular nationalism through the optic of recent calls to mediate the canonical opposition between objectivity and subjectivity. If this is a familiar call, it is also one usually more honored in the breach than in the observance. Recent works by social theorists have at once stressed the limits of this classical opposition and identified its socially generated character.[1] According to these works, an adequate account of such modern social forms as nationalism must capture the dynamic interplay between sociohistorical processes and the embodied, constituting character of everyday practices and cultural categories of understanding.

    [1] Bourdieu (1977, 1988, 1990); Calhoun (1993, 1994); Elias (1978); Giddens (1987, 1990a, 1990b); Postone (1993); Sewell (1992).

However, social-theoretical discussions about the problem of mediating between objectivist and subjectivist approaches and the literature on nationalism have tended to operate as parallel rather than intersecting fields of inquiry. A central task for scholars of nationalism is to fashion a framework that integrates and treats as methodologically inseparable the objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism as a modern social form. The objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism should be placed in a single analytical field, treated as Pierre Bourdieu observes, as "two translations of the same sentence."[2]

This essay begins with a critical elaboration of what I regard as one of the most sustained attempts to bridge the gap between objectivist and subjectivist approaches—Benedict Anderson's account of modular nationalism as developed in his 1983 work, *Imagined Communities*. In a programmatic review of recent studies of nationalism, the historians Geoff Eley and Ronald Suny identify Anderson's *Imagined Communities* as inaugurating a fundamental methodological reorientation from "structural and materialist" to "cultural studies" perspectives on nationalism.[3] Notwithstanding significant exceptions to this trend away from "structural and materialist" approaches to nationalism among state-centric and neo-institutionalist sociologists,[4] this mapping of nationalism research captures the dominant reception of Anderson's work among historians as well as literary-critical and cultural theorists. From an interdisciplinary perspective, his work marks the genealogical locus of contemporary subjectivist approaches to nationalism. Many recent works have adopted Anderson's anthropological conception of the nation as an "imagined community" and the focus on the representational structure and affective dimensions of nationalism. However, these works have largely ignored or consciously repudiated his argument about the modular character of nationalism, that is, the ways in which it "is capable of being transplanted" across regional, socio-cultural, and institutional contexts.[5] Whatever its deficiencies, Anderson's theory of nationalism sought to elucidate the historically novel discursive structure of national imaginings and embed them within broader historical transformations. It attempted to theorize in tandem shifts in technological institutions, cultural categories, and categorical identities. More particularly, his account of the modular character of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century nationalism directed attention to the transregional circulation and transplantation of nationalist discourses, symbols, and strategies. And in so doing, it underlined the importance of the global and comparative-historical aspects of nationalism. I shall suggest that the concept of modular nationalism—reworked in ways that I shall specify below—is central to the attempt to combine the insights of objective and subjective approaches.

[2] Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:105).
[3] Eley and Suny (1996: 24). Also see Parker (1999) and Culler (1999).
[4] Brubaker (1996); Calhoun (1998); Hall (1998); Mann (1995).
[5] Anderson (1991:4). Also see Anderson (1998, 2001).

At the same time that Anderson's framework points to the gaps in studies of nationalism between objectivist and subjectivist approaches—and thus potentially to their productive integration—it also suffers from a weakness or gap of its own. This stems from an insufficient specification of the historical specificity and constitution of the modular character of nationalism. I shall argue that Anderson's attempt to close the gap between objectivist and subjectivist approaches is undermined by a central tension between what I call sociohistorical versus ideal-typical conceptions of modular nationalism. This unresolved tension results in a narrowing of the multiple social causalities that conditioned the modular character of nationalism during the modern global era. By conceptualizing modularity as a universal process of mimesis (of self-identical repetition through time and across space) rather than a historically constituted systemic dimension of the modern nation form, Anderson privileges the subjectivist dimensions of nationalism and does not pay sufficient attention to the dynamic and "eventful" reconfigurations of nationalism.[6]

Against the background of the so-called "cultural" or subjectivist turn in contemporary nationalism research, this article elaborates an alternative conceptualization of modular nationalism that seeks to overcome the weaknesses of the concept as it is deployed in Anderson's work. I rethink modularity as the transposable, dynamic, durable, and doubled character of the modern nation form. This theorization is intended to: (1) navigate key aspects of the rift between objectivist and subjectivist approaches to nationalism; (2) refocus attention on the global articulation of the nation as a social form rather than the particularistic content of specific nationalist movements; and (3) specify key processes that conditioned the constitution of a modular nation form within a specific historical conjuncture and transnational field.

My argument proceeds as follows. First, I elaborate Anderson's intervention in debates on nationalism indicating the limits of contemporary subjectivist approaches. On this basis, I critically reconstruct Anderson's concept of modular nationalism, and propose an alternative conceptualization of modularity that is attentive to the historically constituted "family resemblances" between diverse nationalist movements. Second, I elucidate key processes that conditioned the emergence of a modular nation form during the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth-century era of colonial and capitalist global restructuring. A brief concluding section suggests how a reworked conception of the modular nation form can provide insight into the form and trajectory of nationalism in the current era of neo-liberal global restructuring.

THE LIMITS OF SUBJECTIVIST APPROACHES

Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as an "imagined community" cleared a path through two impasses generated by prior approaches to nation-

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[6] See Sewell (1996, 1997) for an account of eventful temporalities.

alism.[7] First, against the quest for a positivist, definitional determination of the nation, he directed attention to the affectively resonant discursive "style" through which nations are imagined. By engaging the discursive elaboration of nationhood, he directed analysis away from attempting to uncover the objective and structural constituents of the nation. Second, Anderson's conceptualization of the nation as an "imagined community" moved discussions beyond the previous bind of adjudicating between the reality versus the fiction of the concept of nation.[8] I shall examine Anderson's argument in detail below, paying particular attention to his account of the modular character of nationalism. My central concern here is to examine critically the growing prominence of subjectivist approaches that have largely followed Anderson's work on nationalism.[9] Geoff Eley and Ronald Suny identify Anderson's work as "an emblematic text" that marks the moment of "transition in the literature from structural and materialist analyses of nationalism to an approach stressing the meanings and effects of a 'sense of nationality' and intimate connections between personhood and belonging to a nation."[10] While Eley and Suny positively affirm the trajectory of contemporary discussions of nationalism from "sociohistorical" to post-Anderson "cultural studies" perspectives,[11] I shall suggest certain deficiencies in subjectivist approaches.

Many recent works on nationalism indicate a shift of emphasis away from the sociohistorical matrix of nationalism toward an almost exclusive focus on its subjective and discursive contours, especially the internal heterogeneity and difference that nationalisms seek to subsume and contain.[12] While one major strand of nationalist research primarily focuses on the objective determinants and first causes of nationalism, a growing number of recent works have been preoccupied with the discursive provenance of nationalism.[13] Conscious of the

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[7] Anderson (1991).

[8] Of particular importance here is the "invention of tradition" thesis that gained broad currency during the early 1980s. Although Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) explicitly elaborated this thesis, it was a widely shared tenet of prior works by Gellner (1983), Seton-Watson (1977), Kedourie (1960, 1971), and Nairn (1975, 1977). Articulated within the terms of modernist and constructivist approaches, the "invention of nationhood" thesis sought to historicize and materialize nationalism. However, intrinsic to the notion of the invention was the assumed existence of a real national history or nation obscured by disingenuous or duped political and economic elites. By conceptualizing nationalism as ideology, such approaches foreclosed the task of accounting for the social processes that engender reified conceptions of nation and nationhood. While the "invention of nationhood" thesis broke from approaches that took nationalism as its own word, it tended to fix nationalism, in the last instance, on one side of the divide between ideology and objectivity.

[9] For an extended critique of objectivist approaches, see Brubaker (1996) and Verdery (1996). See also Goswami (1998a).

[10] Eley and Suny (1996: 24).   [11] Ibid., 24.

[12] Bhabha (1990); Borneman (1992); Chatterjee (1993); Falk-Moore (1993); Parker and Russo (1992); Skurski (1996); Tambiah (1992); Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989).

[13] Theorists working within objectivist frameworks have primarily focused on the first causes or origins of nationalism, understood as a product of long-run social processes and historical transformations. Within the rubric of objectivist approaches, nationalism has been variously understood as the product of expanding communication and transportation networks (Deutsch 1953; Seton-

ideological circularity of nationalist discourse, various recent works have argued that nationalism resists not only a priori, positivist, and abstract definitions, but *all* definitional attempts. In this view, the incommensurability between cultural-ideological articulations of nationalisms, across widely divergent contexts, is methodologically conclusive. In an exemplary instance of this broad assumption, Eve Sedgwick argues that there are no affinities between the:

> [N]ationness of Canada, the different nation-ness of Mexico, of the Philippines, of the Navajo Nation [within the United States], of the Six Nations [across the United States-Canada border], the nationalism of the non-nation Quebec, the non-nationalism of the non-nation Hawaii . . . and so forth [thus] . . . there exists for nations . . . simply no normal way to partake of the categorical definitiveness of the national, no single kind of other of what a nation is to which all can by the same structuration be definitionally opposed (brackets in original).[14]

This perspective informs, for instance, many recent anthropological engagements with nationalism.[15] However, in its most popular variant this acute perception of the difficulty of defining nationalism, has taken the form of substituting for the sociohistorical problematic of nationalism that of its symbolic, semantic, and discursive aspects.

Condensed in the analytical shift from nationalism as a sociohistorical problematic to the view of "nation" as a discursive construct we find a consequential, if subtle, elision of the sociohistorical processes and institutional constraints that attend the production and circulation of meaning. Homi Bhabha's influential essays on nationalism present, in a distilled form, this move from nationalism to nation, from a sociological to a discursive optic, and from the identity of the nation to its difference.[16] Pushing Anderson's anthropological conception of the nation as a system of cultural signification even further, he stresses the "impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force."[17] Bhabha urges scholars of nationalism to focus on the "particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it."[18] The methodological justification of an exclusive focus on the "interruptive interiority" of nationalist discourse is premised on the claim that there is no "nationalism in general."[19] In this view, the source of nationalism's

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Watson 1977); as a functional requirement of modernization (Gellner 1983, 1994); as a legitimating ideology of bourgeois domination (Hobsbawm 1990); as an outgrowth of the homogenizing practices associated with the creation of centralized, unitary territorial states (Tilly 1975, 1990; Mann 1993, 1995); as a separatist response of peripheral elites against the structurally generated process of uneven development (Hechter 1975; Nairn 1975, 1977); and as an expression of the politics of resentment among marginal social groups and states (Greenfeld 1992). Objectivist approaches have paid less attention to the emotive power of nationalism, its capacity to summon affective attachment and collective sacrifice, the discursive practices that help secure a tie between individuals and an abstract national collectivity, and eventful transformations of nationalism.

[14] Sedgwick (1992:241).

[15] Borneman (1992); Falk-Moore (1993); Herzfeld (1982); Kapferer (1988); Ivy (1995); Tambiah (1992).

[16] Bhabha (1990).   [17] Ibid., 1.   [18] Ibid.   [19] Ibid., 297–302, 303.

ambivalence rests in its constitutive undecidability and its lack of discursive closure. However, an acknowledgement of the ambivalent character of nationalist discourse need not entail the strong assumption that nationalism's distinction lies primarily or solely in its undecidability.

An exclusive focus on the undecidability and particularity of nationalism threatens to jettison the valuable comparative-historical insights garnered by materialist and objectivist approaches. The discourse of nationhood, as it is played out in divergent movements, testifies to the status of the nation as both one of the most universally legitimate articulations of group identity and one of the most enduring and pervasive forms of modern particularism. It is precisely the doubled form of nationalism as simultaneously universal and particular that allows both for objectivist, programmatic theories of nationalism and subjectivist denunciations of such attempts. Recent injunctions to engage the promiscuous plurality and unruly dissemination of the concept "nation" usefully caution us against what Rogers Brubaker has identified as "substantialist" conceptions of nations as "real, enduring collectivities" that implicitly inform many objectivist accounts of nationalism.[20] However, they do not provide analytical purchase on the global articulation of the nation as both an objective and subjective social form.

Many recent subjectivist approaches to nationalism have sharpened our understanding of the internal tensions within nationalist discourse, especially its fraught management of race, gender, and class differences; the dispersed disciplinary regimes that shape nationalist practices; and the interpellation of individuals and collectivities into normative national subjects.[21] However, these works have paid less attention to the ways in which broader social processes and institutions—such as the dynamics of the modern inter-state system, the universalizing logic of capital, the institutionalized tie between nationhood and statehood—shape the sociopolitical and discursive structure of nationalism. Theorists working within subjectivist frameworks fail to adequately examine the socio-historical conditions that mediate the universally legitimate form of the nation and the conditions of its global (re)production. By relegating nationalism to a discursive domain, these works rehearse, rather than overcome, such classical dichotomies as objectivity/subjectivity and universality/particularity.

The protean, polyphonic, and shape-shifting character of nationalism, the fact that is at once irredeemably particular and solidly universal, renders a general or comprehensive theory of nationalism as such illusory. Yet, at the same time, the multidimensional character of nationalism calls for analytical lexicons attentive to its simultaneously objective/subjective and universal/particular character, and its instantiation on a global scale as the dominant political form.

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[20] Brubaker (1996:16).
[21] Chatterjee (1986, 1993); Gilroy (1987, 1993); Hall (1997); Handler (1988); Jayawardena (1986); Parker and Russo (1992); Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989); Verdery (1991, 1996).

An exclusive focus on the localized dimensions of nationalism and the discursive constitution of nationhood brackets a fundamental aspect of the modern nation form: the historical regularities or "family resemblance" between diverse modern nationalist movements, despite their highly variegated regional and cultural contexts of production. The historically constituted "family resemblances" between modern nationalisms include the pervasively institutionalized tie between nationhood and statehood; the principle of territorial nationality and juridical sovereignty; the understanding of culture, history, and territory as the "frontier signs" of the modern nation;[22] the emphases on a territorial correspondence between people, culture, economy, and state; the claim to a collective archaic past and a linear, developmental conception of the future; the concept of "direct membership" according to which individuals are understood as integral parts of a national collective and as formally equivalent;[23] and what I shall sketch in the following sections as the relations of interdependence, path-dependency, formal equivalence, and discursive co-constitution that have defined the field of nationalism and nation-states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century era.

IMAGINED COMMUNITIES AND MODULAR NATIONALISM

Benedict Anderson does not explicitly elaborate his theory of modular nationalism with reference to the problematic of mediating between its objective and subjective dimensions. However, I believe that his framework contains sustained moments of a challenge both to objectivism (which he explicitly repudiates) and to subjectivism (a position that has, as indicated above, gained prominence since his intervention in studies of nationalism). In my view, Anderson makes two crucial analytical moves. First, he attempts to specify the discursive form of nationalism and to situate it in relation to social and institutional transformations. Second, he directs attention to the dualistic character of nationalism as both universal and particular. I shall first sketch Anderson's attempt to embed the specific discursive matrix of national imaginings and his analysis of modular nationalism. On this basis, I shall identify and analyze his equivocation between an ideal-typical and sociohistorical notion of modularity.

Anderson's *Imagined Communities* is concerned less with the origins and trajectory of specific nationalist movements than with the conditions that made possible conceptions of the nation. He locates the constitution of the concept of nation in a set of historical and cultural processes mediated via the novel institutional structure of print-capitalism. Taking as his point of departure a conception of "nationality, nation-ness and nationalism" as "cultural artifacts," he identifies the main contours of his argument as follows: "I will be trying to argue that the creation of these artifacts [i.e., 'nationality, nation-ness and nationalism'] toward the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous dis-

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[22] Poulantzas (1978:97).   [23] Calhoun (1998:5).

tillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became 'modular,' capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations."[24]

Anderson posits a constitutive nexus between the print-capitalist reconstitution of language, the novel apprehension of temporality it engendered, and the discursive matrix of national imaginings. Print languages reconfigured relations of power, affect, and language along three crucial axes: they produced "unified fields of exchange and communication"; they endowed a "new fixity to language" that enabled transhistorical conceptions of the nation as at once natural and eternal; and they created a hierarchical order of "languages-of-power" that reconfigured the terrain of political contestation.[25] These shifts at once expressed and helped produce the novel temporal form of "homogenous, empty time" which shaped the substantive content of the new national framework of consciousness.[26] Anderson argues that the universalizing logic of "homogenous empty time" linked together diverse and physically separated actors who, while unaware of each other's presence, were placed collectively on a singular national space and within a collective, unitary time.[27] These technologically mediated cultural transformations led to the rearticulation of "fraternity, power, and time" from practices associated with inherited kingships, sacral languages, and cosmological time toward the discursive presentation (exemplified in the modern realist novel) and existential experience of fellow nationals as existing in a national "communal temporal simultaneity."[28]

These observations about the transformations that generated the distinctive cultural matrix of the nation set the stage for Anderson's analysis of what he regards as its distinguishing aspect—its *modular* character. The idea that nationalism is modular or "capable of being transplanted" occupies a central place within Anderson's historical account of nationalism.[29] Yet the term modular remains remarkably and frustratingly under-specified: its meaning is presupposed rather than self-consciously theorized. It has the status of a pervasive metaphor rather than a clearly elaborated conceptual category. Insofar as Anderson's strategy is to "show rather than tell," he develops his argument about the modular character of nationalism with reference to three distinct nationalist movements. These are identified as "Creole nationalism" in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Americas; "linguistic nationalism" in mid-nineteenth-century Europe; and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century "official nationalism" linked with British imperialism and Russification.[30] Because I regard this as a key juncture in Anderson's argument, I want to consider more closely his account of these three distinct nationalisms.

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[24] Anderson (1991:4).   [25] Ibid., 44–45.   [26] Ibid., 24.   [27] Ibid.   [28] Ibid., 36, 24–26.
[29] Ibid., 4.   [30] Ibid., 47–141.

According to Anderson "Creole-nationalism" marks the historical origins of nationalism as well as its normative promise. He argues that Creole nationalists forged inclusive genealogies of civic and territorial belonging that translated the historical accidents of race, religion, kinship, and birth into an imagined national whole. However, he argues that Creole nationalism was not modular because it failed to generate a nationalist movement co-extensive with the geographical reach of colonial Spanish America.[31] The modular character of nationalism emerged only in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

Anderson identifies nineteenth-century print-capitalism as the crucible for the circulation and linguistically mediated reification of the nation on a transregional scale. The accumulated print-memory of the French revolution and nationalist movements in the Americas assumed by the mid-nineteenth century the status of a globally available "concept, model, and indeed blueprint."[32] Print-capitalism made possible both the accelerated migration of the concept of the nation and its reification as a self-understood natural entity. Entrenched within everyday print-languages and political consciousness as such, the concept of the nation as developed by popular-linguistic and official nationalisms was "an invention on which it was impossible to secure a patent."[33] Carried on the back of communication technologies and new representational media (novel, newspaper, and pamphlet), these nationalist movements became "formal models to be imitated, and, where expedient, consciously exploited in a Machiavellian fashion."[34]

Anderson's narrative about the modular nature of nationalism contains a strong, if implicit, assumption of their "path-dependency," that is, the notion that temporally prior nationalist movements significantly shape the dynamic and trajectory of later nationalist movements. He notes that by the mid-nineteenth century, "a model of the independent national state was available for pirating. But precisely because it was by then a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impermissible."[35] In this view, the institutions, strategies, and ideologies associated with popular-linguistic and official nationalisms became objects of "piracy," transfer, and "transplantation." In a passage worth quoting at length, Anderson underscores this path-dependent character of nationalist movements:

[T]wentieth century nationalisms have, as I have been arguing, a profoundly modular character. They can, and do, draw on . . . earlier models of nationalism. Nationalist leaders are thus in a position consciously to deploy civil and military educational systems modeled on official nationalisms; elections, party organizations, and cultural celebrations modeled on the popular nationalisms of nineteenth-century Europe; and the citizen-republican idea brought into the world by the Americas. In a world in which the national state is the overwhelming norm, all of this means that nations can now be imagined . . . out of a general awareness of what modern history has demonstrated to be possible.[36]

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[31] Ibid., 63.   [32] Ibid., 81.   [33] Ibid., 67.   [34] Ibid.   [35] Ibid., 81.   [36] Ibid., 135.

Though Anderson does not theorize explicitly the term modular, it is possible to glean its principal conceptual co-ordinates through a close reading of the historical narrative summarized here. In sum, for Anderson, modular refers to the path-dependent and translocal transplantation of particular nationalist models through time and across space.

MODULARITY: IDEAL-TYPICAL VERSUS SOCIOHISTORICAL CONCEPTIONS

Anderson's concept of modular nationalism has been criticized from two closely related perspectives. First, some scholars have claimed that the conception of modular nationalism privileges the role of large-scale structural shifts at the expense of a concrete analysis of which social groups were most invested in discourses of nationhood.[37] Second, various other theorists have argued that the idea of modular nationalism erases the specificity of nationalist movements, especially anti-colonial nationalism, and sets up an hierarchical distinction between origin and copy.[38] Both of the above-mentioned arguments are formally similar in two respects. First, they both take issue with the homogenizing implications of Anderson's analysis of nationalism. As I shall elaborate below, certain tensions within Anderson's theory leave him open to this line of critique. Second, both lines of critique presuppose, and rhetorically overstate, the particularity of nationalist imaginings. In an attempt to direct attention to the local contours of specific nationalist movements, they tend to overlook the transnational and global production of the local. An exclusive focus on the particularistic content of specific nationalist movements renders invisible the relations of interdependence, path-dependency, formal equivalence, and discursive co-constitution that, as I shall argue, characterize the modern world of nationalism and nation-states. Against recent calls to discard the concept of modular nationalism,[39] I argue for a substantive reformulation of the concept rather than its abolition.

There is a central tension within Anderson's framework between an attempt to foreground the social conditions of possibility of thinking the nation and what I term his ideal-typical rendering of the term modular. A methodological stress on the historical processes that made nationalism possible takes as ax-

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[37] Breuilly (1985); Duara (1995).

[38] Chatterjee (1993); Guha (1985); Skurski (1996). See also Calhoun (1998:107–9). Chatterjee, the most forceful of Anderson's critics, observes: "If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain modular forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?" In a veiled response to this line of critique, Anderson's most recent work, *The Spectre of Comparisons*, attempts to "dispose of such bogeys as derivative discourses and imitation in understanding the remarkable planetary spread, not merely of nationalisms, but of a profoundly standardized conception of politics" Anderson (1998:29). See also Harootunian's (1999) powerful critique of the problematic epistemology of comparison that haunts both Chatterjee's critique of modular nationalism and Anderson's *Spectre of Comparisons*.

[39] Calhoun (1998:107–9); Chatterjee (1993); Guha (1985).

iomatic an intrinsic relation between social relations and forms of subjectivi-ty.[40] In this view, categories of self-understanding and practice bear a dialecti-cal relationship to the social contexts of their generation and reproduction. However, Anderson's delineation of the universal diffusion of nationalist dis-course—of the ease with which particular models of nationhood were trans-planted in diverse social, cultural, and political contexts—is in tension with this framework. Anderson's account of the migration of popular-linguistic and official-nationalist models proceeds without reference to on-going sociocultur-al shifts, institutional complexes, or local-regional configurations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The issue here is not only that post-Creole nationalist models are presented as conceptual abstractions oper-ating within an apparently frictionless arena of global flows. Rather, the point is that the circulation of nationalist models, as elaborated below, are delinked causally and temporally from their on-going contexts of production.

Anderson's almost exclusive focus on print-media rather than the new form of social relations established by capitalism overlooks the multiple causal registers that shape nationalism and privileges processes of circulation over processes of production. This leads to a conceptual narrowing of the social causalities that produced the modular character of nationalism. This issue is re-enforced by the analytical divide between the first and second half of *Imagined Communities*. The first half (chapters 1–5) sketches the processes by which the nation came to be imagined, whereas the second half (chapters 6–11) examines the circulation and transplantation of nationalism. This organizational division is based upon, and performatively re-enforces, an analytical separation between processes of production and processes of circulation.

Anderson's analysis of so-called "last wave" nationalisms in the era of de-colonization exemplifies this separation. Indeed, he represents the disjuncture between the context of the production and the reproduction of nationalism as being definitive:

The new states of post-World War II period have their own character, which nonethe-less is incomprehensible except in terms of the succession of models we have been con-sidering. One way of underlining this ancestry is to remind ourselves that . . . they took from linguistic European nationalism its ardent populism, and from official nationalism its Russifying policy-orientation. *They did so because Americans and Europeans had lived through complex historical experiences which were now everywhere modularly imagined.*[41]

This formulation assumes—without providing an adequate basis for—an ontological separation between objective and subjective transformations in the world placed outside Euro-America. At issue here is not only the denial of tem-poral and spatial coevalness that underlies this teleological mapping of global

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[40] Bourdieu (1977, 1988, 1990); Calhoun (1993, 1994); Giddens (1987, 1990a); Postone (1993); Sewell (1992).
[41] Anderson (1991:113), emphasis added.

space-time, and the related assumption, shared by modernization theorists and traditional Marxists alike, of the linear diffusion of nationalist models from Euro-America to the rest of the world. The point here is the deep tension between Anderson's indictment of "last wave" or "official" nationalisms as a case of "reactionary, secondary modeling" of the "largely spontaneous popular nationalisms that preceded them," and the effort in the first half of the work to analyze the co-constitution of subjective and objective forms.[42] Anderson's account of "last wave" nationalisms implies that following their moment of constitution; nationalist models exist in an inert continuum. In other words, once a particular historical threshold is reached, modularity becomes a fixed, frozen formation forever pointing in the direction of a single model. Without an adequate specification of the conditions of possibility of the circulation of particular nationalist models, however, this perspective retains a strong subjectivist bias.

More crucially, Anderson does not distinguish consistently between the analytically separate, if closely related, logical and historical aspects of modularity. He conflates a narrative of the way particular national imaginings were transplanted with the analytically separate issue of the historically conditioned transposability of national imaginings. Anderson uses the term modular, as noted above, to refer to a process of path-dependent mimesis and "transplantation."[43] However, the notion of mimesis and "transplantation" suggests, in the manner of diffusion models dear to modernization theorists, reiteration without change, and establishes a problematic hierarchy between origin and copy. Such an ideal-typical understanding of modularity as a universal process of mimesis leaves unexplored a set of questions that are fundamental to an understanding of the circulation of nationalisms. What conditions shape the openness of actors to particular nationalist models and visions of nationhood? What accounts for the felt salience of particular nationalist imaginings in diverse political and cultural fields? What is the role of unintended consequences and historically specific misrecognitions in the circulation of nationalist paradigms? Finally, if modularity refers to a universal process of mimesis, what accounts for the historical clustering of nationalist movements at particular sociohistorical conjunctures such as 1848, the 1870s, 1914–1915, the 1960s, and 1989–1991? These questions cannot be addressed through abstract theoretical frameworks without doing violence to the realities of multiple causalities, contingent conjunctures, and "eventful transformations" that inform social and political life.[44] The point here is that, insofar as ideal-typical conceptions assume a universal and transhistorical process of mimesis, they are unable to pose, let alone address, such questions.

By rendering modularity as the mimetic diffusion of nationalist models, Anderson's schema forecloses the possibility of the dynamic and qualitative re-

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[42] Ibid., 86–87.   [43] Ibid., 4.   [44] Sewell (1996:245–81).

constitution of national imaginings. The static assumptions intrinsic to an understanding of modularity as mimesis are especially apparent in Anderson's selective appropriation of Walter Benjamin's account of capitalist historicity as "homogenous, empty time." Benjamin employs the category of "homogenous, empty time" to refer to the leveling of historical possibilities by the "stubborn belief in progress" and teleological constructions of historical time particular to modern capitalism.[45] Homogenous empty time signifies the closed and evolutionary self-presentation of capital that a traditional historiography has all too often uncritically reproduced. Against historicist conceptions that affirm the given, Benjamin suggests that "history is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now (*Jetztzeit*)."[46] Although Anderson creatively extends Benjamin's conception of "homogenous, empty time" to specify the civil contemporaneity distinctive of the modern nation, he elides its *critical* content. What drops out of this account is Benjamin's emphasis on the contradictory character of historical change and social imaginings within capitalist modernity. By relegating the constitution of a "homogenous, empty time" to the representational logic of print-capitalism rather than the historically novel form of social relations established by capitalism, Anderson overlooks qualitative transformations within capitalism and nationalist movements and assumes a uniformity of causal structures. His causal temporal narrative corresponds, in this regard, to teleological conceptions of temporality that assume the path-dependent character of social processes but represent social causality as "temporally homogenous" rather than "temporally heterogeneous."[47] As a result, Anderson's account of modular nationalism approximates a theory of reproduction *tout court.*

Benjamin, by contrast, challenges received notions of historical change, especially historicist notions of replication. He argues that an adequate understanding of the historically novel requires the adoption of a historical materialist framework oriented toward the appropriation of the suppressed dimensions of past struggles that contain within themselves the possibility of their retrospective redemption in a discontinuous present. According to Benjamin, historicist conceptions of imitation as repetition domesticate the shocks and the possibilities of the present (the filled time of discontinuity) by subsuming them within a "homogenous, empty time." Benjamin's quarrel with the conception of a "homogenous, empty time" lead him to refashion the motif of imitation as remembering a suppressed past. Acts of collective, critical remembering contain the potential of breaking the perceived homogenous, empty flow of progress, of seizing the possibilities of the present, and mediating between the past and the present, the actual and the possible. Against teleological and nondialectical notions of history as mere replication, Benjamin observes: "[To] Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which

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[45] Benjamin (1968:261).   [46] Ibid.
[47] For a discussion of distinct causal temporalities, see Sewell (1996:262–64).

he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French revolution viewed itself as Rome incarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past. Fashion has a flair for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of the past; it is the tiger's leap into the past . . . the same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical one."[48]

However, an ideal-typical notion of modularity as self-identical replication forecloses the possibility of "regulated improvisations" of received national models within specific sociohistorical conjunctures.[49] A sociohistorical conception of modularity would emphasize the possibility of reconstitution based upon a historically constituted range of possibilities and the contradictory spatio-temporal dynamic of capitalism. In this view, nationalist movements are dynamically constituted through a path-dependent but "temporally heterogeneous" process of the reconstellation and transformation of both objective and subjective forms.[50]

The preceding discussion has underlined the limits of Anderson's ideal-typical understanding of modularity. On the other hand, by emphasizing the modular character of nationalism, Anderson's framework contains unexplored possibilities that can begin to assimilate the insights of objectivist and subjectivist approaches. In what follows, I attempt to reformulate the concept of modularity in a way that retains Anderson's insight about the path-dependent character of nationalism, but abandons its teleological and static assumptions. This approach takes seriously the dynamic character of nationalism and attempts to socially embed the constitution of the nation form as modular.

TOWARD A SOCIOHISTORICAL CONCEPTION
OF THE MODULAR NATION FORM

I conceive modularity as the historically constituted transposable, dynamic, doubled, and durable character of the post-nineteenth-century nation form. While Anderson ties the notion of modularity exclusively to the transplantation of particular nationalist models and frameworks of consciousness, I propose an alternative understanding of modularity as a historically specific systemic feature of the nation form. Before outlining the historical constitution of the nation form as modular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I shall sketch four constitutive dimensions of the modular nation form.

(1) *The transposability of the nation form.* A sociohistorical understanding of modularity signifies the historically constituted transposability of the modern nation form as such, rather than the particular trajectory or attribute of specific nationalist movements. The circulation of particular nationalist models cannot be understood apart from the structural constitution of the nation form as transposable within the modern inter-state system. This understanding of modularity maintains the distinction between its historical versus its logical as-

[48] Benjamin (1968:261).   [49] Bourdieu (1977).   [50] Sewell (1996:262–65).

pects. The very possibility of a distinction between the logical and historical aspects of modularity hinges upon the "family resemblances" between diverse nationalist movements and the pervasive institutionalization of the nation form in the modern inter-state system.

The conception of modularity sketched above, as the historically configured transposable dimension of the nation form, converges with recent attempts to theorize repertoires of collective action. Sydney Tarrow has self-consciously extended Anderson's notion of the modular nature of nationalism to the field of social movements and collective action.[51] Tarrow employs the term modular as part of a broader distinction between what he calls traditional versus modern repertoires of contention. He argues that by the late eighteenth century a new repertoire of collective action emerged in Europe and North America. This new repertoire was "cosmopolitan rather than parochial; autonomous rather than dependent on inherited rituals or occasions; and modular rather than particular."[52] Such modular repertoires of protest as strikes, barricades, boycotts, mass meetings, sit-ins and the like were embedded within broader sociohistorical transformations. Tarrow envisions modularity as the transposability of collective repertoires of contention rather than as the mimetic diffusion of particular forms of collective action. However, there are two differences between his account of modular forms of collective action and the theorization that I propose here. First, strikes, barricades, sit-ins, boycotts and the like are better understood as modular strategies rather than as modular *social forms* such as nationalism and the nation-state. In this view, modular social forms such as nationalism and the nation form are defined not only by their transposability, but their remarkably durable, dynamic, and doubled character. Second, whereas Tarrow uses the terms modular and universal interchangeably, I will emphasize the doubled or the simultaneously universal/particular and objective/subjective character of the nation form.

(2) *The dynamic character of the nation form*. As argued previously, conceptions of modularity as transplantation and mimesis assume a homogenizing logic of sameness or replication without change. However, a conception of modularity as transposability illuminates the dynamic structure of the nation form. William Sewell's dualistic conception of social structures and the related theorization of agency as the capacity to "transpose and extend schemas to new contexts" has particular relevance for grasping the path-dependent circulation of the nation form.[53] Indeed, the various definitions of the verb "transpose"—from its Oxford English Dictionary definitions, "to remove from one place or time to another; to transfer, shift"; to its original meaning in French, "to cause something to change in form or content by causing it to pass into another domain"—connote a dynamic process of transformation.[54] Sewell's account of the duality of modern structures illuminates the ways in which the

[51] Tarrow (1993, 1998).   [52] Tarrow (1998:37).   [53] Sewell (1992:19).   [54] Ibid., 7.

transposition of strategies, cultural schemas, and social resources from their initial contexts of production to new and diverse arenas occurs through the creative capacities of social actors and entails a dynamic process of the reconfiguration of social structures. Inherent to the transposition—as opposed to the transplantation—of social forms is the agentic and dynamic reconfiguration of cultural categories, institutional repertoires, and meanings. A conception of modularity as transposability implies a process of on-going, path-dependent, and "eventful" transformations rather than the static replication of received social and cultural forms.[55]

(3) *The doubled character of the nation form.* A central aspect of the modular nation form is its doubled character as at once universal and particular, and objective and subjective. Nationalism is not only among the most universally legitimate articulations of collective identity, but it is also one of the most pervasive and entrenched forms of modern particularism. In an astute aside, Etienne Balibar observes that nationalisms "do not work everywhere the same way: in a sense they must work in a different way everywhere, as part of 'national identity.'"[56] The representational grammar of modern nationalism expresses a doubled understanding of identity and difference. Nationalist discourse works in and through the simultaneous assertion of similarity with and difference from other nation-states and nations. The universal language of self-determination, for instance, has been routinely mobilized to make claims for a particularized national community. Nationalist movements and nation-states claim the patrimony of a culturally singular, territorially bounded national community that, in turn, is represented as an instantiation of a universal political and cultural form. The doubled character of the nation form as both universal and particular mirrors, in this respect, the spatial partitioning of the modern inter-state system into a series of mutually exclusive, formally equivalent, sovereign states. Nationalist movements and nationalizing states present themselves as universalistic within the confines of the national community, but as particularistic without, that is, in relation to other nations and nation-states. Likewise, nationalizing states claim to represent the universal interest of a bounded citizenry within a delimited national space. Yet these universal interests are configured as particular within the context of the inter-state system. Nationalist claims of particularity and the imagined singularity of national formations only become intelligible against and within a global grid of formally similar nations and nation-states.

(4) *The durability of the nation form.* A key dimension of the modularity of the nation form lies in its remarkable durability. The durability of the nation form is evinced not just in the *longue durée* of nationalism as a political and social phenomenon on a global scale, but also in qualitative terms. The nation form is a paradigmatic instance of a "deep structure" in three respects.[57] First,

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[55] Sewell (1997).   [56] Balibar (1994a:202). Also see Balibar (1991 and 1994b).
[57] Sewell (1992).

the modular nation form underlies and has spawned a range of practices and in-stitutions that structure the spatio-temporal matrices of social and political life. Examples include the institutions associated with national economies (e.g., regimes of economic planning, national taxation and welfare systems, nation-al currencies, tariffs, import quotas, national banks, national debts), the con-struction of cultural fields (standardized languages, educational institutes, mu-seums, the systematization of expressive and folk traditions, and the formation of national public spheres and literary traditions), institutions that regulate cul-tural and political belonging and territorial mobility (citizenship, passports, borders), the creation of particular built environments that serve as the spatio-temporal locus of state-mediated collective memory and commemoration (na-tional capitals, national memorials) and the like. Second, the nation form is a "deep structure" because it has a pervasive presence in a range of social and po-litical institutions and categories of thought and action. Not only is the nation-state the dominant political form on a global scale, but nationalist categories of understanding permeate interpretive frames and social practices in everyday life and the public sphere. The durability of the nation form has been bound, in part, with its provision of an everyday normative grammar for the articulation of collective identities and political projects and as a central locus of affective identification. Third, the durability and depth of the nation form stems from its socially produced reified status, that is, from the ways in which many of the practices, institutions, and conceptual categories associated with the nation-state and nationalism have become second nature or are seen as natural.[58] These include the principle of territorial nationality, the conception of a territorial iso-morphism between a national culture, people, language, territory and state, ideas about popular sovereignty, assumptions of a distinctive national history and mission, and the practices of territorial democracy. The durability of the na-tion form has thus both objective and subjective dimensions.

THE HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF A MODULAR NATION FORM

I now want to elaborate key processes that helped constitute a modular nation form during the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries, and fur-ther specify some methodological implications that follow from a reworked no-tion of modularity. As conceptualized here, modularity was the structural and discursive counterpart to the changes initiated by the deepening, widening, and intensification of multi-scalar and multi-temporal processes of global capital-ist and colonial restructuring. The structuration of the nation form as modular during this period was made possible by a range of interlocking processes: (a) the increasing "superimposition and interpenetration" of socioeconomic and cultural relations, and the competitive rescaling of social relations along na-tional-territorial lines; (b) the formation of states as spatio-temporal frame-

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[58] Brubaker (1996); Calhoun (1998); Malkii (1992).

works of power in conjunction with the emergence of a dynamic, relational, and structured field of inter-state relations; (c) the discursive co-constitution and the growing intertextuality of nationalist discourse in a range of regional contexts; and (d) the nationalization and naturalization of social and cultural categories of practice and understanding.

Global space-time and the nation form. The era of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries was defined by a structured dynamic between high nationalism and high imperialism; it was an age simultaneously of empire and nation. Colonial expansion and the spatial widening and deepening of the world economy were the crucible for the formation of a densely interdependent, deeply uneven, and multiform global space-time. Vast concentrations of capital and labor coalesced in particular regions while globe-spanning transportation and communication structures spurred the mobility of capital, peoples, aesthetics, and cultural flows.[59] Colonial and capitalist expansion was characterized by an intensification of the "superimposition and interpenetration" of socioeconomic and cultural relations on local, regional, national, and transnational scales.[60] On the one hand, colonial and capitalist expansion was the source of novel forms of universalization that shaped both objective and subjective processes. These included an emergent world economy and a particular international division of labor; the consolidation of an inter-state system through inter-imperial rivalry; a dense network of socio-economic flows and cultural interconnectedness; the reconstitution of conceptions of space and time; and the dialectical interweaving of regional, particular histories into a global, interactive terrain. On the other hand, there was a complementary trend toward particularization: the rise of nationalist struggles within metropolitan Europe (Ruthenian and Croat movements in the Habsburg empire, Macedonian and Albanian struggles in the Balkans, Welsh nationalism in Britain, and German and Italian nationalisms in the late nineteenth century); the proliferation of various anti-Western, pan-Asian movements in Japan and China, the spread of economic nationalist and protectionist policies in national-imperial states (The United States, Germany, Japan), colonial formations (the counter-hegemonic s*wadeshi* movement in colonial India that sought to foster indigenous enterprises and boycott foreign commodities in an effort to fashion an economic and cultural national space against the British-colonial regime), and semi-colonial regional states (the boycott movement in China against Western commodities and products); and the deepening and widening of economic, political, and cultural unevenness.[61]

[59] Amin (1996); Arrighi (1994); Arrighi and Silver (1999); Geyer and Bright (1995); Harvey (1990); Hobsbawm (1989); Maier (2000); Polanyi (1957); Wolf (1990).
[60] Lefebvre (1991:81).
[61] For the spread of nationalism within Europe, see Hobsbawm (1990). For an account of pan-Asian civilizational discourses see Duara (1999). For anti-Western narratives in Japan see Harootunian and Najita (1988). For a transnational perspective on *swadeshi* practices see Goswami

During the last third of the nineteenth century, processes of global territorial and economic restructuring were indissolubly part of the crisis of Britain's political-economic hegemony. By the 1870s, there was a reciprocal expansion of struggles to constitute autonomous, spatially bounded national societies and economies in a number of regional contexts. States such as Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States, and Russia, confronted with the world territorial and economic hegemony of metropolitan-imperial Britain, adopted roughly in tandem neo-mercantilist strategies toward securing a relatively closed, state-defined and protected national economic space. This occurred even as the substantive (rather than merely geographical) boundaries of these states extended outwards to subsume new colonial territories.[62] From the last third of the nineteenth century onward, the developmentalist orientation of these states demanded a novel degree of closure from the Britain-centered global economy, typically secured through the erection of protectionist barriers to trade and capital.[63] National-economy making mandated the reorganization of economic space into distinct, mutually exclusive national-imperial blocs through the introduction not only of protective tariffs and quotas, but also of massive state-directed investments in developmentalist projects such as railroads, ports, canals, and educational systems.[64] During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, there was a deliberate effort to forge a regulative boundary between an internal, domestic economy enclosed within state boundaries, and an external, world economy that existed beyond state territorial boundaries in a range of national-imperial contexts. These struggles were not confined to an economic domain, but also underlay such formally similar discourses as "manifest destiny" (United States); "the white man's burden" (United Kingdom); "*mission civilisatrice*" (France); and Pan-Asian civilizational missions (Japan, China).

What bears emphasis here is the temporal and institutional synchronicity of struggles to establish an internally homogenous, sovereign space of nationness in a number of imperial-national (Germany, United States, Japan) and colonial/semi-colonial contexts (*swadeshi* in India, the boycott movement in China, state rationalization in Thailand).[65] While these movements were fashioned by local social relations and power struggles, their temporal simultaneity, structural similarities, and competitive logic was conditioned by their location within a single, increasingly interdependent, and hierarchically organized global space-time.

(1998b). For analyses of the deepening of uneven development see Bright and Geyer (1987); Amin (1996); Wolf (1990).

[62] Colonial spaces were also reconfigured along territorially bounded lines during this period through the extension of communication and transport infrastructures, political, juridical, and administrative homogenization, and the increasing penetration of colonial societies through an expanding networks of state institutions.

[63] Polanyi (1957).   [64] Arrighi (1994); Hobsbawm (1990); Mann (1993).

[65] Geyer and Bright (1995:1046).

The transposability and durability of the post-nineteenth-century nation form has hinged on its status as an interstitial framework that mediated between the global (the global economic system and the inter-state system) and the local (the internal lines of cultural and historical differences) in both structural and discursive senses. The dynamics of global capitalist restructuring did not bear directly on local actors and institutions but did come to affect them through the specific field of state-territorial political, cultural, and economic institutions in the case of colonial spaces, and national political-economic institutions in the case of imperial nation-states. In this context, state-centered discourses in Euro-America, anti-colonial nationalism in South Asia, and statist civilizational projects in East Asia (China, Japan) sought to secure individual and collective identification with the abstract form of the nation, in contradistinction to inter-personal, local, regional, and transnational relations. Against the perceived abstract, deterritorializing dynamic of colonial and capitalist expansion, discourses of nationhood (especially in colonial worlds) presented the nation as historically continuous, spatially bounded, and internally homogenous. In this context, national identities were increasingly figured, if not precisely lived, as "still points in a turning world."[66]

The actual instantiation of a modular nation form on a global scale (and the hegemonic status of its normative imaginary) did not fall into place until the creation of the League of Nations, the aftermath of the Great War, and the Bandung era of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century. However, the widening and deepening of the multi-scalar and multi-temporal processes of capitalist and colonial restructuring during the turn-of-the-century era spawned the fundamental lineaments of the modular nation form. In other words, there was a relation of "ontological complicity" between the incipient formation of a modular nation form and the creation of an uneven, differentiated, and multiform global space-time.[67]

National territoriality and the inter-state system. As suggested, there was a mutually dependent relationship between the emergence of the modular nation form and specific transnational fields. The former entailed a recursive logic, that is, the generalization of particular practices that, once institutionalized, reproduced the larger transnational field of their constitution. A central dimension of this process was the attempted territorial "encaging" of social, economic, and cultural relations within delimited state territorial boundaries that enabled, as I suggest below, the structuration of the nation form as modular.[68]

From the last third of the nineteenth century, states throughout the inter-state system increasingly became active participants in, and key sites for, a "territorial rescaling" of political, economic, technological, and social relations.[69] The configuration of modern states as "spatial frameworks of power"[70] hinged upon

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[66] Hall (1997:22).   [67] Bourdieu (1990:12).   [68] Mann (1993:505).
[69] Maier (2000:815). Also see Agnew (1994) and Taylor (1996).   [70] Lefebvre (1991:279).

a territorial correspondence between political, economic, military, and cultural resources and relations. Modern imperial-national states in Euro-America and East Asia (Japan) increasingly sought to inscribe their institutional presence and authority in a second-order (that is, a produced rather than pre-given) political-economic space. In the specific case of British and French colonial states in South Asia (colonial India) and North Africa (Algeria, Egypt), the centralization and territorialization of colonial state power unwittingly made possible and directed the dynamics and character of emergent anti-colonial nationalist movements.

A range of regulatory practices and institutions—which emerged in the late nineteenth century and congealed in the mid-twentieth century—helped forge national territoriality as the privileged scale for social relations, economic development, political governance, and affective allegiance. These included the demarcation, mapping, and policing of national-territorial boundaries; the expansion and interpenetration of society by state institutions such as the army, schools, public bureaucracies; the formation of a vast, territorially integrated networks of communication and infrastructural complexes such as roads, railways, bridges, canals, and post-offices; the appropriation and designation of natural resources (forests, lands, oil, mines) as sovereign state space; practices of spatial and economic planning that took a demarcated national territory as their explicit target and unit of development; and the creation of a nationalized, built environment in the form of capital cities, monuments, official cemeteries, museums, and parks, that worked as places of state-mediated collective memory and which made visible the affective liaisons between territory, history, and collective identity.[71] These practices helped forge the political, institutional, and spatio-temporal matrices of the modular nation form. They expressed, and congealed, a specifically modernist and nationalist pre-occupation with societal homogenization. The paradigmatically nationalist preoccupation with homogenization, its articulation with direct reference to an imagined national space, culture, and economy, and the demand for exclusive and exhaustive loyalty from its citizens, all set apart the post-nineteenth-century modular nation form from other territorial states and imagined communities, such as empires and city-states.

The progressive deployment of the above-mentioned practices throughout the inter-state system, especially during the early and mid-twentieth century, facilitated the reproduction of the conditions that engendered them in the first place. Consider, for instance, the practice of delimiting and regulating a stable, territorial boundary. This form of enclosure, which fixes territory to sovereignty, is the *differentia specifica* of the modern world system of states.[72] The consolidation of the inter-state system into a global mosaic composed of mutually

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[71] Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983); Scott (1999), Poulantzas (1978); Weber (1976). For an analysis of this process in colonial India see Goswami (1998a).

[72] Arrighi (1994); Wallerstein (1983); Taylor (1994).

exclusive, contiguous state territories occurred in tandem with the consolidation of practices of internal territorial-economic and sociopolitical closure. The intensification of practices of "self-reflexive monitoring" within and among nation-states fortified the principle of mutually reciprocated territorial sovereignty constitutive of the inter-state system.[73] It also entailed the formal institutionalization, however violated in colonial practice, of the principle of territorial nationality, and accentuated attempts to sustain a territorial correspondence between a national state, people, territory, and economy.

The formal institutionalization of the principle of territorial sovereignty was rooted within a relational and dynamic "field" in both spatio-temporal and organizational senses.[74] As used here, "field" refers to the multiform, differentiated, and uneven global space-time engendered by the dynamics of the inter-state system and the deepening and widening of colonial territorial and capitalist expansion. This field was at once an arena of material and symbolic struggles and an objective configuration of forces. Within this field, nation-states were formally similar; that is, they occupied structurally equivalent positions despite vast substantive differences in economic and political resources and power. Furthermore, nation-states were shaped not just through relations of interconnections but of interdependence insofar as the reproduction of particular states came to depend upon the dynamics of the field as a whole. The practices of individual states were thus both enabled and constrained by the workings of a dynamic field that systematized certain pattern of interactions and socio-political forms on an increasingly global scale. Modularity thus exists as a systemic feature of a specific global field through a dynamic process of "structuration."[75]

The discursive co-constitution and intertextuality of nationalist discourse. The emergence of a dynamic and interdependent field was coeval with the reconfiguration of the discursive terrain of national imaginings. The development of a high degree of reflexive monitoring between nation-states paralleled the growing "intertextuality" or discursive overlap between various nationalist movements. The decades between the late 1870s and 1914 marked, for instance, the unprecedented dissemination of nationalist movements in both colonized and imperial-national contexts in Europe, South Asia, and East Asia. These nationalist movements were distinguished by widely shared particularistic and organic conceptions of nationhood, evinced in the novel emphasis placed on a common territory, language, ethnicity, and race as the essential markers of nationhood. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalisms discursively converged around an invocation of an already existent, internally homogenous, and externally distinctive nation; widely shared historicist claims that sovereign statehood was the culmination of an inner dialectic; and a pro-

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[73] Giddens (1987:256).   [74] Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:101).
[75] Giddens (1990a); Sewell (1992).

foundly statist orientation that reflected the progressive institutionalization of the link between nationhood and statehood.[76]

These discursive elements fueled a transnational politics of closure that helped secure the nation form as a bounded "spatial framework of power."[77] The politics of closure found concrete expression in a range of practices. These included the stress placed on cultural and linguistic purity; the emergence of protectionist economic policies in Europe, America, and East Asia; the rise of anti-colonial mass mobilization campaigns exemplified in the early twentieth-century *swadeshi* movement in colonial India, and the boycott movement in China that sought to regulate practices of consumption and production as part of a larger effort to produce an autonomous national space; the establishment of immigration controls; and the popularization and attempted naturalization of imperial ideologies in Europe, North America, and Japan.

During the early twentieth century, the intertextuality of nationalist discourse sharpened with the generalization of the doctrine of self-determination in both its Wilsonian and Leninist articulations. The principle of self-determination fostered a multiplicity of territorially delimited, formally similar nation-states based on the principle of territorial nationality and popular sovereignty. It also privileged subjectivist understandings of nationhood insofar as any body of people that considered themselves a nation claimed the right for a separate, sovereign and independent nation-state. The demand for an autonomous history, culture, language and the like could no longer be thought, much less realized, outside of the demand for national self-determination. As Nicos Poulantzas observes, a self-identified national community without a state of its own was confronted with the danger of "losing its tradition and history."[78] Nationalist movements had to either confront existing state structures and seek their transformation, or, in the case of anti-colonial nationalisms, aspire to their own sovereign, properly national states. In either instance, the discursive and structural dimensions of the modular nation form represented the institutionalized ideal and normative horizon for legitimate collective struggle.

Two methodological implications of this theorization of modularity as entrenched within a relational, interactive, and dynamic global field merit particular emphasis. First, the origins, character, and trajectory of particular nationalist movements cannot be understood apart from a simultaneous focus on their articulation with a historically specific relational and dynamic global field. Second, the notion of a dynamic and relational field implies both objective and subjective relations of interdependence and formal equivalence. The emergence of a transposable, dynamic, and durable nation form entailed a transformation not merely in objective conditions but in the formation of novel categorical identities and conceptions of territory, economy, culture, and history. The formation

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[76] Anderson (1983); Hobsbawm (1990). [77] Lefebvre (1991:279).
[78] Poulantzas (1978:113).

of a modular nation form in conjunction with the transnationalization of social relations transformed the terrain of subjectivity because it offered new resources, practices, and disciplines for the creation of novel political identities and ideational frameworks. In particular, it made possible the coeval nationalization and naturalization of sociocultural categories of understanding and practice. An adequate account of particular nationalist movements must therefore consider the historically specific dialogic links forged between nationalist movements within a common historical conjuncture and transnational field (i.e., the intercontextual conditions of intertextuality).

The naturalization and nationalization of social categories of practice and analysis. Central to the project of nationalism is the naturalization of the nation form. This project entails the translation of local, regional, and transnational identities on a national-territorial scale, and the transformation of the abstract categorical conception of the nation into a taken-for-granted frame of reference in everyday life. It involves the institution of a lived equivalence between the individual and the nation, and the forging of an interiorized relation between a particular national people, space, economy, and state. The very durability of the nation form stems from the historically configured link between processes of nationalization and naturalization, or the production of an implicit and normatively presumptive national "habitus." [79]

The persistent and troubling overlap between nationalist discourses, scholarly analyses, and everyday categories of practice and understanding emerged during the period of high nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was during this period that such categories as territory, economy, history, and culture acquired a specifically national meaning. Scholars have detailed the philological and geographical expansion of the meaning of such words as "pays, paese, pueblo, patrie" in a number of mid-to-late nineteenth-century European contexts.[80] Recent works have analyzed as well the transnational provenance and circulation of the normative and analytical category of "national economy"—initially formulated by such theorists as Friedrich List, Henry Carey, and John Rae—during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in a number of colonial and formally national contexts including India, Korea, Turkey, Japan, Germany, America, and Poland.[81] In addition, they have drawn attention to the geopolitical conditions of possibility for the emergence of nation-centered conceptions of history, the nationalization of scholarly fields, and the historically specific "epistemology of state-centrism."[82] More generally, the modern vision of the world as made up of ontologically distinct spheres (culture/economy/politics) underwent a novel process of territorializa-

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[79] Bourdieu (1977).   [80] Deutsch (1953); Hobsbawm (1990).
[81] Goswami (1998b); Henderson (1983); and Sporzluk (1988).
[82] See Poulantzas (1978) for a brilliant theorization of the role of the nation-state in establishing and regulating the spatio-temporal matrices of everyday life. Also see Brenner's (1999) rigorous critique of the "epistemology of state-centrism."

tion. This specifically modern imagination of social and political life was at once naturalized and nationalized. The idea that society was spatially bounded within particular state structures assumed a self-evident status in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sociological and philosophical paradigms, as well as in emergent nationalist discourse.[83]

It is important to stress here that the interpenetration of nationalist categories of thought and social-scientific analyses, both historically and at present, is not just an intellectual mistake. The reification of the nation-state as the self-evident container of political, cultural, and economic relations is a social process. It is rooted in and reinforced by the practices and institutions of the modern nation-state, the organization of the inter-state system as a series of mutually exclusive, spatially bounded nation-states, and the pervasively institutionalized tie between nationhood and statehood. In a powerful analysis of the epistemological conundrums raised by nationalism, Rogers Brubaker warns against the persistent tendency to treat nationalist "categories of practice" as "categories of analysis."[84] The effort to excise nationalist assumptions from analyses of nationalism requires an account of the historical production of such apparently natural categories of understanding as a national economy, national territory, and national culture. That these categories have a taken-for-granted status in both scholarly and popular discourse attests to the "depth" of the modular nation form as at once a subjective and objective structure. In order to understand the vast role that nationalism has played in world politics for over two hundred years, we need to be attentive to the categories, institutions, and practices of the modular nation form. However, rather than presupposing such nationalist "categories of practice" as a national economy, territory, and culture, we need to provide a sociohistorical account of their co-constitution.[85] A sociohistorical conception of modularity illuminates not only the intertextuality between nationalist discourse and scholarly analyses, but also embeds this interface within a historically specific transnational field and conjuncture.

CONCLUSION: MODULARITY AND ITS FUTURES

I want to conclude here by sketching some implications of this analysis for ongoing debates about the future of nationalism and the nation-state in light of contemporary neo-liberal global restructuring. Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the ways in which the accelerated integration of financial, labor, and capital markets on multiple spatial scales, the reorganization of the spatial and inter-scalar international division of labor, processes of mass migration, the accelerated circulation of aesthetics, images, and cultural flows, and the emergence of a host of supranational regulatory institutions, have apparently attenuated the institutional capacities of nation-states to regulate their national

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[83] Agnew (1994); Brenner (1999); Giddens (1990b); Wallerstein (1991).
[84] Brubaker (1996:15).   [85] Ibid.

economies, accomplish projects of social citizenship, and deliver on promises of collective development.[86] The apparent erosion of the territorial correspondence between culture, territory, people, and economy has imposed, according to this view, novel constraints on territorial sovereignty and the inherited nation-state project of homogenization. How to think through the spread of nationalism, in tandem with global capitalism, remains both conceptually difficulty and politically urgent.

Many scholars have interpreted the intensification of these emergent trends as posing a fatal challenge to nationalism and the nation-state.[87] Others have emphasized not only the continued political force of nationalism but also its ubiquity across political landscapes.[88] Both sides in this debate assume, to varying degrees, the radical novelty of the present conjunction between processes of nationalization and the proliferation of profoundly uneven yet densely intertwined supra-national, regional, and local processes of capitalist restructuring and intra- and inter-state dynamics. In an anxious attempt to fix the future of nationalism, contemporary debates have pushed aside the *longue durée* of the intimate links between the nation form, the reworking of global capitalism, and the relational character of intra- and inter-state fields.

A sociohistorical understanding of modularity embeds the post-nineteenth-century nation within the multi-temporal, multi-scalar, and uneven processes of global restructuring (qualitative shifts in capitalism along with the shifting dynamics of the inter-state field), thereby providing analytical leverage and comparative perspective on the present. In this view, while neo-liberal global trends appear to have heightened the tenuousness of the coincidence of nation and state, they have also spurred national, supranational, and sub-national state strategies (from heritage industries, to economic and institutional restructuring, to repressive immigration measures) that seek to refortify this inherited framework. Furthermore, contemporary nationalist movements contest, without overcoming, the institutional, spatio-temporal, and discursive lineaments of the post-nineteenth-century modular nation form, especially the principle of territorial nationality and the discursive articulation between territory, history, people, and state. Many contemporary nationalist movements have challenged existing state structures, and dominant articulations of nationhood, and have mobilized simultaneously on local, regional, and transnational scales. However, they represent the rearticulation of discourses of nationhood and the relativization of the national scale (as the object of economic governance and the locus of collective allegiance) in relation to other spatio-temporal scales and organizational forms, rather than a challenge to, much less an overcoming of, the modular nation form as such.

[86] Harvey (1990); Hirsch (1995); Jessop (1999); Sassen (1998).
[87] Appadurai (1996, 1996); Breuilly (1985); Hardt and Negri (2000); Held (1990, 1995); Hobsbawm (1990).
[88] Mann (1993); Tilly (1994, 1996).

Despite requiems of its imminent demise, the future of the nation form seems uncomfortably secure. The elements of a substantive alternative to the nation form have yet to emerge. A reworked notion of modularity suggests the limits of perspectives that view the future of the nation-state and nationalism as one of either imminent dissolution or mechanical reproduction. From this perspective, the challenges that neo-liberal forms of global restructuring pose to nationalism and the nation-state demand that we pay attention to the on-going, dynamic reconstitution of the nation form. A reworked notion of modularity represents an initial but crucial step toward engaging this larger task.

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