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Reply to Annika Tahvanainen

Montserrat Guibernau
Open University, UK

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REPLY TO ANNIKA TAHVANAINEN

These comments are based on a series of misquotations and the use of half sentences from my paper which result in a substantial misinterpretation of my arguments.

As I have argued in the paper, it is crucial to establish a distinction between the concepts of nation, state, and nationalism. The commentator attributes the six characteristics I set up when defining the “nation,” to a “nation without state.” This reflects a misunderstanding on her part because my definition of the “nation” is independent of whether the nation in question has or does not have a state of its own.

When dealing with my definition of nations without states, Tahvanainen omits my main definition and jumps into some other features sometimes cutting my sentences and depriving them of full meaning. For instance, I define “nations without states as nations which in spite of having their territories included within the boundaries of one, or more states, by and large do not identify with them.”¹

I do not argue that “the stateless communities must have the explicit wish to rule themselves” as Tahvanainen writes. On the contrary, I have written in my paper that “Self-determination is sometimes understood as political autonomy, in other cases it stops short of independence and often involves the right to secede.”² The misunderstanding and confusion of the commentator is evident. She misquotes my paper and mixes up parts of sentences with the result of attributing to me ideas which do not correspond to my position as expressed in the paper.

I am accused of employing a “static” definition of the nation; such an assertion neglects that in my view “Nations are not unique and fixed, and throughout history it is possible to record the disintegration of some nations . . . and the creation of new ones.”³

I am also accused of assuming that nations are homogeneous. On the contrary, I assume that nations are not homogeneous and this applies both to nation-states and nations without states. In the paper I write: “The nations or parts of nations included within a single state do not share similar levels of national awareness.”⁴

I do not argue that nations without states have a “uniform desire for independence” as the commentator attributes to me. On the contrary, I clearly state that the desire for self-determination could be either

1. Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations Without States: Political Communities in the Global Age*, 25 MICH. J. INT'L L. 1251, 1254 (2004).

2. *Id.* at 1255.

3. *Id.* at 1257.

4. *Id.*

manifested through the desire for political autonomy or secession, and that it varies according to each particular case.⁵

Tahvanainen argues that “the union of Scotland and England in the early eighteenth century—and the concurrent loss of Scotland’s independent statehood—was made possible in part because of the lack of strong cultural distinctions between the English and the lowland Scots.” This is only a limited picture of a fuller story.⁶

I have discussed at length the issue of First Nations.⁷ Only space limitations have prevented me from developing this topic in this Article. As I have argued elsewhere, although there are substantial differences between “Western nations without states” and “Native nations,” I maintain that in both cases we encounter cultural communities with a consciousness of forming a group, memories of a common past and the desire to decide upon their own political future, which may take different forms including cultural recognition, political autonomy, federation and, in some cases, independence.

PROFESSOR MONTSERRAT GUIBERNAU
Open University, UK

5. *Id.* at 1255.

6. For a full picture of the complex political and cultural impact of the union of crowns and the conflict it brought about see J.K. Mackie, *A HISTORY OF SCOTLAND* 261 *passim* (1991); M. Lynch, *SCOTLAND: A NEW HISTORY* 246, 324 (1998).

7. Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations and Nationalism in Native America*, in *NATIONS WITHOUT STATES* (Montserrat Guibernau ed., 1999).