

Politics, Governance, and the Law

## Interview: Andreas Wimmer and Helmut K. Anheier

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Keywords: methodological nationalism, nation building, nationalism, war, post-colonialism

<https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2022.38287>

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### Global Perspectives

Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2022

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In this interview, Helmut K Anheier and Andreas Wimmer discuss his work on methodological nationalism, nation building, democracy, war, and longer-term economic, socio-political developments. They also explore the post-colonial debate and the decolonization movement in the academy. They touch upon foresight methods and review the state of the social sciences, in particular anthropology and sociology.

**Helmut K. Anheier:** Professor Wimmer, you were educated at the University of Zurich, where you received a PhD in social anthropology in 1992 and completed your habilitation two years later. You joined Columbia University in 2015 to become the Lieber Professor of Sociology and Political Philosophy and previously taught at Princeton University and the University of California, Los Angeles. Before moving to the United States, you were founding director of two interdisciplinary research centers, the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Study at the University of Neuchâtel and the Department of Political and Cultural Change at the Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn in Germany.

You have emerged as one of the leading sociologists of your generation whose work is recognized in other disciplines to a significant degree. For your scholarship, you have received several prestigious awards and fellowships. Your research brings a long-term historical and comparative perspective to the questions of how states are built and how nations are formed, how individuals draw ethnic and racial boundaries between themselves and others, and which kinds of political conflicts and wars result from these processes.

You pursue this agenda across disciplines and through various styles of inquiry that include comparative historical analysis, quantitative research, network analysis, and formal modeling. The study of nationalism has long been a core issue for you in this context. You also looked at the role of transnational diffusion of cultural practices and more recently began to explore the future, exploring long-term developments.

I would like to ask you about distinct but related aspects of your work, beginning with the topic of methodological nationalism. Your paper with Nina Schiller in 2002 is one of the most cited about the issue of methodological national-

ism (Wimmer and Schiller 2002). On page 301, you describe it as “the assumption that a nation-state society is the natural social and political form of the modern world.” You lay out the fundamental implication of this assumption when critically pointing to the state of the debate at that time. In 2002 you wrote: “where there were fixed boundaries, everything is now equally and immediately interconnected. Structures are replaced with fluidity, being sedentary is replaced with movement, the territorial boundedness of analysis has been overcome by a spiraling rhetoric of deterritorialization and localization.” Some twenty years later, how would you assess the responses to the problem of methodological nationalism? Both in terms of how it is stated in the first quote above and to the implicit challenge, even critique, you formulate in that article exemplified in the second quote.

**Andreas Wimmer:** A lot of time has passed. As you mentioned, it’s been twenty years. The term “methodological nationalism” and the critique that we formulated in this paper have been very widely received, and many different solutions to the problem of methodological nationalism have been offered, many different approaches have emerged.

Many solutions to the problem of methodological nationalism were tied to the idea that we’re entering a postnational age, or that globalization will make the nation-state irrelevant and thus also move us beyond taken-for-granted nationalist thinking in the social sciences. These predictions have proven to be empirically quite wrong.

There has been a resurgence not only of nationalism but also of the policy-making role of nation-states. Most recently, the pandemic has basically highlighted, again, the enormous structuring power of national states. All of this is actually part of how we defined, in the article, the problem of methodological nationalism since we identified, as one

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of its modalities, the overlooking of the continuous structuring power of the nation-state by taking it so much for granted that it disappears from the analytical horizon. A lot of the escalating rhetoric of being in a “postnational era” and so on—which developed partly as a response to the opposite variant of methodological nationalism, which ignores nonnational social processes altogether—was basically falling into the trap of the other form of methodological nationalism that overlooks the continued relevance and power of nation-states.

So, the postnational version of methodological nationalism is basically that you cannot see yellow if you have yellow glasses on your nose. It’s in a similar vein that you might take the nation-state so much for granted that you overlook its continued relevance (see Mettler 2011). You overlook that it’s actually there underneath all the other globalizing trends that you might want to focus on.

**HKA:** And how would you compare your position on methodological nationalism with those, say, of Saskia Sassen or Ulrich Beck?

**AW:** Beck was doing what I was just describing, which is massively overestimating the declining significance of nation-states and of nationalism. And his version of overcoming methodological nationalism was to develop methodological cosmopolitanism, as he called it (Beck 2000). What he meant by that is to actually get rid of methodological nationalism by simply focusing on global processes such as global risks, such as a pandemic, atomic catastrophes, climate change, and things like that. That was his interpretation. I think he massively erred on the side of underestimating the continued relevance of nation-states, on the level of both shaping identities and shaping policies. And maybe we can talk a little bit more about that, why that is, and whether there is the possibility of developing a robust global governance structure beyond the nation-state, as Ulrich Beck was so vehemently hoping for.

Saskia Sassen (2003) was developing a very different approach from Beck and what Nina Glick Schiller and I were trying to do. Basically, her approach was to look for global connections in local social processes. It didn’t mean to disregard the national level of analysis, as Ulrich Beck was calling for, but rather to specify how the local, either national or subnational level is deeply intertwined with the global. For example, looking at Manhattan and discovering what global finance actually does to the local labor market, creating an hourglass-shaped structure, and so on. This approach, I think, is now very standard in a lot of qualitatively oriented research, including by Ayse Caglar. Anthropology, for example, basically has moved from the early preoccupation with globalization to this global-local interaction approach: tracing global processes in their local manifestations, understanding how they intertwine with national or subnational processes and how the latter may even loop back onto the global level.

**HKA:** At some point, the debate about methodological nationalism was taken up by what is now a growing movement in the social sciences, variously labeled decolonialism,

postcolonialism, or the subaltern. It is both a political movement and an academic approach that seeks to challenge the social sciences and humanities in their very foundations and does so across disciplines as well as fields of inquiry. It questions the legitimacy of the social sciences and humanities in the present form and argues that they constitute a system of knowledge that needs to be replaced because it is characterized by inherent biases and inequities. What is your position when it comes to attempts to decolonize the academy, and can you point to particular cases where the process has achieved important goals and maybe others where it has gone astray?

**AW:** It’s a very contested terrain that you open with this question. I’m not quite sure yet how I should position myself in these terms, so maybe just a couple of remarks. The first is that in my view, the postcolonial critique is mostly rhetorical and has remained at the level of critique, denouncing and criticizing the motivations of scholars from the West, pointing out implicit (or sometimes explicit) connections between their thoughts and colonial power or showing how global power inequalities shape the discursive field of academia. But very little positive in the sense of alternative theories has been offered, as far as I can tell.

What would be a true alternative? It could be social sciences that are not relying on Western rationalist, individualist, modernist, and Eurocentric assumptions. That’s what is often called for. But where are such alternatives? People gesture at Ibn Khaldun, they gesture at a Japanese philosopher of science who was a student of Heidegger. But very little has been done, beyond such gesturing, to actually build on these bases an alternative theoretical system of social sciences. So that’s for one.

Secondly, it is absolutely true that the West dominates the global intellectual production to a degree that is very unhealthy. It would indeed be wonderful if there were other centers of global intellectual production that are not derivative of the West. But unfortunately, the trend goes exactly in the other direction. Western, especially Anglo-Saxon, models of doing social science, of theorizing, of methods are rapidly spreading around the world and imitated by almost everybody, as the recent global spread of the “systemic racism” discourse shows. The postcolonial critique has done almost nothing to reverse this trend, and it doesn’t show us a way forward. How could India become an intellectual powerhouse with a genuine, differently structured intellectual discourse and research tradition? How could China do more than what it does currently, which is on the one hand imitating Western models of science and discourse, and on the other hand simply plunging into nationalist rhetoric and practices of scholarship? I don’t see that the postcolonial critique has even outlined a strategy to answer these kinds of questions, to democratize global intellectual production. It remains perhaps too closely tied to the Anglo-Indian perspective on the world to do this successfully.

**HKA:** In your book *Nation Building* (Wimmer 2020), you address a fundamental question: why do some countries with diverse societies or diverse population groups achieve po-

litical integration, while others are destabilized and prone to separatism and ethnic conflict? The answer you give is found in political alliances that stretch across ethnic divides and build inclusive coalitions. And I add that the early spread of civil society organizations, language assimilation, and the state's capacity to provide public goods are important factors that explain if such multiethnic coalitions emerge. Further deepening political integration, citizens of inclusive states will embrace the idea of the nation as a community of shared historical origin and future political destiny. From a different perspective, political economists like Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) have asked related questions: why do some countries fail and others succeed? How would you see the differences between your approach and that of Acemoglu and Robinson (2020), for example, in their recent book *The Narrow Corridor*, or previously in their book *Why Nations Fail* (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Do you arrive at different conclusions and implications?

**AW:** Partly, the books are different because they ask different questions. *Why Nations Fail* basically asks: why are some countries poor and others are rich? My question is: why do some countries descend into civil war and ethnic conflict while other multiethnic countries do not? The methodological strategies are also very different. They explicitly refrain from trying to find out why certain countries actually develop in a certain direction, develop institutions that are beneficial for sustained growth, while “bad” institutions emerge in other places. They say that's basically contingent and needs to be left to historians. All they do is to identify which institutions are good for economic growth, such as democratic accountability, nonexploitative structures of production, a relatively equal distribution of resources, and so on. They proceed as in a recipe book. They say: you need black pepper, you need really good lamb sausage, and you need fantastic Sicilian tomatoes to make this wonderful spaghetti sauce. But why do we find these beautiful black peppercorns and tomatoes and sausages only on some tables, while other tables have different ingredients to cook with? They don't address that question. I'm a little bit more ambitious. I'm trying to understand why certain countries develop in certain directions, and I basically proceed by progressively identifying layers of historical developments that influence future possibilities.

**HKA:** In both *Nation Building* and *Waves of War* (Wimmer 2020, 2013), you take a longer-term comparative perspective in search of patterns of development and typically identify three or more conditions associated with one type of outcome or another. Do you agree with the economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron, who famously wrote that there should be a fine for the use of the word “necessary” in historical analysis? In other words, how do you think about necessary and sufficient causes and cases in your work?

**AW:** Well, that's a very interesting question. I'm one of the few people who seems to still believe in broad regularities that repeat across periods of time and across regions. This is the old-school modernization approach to historical developments, which consisted precisely in finding repeat-

ing patterns across places and time. But I do so in a very different way than previous modernization scholars. And I pursue this project by looking at datasets over long periods of time and usually covering the entire world and then drilling deeper into the mechanisms that I think are at play by using case studies and the detailed analysis of historical developments.

In the regularity-seeking part, I develop a probabilistic understanding of causation. I think certain things are more likely to happen under certain conditions. If you have the early development of civil society organizations in a society, it's more likely that political alliances will cross ethnic divides and that more inclusionary ruling coalitions will emerge, to come back to the topic of nation building. But these are not laws as in physics. I think I agree with Gerschenkron that there's no necessity, and I kind of disagree for that reason with the Charles Ragin and Jim Mahoney approach to historical sociology, because they have a more deterministic understanding of causality. On a philosophical level, I agree with Jim, whose work I admire a lot: ontologically speaking, causality is complete, everything happens for a reason. But if you focus just on specific aspects of history—let's say on the probability of ethnic civil war during the process of state formation—not on individual historical events, then you have to be content with a probabilistic understanding of causality. Multiple such probabilistic causes then come together in specific configurations to generate individual cases that are fully determined by them. Sorry, that's probably a little bit too abstract.

**HKA:** No, it's very good because you make reference to what is also a very prominent methodology in the social sciences—for example, fuzzy set approaches, building on combinatorial thinking. Let me go back to some of the things we have discussed already. How do you address arguments that the nation-state has proven incapable of addressing global challenges such as pandemics and climate change, and that a new planetary form of governance is needed? For example, Nils Gilman and Jonathan Blake (2021) have recently argued, and I quote: “from economic precarity to public health, the nation-state is ill-equipped to manage the planetary roots of the problems and the local consequences for communities. All around the world people feel that: my nation state has failed me.” Are these claims true, and even if they are, is global governance a potentiality?

**AW:** Well, it is always a potentiality. Will it be realized anytime soon? I don't think so. And there's a bunch of reasons why that is so. And it brings us back to the analysis of the relevance of the nation-state. Right now, the only democratic institution, the only institution that guarantees some form of participation on an institutionalized and regular basis, is the nation-state. So far, the only political organization that provides public goods on a scale large enough to become visible for everyday citizens is the nation-state. So far, the only institution that provides protection against arbitrary violence, policing, military security, and so on to citizens in a discernible way in the every-

day lives of people is the nation-state. Within the nation-state framework, citizens and governments exchange political loyalty against participation, taxes against public goods, military service against security, and so on. All of these exchanges have been (and are continuing to happen) between national states and their citizens; they are structured by the nation-state form.

Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that other forms of governance are basically add-ons layered upon that basic political structure. Take the form of cooperation between such national governments in international organizations. Let's not talk about the European Union for now, because that's complicating the picture quite a bit. But even the European Union has no taxes of its own, has no army, and doesn't provide public goods directly. Given this state of affairs, it is clear that transnational governance remains the dream of global elites like us who like the idea of a robust governance structure at the international level. A lot of people call for it because, indeed, a lot of the problems that we're facing are of a planetary scale. But it's unlikely to emerge anytime in the near future. What needs to happen is that global institutions emerge that gradually adopt the functions of national states that I just described: public goods provision, military security, and so on. However, for that to happen, massive disruptions of the current institutional structure would be needed.

**HKA:** In your *Foreign Affairs* article "Why Nationalism Works" (Wimmer 2022), you outline basic tenets of nationalism: that a state should be ruled by members of the nation in the interest of the nation. And you argue that far from a poisonous right-wing ideology, these core concepts are almost universally accepted and largely a positive development, especially in the form of present-day "inclusive nationalism." What do you see as examples of where an inclusive nationalism has taken hold in these days? What lessons can we draw from those instances that could be applicable to other countries?

**AW:** Let me just take one step back to make a little more plausible what I'm saying about nationalism. One just has to go a little bit back in history to realize that nationalism has been historically associated with all kinds of political ideologies: liberalism in the nineteenth century, fascism in the interwar period, communism in the colonial dependencies after the Second World War. Nationalism doesn't have a political home, as it were. It's an ideology that is flexible enough and unspecific enough to enter marriages with all kinds of other political creeds. So, it is important to remind ourselves that even liberalism is deeply structured by nationalist thought, that even communism has these roots—despite its internationalist bent during the Second International. The same ideological versatility is demonstrated by current nationalisms, which are associated with the right and with authoritarian or populist tendencies.

There are lots of examples where nationalism has been inclusionary, liberal, democratic. You can point to Germany, where this tradition is well established since the Second World War, and where the nonliberal traditions today are really marginal. You can even point at France; you can

point at India, where despite the current drift towards an ethnonationalist program, you have a very robust inclusionary structure of power, which is still undergirding the actual foundations of the state and how it's run, even if in a somewhat more precarious way. So, there are plenty of examples. Botswana would be another one, as is South Africa, where you have a strongly established fusion of the nation principle with liberal-democratic elements in the post-apartheid era.

**HKA:** I think the United States would be a complex example in that regard. And with the current political situation in this country, but also with tendencies in others, do you see a risk that nationalist energies cannot be contained and can result in catastrophes similar to what we saw a hundred years ago?

**AW:** You mean that a right-wing, jingoist form of nationalism would triumph over liberal, civic, more internationally oriented and cooperative forms of nationalism? That the versions of nationalism that we took for granted only twenty years ago (and therefore ceased to call nationalist, although they were obviously versions of nationalist ideologies) would disappear? Well, that is definitely a risk. And I have been growing much more pessimistic about, especially, the US and its future political trajectories. On the international level, how likely is it going to be that tensions between countries that are led by jingoist nationalist leaders escalate into warfare? I am not sure. I think that the taste for serious conflict among today's right-wing nationalists is actually quite limited. A lot of it is rhetoric. A lot of it is cheap rhetoric. You can see that with Trump: he would beat his chest and do all kinds of maneuvers to be the biggest macho in the world and so on. But actual conflict behavior that would lead to military confrontation? He was avoiding that very consistently. He had a businessman's attitude towards the world rather than a nationalist politician's.

I think that's the case for many of today's nationalist leaders, with obvious exceptions such as Putin. The nuclear threat, combined with the high economic risk of serious conflicts for everybody involved in today's world economy, that is more integrated than it was before World War I, will make escalation less likely. Plus, number three, the very low appetite that today's average citizen has for jingoist adventures abroad, with the exception of Russia and China, also puts the brakes on tendencies towards escalation. These three factors combined might make a descent into World War III less likely.

**HKA:** And recently you began to look at the future, taking a bold step to look three hundred years ahead to a world without nation-states and to look at different configurations or patterns (Wimmer 2021). You arrive at five scenarios that differ in whether these functions are assumed by states, how large they will be, and whether their boundaries are aligned with cultural differences. Here are the five scenarios: first, an anarchic scenario without any states; a scenario with a thousand or more mini states based on shared cultural identities; an imperial scenario with a few

states each claiming to represent an entire civilization; a scenario with culturally heterogeneous and highly efficient continental states; and finally, a world state. Could you briefly summarize or describe how your approach differs from other foresight and scenario approaches commonly used in policy analysis? And what makes you confident about your predictions?

**AW:** Well, I'm absolutely not confident about predictions, and I actually refrain from making predictions in the article. I leave the question open as to which one of these scenarios is more likely. The literature on forecasting, scenario building, and so on has a much shorter time horizon. I think the maximum that I've seen in this literature is maybe sixty years. There are some exceptions. The UN did a long-term forecasting exercise, but most of forecasting is predicting the next election results, the length of the next economic cycle, predicting long-term growth prospects for different kinds of countries, and so on. What I've done is kind of outside the boundaries of traditional forecasting since I adopted a three-hundred-year time horizon. I had a lot of fun doing that because, as an empirical social scientist, to think about something on which there are no data whatsoever (since the future hasn't happened yet and hasn't had a chance to produce empirical realities) is just challenging and difficult, but also kind of liberating. I did this as a tongue-in-cheek exercise, so I don't take my scenarios all that seriously because, as they say, the future is always open. Rather than scenario building, I would classify this as a thought experiment.

**HKA:** And you put the nation-state at the center of your analysis. Could you imagine replicating your thought experiment on topics other than the nation-state?

**AW:** I focused on the question of what states could look like because that's my area of expertise. I wrote about the rise of the nation-state across the world in the last two hundred years: how empires, dynastic states, and theocracies have been replaced with the nation-state model. I started from the assumption that similarly dramatic changes in the political organization of the world will happen in the next three hundred years and that therefore, three hundred years from now, we no longer will live in a world of nation-states. That was why the thought experiment developed in the direction it did. But one could do the same for other topics. It would be interesting, for example, to think about gender relations and how they will change given the massive changes in reproductive technologies lying ahead of us. If one could look at the world in three hundred years, one could imagine very, very different kinds of gender concepts and relations, perhaps not simply prolonging or accelerating the trends that we observe today, but taking on a completely different direction, such as a world where various genders are spatially or even politically segregated from each other.

**HKA:** I'd now like to consider broader questions about the social sciences and ask you to reflect on the current situation and explore future prospects and developments. You began your career as a social anthropologist and conducted

field research in rural regions of Mexico. You were the proverbial outsider, a white European, entering "strange local communities that were so different from your own experience." While some anthropologists have argued that profound insights can emerge from such outsider encounters (the names of Margaret Mead, Bronisław Malinowski, or Claude Lévi-Strauss come to mind), others have criticized it on various grounds. These are both methodological and political. Indeed, the anthropologist Andrew Apter of UCLA, a specialist on Yoruba culture and West African mythology, suggested in a recent conversation that for the current generation of anthropologists, classical fieldwork of the kind you conducted is ever less an option and even frowned upon. What are your thoughts about this?

**AW:** That's another contested terrain. Most of the critiques of fieldwork are tied into the postcolonial critique of the "gaze of the West towards primitive others" and so on. That's against the background of an anthropology that did indeed often emerge in colonial contexts such as Romanov Russia, the British and the French Empire. But that's a political kind of critique, which has its value but also its limitations. Epistemologically, methodologically, the question is: should we no longer do fieldwork because it has these origins and these distinct historical connections? I think that would be a dramatic mistake. I think in order to make anthropology a truly global discipline and to detach it from the "West gazing at its exoticized other" dynamic, we need more people from the Global South and from the East doing fieldwork in the West. Basically, we need to make this a mirror-image situation, a more global enterprise.

But that brings us back to the whole question about how to decolonize the social sciences. It would mean building up academic capacity in these countries so they could train people really well, so they could become intellectually independent from the preoccupations of American-dominated anthropology and develop their own research agenda and their own questions. We did a little bit of that at the University of Zurich in the 1980s, where we had an exchange program with Cuba. Cuba sent their anthropologists and sociologists to Switzerland, and they were doing fieldwork there, and they were observing things they found remarkable and unusual, such as the obsession with pet dogs, for example. Another example is the research center that my former Princeton colleague Leonard Wantchekon is helping to build in Benin. I think initiatives like these are the way forward. Coming back to the method of fieldwork, I think there's nothing like it in terms of building insights about how the world works, how differentiated it is, how the everyday experiences of people differ in different parts of the world. I think every social scientist should be dropped randomly somewhere on the planet for at least two months to gain this very basic insight. We would have a much, much better, more sensitive, more realistic kind of social sciences if that would be a mandatory part of the training for everybody.

**HKA:** That's a fascinating idea, and we should take it seriously. But you later found a home in sociology. Also, your work branches into several neighboring disciplines and

with a pronounced comparative focus. How would you assess the state of comparative sociology today and perhaps look at similar approaches in political science or economics?

**AW:** I'm trying to help build a stronger institutional foundation for comparative sociology—for example, by editing a book series for Princeton University Press or by engaging in the comparative historical section of the American Sociological Association. But it's kind of an uphill battle. In the current political moment, domestic agendas that are related to racial justice and other domestic issues are so strong that sociology, at least in the United States—but in Europe, I observe a similar trend—has kind of turned more inward looking than it already was. The intellectual space for genuinely comparative approaches has been reduced, with the exception of what is now called transnational sociology, which is derived from John Meyer's (Meyer, Krücken, and Drori 2015) perspective. It is still going strong and has a lot of people interested in it. There is also a slowly growing recognition that studying important countries such as China in their own terms is a valuable project, as you can see in the slow diversification of the geographic focus of major journals. In political science, the comparative, non-domestic approach has much stronger roots. It is one of the four key fields together with American politics, with IR, and with political philosophy. Every department must cover these four fields; every department thus has comparativists. You can make a career studying West African politics. You can make a career studying Southeast Asia, you can make a career studying the Central Asian republics, or you can be a China specialist, and so on. That is much, much harder to do in sociology. Sadly, sociology has remained a more provincial discipline, and for that reason I have been drifting slowly towards political science.

**HKA:** Where we also have very large-scale and sustained comparative projects like the quality of government, the drivers of democracy, and so on. Perhaps one question we could think of is, What would be the sociological equivalent of such an endeavor? Which brings me to the last and final question. If you had to make two or three proposals on what could advance not only sociology but also the social sciences generally, what would they be?

**AW:** Well, I'm a big fan of global data, and I'm a big fan of the idea that methodological nationalism can be overcome by going beyond the statistics that governments provide to the UN or to the World Bank. A big project would be to collect regional-level data—for example, for every region of the world. That's done in Europe, with Eurostat.

What's available now in the European Union is fantastic. You can do all kinds of extraordinary, interesting work where you don't have to take nation-states as the exclusive units of observation and analysis. We need something like that at the global level. To be sure, the global health surveys went a little bit in that direction. World Values Survey went

in that direction, but it doesn't have representative regional samples. If we could push this further, I think that would be great. And if we could do this with historical depth, that would be even better.

There's a part of V-Dem that they call historical V-Dem.<sup>1</sup> I think it is now folded into the general version 11 dataset. They try to code things for the late eighteenth century, and that's fantastic. But it's somewhat problematic in terms of data quality. I'm very optimistic that over time, we will have more and more attempts at adding historical depth to the social sciences so that we can look not just at the problems of the day as we tend to do, and be consumed by them, but to observe over long stretches of time how the problems of the day change and are reconfigured, dissolve into other kinds of problems of the day. Strengthening the global purview to overcome its Western centrism, adding historical depth to avoid chronocentrism, and overcoming methodological nationalism with new, more disaggregated data is where the social sciences should go. That would be my three main points on the wish list.

**HKA:** Professor Wimmer, on behalf of *Global Perspectives*, we'd like to thank you ever so much for your time and for a fascinating interview.

#### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Andreas Wimmer's** research assumes a long term historical and globally comparative perspective. It asks how states are built and nations formed, how ethno-racial boundaries and hierarchies form and dissolve in the process, and when this will result in armed conflict and war. Most recently, he began to ask how ideas and institutions travel across the world and with what long term consequences. His most recent book is *Nation Building. Why Some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart* (Princeton UP 2018).

Andreas Wimmer was educated at the University of Zurich, from where he received a PhD in social anthropology in 1992 and a habilitation two years later. He joined Columbia University in 2015 as the Lieber Professor of Sociology and Political Philosophy. Previously, he taught at Princeton University and at the University of California Los Angeles (from 2003 to 2012). Before moving to the United States, Wimmer was founding director of two interdisciplinary research institutes in Europe: the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies at the University of Neuchâtel (from 1995 to 1999) and the Department of Political and Cultural Change at the Center for Development Research of the University of Bonn (from 1999 to 2002).

Wimmer received an honorary PhD from McGill University, the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research, life-time achievement awards from sections of the American Sociological Association and the Interna-

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.v-dem.net/hdata.html>.

tional Studies Association, as well as numerous best book and best article awards. He is a fellow of the Boundaries, Membership & Belonging Program of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

For Princeton University Press, Wimmer edits the book series *Studies in Global and Comparative Sociology*. He serves as one of the deputy editors of *Sociological Science*.

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