

# **Comprehensive Examination Fields Definition Essay.**

## **Field One: Nationalism and Nation-Building**

PhD Student: Takhmina Inoyatova

Senior Supervisor: Dr. Adel Iskandar

Supervisor: Dr. Kirsten McAllister

This section of the comprehensive examination focuses on the survey of critical perspectives in the study of nationalism both in Western and non-Western contexts. Despite nationalism being one of the most thoroughly studied subjects in the social sciences, academic debates around nationalism remain relevant and crucial for our understanding of contemporary societies in their heterogeneity and complexity. Although studies of the phenomenon of nationalism are vast and have a long history, the focus of this comprehensive list will be on the contemporary critical perspectives on nationalism from the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The following discussion does not take into account primordialism and its belief in a natural development of nations, instead it emphasizes critical approaches to nationalism that allow us to understand nations as constructed and imagined. This list includes literature that provides us with material for analysis of both so-called classic and new approaches to the study of nationalism.

In this abridged yet in-depth study of nationalism theories, I aim to address questions such as:

- what are the main theoretical approaches to the study of nationalism;
- how did a modern concept of the “nation” emerge in both Western and non-Western contexts;
- what are the forces that shape nationalist discourses in a contemporary world system;
- what is the connection between emerging nationalist projects, capitalism, globalization and unequal development/inequality in Central Asia and elsewhere;
- who is included in and who is excluded from the process of nation-building;
- how does nationalism shape the world we live in, both physically and conceptually?

Review of the classic critical approaches to nationalism can start from the discussion of the roots of nationalism. The *modernist approach* represents a cluster of ideas that ground their

study of nationalism in Enlightenment and modernity. This approach refers to nationalism as a modern phenomenon that emerged in Europe in 18<sup>th</sup> century in the context of emerging industrialization, capitalism and secularism. Some of the key works in modernist scholarship on nationalism were written by Ernest Gellner (1983) who sees industrialisation as the driving force of nation creation and as a product of industrial social organization. Breuilly (1993) explores the relationship between nationalism, power and class in modern nations using case studies from different regions and nationalism movements around the world. Benedict Anderson (1983) suggests the key idea for nationalism studies—“imagined communities”—which emphasizes the relationship between communication and nationalism. According to Anderson, the emergence of the print capitalism coincided with formation of European nation states and emergence of reading publics. In his analysis of both Western and non-Western contexts, Anderson explains that states are imagined communities in the sense that the identity and national consciousness of their members who will never know each other is constructed through various means, including the consumption of media and common language (1983).

Historian Eric J. Hobsbawm represents the critical Marxist study of nationalism, an important component in the modernist approach with a critique of capitalism at its core. Hobsbawm argues against the primordialist view on nationalism and argues that “nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around” (2012). He further claims that nationalism can emerge from the intersection of politics, technology and social transformation with an emphasis on technological development that creates conditions for the emergence of nationalism. Hobsbawm suggests that the study of nationalisms should be from below, by looking at how people exist in condition of nationalism, how they form their national identity, and whether national identity means more than other forms of identity. In summary, the modernist approach made a significant contribution to studies of nationalism. Some critiques of this modernist approach argue that it is reductionist and essentializing because of its focus on the economic and political transformations of nations.

The main critique of the modernist approach comes from ethno-symbolism, which considers the continuity of nations rather than drawing a strict line between modern industrial nations and other pre-modern forms. Ethno-symbolism emphasizes the role of traditions, memory, myths and symbols as well as the significance of cultural identities and the concept of ethnicity. While ethnosymbolism recognizes nationalism and national identities as a modern

phenomenon, it rejects the idea that nations and ethnic group identities did not exist before the European modernity (Anthony Smith, 1999; Armstrong, 1982). For the ethnosymbolic approach, analysis of contemporary nationalisms requires a pre-modern understanding of local history and ethnic identities.

In addition to two main approaches to the study of nation and nationalism, various theoretical perspectives proposed their respective view on the matter, including post-structuralist Michel Foucault (1970), post-modernist Jean Baudrillard (1994), and post-colonial thinkers like Homi Bhabha (1994), Partha Chatterjee (1993), and Edward W. Said (1993). These approaches emphasise the constructed “nature” of nation and the importance of symbolism, representation, identity, culture, and power. Nationalism can be seen as a form of discourse (Foucault, 1970) or as a discursive formation (Calhoun, 2007). For Stuart Hall, “a national culture is a discourse—a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves” (1996). These approaches tend to reject the universalism of classic approaches and suggest that there can’t be any universal theory of nationalism as nationalisms are bound to their context (Calhoun, 2007). Non-Western intellectuals challenge the Eurocentric focus of nationalism studies by looking into processes that take place in previously colonized nations and other locales of the Global South and the periphery. These approaches allow for the incorporation of a bottom-up perspective anchored on marginalized groups. Bilig’s *Banal Nationalism* (1995) expands on both modernist and ethnosymbolic approaches and discusses nationalism as a continuous routine of familiar habits and as a reproduction of itself in various symbolic forms within the geographical borders of the state, or “homeland.” Some practices of everyday nationalism draw a line between the nations and enforce stereotypes that create “the other.” The question of “the other” was important for post-colonial scholarship, which focuses on struggles of nation-building in the post-colonial world that were overlooked by modernist scholars, including Anderson (Ozkirimli, 2010). Post-colonial scholars challenge the assumption that non-Western and post-colonial nations are merely perpetual consumers of modernity (Chatterjee, 1986).

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *globalization* became the focus of studies of nationalism, for both modernist and post-modernist scholars. The latter tended to see globalization as a process that will lead to the demise of the nation state and hybridization in the context of increasing economic and cultural global flow. Appadurai (1996) saw globalization in a

form of five main global flows, or “scapes,” that create new forms of post-national processes and identities. The relevance and importance of nation states, however, did not diminish over time. Another recent theme that rises from the discussion of globalization and nationalism is the commodification of nationalisms and the practice of nation branding, that exists both in Western and non-Western contexts. Under the neoliberal world economic order, states are increasingly shaping their national identity for the purpose of consumption by the foreign audiences. The nature of neoliberal regulatory and institutional practices becomes central to the premise of branding the nation (Aronczyk, 2013). National identity and other elements of the nation increasingly become a commodity in countries on the periphery that appropriate neoliberal discourses in order to “catch up” with the “developed” nations and can be seen as a part of the neocolonial system. Nation branding becomes essential to attract global investment and tourism. The process has certain negative consequences as explored by various scholars from communication, cultural studies, and political science (Kaneva, 2011; Volcic, 2011).

With *gender dimension* being largely absent from the classic modernist and ethnosymbolic literature on nationalism, the feminist approach aims to fill that gap. The work of feminist scholars represents a critical gendered shift from classical approaches and can be traced to both Marxist and post-colonial scholarship. Scholars of the feminist approach to nationalism argue that nationalism as ideology has always had a gendered nature. Yuval-Davis (1997) explores the ways by which femininity and masculinity are constructed within nationalist discourses and argues that, in fact, women are the ones who reproduce nations biologically, culturally, and symbolically. However women are often excluded from theorizations of nationalism and from the bureaucratic nationalist apparatus itself (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In post-colonial states, women often become the carriers of the tradition, which situates them in a particular way in new national, usually masculine, projects. Therefore, nationalism is constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse, and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power (McClintock, 1993)

And finally, the last section of this reading list will focus on studies of nationalism in Post-Soviet space, specifically in Central Asia. This section does not represent a specific theoretical framework or methodology but identifies key literature on the study of nationalism and nation-building in the region. While contemporary Central Asian nationalisms remain well covered in Western research of the region, there is a lack of literature that situates the existing

nationalism in the critical historic and geopolitical context and goes beyond the “top down” approach. Work of several scholars is important here. Abashin (2007) and Bustanov (2014) analyse emerging national projects as a legacy of the Soviet territorial policies. Kole and Kandiyoti (2002) draw parallels between Central Asian republics and states colonized by the Western empires. Tlostanova (2015) speaks about decolonial options for Central Asia as she believes that formation of statehood in Central Asia was an inherently modern phenomenon that was imposed on Central Asia by the Russians, who in turn were spreading their imperial influence on the peripheries in order to establish Russia as one of the Western powers and also suffered from the complex of “the other” compared to the Western nations. Tlostanova suggests that Central Asia exists between the former and contemporary Russian/Soviet dependencies and new Western neoliberal regime and it is crucial for Central Asia to turn to a critical decolonial option instead of re-appropriating existing modernist narratives.

Considering the richness of scholarship on the issue of nationalism and nation-building, there are certain areas of this topic that are beyond the scope of this reading list. As my goal is to start a conversation about the history and nature of various forms of nationalism, I believe this reading list provides me with a detailed general framework that can be beneficial for my dissertation project.

# Reading List

## **Classic approaches: origins of nations**

### ***Modernist and ethnosymbolic approaches:***

1. Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso Books.
2. Armstrong, J. A. (1982). *Nations before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: Univ.
3. Breuilly, J. (1993). *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester University Press.
4. Gellner, E., & Breuilly, J. (1983). *Nations and nationalism* (Vol. 1). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
5. Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.). (2012). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Hobsbawm, E. J. (2012). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge university press.
7. Smith, A. D. (2009). *Ethno-symbolism and nationalism: A cultural approach*. Routledge.

## **New Approaches: nationalism as a discursive formation**

### ***Post-structuralist, post-modern and post-colonial approaches:***

8. Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan press.
9. Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *DissemiNation*. In *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
10. Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. Sage.
11. Calhoun, C. (2007). *Nations matter: Culture, history and the cosmopolitan dream*. Routledge.
12. Chatterjee, P. (1993). *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories* (Vol. 11). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
13. Hall, S. (Ed.). (1996). *The question of Cultural Identity*. In *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies*. Blackwell Publishing.

14. Fanon, F. (1965). The Pitfalls of National Consciousness and On National Culture. In *The Wretched of the Earth*. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre ; translated from the French by Constance Farrington.
15. Foucault, M. (1970). The archaeology of knowledge. *Information (International Social Science Council)*, 9(1), 175-185.
16. Özkırımlı, U. (2010). *Theories of nationalism : A critical introduction / Umut Özkırımlı*. (2nd ed.).
17. Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York.

#### **Globalization turn:**

18. Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. (Vol. 1). U of Minnesota Press.
19. Aronczyk, M. (2013). *Branding the nation: The global business of national identity*. Oxford University Press.
20. James, P. (2006). *Globalism, nationalism, tribalism: Bringing theory back in*. Pine Forge Press.
21. Kaneva, N. (2011). Nation branding: Toward an agenda for critical research. *International journal of communication*, 5, 25.
22. Volcic, Z., & Andrejevic, M. (2011). Nation branding in the era of commercial nationalism. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 21.

#### **Gender and Nationalism:**

23. McClintock, A. (1993). Family feuds: Gender, nationalism and the family. *Feminist review*, 44(1), 61-80.
24. Nagel, J. (1998). Masculinity and nationalism: Gender and sexuality in the making of nations. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 21(2), 242-269.
25. Puri, J. (2004). Redoubtable Essences: Nationalisms and Genders. In *Encountering Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 107-142.
26. Yuval- Davis, N. (1997). *Gender and Nation: SAGE Publications* (Vol. 49).

## **Post-Soviet and Central Asian nationalisms: history and contemporary nation states**

27. Abashin, S. (2015) *Национализмы в Средней Азии: В поисках идентичности*.  
(Nationalisms in Central Asia: In Search for Identity). *Свободная мысль*, (7), 138-150
28. Blakkisrud, H., & Nozimova, S. (2010). History writing and nation building in post-independence Tajikistan. *Nationalities Papers*, 38(2), 173-189.
29. Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
30. Bustanov, A. K. (2014). *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*. London and New York: Routledge.
31. Cole, J. R., & Kandiyoti, D. (2002). Nationalism and the colonial legacy in the Middle East and Central Asia: Introduction. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34(2), 189-203.
32. Isaacs, R., & Polese, A. (2015). Between “imagined” and “real” nation-building: identities and nationhood in post-Soviet Central Asia. *Nationalities Papers*, 43(3), 371-382.
33. Omelicheva, Mariya Y. (2015). Nationalism and Identity Construction. In *Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions / Edited by Mariya Y. Omelicheva*.
34. Tlostanova, M. (2015). Between the Russian/Soviet dependencies, neoliberal delusions, dewesternizing options, and decolonial drives. *Cultural Dynamics*, 27(2), 267-283.