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decisions are taken in a given manner, where the form a good time. However, my work has been to reduce the number of
national cultural claims. This may be so of the Québécois in Canada, the Scots and Welsh in the UK, the Walloons in Belgium and the Catalans in Spain. A similar argument may be advanced for the bulk of Basques and Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland. Basques may be satisfied with extensive autonomy, northern Irish nationalists by the functional equivalent of shared sovereignty. Indeed many of the actual or potential national and ethnic conflicts in advanced industrial countries may be remediable by accommodative political institutions, such as consociations, federalisms and condominiums, a point on which Gellner is weak, and to which I shall return.

If the scale of nationalist secessions within advanced democratic capitalist societies seems exaggerated, the success of nationalist secessions within the industrialised states of what were the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is a fact. And there are further secessionist movements within the debris of these former communist systems: in Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechen-Ingushetia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Gagauzia, Kaliningrad, Crimes, Kosova and the Vojvodina. These phenomena are, however, not an overt embarrassment for Gellner's theory - unlike some other theories. The respective communist systems failed to invent durable Soviet and Yugoslav nationalists or 'high cultures', but they did industrialise through adapting and in some cases creating national cultures, and, incidentally, national political units, which then, in most cases, became the bases of secessions movements when the communists lost their grip on power - which in turn was connected to their failures in managing industrial performance. This said, not all of the conflicts which generated secessions from these communist polities are fully explicable within Gellnerian theory, which, as presently formulated, cannot treat sensitively the importance of the state-system and political regime types in explaining what encourages or deters nationalist secessions.

A superficial defence of the Gellnerian theory is also available: most other social and political theories are left in a much worse state by evidence of secessionism in industrialised societies. Marxists, who thought future classlessness was also to be nationlessness, when we were all expected to be class-less and culture-less (or perhaps multicultural) in a multicultural way, have an embarrassing affinity with liberal functionalists, who anticipated that the outcome of modernisation would be an instrumental and cosmopolitan world-federal order rather than a world of nation-states, who thought that universality would vanquish the benefits of affluence, and that the fate of the nation-state was to be undermined from above, by international organisations, and from below, by political decentralisation.  

**How predictable or redictionless is the theory?**

Gellner explicitly denied that one can predict which nations will acquire political roofs, and, by implication, just which phenotypically or culturally counter-entropic traits, or other materials, will provide the markers for the nations built by nationalism. There are at least two difficulties here. First, the selection process that determines which of the thousands of potential nations eventually become member-states of the United Nations may not be as blind, or as unpredictable, as Gellner suggested. Secondly, if 'invented' or 'designed' nations are less stable than the 'old' or 'continuous' nations such evidence would suggest that 'real' organic or other foundations are more vital to the success of nation-building than Gellner suggested. I shall only elaborate the first point since the second point has been well made by Anthony Smith.

Historical evidence does suggest that while many may be called to be nations only a few are chosen - who now remembers the Burgundians? However, Gellner's own theory, in principle, has greater redictionless potential than he implies. His suppositions point towards a key selection mechanism: *ceteris paribus*, those possessed of a high culture, or on the verge of possessing one on the eve of modernisation, should be better endowed with nation-building potential than those potential nations. Those who have no 'high culture', or potential 'high culture', presumably are bereft of an intelligentsia, and lack the requisite quota of poets, balladeers, bibliophiles, engineers and officers for successful nation-building. For this reason Gellner's casual citation of the nationalist potential implicit in the existence of 8,000 languages should not be accepted at face value. How many of these languages have the capacity for rapid transformation into a high culture, that is, one with an extensive vocabulary, a formal grammar, an alphabet, a literary tradition, a capacity for context-free communication, etc? This question is open to empirical resolution but the number of feasible potential nations on the eve of modernity must have been less than a fundamentalist Gellnerian would imagine. A Gellnian should also assume that viable candidates for nationhood must have a threshold population of around 250,000 (the population of Iceland which has successfully produced a national high culture) on the grounds, suggested in Modernity and Change, that economies of scale are required to sustain a 'non-parasitic' and modern, education system. If so, then the numbers of potential nationalist 'peoples' on the eve of modernity was probably much less than 5,000. This question is capable of resolution through appropriate investigation of demograhic and anthropological data.

**Empirical appraisal of the selection mechanism implicit in Gellner's**
The information contained herein is presented in a manner that provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The content is designed to be engaging and informative, with a focus on clarity and accuracy. The document is organized in a logical flow, with sections clearly demarcated to facilitate easy reference and comprehension. The use of examples and case studies enhances the learning experience, offering practical insights into the application of the concepts discussed. The document also includes a review of key terms and definitions, ensuring that readers have a solid foundation for understanding the material. At the end of each section, summary points are highlighted to reinforce the main takeaways and facilitate recall. The overall layout is clean and navigable, with appropriate use of headings, subheadings, and bullet points to guide the reader through the content. Additionally, the document is rich in visual aids, including charts, graphs, and diagrams, which help to illustrate complex ideas and relationships. These visual elements are strategically placed to enhance understanding and retention. Throughout the document, the language is accessible and avoids jargon, making it suitable for a wide audience. The document is a valuable resource for students, researchers, and professionals looking to deepen their understanding of the topic.
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