

Symposium for Miroslav Hroch

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SYMPOSIUM

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Symposium for Miroslav Hroch

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Abstract

Twelve historians and social scientists reflect on Miroslav Hroch's contributions to the field of nationalism studies. There are essays on his pioneering comparative historical studies of 'small nation' national movements and his distinction between nationalism and national movements. Other essays focus on concepts such as those of protagonist, the three phases of national movements, the small nation and nationally relevant conflict of interest. A further set of essays explores how Hroch's approach can be extended beyond small nations, beyond Europe and into the contemporary period.

KEYWORDS

European Nationalism, Miroslav Hroch, national movements, regionalism, South Africa, Turkey

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1 | JOHN BREUILLY, INTRODUCTION

Miroslav Hroch's 90th birthday falls on 14 June 2022. Given the originality and influence of Hroch's work in the field of nationalism studies, *Nations and Nationalism* decided to mark this event with a symposium. (The suggestion that we do this came from Elisabeth Bakke.) There are articles and books engaging with Hroch's ideas that have been published (e.g., Kolár & Reznik, 2012; Maxwell, 2010), and for biographical detail, one can do no better than Hroch's intellectual autobiography (Hroch, 2018). Here, by contrast, a dozen or so historians and other social scientists contribute short essays focusing on selected aspects of Hroch's work. Here, I offer a rough and ready summary of the topics treated by these essays.

Some focus on Hroch's 'three-phase' concept of national movements: i.e., cultural, elite political and mass political phases. Leerssen reflects on the idea of the 'protagonists' (*Vorkämpfer*) in Hroch's treatment of Phase A. Hutchinson critiques the three-phase notion in relation to the case of Irish nationalism. Šima considers the role of public festivals in Phase B. Řezník also concentrates on phase B, extending the range of cases to 'failed' national as well as regional movements. Storm relates Hroch's framework to post-1900 regional movements, when the goal of nation-state formation is generally absent. Bakke's consideration of Hroch's notion of 'nationally relevant conflicts', arguing that this widened from his earlier to his later publications, takes us into Phases B and C. Finally, I argue that differentiating Hroch's concept into three ideal types enables one to extend his approach beyond those of European small nations.

Two essays explicitly take Hroch beyond his self-imposed limitation to Europe. Malečková considers the influence of Hroch on Turkish historians mainly interested in non-European national movements. Kriel argues that Hroch's three-phase model helps one understand Afrikaner nationalism and has potential for the analysis of black African national movements in southern Africa.

Three essays have rather different concerns. Malešević questions Hroch's basic concept of a 'small nation'. Núñez Seixas looks at Hroch's role in bridging the Cold War divide, in particular his influence on 'western' historians. Kolář also considers Hroch's mediating position between West and East, relating it to conceptual and normative tensions in Hroch's work, as indicated by his distinction between 'national movements' and 'nationalism'.

All the contributors maintain a fine balance between celebration and critique. Miroslav Hroch has been a pioneering figure in modern nationalism studies. Among other qualities his work is distinguished by the originality and early date of his first major publications; his range of languages; his rigorous comparative approach; his creative use of Marxist concepts. This work was largely researched and written in Cold War Czechoslovakia, but Hroch has since gone on to become a major intellectual figure in post-Soviet nationalism studies. That and much more is worthy of celebration. However, all significant intellectual work demands critique. Indeed, the more significant, the more searching the critique demanded and the greater its stimulus to original work by other scholars. It is in that spirit that we publish this symposium.

2 | JOEP LEERSSEN, PROTAGONISTS/*VORKÄMPFER*

In 2016, a National movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe (NISE) workshop was held in Prague, entitled 'Protagonists of national movements'. On that occasion, Miroslav Hroch pointed out to me that few people had actually come to grips with his concept of *Vorkämpfer*, protagonists—highlighted though it was in the very title of his classic book. In studying how the nationally minded intellectual interests of phase A 'gained traction' and became an actual 'national movement' in Phase B, Hroch himself had paid specific attention to print media and sociability, looking at membership lists of clubs and subscribers to periodicals and publications.

That identification of a cohort of 'protagonists' continues to flag an important point of interest. In situating his protagonists in a sociopolitical frame, Hroch himself has distinguished three situations: the old-established states, where 'national elites' with a 'mature' (i.e., literate and high prestige) vernacular culture aim for political

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empowerment; the elites of multi-ethnic empires whose literary national culture (Polish and Italian) is discongruous with the state, and 'non-ruling ethnic groups in multi-ethnic empires'. (Besides Hroch's standard works, see also Hroch, 2019, 2007b).

But Hroch's focus on sociability and print culture—which left none of the state variants distinguished by him unaffected—suggests a culture-historical frame as well. The rise of sociability and leisure-time mobilisation is a telltale marker of modernity acceleration: Between 1789 and 1914, we move from the forums of an emerging public sphere (theatre, philanthropic salons, coffee houses: think Habermas) to the cafés-chantants, amateur theatricals, shopping arcades and exhibition fairgrounds of the fin-de-siècle (think Benjamin). The same goes for the growth of mass print media, with their drastically increased availability, affordability, density, and social/geographical penetration. It is in that shifting historicity of cultural dissemination that the protagonists found their role. In addition, the European nineteenth century is marked by the professionalisation of intellectual life. The realm of 'belles lettres' fissioned between artistry, journalism and knowledge production. History-writing and philological antiquarianism, once the literary pursuits of gentlemen of leisure, were subsumed into the institutions of the post-Napoleonic state. The Humboldt-style university, the state reorganisation of national libraries, archives and museums, created government-institutional employment and career possibilities for a whole new class of academics, whose curatorship of the national heritage gave them cultural and social prestige as well. The *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe* documents in dozens of cases how students of the Romantic generation could drift downward into menial positions as family tutors or private secretaries/amanuenses and move upward to academic tenure and high status. Country doctors and village clergymen (Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox) used their education, spare time and demotic embeddedness to convey popular culture, now valorized as a 'national heirloom', to a nationally interested modern audience.

So how do these two frames, the culture-historical and the sociopolitical, relate to each other? Can we map the protagonists' shifting social anchorage and evolving ideological agenda, amidst changing means of cultural production, reliably onto the polarities of elite/non-elite or ruling/non-ruling? As a cohort, the protagonists seem to be characterised by the century's intense social mobility patterns rather than being determined by a specific class appurtenance.

The case of Ireland (Hutchinson, 1987) is instructive: The cultural capital of an ousted Gaelic elite was transferred to British-administered modernity as national 'patrimony' (Anne-Marie Thiesse's term in Thiesse, 2021. On the process, see Hutchinson, 1987). The appropriation of a Gaelic cultural heritage affected Irish society in successive waves across the 19th century (cf. Hutchinson, 1987, and below); Gaelic-proficient literati found new employment, initially precariously, as assistants to Protestant antiquarians around the Royal Irish Academy and Trinity College Dublin but eventually obtained professorships in the new redbrick universities of Dublin, Cork, Galway and even Belfast. As the great potato famine decimated the number of native speakers, cultural activists campaigned for the salvage of Gaelic as a living language (Leerssen, 2016). The social composition of this national revivalist movement was complex, and class relations within it were fraught. At the apex, we find representatives of the protestant land-owning gentry, like Douglas Hyde (founder of the Gaelic language revival movement in 1892, and future president, in 1938, of the Irish Republic) or Lady Gregory (folklorist and national playwright). They encountered the Gaelic language and culture Downton-Abbey-style, among the peasant tenants and labourers on their estates. Gregory's associate W.B. Yeats, future Nobel Prize laureate, vacillated his entire life between haughty social-darwinian elitism and radical nationalism. His relations with the players in his National Theatre were fractious. These were white-collar workers with a reformist or activist agenda, a group scorned by Yeats until he was forced into grudging admiration for their courage during the anti-British uprising of 1916 (Foster, 1997-2003, 2015). Below the petty-bourgeois or white-collar activist suburbanites was the Gaelic peasantry, impoverished, driven to emigration (and developing radical-separatist diaspora nationalism overseas) but capitalising on their new-found cultural status as 'living repositories of the national traditions'—peasants into Celts, as it were.

The protagonists were, then, a social spectrum crossing class divisions, and it may be precisely that aspect which rendered them, for all their mutual religious and class-based unease, collectively 'national'. Hyde himself stated that

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his language revival campaign, being national, was non-political. This may appear to us like wilful self-beguilement (even more so since the claim was made in a lecture with the not very non-political title 'The Necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland') (Hyde, 1892). But it is not untypical of Phase A protagonists. Hyde felt that the nation and its culture, and even a programme of avowed de-Anglicisation, loftily rose above the self-serving vindication of party interests.

The case of Ireland is representative for much of 19th-century Europe. National protagonists ranged from representatives of the nobility (even queens like Elisabeth of Romania) to armed insurgents and starving *bohémien* artists and poets. They included a precariat of students, some of whom would make professional careers in state institutions; the high and the petty bourgeoisie of the capitals and market towns; country doctors and rural clergymen; schoolteachers, printers and booksellers; and musicians, actors, and semi-anonymous, often illiterate rural paupers used as cultural specimens or folklore informants. Their nation-building took place within the modernization of cultural life generally: with literary publications and musical performances relying less and less on patronage or subscription, and more and more on sales figures and fee-paying audiences; with increasing mobility facilitating cultural tourism and with the mass platforming of culture in public museums, festivals, exhibitions and the entertainment industry, which spanned Europe from Welsh *eisteddfods* and Spanish *zarzuelas* to Baltic choral festivals and the *slets* of Sokol athletics clubs.

Who made up, and indeed, who 'made', the national movements? Sociologically, the 'protagonists' were nothing if not heterogeneous, and this heterogeneity might even explain the thin-centredness (Freeden, 1998) of the nationalist ideology, shape-shifting between the political Left and the Right, between reformist radicalism and palingenetic nostalgia. Studying the cohort of protagonists as identified by Hroch will prove most valuable if used with due attention to Rogers Brubaker's caution against 'groupism'. The national protagonists constituted themselves as such across class divisions by the agenda they followed, and as important as studying their socioeconomic and political circumstances is to study their motivating ideas and repertoire. More than from the determinants of this or that socio-political situatedness, their profile emerges from their ideals and actions: prioritising and vindicating the nation's identity in public affairs.

3 | JOHN HUTCHINSON, EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS AND NATION-FORMATION

As a single-authored study of non-dominant European nationalities, Hroch's classic monograph (1968, 1985) remains peerless for its conceptual daring, comparative reach, and depth of primary research. Hroch posits that nationalist movements developed chronologically through Phases A, B and C. In A, intellectuals excavated and reconstructed cultural remains for their own sake; in B (patriotic agitation), cultural claims were tied to political demands by nationalist organisations, led by a middle class intelligentsia, and in C (mass mobilisation), nationalists mobilised urban and rural masses, often with separatist political demands. The intellectual phase was necessary to a national consciousness, but the motors of revival were the dual political and capitalist revolutions. Scholars have found productive this analysis of movements into specific phases.

Had I read this before I wrote my study of Irish cultural nationalism (Hutchinson, 1987), however, I would have been puzzled. I was to discover in Ireland that there were *three* significant cultural revivals in periodic interplay with political nationalist movements—in the late 18th century, in the early to mid-19th century and in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Each revival developed in phases corresponding to A, B and C, although Phases B and C of the late eighteenth century had more of a republican character. Initiated by historicist intellectuals whose goals were primarily the moral regeneration of a national community, the revivals were given a socio-political articulation when adopted by middle professionals who believed their mobility was 'blocked' and who finally attempted an appeal to a mass constituency. These were movements, sceptical of political independence as an end in itself, and directed as much against the established leaders of the non-dominant nationality as against an alien elite. This suggests that

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nationalism is an episodic rather than a linear phenomenon in which intellectuals played a dynamic leadership role throughout, as programmatic track layers, periodically revising the national myth history as the basis of a collective project.

The second and third revivals differentiated themselves from their immediate predecessor, and there was also a time lag between the identity-centred cultural phase (A) and the more political phases of each revival. Thus, questions of identity were not reducible to political or material interests but arguably guided the latter. Finally, within the revivals, there were alternative visions: The crucial third revival, in particular, was riven by intense ideological conflicts in which a Gaelic-Catholic-linguistic vision triumphed (over an Anglo-Irish Protestant 'pagan' literary alternative) shaping the new Irish state. This Gaelic-Catholic vision in turn has been challenged, as there has been an attempt to recognise the Protestant contribution to the Irish nation. This indicates there is no finality to identity formation.

One might argue that Ireland is a special case, and Hroch in his later publications recognised that nationalists seek a separate national culture as well as political autonomy. He also extended his analysis to explore different patterns of nation-formation, including those of the state-nation (Hroch, 1993, 2015). However, he tends to depict the nationalisation of populations as an evolutionary process shaped largely by *internal* developments of social mobilisation and communication (Deutsch, 1966). An alternative view is to consider nationalism as an *episodic* phenomenon that waxes and wanes because populations are subject to unforeseen *external* events that cut across their boundaries and profoundly shake established identities and disrupt their life chances. These include dramatic economic shifts, ideological movements, wars, famines, migrations and demographic changes. At such crisis points, nationalists look to a national myth history offering meanings and inspiration, though this past is often contested.

Of these external factors, wars are among the most powerful agents of national mobilisation. Crucial to the Irish revivals were the American and French revolutionary wars and the First World War. Given Hroch's focus on nineteenth century Europe, it is surprising that he did not give more attention to war and geo-political conflict. A key event in the crystallisation and diffusion of nationalism was the French revolution which launched two decades of military invasions and popular mobilisations across Europe. In the guerilla war in Spain, the volunteer movement in Germany and the partisan struggles in Russia against the French, national mythologies were created. Furthermore, the waves of insurgent nationalist movements in Europe of the 1830s and 1840s were triggered by revolutions in France and the (incorrect) anticipation of French military intervention on their behalf, based on the earlier revolutionary experience. Later, the Crimean War and the wars of Italian and German unification and then the Balkan wars played a similar role.

In more recent publications, Hroch recognises the relationship between existential challenges and the rise of national intellectuals, discussing such factors as the threats to an established political order or to traditional moral systems (Hroch, 1993, 2020). It is relevant, therefore, to consider war as an existential challenge to populations, threatening the overthrow of states, foreign occupation, political revolution, the radical redrawing of boundaries and the forced redistribution of populations between states. In calamitous defeat, prolonged debates have erupted about who constitutes the people, where the homeland is located and on what basis a national state can be reconstituted.

The German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine in 1871 inspired the famous debate between German and French intellectuals (between Theodor Mommsen and Ernest Renan) about how membership of the nation should be decided, whether by the 'subjective' choice of its inhabitants or by 'objective' criteria such as language. It also led to prolonged internal conflict struggle within France, as Republicans vied with Catholic-traditionalists to regenerate the nation, each claiming the mantle of Joan of Arc.

More broadly, wars (premodern and modern) and their mythologising can be profoundly nationalising. In the memory of national populations, they can operate as foundational moments of collective triumph or suffering. They can create popular we–they stereotypes against significant others that helped socially institutionalise national identities. They have generated commemorative rituals devoted to immortalising the national dead that valorised sacrifice for the nation. At war's end, such sacrifice could also produce utopian hopes for the peace or mobilise peoples for a redress of defeat (Hutchinson, 2017).

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None of this gainsays the powerful original contribution of Miroslav Hroch, but, as he acknowledges in a recent article, he has focused on the formation of a nation as a completed class structure rather than as a cultural construct (Hroch, 2020). I argue that we must also explore this latter project, as driven by *existential* questions about identity. Such questions recur because of the enhanced unpredictability of the modern world that periodically threatens existing arrangements: political-territorial, economic, ideological and demographic. In particular, the incidence of war (potentially so destructive as well as constructive of nations) will not be explained by evolutionary models. This suggests a national project can never be completed and that societies will continue to look to national intellectuals to offer meaning in the face of radical contingency.

4 | KAREL ŠIMA, WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF FESTIVE CULTURE IN NATION-FORMING PROCESSES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY?

Miroslav Hroch devoted little attention to public nation-building activities. He viewed objective social processes as the vehicles of history and therefore was not overly interested in the specific activities of patriots acting 'in the name of the nation' in the forefront of national movements. Instead, it was their social backgrounds that attracted his attention. To understand why activists agitated for their small nations, often with no reward, it was enough to know about their socio-economic status.

This leaves us with a number of questions: Why did patriots agitate for their nations in this or that way? Which objective factors motivated them? Hroch admitted in *Social Preconditions* (Hroch, 1985, p. 13) that these activities themselves were under-analysed. He also raised a comparative question: Why were such activities more successful in some cases than others? He left this question unanswered.

Since the 1980s, research on national festivals and celebrations and nation formation has flourished. They have been studied by German social historians as part of 'public festive culture' (*öffentliche Festkultur*) and by proponents of the cultural turn. This scholarship has contributed to a better understanding of problems raised by Hroch's original work. Despite his scepticism about these approaches, Hroch addressed them in a conscientious and intellectually provoking way in his magnificent synthesis on nation formation in Europe. In the final chapter of *European Nations*, he draws attention to approaches that—according to him—see nations as 'cultural constructs' or 'invented communities'. Studying performances 'in the name of the nation' enables us to answer the question 'How?' rather than 'Why?'. Hroch provides an excellent comparative analysis of the literature on emotions, stereotypes, monuments and symbols, territories and, finally, celebrations. He first outlines a typology of celebrations, distinguishing between festivities based on religious or dynastic traditions, commemorations of events from the national past, anniversaries related to important figures and monuments, the funerals of national heroes, political meetings, and sporting and military celebrations. He claims that not all such celebrations played a significant role in European nation formation and that their roles often changed in different phases of national movements.

In conclusion, Hroch proposes four theses about the role of national celebrations in nation formation. The first and most general is that we must distinguish between state-nations and national movements. The state-nation had control of public space, even if it negotiated with liberals on where to draw the line between the public and private sphere. This links to Hroch's third thesis that public festivities were limited by the degree of political freedom in a given state. While state-nations were free to hold public national celebrations, national movements without their own state were limited by states dominated by other national or supranational groups.

Consequently, for national movements with opportunities to celebrate national heroes and commemmorate national history—such as those of Hungarians, Croatians, Czechs and Poles in Habsburg territory from 1860s—festive culture played a significant role in the later agitation phase of nation-formation. Even in states with more limited opportunities such as the Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvia regions in Russia, cultural events such as festivals of choral societies decisively accelerated the elite phase towards that of popular movements.

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Hroch's second thesis states that national celebrations mostly drew on material about national history, and that what was available varied greatly, often being limited for small national movements. However, such movements could usually find some material with which to invent a tradition. This might be a mythical pre-history forged from folk culture. It might even build on the heroic lives of activists, such as the celebrations of Elias Lönnrot's completion of the *Kalevala* manuscript organised from 1885 or of the anniversary of František Palacký's return to Prague and the start of research for *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*.

I find Hroch's fourth thesis—that participation in festivities required a degree of wealth and political culture—the least convincing. Certainly, people who wanted to take part in national celebrations had to have free time, not a plentiful commodity among the lower classes. However, people across Europe had experience of religious, dynastic and feudal festive cultures, which would have provided cultural skills promoting participation in national festivals, and an understanding of the organisers' message. National activists relied on this cultural preparedness when they adapted older festive forms and symbols for the purposes of agitation. Especially in Catholic regions, this older religious tradition could be adapted to the national discourse as with the Polish Marian cult of Queen of Polonia from Częstochowa, the Czech baroque tradition of St. John of Nepomuk and the Gaelic League's nationalisation of St Patrick's Day in Ireland.

Finally, Hroch's objection to exaggerating the importance of national celebrations because these mostly were demonstrations of existing national strength and unity has some validity. However, I argue that these interactive, broadly accessible celebrations gave wide swathes of the population their first experiences of national identity during Phase B. If, how and why this experience successfully developed into national consciousness are questions for empirical study. Hence, we return to Hroch's question posed in the introduction to *Social Preconditions*: What activities and forms of festive culture were more or less successful in the different social and political contexts of national movements and why? In addressing this question, we can treat national festive cultures as one explanans of nation-forming processes. Doing so does not contradict Hroch's insistence on the centrality of nationally relevant conflicts, but it does offer fresh comparative insights into nation building processes.

5 | MILOŠ ŘEZNÍK, SMALL NATIONS, ETHNICITY AND NEW REGIONALISMS IN POST MODERNITY

The category of 'small nation', long known in the discourse on nations (e.g., as canonised in the Czech case by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk with his *Problem of a small nation*, 1905), has become firmly established in European academic thinking and in the political literature on nations (Bibó, 1946) in the second half of the 20th century. In Hroch's analytical and comparative work, it received a new significance through stronger conceptualization, more precise formulation and use as a key category of comparative study. The 'small nation' was re-named a 'non-dominant ethnic group'. It was, as Sinisa Malešević emphasises, not defined by numerical size or territorial extent, although there are indirect, if imprecise correlations between 'non-dominant ethnic groups' and these features.

Instead, the non-dominant ethnic group is defined by its position in the power structures of modern imperial states. Such ethnic groups lacked state elites, and their members only took over such elite roles by means of a transition to the dominant state language and culture. While this transition was originally seen as a form of individual advancement, this model came into conflict with a new ideal of civil equality for all people without regard to their ethnic origin and native tongue.

Hroch's interest was in how this process gave rise to national movements in 19th century Europe, movements which were usually followed by the formation of new 'nation' states or at least autonomies: Czechs, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Slovaks, Slovenes, and Croats. All these were successful; they became mass movements and established modern national societies in which ethnic nationality as a key form of collective identity was shared by most people. However, a certain teleology was central to Hroch's research problem, without which one could not conceptualise his approach. The 'success' (this term is understood in a completely neutral way) of the national

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movement lies in the moment of the transition to the mass phase. That is why Hroch concentrates on phase B, i.e., the elite phase of national agitation, and seeks to explain what enabled the transition to the mass phase. In other words, Hroch asks why and under what conditions modern ethnic nations arose.

This approach determined which national communities would not be considered by Hroch. First, there were nations formed within a state by a dominant linguistic or ethnic group and with full state support. (There was also a movement for the creation of a supra-ethnic Austrian nation within the Habsburg monarchy.) Second, there were movements that did not lead on to a clear mass phase, such as the Belarusian and even in part the Ukrainian movement. Third, there were cultures in semi-dominant positions such as the Polish and Hungarian movements and partly also various Balkan movements.

However, Hroch did not avoid reflecting on these other movements. The development of non-dominant ethnic groups stimulated comparison with the formation of 'political' nations, consideration of the unique and shared features of ethnic-cultural movements and later to criticisms of stereotypes of 'East-European ethnationalism'. Hroch never lost sight of the Balkan movements. He also took account of 'small' ethnic movements that did not enter a mass phase, or formed a nation or were borderline cases. Two such cases he considered were the Sorbs in Lusatia and Bretons in France.

This enabled Hroch to consider the structural (economic, demographic and social) and political circumstances that inhibited ethnic-national formation and promoted other collective identities, as in the Franco-Breton case. He remained unclear as to whether there was a minimum size below which an ethnic community could not form a nation, but he only discussed this question occasionally.

One could thus compare 'unsuccessful' national movements which never got beyond phase B with 'successful' ones which did. There were ephemeral movements such as the Kashubian case which was a one-man affair for the first 40 years of its existence. By contrast, there were other cases that developed vigorously. In the Lusatian Sorbs' case, the scholarly phase A began at the end of the 18th century, and the elite agitation phase B in the decades before 1848, almost at the same time as the Czech movement. The Sorb activists came closest to forming a small nation from a numerically very small non-dominant ethnic group. At the end of the First World War, Sorb patriotic activism seemed close to mass mobilisation. By contrast, in the numerically bigger Belarusian case, scholarly patriotism began in the first half of the 19th century, and the agitation phase in the second half, but it never attained a mass phase.

However, the 'failure' of these movements did not mean their demise, but rather a change into ethnic-national regionalisms (see the essay by Eric Storm), even going on to enjoy 'success' of a kind Hroch could not have envisaged in the 1960s or 1980s.

In this later period, nationality has a different function for such movements (despite some signs of 'renationalization') compared to the 'classic' national movements. Nationality is no longer so central for identity or the nation-state for major political decision-making. With the emergence of more pluralistic and fluid collective identities has come the renaissance of ethnic-regional identities, and the revival of regional languages and dialects such as in the Kashubian, Frisian, Ligurian, Istrian and Sáami cases. New ethnic identity claims and regionalist movements are among the responses to the weakening of the nation-state. Such movements often hark back to earlier agitational phases, but in their focus on ethnicity and region, they express new forms of collective identity. Here too one can make comparisons in terms of the degree of 'success' of such movements. Could this be an agenda for Hroch 2.0?

6 | ERIC STORM, SMALL NATIONS VERSUS SUB-STATE REGIONS: SOME CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM CONTEMPORARY REGIONALISM RESEARCH

Miroslav Hroch's *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* is a great comparative history of eight national movements. As a detailed examination of the rise of 'small nations' during the nineteenth century, it has rightly

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become a classic. Nonetheless, in its approach and some of its findings, it has been superseded by more recent work. Strikingly absent from his narrative, for instance, is a closer scrutiny of cultural factors. He does not apply the constructivist approach that would become fashionable in the early 1980s; rather, he takes the existence of nations for granted. As a consequence of his choice of examples—each of the eight smaller nations discussed in the book have their own language—national mobilisation occurs primarily along linguistic lines. However, the questions of what constitutes a language and when a dialect becomes a language are ignored. As Kamusella (2009) has made clear, the construction of national languages was anything but straightforward. Around 1900, for instance, Macedonian dialects were defined both as variants of Bulgarian and of Serbian, while Greek nationalists claimed that Macedonians were Slavicized Greeks. Only in Communist Yugoslavia was Macedonian turned into a distinct language.

Many new perspectives and theories have appeared in the field since the publication of Hroch's book. Until the 1980s, regional identities were primarily seen as a nostalgic left-over of the past. According to the dominant theories of modernization, regional differences—including vernacular traditions and dialects—would slowly disappear and be subsumed into the national language and culture. However, this view was rejected by Applegate in her pioneering *A Nation of Provincials* (1990). She applied Anderson's concept of 'imagined community' and Hobsbawm's 'invention of tradition' to the German region of the Palatinate. Although she does not explicitly refer to Hroch's three phases, the construction of a *Pfalzer* identity began with a 'period of scholarly interest', then towards the end of the nineteenth century, a new generation of activists tried to mobilise wider sections of the population in order to protect and celebrate the region's heritage, which was followed by the rise of regionalist associations which developed a mass following. However, the goal was not independent statehood but was rather to inculcate love of the local homeland or *Heimat*, while simultaneously strengthening loyalty to the wider German fatherland. Thus, according to Applegate, the process of regional identity construction was not very different from what happened in Hroch's 'small nations', the only major difference being that secession was not on the agenda.

Other studies, such as Thiesse (1991) on French regionalist literature and Dorman (1993) on the United States have made clear that processes of regional identity construction occurred in almost all parts of both countries and that, in most cases, a growing attachment to the region was not in contradiction with feelings of loyalty to the existing nation-state. During the last few decades, scores of case studies focusing primarily on the period 1870 to 1945 and dealing with many different parts of Europe, the Americas and even India, have confirmed these findings. Although Hroch's study of the rise of 'small nations' was not in most cases a direct source of inspiration, striking parallels in chronology, social background of the propagandists and the nature of their activities can be found. Surprisingly, Hroch's comparative approach was almost completely ignored in these case studies, nearly all of which remained firmly embedded within one national historiographical context. As a consequence, they fell into the trap of methodological nationalism—such as Applegate's foregrounding of the German sense of *Heimat* or Thiesse's emphasis on French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War as a crucial turning point. In the last few years, several edited volumes on regionalism in various parts of Europe have appeared that show that the rise of regionalism was in fact a transnational phenomenon. Indeed, towards the end of the nineteenth century, regions became a crucial category in scientific disciplines, such as geography and ethnography. At World fairs, the cultural patrimony of multiple regions was promoted through ethnographic villages and regional pavilions. For this purpose, each region was expected to have its own vernacular architecture, traditional costumes, folk dances, artisanal products and regional dishes. Tourism, also provided an incentive for each region to select, develop and showcase its own unique heritage and traditions.

More detailed case studies on 'small nations' have made clear that it is difficult to make a clear separation between nationalist and regionalist movements (Augusteijn & Storm, 2012; Cole, 2007; Núñez Seixas & Storm, 2019). In most cases, nationalist movements strove for autonomy rather than independence. Most of these movements had many different strands which fluctuated in prominence over time. Some were moderate and could be defined as properly regionalist, while others were more radical and supported outright secession. As Hroch himself left the final attainment of nationhood out of his story, geopolitical considerations are absent from his book. His focus is on the activists, the development of capitalist society and the immediate political context while he largely

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excludes external factors. However, in *Waves of War*, Wimmer (2013) uses big data evidence to demonstrate that new nation-states were created in successive waves and that more important to the success of a nationalist movement than its inherent strength was the opening of a 'window of opportunity'. One such window was the end of the First World War, when many of the Central and East European national movements studied by Hroch achieved independent nationhood. As recent studies have made clear, the Central and East European empires were not doomed; rather, their collapse was the result of their mismanagement and defeat in war. The 'Wilsonian moment' (Manela, 2007), moreover, did not extend to other parts of Europe (with the partial exception of Ireland) nor to the rest of the world. Thus, geopolitical factors determined the outcome, not the activities or mass following of nationalist movements.

7 | ELISABETH BAKKE, HROCH'S CONCEPT OF NATIONALLY RELEVANT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Miroslav Hroch is arguably most famous for distinguishing between three phases of nation-forming, which he originally applied to the 'small nation' or 'non-dominant ethnic group': Phase A (scholarly interest), Phase B (national agitation) and Phase C (the rise of a mass national movement). Nation forming is in this scheme an open-ended process that depends not only on agency but also on objective preconditions (i.e., circumstances beyond the control of the national movement). The modern nation is fully formed when 'everyone, or almost everyone, who qualifies as its potential member, identifies with it' (Hroch, 2015, p. 34). In his ground-breaking comparative work on the pioneers of the national movements and their social stratification, first published in German and Czech in 1969 and 1971, Hroch found that while high social mobility and strong communication networks contributed, the decisive factor for national agitation to succeed was the existence of *nationally relevant conflicts of interest* during Phase B. This concept remains essential to his approach to nation-forming albeit taking on slightly different meanings as his perspective widened.

What does Hroch mean by nationally relevant conflicts of interest? In his first book in English, these were 'conflicts of material interests' that during Phase B coincided 'to a considerable degree with linguistic (and sometimes also religious) differences' (Hroch, 1985, p. 185). However, because the nation was not 'a homogeneous class or social group with fundamental interests', these were not the material interests of the nation as a whole, but 'the transformed and sublimated image of the material interests of definite concrete classes and groups, whose members took an active part in the national movement (or had to be won over to participation in it)'. To succeed, the pioneers of the national movement had to articulate 'in national terms the interests of the specific classes and groups which constituted the small nation' (Hroch, 1985, pp. 185–186). At this point in his career, Hroch's approach to nation-forming was clearly Marxist in its emphasis on class as well as material interests.

By 1996, Hroch conceded that such conflicts of interests need not necessarily be material but could also be related to prestige or power (Hroch, 1996b, p. 135). He defined nationally relevant conflicts of interests as 'social or political conflicts or tensions that coincided with linguistic (or eventually religious) differences' (Hroch, 1996a, p. 40). Examples are the class conflict between peasantry and landlords or workers and factory owners, but also conflicts between the centre and the province; between the traditional village and the ethnically different town and between the rising intelligentsia of the non-dominant ethnic group and the old elites of the ruling nation. Group interests became nationally relevant when the members of the fledging nation accepted them as such (Hroch, 1996b, pp. 208, 211). According to Hroch, only one nationally relevant conflict was present in all national movements: the conflict between the privileged ruling nation and the protagonists of the national movement (Hroch, 2004, pp. 651–652).

In his latest book in English, *European nations. Explaining their formation* (2015), he expands his analysis of nation-forming processes from 'small' nations to include 'state-nations'. Here, he devotes a whole chapter to nationally relevant conflicts of interest, and the emphasis on the struggle for power and prestige is even stronger. Once national movements started to make political demands on behalf of the nation-to-be, and demands for autonomy in

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particular, he argues, they threatened the ruling elites' monopoly of power, and the ensuing power struggles thus constituted nationally relevant conflicts of interest. Hroch still regards such conflicts to be 'the main driving force behind nation-formation' in 'small' nations and contends that their accumulation caused national agitation to succeed more rapidly (Hroch, 2015, pp. 159–160). This is because national arguments 'needed to "resonate" with what given individuals—or, rather, social groups—considered to be their own interests. The appeal of the newly offered identification with a nation increased when socially or economically defined rivals and competitors could also be labelled national enemies' (Hroch, 2015, p. 273). In the case of state-nations, however, conflicts of interest that in multinational empires coincided with national divides, instead constituted internal conflicts. Nationally relevant conflicts of interest thus played a lesser role in the nation-forming process as such, but the image of an external enemy nevertheless had a nationally mobilising function, especially in the context of war or foreign occupation (Hroch, 2015, p. 273).

Where the young Hroch emphasised objective material interests, his current conception of nationally relevant conflicts of interest thus entails a stronger focus on the quest for power and prestige and a more explicit distinction between the objective and the subjective aspect of national interest. This is a refinement of his originally approach, but the fundamental idea is the same. I find the concept of nationally relevant conflicts of interests useful particularly because it emphasises the importance of agency: objectively existing national or ethnic divisions that coincide with patterns of cultural, economic or political inequality become salient only when somebody (e.g., a national movement or a nationalist party) makes the members of the national group(s) in question aware of being disadvantaged.

The concept is useful not only to explain why national agitation succeeded, but also why it is difficult to build a new, overarching identity in a multinational state. If national movements could use nationally relevant conflicts of interest to mobilise the members of the nation-to-be against a foreign ruling elite during the nation-forming process, so could conceivably also the protagonists of wronged national groups in a multinational setting where existing identities coincided with substantial differences in political power, cultural opportunities or economic resources. Such nationally relevant conflicts are likely to perpetuate existing identities and work against a new overarching identification, as I argued in my work on the failure of Czechoslovakism (Bakke, 1999).

8 | JOHN BREUILLY, HROCH AND THE THREE PHASES OF NATIONALISM

This idea was developed by Hroch to enable comparison of various European 'small nation nationalisms'. It is a simple but powerful idea and has attracted much attention. Özkırımlı (2017) has a section entitled 'Miroslav Hroch and the three phases of nationalism'.

In Phase A, intellectuals identify and cultivate a national culture by compiling dictionaries, constructing grammars, composing poems, establishing theatres and a repertoire, 'discovering' national epics, writing national history and much else. This challenges the dominance of foreign languages and cultures, often associated with foreign rule. In Phase B, political elites build upon this work, agitating for autonomy in such areas as schooling, census categories and local, even regional, government. Phase C sees the emergence of a mass movement, pursuing ends such as devolution and, ultimately, a sovereign nation state.

Hroch limits the idea to European small nation nationalisms. He distinguishes different contexts in which the phases originate and unfold. The duration of each phase can vary. A successful national movement might not need phase C. The sequence can be reversed, for example, by repression, or accelerated, for example, by concession. Hroch never substitutes the model for accounts of individual cases. His model is not a norm derived from one case against which other cases are treated as deviations. It is deployed to enable effective, illuminating comparison.

However, there are two assumptions I would question.

First, it presents three concepts as if they were aspects of a single concept, that of national movements. This is why it has been much more influential than taxonomies of nationalism or nations. Such taxonomies are competitive;

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one must assign cases to classes. By contrast, the phases identify changes within cases. Thus historians do not have to make choices; they can instead focus on the phase which most interests them. (Maxwell, 2010).

Second, it implicitly equates logical with chronological sequence. It is 'natural' that nationalism first takes intellectual and cultural forms, hardening into ideology. The next 'natural' step is for such ideology to be taken up by political elites. The final step is mass mobilisation. Some writers specify a Phase D: nation-building after independence. Logic and chronology apparently match up. The full sequence might not be realised ('fail') and could be reversed, but it seems unnatural that a phase would be skipped, or phases inverted in their sequence.

However, things look different if one treats A, B and C not as three phases of a single concept called nationalism but instead as three distinct concepts of nationalism. There are adequate histories of nationalist ideas which never consider nationalist politics and of nationalist politics—either elite or popular—which never investigate nationalist ideology.

Furthermore, it is possible for a nationalist politics—elite and/or popular—to form in the absence of anything other than the most exiguous ideology, *unless we require more than this before we call such politics nationalist*. There are cases where elite agitation against alien rule preceded nationalist ideology. 'Serb' resistance to Ottoman rule involved local elites stepping in where imperial government was failing. There are cases where a popular movement largely preceded ideological elaboration and elite agitation. Arguably, Ulster Unionism was such a case, a populist movement using the language of ultra-loyalism while compelling elites into determined opposition.

In Hroch's cases, Phase A comes first, in the Serb case Phase B and in Ulster Unionism Phase C. Does this mean the three-phase concept is of little value? I think not; rather, I argue that presenting it as three distinct ideal types transforms its comparative value. One can link differences between the sequence of phases to different contexts and different functions. It also means analysis can be extended beyond European small nation movements to which Hroch had restricted the three-phase concept.

For Hroch, Phase A prepares the ground for Phase B, and Phase B for Phase C. This is why it has been criticised as teleological. However, if one treats the phases as distinct ideal types, then not only does that criticism fall away but new perspectives open up. Thus, in the Serb case, the local elites could draw on Phase A achievements elsewhere, e.g., in the Greek national movement, using such ideas less to motivate elite and popular mobilisation than to appeal to influential public opinion and in turn influence government policy in powerful states such as Britain and France.

Ulster Unionism fits into a different context, one that might be described as a settler nationalism in which a pro-imperial group turns against empire. It can even present itself as loyalism as it takes up arms against the empire. Later, it might elaborate an explicitly national ideology, as happened with many European overseas settler groups, most notably in the Americas. By contrast, where settlers were less numerically dominant, and where the imperial state devolved certain kinds of power to indigenous groups, we find something like Hroch's original phase sequence developing. Sometimes this could invoke similar cultural markers such as language and religion (as in Arab, largely Muslim regions), elsewhere national identity was built on colonial territory and concepts of political freedom.

Using the phases as three separate ideal types helps in extending analysis to the nationalism of 'dominant' nations. As Malečková argues for the Turkish case, the challenge is not to assert one distinct national identity against another but to transform a non-national imperial-statist identity into a national one. This, for example, was what was involved in transforming Prussian dynastic loyalty into German national identity. Also, as Sima points out in his essay, state-nations control the public space in which a national movement develops, giving the phases a different character to that of small nation movements.

We can return to Hroch's original set of cases and ask why his particular phase model seems so persuasive. This set is not merely 'European' and 'small' but is located in long-established Christian dynasties based on sedentary peasant agriculture and privileged landownership, with these two classes often divided by language, confessional practices and everyday culture. Furthermore, the impact of modernity (capitalism and industrialism) combines with local autonomies and transnational borrowings to enable the elaboration of nationalist ideologies and their subsequent politicisation through an elite and a popular phase. The model also works well for the Romanov and Habsburg

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Empires before 1914 as they were relatively stable political units. This did mean that these movements tended not to pursue sovereignty, posing problems for Hroch's concept if that is seen as the measure of 'success'. However, it does make an 'internalist' analysis persuasive, which is not the case for the European part of the Ottoman Empire at the same time, or for the Habsburg and Romanov empires in their final, wartime years of existence.

To have constructed the concept of 'European small nation nationalism' and to use this three-phase concept to enable comparison of relevant cases was a formidable and unique intellectual achievement. To convert that concept into three ideal types could provide the conceptual capacity to extend their analytical reach beyond Hroch's self-imposed constraints.

9 | JITKA MALEČKOVÁ, HROCH IN TURKEY

Claiming he could only write about the history he knows, Miroslav Hroch confined his typology of national movements to Europe. He assigned the Bulgarian and Macedonian movements in the Ottoman Empire to the 'insurrectional type' in his taxonomy, while the Ottoman Empire generally, and specifically all of its non-European parts, remained outside his scholarly interest. Hroch's three-phase model of the development of national movements has nevertheless attracted the attention of scholars around the world, some of whom have 'applied' it to non-European contexts or have modified it and used it to study nations outside Europe.

Hroch's work has been particularly popular in Turkey. The Turkish translation of Hroch's *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* by Ayşe Özdemir was published in 2011. However, Turkish scholars were citing Hroch's three-phase model earlier and have repeatedly referred to his work as inspiration for their own research on Ottoman and Turkish history as well as other topics. There is no room here to mention even a fraction of these publications. Instead, I will outline several areas in which Hroch's work has been cited by Turkish researchers and suggest reasons for the appeal of his thought to scholars working both in and outside of Turkey.

One striking feature of this appeal is how long it has endured: publications citing his work or drawing on its theoretical framework have been appearing continuously since the 1970s. Metahistorical analyses of nationalism research mention Hroch as one of the major figures in nationalism studies (Özkırımlı, 2017) and highlight his influence (Gültekingil & Bora, 2008). Hroch's work has been cited in studies of 'small' (i.e., non-dominant) nations in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, and besides the national movements in South-Eastern Europe under Ottoman rule that Hroch considered, his three-phase model has most notably been applied to the Kurdish movement, and it has also been used to characterise the beginnings of 'Arabism' in the Arab-populated regions of the Ottoman Empire (Kayalı, 1997, pp. 10–11).

Perhaps more surprisingly, the Turks, who do not fit the category of 'small nation', have also been studied using Hroch's model or referring to his work. This happens for three distinct situations: the activities of Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals in the late Ottoman Empire, the national developments accompanying the emergence of the Turkish Republic and, occasionally, recent Turkish nationalism. Some Turkish scholars have also applied insights gained from Hroch's work to research on national movements beyond the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. A striking example is the development of a typology of state-seeking nationalisms in the 21st century 'inspired by Miroslav Hroch's three phases' (Karataşlı et al., 2012, p. 325).

Alexander Maxwell noted that Partha Chatterjee's schema of postcolonial nationalism, which appeared around the same time and bears some resemblance to Hroch's model, became popular in postcolonial studies, and this may have muted the impact of Hroch's work on scholars working on areas outside European history (Maxwell, 2010, p. 871).

Why then is Hroch popular in Turkey? The use of Hroch's three-phase model for analysing small-nation nationalism in the Ottoman-Turkish context is hardly unexpected, given that Hroch himself included the Ottoman Empire's European territories in his typology. The more general and continuous attraction of Hroch's work for Turkish scholars is less obvious. One possible explanation is the position of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey as both inside and

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outside Europe. Historians, including Turkish ones, thus often perceive Ottoman history as a part of European history. One might ask whether the 'applicability' of his model means the Turks are as 'European' as the other nations Hroch studied, or whether it shows how generalisable are features of his model, able to inspire research on other regions. Another possible explanation for the popularity of Hroch's work in Turkey could be that Turkish intellectuals—many of whom have been influenced by Marxism—have felt, at least in some periods in history, an ideological affinity with a theory that emphasises the socio-economic preconditions of a nation's development.

The most intriguing aspect of Hroch's popularity is how his model has been applied to the study of the Turks as a 'small nation'. 'Small' in this case does not refer to size but to the position of the emerging national community. To study the Turks as a small nation might seem paradoxical, but while the Turks ruled the Ottoman Empire, they did not, at least until the last decades of the empire's existence, rule it 'as Turks', since the ruling elites were multi-ethnic and Turkishness was not promoted by the state. The 'discovery' of the Turkish character of the Turks thus resembles the early phases of movements that Hroch analyses, specifically the interest of intellectuals in the history, language, and culture of their nation and their effort to spread national awareness among their compatriots. If this process is viewed through the prism of Hroch's model, the roots of the Turkish 'national movement' can be traced back to the later part of the 19th century. Traditionally, the development of Turkish nationalism has been associated with the period immediately preceding the emergence of the Turkish Republic and the spread of nationalism in the early years of the republic. Hroch's three-phase model, including Phase A when intellectuals show a scholarly interest in the 'small nation', helps to date the emergence of Turkish national awareness to an earlier period. This could have implications that transcend scholarly analyses and could appeal to those critical of Turkish nationalism, those celebrating Turkishness, and those simply aiming to describe its origins.

10 | MARIANA KRIEL, HROCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In his history of the *Oxwagon Sentinel*, Christoph Marx (2008, p. 94) notes that 'Afrikaner nationalism is a highly complex phenomenon because various movements overlap and influence each other, making it difficult to place it in the framework of theoretical models'. He nevertheless shows that the works of Anderson and Gellner 'open up avenues to analysis that are compatible' (Marx, 2008, p. 90). It is further possible, says Marx, 'if not easy, to apply Hroch's phases to South Africa, when the focus is limited to cultural nationalism and one is not dazzled by the meteoric rise of the [Afrikaner National Party]' (Marx, 2008, p. 94).

However, even if the rise of Afrikaner nationalism does not fit neatly into Hroch's three-phase framework, I would argue that it still provides historians with a useful analytical road map. When I was introduced to his work as a student in Leuven in 1995, it came as an amazing eye-opener for me: for the first time, I was able to make sense, from a theoretical and comparative perspective, of the mythologised Afrikaner history I had been taught in apartheid's Christian National schools. Hroch's depiction of Phase A fits the Afrikaner case like a glove.

On 14 August 1875: Invited by a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, eight educated but marginalised Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking men (marginalised because they were Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking) meet in the town of Paarl in the British-ruled Cape Colony. They were supposed to discuss a tentative offer by the British and Foreign Bible Society to publish the bible in Cape Dutch/Afrikaans, but instead established the Society of True Afrikaners. The rest is classic Phase A history: the publication of dictionaries and grammars, partial bible translations, a monthly newspaper called *The Afrikaans Patriot*, 'poems' on the topic of 'fatherland and mother tongue' (Nienaber, 1975, p. 24) and, last but not least, a booklet entitled *The history of our country in the language of our nation*. 'Our country' was defined to include the colonies of the Cape and Natal as well as the republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State and 'the language of our nation'—the spoken-only vernacular of Cape Dutch—as Afrikaans.

Hroch has been careful not to claim validity for his model beyond European shores, but in my view, his characterisation of Phase A national movements applies to the Society of True Afrikaners (whose second meeting was attended by some 40 new members). Like their European counterparts, these men talked about their ethnic identity,

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conceived of it as a national identity, and set out to 'persuade their compatriots of the importance of consciously belonging to the nation'. They identified possessions that the nation still lacked, in this case particularly a printed language and a 'high culture', and they made attempts to overcome these deficits (Hroch, 1996, p. 80). They failed, though, as 'most potential nationalisms must' (Gellner, 2006, p. 46). The so-called First Afrikaans Language Movement remained stuck in Phase A. However, in the wake of the Anglo-Boer War (1898–1902), with the Boer republics now also under British rule, the anglicisation programme of Alfred Milner triggered a Second Afrikaans Language Movement and this nationalist movement went successfully through the three (admittedly overlapping Phases A, B and C) in the course of half a century.

The point I am making is that Hroch may underestimate the power of his model and the scope of its applicability by seeing 'the nation as a specifically European phenomenon'. He concedes that it 'is necessary to expand the European space to include the American continent, to which Europe exported and implanted not only Christianity, but later also the nation, and in an isolated instance (Quebec), even the phenomenon of the (ethno)-national movement' (2021, pp. 496–497). To me, Afrikaner nationalism is proof that Europe also exported ethnic-linguistic nationalism to Africa, just like Boer nationalism/republicanism—and, a century later, the continent's anti-/decolonial liberation movements—are proof that revolutionary-democratic nationalism (to use Hobsbawm's, 1992, distinction) was also a European import.

Finally, I would like to pose a question without making any attempt to answer it. Can one not further extend the three-phase model to serve as a framework for theorising the rise of anti-/decolonial Black ethnic-linguistic (nationalist?) movements of sub-Saharan Africa in the nineteenth century? My interest in this question stems from a course I teach in language standardisation to students who are predominantly isi-Xhosa speakers—hence the focus on isiXhosa in what follows. The scholarly consensus seems to be that modern standard languages have been by-products of the dynamics between Western modernity, industrialisation, and nationalism on the one hand and, on the other hand, by-products of 'the darker side of Western modernity' (Mignolo, 2011): 'the Christian/colonial project' (as Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, 138, describe it). In the former case, the standardisation project was initiated by insiders (nationalists), in the latter case by outsiders (colonisers). Yet it would be crude to argue, as Etherington (2001, p. 7) does, for example, 'that eastern coast missionaries turned what had been a continuous spectrum of closely related dialects into distinct Zulu and Xhosa languages', as if African people were deprived of all agency in the process. In fact, as Deumert and Mabandla (2000, p. 215) demonstrate, colonial control of the isiXhosa language was met with resistance from very early on: 'The language was kept alive, both spoken and written, and its standard norm, bearing a strong colonial imprint, was consistently contested'. My question is whether this anti-/decolonial resistance was not an ethnic-linguistic based nationalist movement (unlike the state-based ones of the twentieth century) and whether its origins—Ntsikana Ka Gaba's isiXhosa hymns, J.H. Soga's history of the amaXhosa, newspapers with names such as *Voice of the People* and *Messenger of the amaXhosa*—did not constitute a long Hrochean Phase A.

Some of the ideas expressed in the last paragraph were developed at a research retreat organised by Jacqueline Knörr of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), in December 2021. Thanks are due to her, David O'Kane and Luísa Acobado for their valuable input.

11 | SINISA MALEŠEVIĆ, SIZING THE NATION

There is no doubt that Miroslav Hroch has made important and lasting contributions to understanding the dynamics of nation-formation. He has pioneered a comparative historical analysis of nationhood and developed a novel and much-admired approach that traces the rise of national movements in Europe—the ABC model. He was also one of the first scholars to explore the growth of national projects through the prism of structural economic transformations, modernisation and capitalism. However, his most influential contribution is the concept of small nations.

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Hroch (2013, p. 7) differentiates between the 'state nations', which at the dawn of modernity already possessed a high culture, developed literary language and ethnically homogeneous ruling class and 'small nations' where 'nation formation was not self-evident and proceeded as part of a national movement which began within ethnic communities'. In this view, small nations are characterised by the lack of an independent state, and the absence of a literary language and other aspects of high culture, and their 'subjection to a ruling nation for such a long period [means] that the relation of subjection took a structural character for both parties' (Hroch, 1985, p. 9). Hence, in state-nations such as France, Sweden, England or the Netherlands, 'the development towards a modern nation started in medieval or early modern state-national continuity, as a process of internal political and social transformation' (Hroch, 2014, p. 450). In contrast among small nations such as Czechs, Norwegians, Finns or Lithuanians, the nation-formation 'proceeded not through internal transformation of an already existing state, but as a struggle to implement the missing attributes of a fully-fledged nation – as a national movement' (Hroch, 2014, p. 450).

This distinction is highly valuable as an ideal type for comparative research, but it also raises several problems. First, this criteria does not help us understand the changing dynamics of nation-formation in 'state nations'. While Hroch nicely demonstrates how the sense of nationhood gradually develops and expands in 'small nations', this historical dynamics is largely invisible in the world of 'state nations'. Hence, instead of recognising the contingent character of nation-formation in France or England, Hroch assumes that in this part of Europe nationhood was an almost automatic and evolutionary process shaped largely by internal developments. He often emphasises that the ruling groups were ethnically homogenous and shared common culture which is seen as a precondition for smooth nation-formation. However, as recent scholarship indicates (Bell, 2001; Kumar, 2021) the development of nationhood in France and England was a process shaped by many contradictions and conflicts. The sense of common nationhood was not built around an alleged common culture; rather French and English aristocracies shared cultural practices with other European aristocracies and the notion of common ethnic descent played a marginal role in the development of French and English nationalisms. Moreover, the development of nationhood in France and England was as much shaped by external, geopolitical, economic, military and ideological, factors as it was by internal factors. Thus, a sharp distinction between 'small' and 'state' nations does not help us understand many similarities that typify nation-formation across European continent.

Second, Hroch (2014, p. 451) has recently recognised that the numerical size of population is not a decisive line that separates state nations from small nations. What really matters is their subjugated position vis-à-vis ruling nations or their underdeveloped sense of nationhood. However, this distinction between small and ruling nations is also historically problematic as it projects modern concepts into the past. While it is true that populations of many European regions were subjugated by rulers who spoke different languages and engaged in different cultural practices, these rulers were not representatives of 'ruling nations' but were mostly agents of imperial social order. The logic of imperial domination in the pre-modern world was not defined by ethnicity but primarily by lineage, religion, civilising missions, and other proto-ideological projects. The imperial orders are built around patrimonial relationships between rulers and ruled including contradictory systems of personalised obligations where there is no room for national attachments. Unlike modern nation-states which derive their legitimacy from particularist principles of popular sovereignty, empires espouse universalist creeds which privilege aristocratic lineage over ethnic descent (Malešević, 2013, 2019). The imperial orders discouraged the rise of all forms of nationalism, including those of the 'ruling' and 'small' nations, because nationalist principles of legitimacy promoted ideas of popular sovereignty and political equality that directly challenged the deeply hierarchical imperial forms of rule. In other words, rulers of pre-modern empires discriminated against all subjects regardless of their ethnic origin. Hence, the distinction between 'ruling' and 'small' nations only makes sociological sense in modernity.

Third, the concept of small nation indicates that these political entities are objectively weak if not necessarily numerically insignificant. Nevertheless, one should not take the notion of smallness as a simple reflection of objective reality. Many national movements, such as the Irish, Danish, and Hungarian ones, were far from being numerically small but strategically deployed the idiom of 'small nation' to facilitate the realisation of their nationalist projects. By depicting their imperial rulers as large and powerful nations of oppressors and their compatriots as

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freedom loving small and oppressed nations, these national movements utilised the idiom of smallness to attain specific ideological goals. For example, Irish national movement continuously deployed the idea of small Irish nation being oppressed by the large British empire despite the fact that in the early and mid- 19th century the population of Ireland was among the largest in Europe. Similarly, many 19th and early 20th century national movements in the Balkans used the notion of 'greater nation' (i.e., Megali Idea, Greater Serbia, Greater and unified Bulgaria) to justify their own nationalist ambitions even though their populations were all objectively much smaller than those of Ireland, Hungary or Denmark (Malešević, 2019). Hence, the concept of 'small' vs. 'great' nation is often deployed as a strategic device to pursue different ideological claims. Finally, this dichotomy of small vs. ruling/state nations unwittingly reinforces essentialist and teleological understanding of nationhood. Hroch (2014, p. 451; 2013, p. 7) often refers to small nations as 'missing attributes of fully fledged national existence' or 'those where nation formation was not self-evident'. In this understanding nation formation is conceptualised as an evolutionary and finite phenomena that has relatively fixed and linear stages which all national movements must undergo in order to achieve the status of a 'fully-fledged nation'. However, many sociologists would argue that rather than having an objective essence nationhood is a highly contingent, and ever-changing process of dynamic existences. As such there are no universally established criteria of what constitutes a 'fully-fledged nation'. The nation-formation processes are never 'self-evident' nor 'complete'; instead, this is an ongoing process defined by variability, reversibility, diversity, and plasticity. However, this is not to say that scholars should avoid making analytical comparisons between different national projects, just that such comparisons have to recognise the uneven, reversible and contingent character of historical change.

These brief remarks do not take anything away from the exceptional contribution that Miroslav Hroch has made to the scholarship of nations and nationalisms. It is due to the creativity and vigour of his ideas and concepts that the study of nationhood has become such a vibrant research field today.

12 | XOSÉ M. NÚÑEZ SEIXAS, MIROSLAV HROCH AND WESTERN EUROPEAN 'NATIONALISMS'

First, there was something like a discovery. Historical research on Western European national(ist) movements, substate national movements, minority nationalisms, and even regional(ist) movements since the 1960s was not accustomed to looking comparatively at East-Central Europe, and even less to what had emerged in Eastern Bloc historiographies prior to 1989. Meanwhile, Marxist-oriented research on the 'national structures', the social composition of national movements, and the intertwining of social and ethnic demands were certainly underway from Britain to Spain. Tom Nairn and Pierre Vilar had written influential works. Marxist historians in Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, and Italy had researched the historical development of sub-state nationalisms, from Scotland to Sardinia, and were well-versed in Marxist thought on the national question, from Karl Marx to Otto Bauer. Nevertheless, it was rather unusual to look for comparisons on the other side of what became the Iron Curtain after 1947. Consequently, the national ideas, cultural patterns and even models of political organisation that had circulated from the Czech lands to Catalonia and from Scotland to Ukraine were ignored. Until the late 1980s Western historians were with few exceptions influenced by the geopolitical division of Europe when it came to addressing minority nationalisms and their case studies. Hans Kohn's (1944) influential work on European nationalisms and the classic dichotomy he established between 'civic' (Western) and 'ethnic' nationalism, implicitly or explicitly cast its shadow over Western European and American research on minority nationalisms, though some scholars coined the term 'ethnonationalism' to refer to the Irish or the Basques.

Miroslav Hroch's impressive comparative study of national movements in Europe, from its first German edition in 1968, was engaging and thought-provoking for a new generation of researchers, especially in the Germanophone academic community, which had developed its own school of nationalism studies (from Theodor Schieder to Hans-Ulrich Wehler). Hroch's influence in other Western historiographies was dependent on links to German

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historiography, while the impact of the Czech historian on the analysis of Eastern European national movements remained more limited; a rare example of such impact being Mirjana Gross' work on the Croatian movement (Gross, 1981). With the updated and expanded English-language edition of his work in 1985, Hroch's influence spread in Western Europe and overseas. Hroch skilfully combined a huge repertoire of primary sources in several languages with sophisticated theoretical reflection and an explanatory model aiming to establish patterns of development for national movements, from a cultural phase to a mass stage. These were related to overarching social and economic changes in each case from the beginning of the industrial revolution to the emergence of the workers' movement. What became widely known as Hroch's model was often reduced to the basic formula of Phases A, B C, and primary research results were sometimes simply 'encapsulated' within this scheme.

It would be unfair to ascribe to Hroch's model an exclusively 'Eastern' validity. In his comparative study, he included Finland, Norway, and Flanders. Critics have argued that his concept of 'non-dominant ethnic group', as well as his firm belief in the existence of the nation, defined by ethnicity and culture, as a precondition for the existence of national(ist) mobilisation, had teleological and primordialist features. His bypassing or underestimating of cultural dynamics and the articulation of political interests, as well as the influence of state politics and international relations make some political scientists and political historians sceptical about extending Hroch's model to cases such as Scotland, Catalonia, and Sardinia. There, ethnicity and language did not play a prominent role in laying the foundations of national or territorial claims. It has also been argued that Hroch's model cannot explain why Basque nationalism was more widespread in the Spanish than it was in the French part of the Basque Country. Similarly, Hroch's model cannot explain why cultural claims (Phase A) often did not precede the emergence of political groups (Phase B), or how regression from Phases C to B could take place. Hroch's use of the concept of 'complete social structure' was also subject to criticism: Was it the case that Galicians, Irish, Bretons or Welsh did not have their own bourgeoisie simply because their upper-middle classes spoke the state language? In short: 'ethnic' features could be regarded as an Eastern thing.

Miroslav Hroch has consistently answered those and many other critiques, which in part arose from a superficial reading of his complex model. What is perhaps more pervasive and interesting from the A-B-C pattern is not necessarily the characterisation of the 'stages' as static categories, but the modalities of transition from one phase to another. Moreover, in his later books (2000, 2005, 2007a) and articles, Hroch has attempted to incorporate the politics of language and the dynamics of cultural nationalism, and to develop new explanatory models that include all of Europe. He has also partially conceded that languages, myths of origins, and mobilisation discourses can be crafted by specific actors, while remaining reluctant to accept a modernist paradigm, and cautioning against the dangers of excessively prioritising the study of culture and representations. He concludes that it is structural change which explain why things happen, whereas representations only tell us how things happen.

Nevertheless, Hroch's later openness towards a more constructivist or 'modernist' approach to the study of nationalism has often gone unnoticed by later nationalism scholars. 'Our' Hroch is almost always seen through the A-B-C model, which does little justice to the complexity of his reflections on the national question over 40 years.

Another contribution of Miroslav Hroch's work that deserves to be highlighted is its treatment of the evolution of the national question in Europe, from the late 18th century to the present day, as an integrated phenomenon. A closer look at Europe's complex history shows similar cultural dynamics of national agitation from the Caucasus to the Atlantic, how ethnic some Western European nationalisms can be, and how civic some national claims in Eastern Europe. Hroch persuades us to look at Estonia or Slovakia the better to understand why Breton nationalists were less successful than Scottish or Fleming nationalists. As this Czech historian interacted with Galician colleagues in Santiago de Compostela and Catalan colleagues in Barcelona, perhaps he transmitted to us a view from the outside of 'our' national(ist) movements. This has broadened perspectives and encouraged looking at the national question in Europe in a more integrated way. Hroch's contribution has been more than an ambitious comparative approach; he has laid down stepping stones in the study of minority nationalisms, incorporating a transnational focus for Europe. But that is another story.

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13 | PAVEL KOLÁŘ, HROCH'S CRITIQUE OF THE CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM

Hroch has been critical of the concept of 'nationalism'. One aspect is linguistic and shows Hroch working in different national traditions, switching between languages, and mediating between East-Central European, German, and Anglo-American academic cultures. In the early 1990s, as a student in Hroch's 'proseminar', I recall him starting by examining 'concepts', 'definitions' and 'meanings'.

As regards the concept of nationalism, Hroch stressed that in the Anglo-American tradition this was orientated towards statehood, an element weaker, if not absent, in German discourse. In most East-Central European languages "nationalism" is an overtly negative borrowing unrelated to domestic, principally cultural concepts of nation (*národ*, *naród*, *narod* etc.). Such differences can cause misunderstanding about Hroch's Phase A, when scholars pursued apolitical goals. Calling these activities 'nationalist' would impose a political meaning. How apolitical such national movements actually were is another matter. They are for Hroch who treats politics as a distinct zone of struggle for power.

Another aspect is conceptual, not linguistic, and more complex. While one can register different meanings in different languages, the concept is an essentially contested one. (Gallie, 1964) Hroch observes that many Western scholars employ the term tendentiously; nationalists are 'others', often Central and East Europeans.

Churchill and De Gaulle were fierce nationalists but rarely so described in British or French literature. By contrast, Masaryk has often been regarded as a 'Czech nationalist', even if his 'nationalism' was milder than that of Churchill and De Gaulle. Ironically, the Czech historical tradition views Masaryk as a critic of Czech nationalism: his denunciation of literary forgeries; criticism of antisemitism during the so-called Hilsner affair; visiting, when President, the German theatre in Prague to signal protest against anti-German riots in 1934.

Current usage of the term supports Hroch. The entry 'English Nationalism' in Wikipedia focuses on early nation-state formation while omitting the 19th and 20th centuries almost entirely. There seems to be little English nationalism between the Stuarts and Brexit. Academic work on the subject was rare before Brexit, often equating nationalism with the drive for a future state.

'Nationalism' has thus been for Hroch both too broad and too narrow. While for the post-1800 history of the West only chauvinism is treated as nationalism, accounts of East-Central Europe employ the term in a sweeping way, applying it to the entire modern political class (exceptions being such groups as nationally indifferent aristocrats or peasants). Interestingly, socialism and communism are mostly disregarded by students of nationalism, with later state socialist regimes being labelled as 'national communism', in which the former matters more than the latter.

Important is Hroch's argument that there is no typical East-Central European 'ethnonationalism'; one encounters ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and other such features in all national movements. Ethnonational cleavages seem prominent in Catalonia, Belgium, and Ireland nowadays. Hroch's careful distinctions between national identity, national consciousness, national awareness, patriotism, chauvinism, national loyalty and so forth, serve as safeguards against sweeping umbrella terms.

Hroch's differentiations, balance, and combination of various factors was partly a rejection of class determinism, best embodied in Stalin's thesis that nations were products of the bourgeoisie's struggle for markets. Positively, it dovetails with the post-1956 shift towards revision, new beginnings, and experimentation. I am not the first to regard *Vorkämpfer* (Hroch, 1968) as a post-Stalinist book, one that breathes an optimistic humanism in asserting the almost immaculate nature of the scholarly phase A as one not 'soiled' by political aims.

Today many scholars would criticise Hroch's narrow concept of politics, contrasting it to a view of politics as fluid, decentred, and interwoven with knowledge. There appears something idealistic about Hroch's Phase A, with its actors depicted as 'enthusiasts' engaged in an intellectual game. The qualitative distinction between culture and politics finds temporal expression in the turn from Phase A to Phase B, marked by a deliberate decision of a younger generation of patriotic scholars to become 'agitators'. This moment constitutes, as the title of one of Hroch's later

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books goes, the 'threshold of national existence' (Hroch, 1999) when the historical actors see themselves entering a new epoch.

Hroch's lack of interest in aggressive nationalist politics - 'nationalism' - has often been noted. His concern has been with national movements as emancipatory, not how state-nations consolidate power and turn reactionary. His treatment of post-communist nationalist conflicts has mainly paid attention to the emancipatory efforts of formerly 'dominated' nations against 'dominant' ones: Slovaks against Czechs, Slovenes and Croats against Serbs, Lithuanians and Latvians against Russians. He has expressed concerns about the re-nationalisation of Germany, but not engaged academically with the issue. However, using Hroch's conceptual apparatus to study the diversity of national politics and sentiments within 'consolidated' nations might yield important results.

While maintaining a detached attitude towards the 'cultural turn' and its impact on nationalism studies, Hroch has considered and even integrated culturalist views into his work, particularly from the late 1990s (for instance, Bourdieu's ideas on language and power). Often his criticism of 'fashions' was less directed against a new subject than the concepts with which cultural history operated. I vividly remember his uneasiness about the notion of 'master narrative' which he rejected as new coinage for an old idea. He did maintain certain positions. For example, while historiography was increasingly interpreted in the 1990s in terms of its alleged complicity with aggressive nationalism and as a 'legitimizing discipline', Hroch insisted that not all historical knowledge and imagination must necessarily bolster or challenge existing power relations.

Already in the 1970s Hroch examined the role of historical fiction and textbooks for nation-formation, distinguishing between a rationally reflected national consciousness (*národní vědomí*) and a less reflected, elemental *národní povědomí* (untranslatable from Czech but anticipating Assmann's concept of communicative memory) (Hroch, 1976). Later Hroch adopted related concepts such as 'collective memory', though characteristically using quotation marks to indicate detachment. In 1997, Hroch organised a workshop titled *National History: Construct or/and Reality?*, engaging critically with what he regarded as a fashionable subject while exploring its scientific potential. The binary opposition of construct and reality sounded old-fashioned, yet Hroch's goal was to trace the entanglements and interactions between various aspects of *národní povědomí*.

While rejecting monocausal, determinist explanations in favour of pluralist accounts, Hroch has constantly advocated precisely formulated "why questions". Why did those patriots venture upon such a risky enterprise as a pro-national agitation within a largely indifferent 'ethnic group'? Such research questions have been an important legacy for most of his Prague pupils who, to Hroch's chagrin, turned to contemporary history, especially the history of communism. Why did so many people join the communist movement—not only industrial workers but middle-class intellectuals, Jews and women—even when the prospects of success were slim? Such 'why' questions are equally relevant for exploring historical situations where the movement has 'succeeded' and transformed into established regimes. An emphasis on different forms of belief (and disbelief) in communism might help us understand why in 1956 many left but at the same time many remained, recasting their belief so as to construct a sense of a new beginning. Why did so many resign themselves to the considerably shrunken utopia of 'developed socialism' after 1968, and why did increasing ideological indifference enable a stagnating regime to endure for more than 20 years while eventually paving the way for its final collapse? Translated into the history of nationalism, the question could be asked to what extent 'national indifference' worked paradoxically as a vehicle rather than an obstacle for the 'success' of national movements?

It remains important to follow Hroch's pan-European view of history, one not predetermined by pigeon-holing research problems into specific 'historical regions' but driven by an interest in comparable historical phenomena which, while occurring in different places at different times, were essentially similar and therefore explicable (an approach that Maria Todorova, 2005, has called 'relative synchronicity'). Such a view of European history does not consider phenomena as prisoners of 'regions' or 'systems', whether East and West, Socialism and Capitalism, Dictatorship and Democracy, but as manifold variations of the paths to and through modernity. This battle for a genuinely comparative and cross-regional European history has not yet been won and continues to need enthusiastic agitators like Hroch himself.

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