



The Nation, Nationalism and Ethno-nationalism: A Theoretical Discourse



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Abstract: *People or masses that are united by their common culture, language, history, descent and distinct ideas in a specific country or territory known as a nation. Moreover, nationalism is an idea or a movement where a nation fits in the state. As a nation, it tends to promote the interest of a group of people. The word 'nationality' has been in mutual use in third-world countries to designate ethnolinguistic communities. The term ethno nationalism is a form of nationalism and basic understanding in the regard to ethnic ties and ethnicity as a core component of experiences and conception of nations. Exclusivist ethnonationalism denotes the compartmentalization among various entities while living in a similar territory. The current study explores the origin, evolution and growth of nation, nationalism and ethnonationalism. How these three ideologies are different from each other. The study also reveals the major stakes of the theorist on these three philosophies.*

Key Words: Nation, Nationalism, Ethno-nationalism, Ideologies, Discourse, Philosophies, Communities

Introduction

A general belief of nationalism is to derive the strength of national identity that state elites would be the agent of equitable development. The social justice ideology was invented by these state elites to resonate with the psychological needs of the individual in the search for the security and development of any community. (Brown, 2004, 1) In the modern world, “nationalism is considered one of the most powerful forces.” As an ideology and political movement, nationalism applied as a strong effect in the French and American revolutions. There are various causes for this state of affairs. To begin with, the nationalist phenomena, which include the growth and development of nations and national states as well as community and ethnic identity, is ramified and vast. It also spills

over a number of cognate subjects: racism and race, language development and fascism, communalism, political religion, international law, ethnic conflict, minorities, protectionism, immigration, gender and genocide. (Hutchinson and Smith, 1993, 10)

In the postulation of linkages of ethnic identity and political legitimacy, the concept of self-determination of a nation contains the root of the radical redrawing of the contemporary political map. In the current dictionary, world politics, national self-determination maintains that it is “the right of the group of people who consider themselves different and separate from others to determine for themselves for the state in which they will live and form a government it will have”. (Connor, 1973, 1)

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The common culture, language, history, tribal and kinship elements bind people into a harmonious whole for future action. An ethnic group, this study implies a group of people who share linguistic, cultural, territorial and tribal commonalities. This is acknowledging the relevance of nearly all the constituent elements of a nation as emphasized by various academicians. However, it is not necessary that every group that claims to be a nation has all the above-mentioned essential features. (Connor, [1994](#), 76)

Research Objectives

This study, however, intends to explore the following objectives;

- To explore the difference, nature and origin of nation and nationalism in a theoretical context.
- To explore the ideologies of ethnonationalism and ethnosymbolism.

Research Questions

This distinct research aims to answer these questions which are given below:

- ⇒ What is the difference in nature and origin of the ideologies of nation and nationalism?
- ⇒ How far the ethnonationalism and ethnosymbolism are different from each other?

Research Methodology

In the current study, the discussion generated is based on the qualitative analysis of the existing published literature in the form of research articles, books and reports. Moreover, this study, not only discovers the contradictions among nation, nationalism and ethnonationalism but also includes societal perspectives on ethnic diversity. The current research is exploratory, normative, descriptive and qualitative. Both primary and secondary sources have been consulted. Primary data is also conducted through government official reports, census reports gazetteers and archives. However, the required secondary data for this study has been

collected from Books, Research Articles, Journals, Newspapers and Internet sources.

Nation

There are various theorists defined the nation in their own way. Generally, the nation is a large body of individuals unified by common culture, descent, language, and history, inhabiting a specific territory and country. Benedict Anderson further advances this worldview by arguing that nations are imagined political communities because membership is contingent upon the approach of the people that they belong to a singular group. He further argues that nations as modern entities and it's resulted from industrialization and modernization specifically print capitalism where vernacular languages come up against Latin, which is considered the language of the Church. Anderson asserts that the force of religion reduced and the appearance of printed material in the vernacular led to a rising cultural consciousness among the people thus laying the 'imagined communities. (Anderson, [1983](#), 7)

There are many variations among the modernist writer about the modernist approach. The first contradiction that emerges is about the origin of nations. (Ozkirimli, [2010](#), 28) Liah Greenfeld describes the first nation during the 16th century (Greenfeld, [1993](#), 12). Hasting said that the nations came in the 14th century (Hastings, 1997, 3). These concepts are at variance with those of Hobsbawm, Gellner, Breuilly, Kedourie and Anderson who assert nationalism and nations are modern phenomena (Gellner, [1990](#), 8). Therefore, the major criticism of the argument of modernism comes from the ethnosymbolist approach to nationalism. Smith who presented the theory of ethnosymbolist has made a sharp criticism of the modernist position. His main criticism is that modernists do not consider the existence of pre-modern ethnic ties. Smith calls them ethnies, he asserts that these ethnic communities have lived for hundreds of years and they developed a direct link with contemporary ethnic groups. (Hutchinson, [1994](#), 8)

Thus, historical events and history are important dimensions in understanding ethnic

identity, nation and nationalism in the modern context. Modernism. Speculation “became on about the timing of nations (when is a nation) and the rise of a nation (when it became a dominant ideology and force) has led to two contradicting Calendars. Modernists date their creation to the rise of modernity in whatever form the latter is defined, perennials see them as Inveterate, enduring, century-long even millennial phenomena certainly predating modernity.” (Leoussi, 2007, 11) Since Gallner was “perhaps the major modernist influence on Smiths work. A former disciple of (Ernest Gallner) Smith has challenged and questioned the latter deterrments and modernist grand vision.” Gallner associates modernism with the spread of industrialization. (Leoussi, 2007, 12)

A renowned author Anderson expounded that A "nation is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently sovereign and limited. It is imagined in the sense that it is impossible for the members of even the smallest nation to know, meets with, or hear of, most of their fellow members. It is imagined as limited in the sense that even the largest nation has restricted territories beyond which exist other nations. In short, no nation seeks to spread across the globe.” (Erdem, 2017, 27) Further, the “most extreme nationalist does desire nor the entire human community race to join their nation. It is imagined and sovereign because the concept arose in an age when the Revolution and Enlightenment were demolishing the legitimacy of the hierarchical dynastic realm: the nations were seeking freedom. Lastly, it is also imagined community in the sense that regardless of the exploitation and actual inequality that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship, it is this sense of fraternity, Anderson notes, that scenario leads millions voluntarily to sacrifice their lives for their nations.” (Erdem, 2017, 27)

Finally, Anderson analyzed, there are three possible developments which made it possible for imagining of nation: Firstly, “the decline of the religious community and dynastic realm offered the historical and geographical space nations needed to surface; secondly, the transformation of the pre-modern apprehension of time from a simultaneity of past and future in an

instantaneous present’ into ‘homogenous, empty time’ made it possible to imagine the nation. Thirdly, capitalism on the convergence of print technology and fatal diversity of human language’ paving the way for the modern nation and laid the foundation for national consciousness.” (Erdem, 2017, 28)

Differentiating between a nation and ethnic, it is clarified by Anthony Smith that the link which is shared by the ethnicity with the territory might be "historical and symbolic" (Smith, National Identity, 40), while the link between territory and nation is, “physical and actual [as] nations possess territories”. (Bajaj, 2017, 6)

In fact, he also claims that “no nation seeks to spread across the globe.” This kind of feeling may generate common interests among followers of a nation or particular features such as culture, language and ethnicity. (Anderson, 1998, 6) According to A.D. Smith, by the term nation, "I understand a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, public culture, common rights and a single economy and duties for all the member." According to Connor, “a few nations may enjoy one to two. During the Cold War era, nationalism created further academic interest, making it the concern of political and social scientists who studies it as a dominant strand on ongoing ethnic conflict. (Connor, 1994, 75) When the demand for self-government and autonomy of the group would appear, an important implication of the change from an ethnic group into a nation is emerged often, in a sovereign state. This is one of the ideals components and constitutes of 'nationhood'.” (Connor, 1994, 75)

The Nationalism

Nationalism is “an idea and a movement that holds that the nation should be congruent with the state”. The various interests of a group of people intend by a nation. To designate ethnolinguistic communities, the word 'nationality' has been in mutual use in third-world countries. The dictionary and scholars of nationalists and Marxists as well as politicians and right-wing political parties have been using

it. The problems of language, culture and allocation of resources among ethnic communities, political participation and regional autonomy have been considered the rubric of the 'nationality question' or 'national question'. (Ahmed, [1996](#), 3050) Ethnie is "another very important aspect of nationalism which considered the formative concept of nationalism works on the shared memory and notion of culture and, love for the homeland" (Bajaji, [2017](#), 2).

Ethnie has been divided by Smith into two main types namely, "aristocratic ethnics" and "the vertical demonic ethnics". The first one through the growing role of bureaucracy concentrates on the culture of assimilation of lower classes. The second having political leverage is ruled by religious communities interested. Anthony Smith cites some examples while elaborating on the Aristocratic and Lateral ethnics, including, Spain, England, Sweden, and France were able through a process of 'bureaucratic incorporation in last over many centuries. It was owing to this process that other groups, classes, and regions, "of their society [were brought] into the principal ethnic culture of the state". (Bajaji, [2017](#),3) Smith defined an ethnics as a "named human population one of more elements of a common culture, with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, including some degrees of solidarity and an association with the homeland, at least amongst elites. (Smith, [1999](#),13) In fact, according to Smith, the myths and symbols play an important role in confirming their continuity and uniting the varied people over many generations. He further focused on the cultural content of myths, symbols and memories." (Smith, [1999](#),14)

Another leading modernist writer Benedict Anderson "underlined cultural and social transformation of the society in explaining the formation of nationality, nation, and nationalism. Anderson contends that nationalism and nationality are cultural artefacts of a particular kind, which emerged in the 18th century by the spontaneous distillation of a complex crossing of discrete historical forces 'but once formed they became 'modular' able to be transplanted, with various degrees of self-consciousness" (Erdem, 2017, 28).

The major proponents of another theoretical variant of the modernist approach considered a cultural and social change in society as the major reason for the appearance of nationalism and nation. "Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner are two famous contributors" to this approach, they both considered the study of nationalism, to be the modernist approach. To explain the idea of nation and nationalism Gellner's theory of nationalism was considered the best example. (Axman, [2008](#), 7)

E. Gelener stated that:

"the nations and nationalism are the products of modernity and associate modernity with the spread of industrialization, capitalism, urbanization, secularization and the bureaucratic states. (Axman, 2008, 9) Benedict Anderson says that the nation is an imagined political community which is inherently sovereign and limited. (Anderson, [1991](#),6) In fact, nationalism as deriving from the economic practices and political arena both indicated and reject the major claim that nations are fixed, predetermined and natural entities. They further argue that nationalism is the manipulation of the public emotions for the purpose or land on or attaining political or economic power." (Anderson, [1991](#),7)

In fact, Gellner gave his remarkable analysis, his "Thought and Change (1964), and Nation and Nationalism" (1964), because of the distinctive structural necessity the nationalism originated in industrial society. He also defined nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent. He also said that nationalism is the product of the modern time period and produced by the industrial order because leaders by using nationalistic ideas in the pre-modern period did not strengthen the structure of the political institution. He further argues nationalism as a sociological necessity' only arose during the modern period." (Erdem, 2017, 235)

John Breuilly for the emergence of nationalism is the foremost proponent of political modernism, who dowed on political transformation, argues that "the concept of nationalism needs to "be understood as a form of

politics" and hence that form of politics becomes meaningful solely in terms of the aim of nationalism and specific political context. The basic and fundamental aim to development of the modern state." Both aims regulates nationalist politics and strengthen that politics with its central task: control of the state. John Bruielli agreed on the existence of national attachments and ethnic groups in medieval Europe; however, he asserts that nationalism emerged as a political phenomenon as an opposition in the modern era to political modernization. He further explained it in three different forms, namely, reform, separation, and unification. (Bruielli, 2000, 186)

As Bruielli notes, "A nationalist argument, therefore, is a political doctrine resting on three principles: first, there exists a nation with peculiar character. Second, the values and interests of this notion take priority over all other values and interests. Third, the nation must be as independent as possible." (Bruielli, 2000, 188)

Another very famous name that contributed to the study of nationalism can be found in Eric Hobsbawm's different books, like "The Invention of Traditions (1983) and Nations and Nationalism since 1780 (1990). The British Marxist historian Hobsbawm can be called among the proponents of the political modernist approach that maintains political transformation lies beneath the emergence" of nationalism and nations. (Erdem, 2017, 33)

Gellnerian model of nationalist development powerfully highlights that "nationalism has its roots in the new industrial order, and that nothing before this period, in his more recent statements there are no main theoretical changes, although Gellner has advanced his typology of nationalism. He differentiates five stages in the evolution of nationalism (beginnings, nationalism triumphant, totalitarian nationalism, nationalist irredentism, and tamed nationalism) and four European time zones (Holy Roman Empire area, Atlantic sea-coast, Mitteleuropa and the ex-Soviet Union)." (Joseph, 1999, 17)

Elie Kedourie start nationalism in these words, "nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century" Similarly Kedourie further argued that "nationalism establishes the ideological

character of nationalism". He further defines nationalism, as "the doctrine holds that humanity is naturally defined into a nation, that nation is known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national-self-government." (Bruielli, 2000, 188) For Kedourie nationalism is begin life as an Idea and once it became powerful politics is characterized by a commitment to imposing that idea upon the world. (Bruielli, 2000, 190) For Bruielli "nationalism is a political movement". He further argued that nationalism first attracted the historian because of its political significance after the aftermath of the First World War. The War aims of the states were formulated in national and anti-national terms. (Bruielli, 2000, 192)

Another writer on Nationalism Guibernau argued that nationalism is a sentiment which is connected to a territorially demarcated homeland, cultural and customs values, and a common language. He further claimed that a group of people identified with a piece of songs and symbols of a flag which create a distinction between two ethnic groups (Guibernau, 2001, 43).

Ethno-nationalism

The term ethnonationalism is a form of nationalism and basic understanding in regard to ethnic ties and ethnicity as a core component of experiences and conception of nations. Exclusivist ethnonationalism denotes the compartmentalization among various entities while living in a similar territory. If these bodies fail to grow attributes or social capital or integration to accommodate each other, they finally result in distinctiveness, with deeply deep-rooted boundaries defined among distinct ethnic groups. Different thinkers, such as Karl Marx and Max Weber enlist various reasons that construct ethnonationalist watersheds such as colonial legacies, modernization, forced assimilation, social fragmentation, uneven development, and histories of authoritarianism. Every ethnic group has an intellect of ethnic honour but when it is oppressed in terms of non-inclusive and less- privileged policies from the

centre, it ends up feeling relegated while still being a part of the larger whole. (Shahzad, 2017,101)

Ethno symbolism “underlines the continuity between pre-modern and modern forms of social cohesion, without overlooking the changes brought about by modernity. The persisting features in the formation and continuity of national identities are myths, memories values, traditions, and symbols. Although Smith does not systematically focus on intellectual, he acknowledges the pivotal role of a creator's inventions, producers and analysis of ideas. In fact, the intellectual role is seen by ethnosymbolist as providing a skeleton upon which to build a larger movement. Bridges must be built between past and present between ethnic myths and their modern translation into viable coherent identities and political” programs (Conversi, 2020, 15). “Such a sensitive and powerful connection to a homeland continuously attribute to assertions among co-ethnies of homeland territory being “exclusively theirs, consigning all non-members to the status of outsiders or foreigners who don't properly belong.” (Kaiser, 2002, 8)

This transformation, in any case, “contains rivalry between opposing elites for economic and political advantages. Various students of the study of nationalism have asserted that the uneven development of industrialization and march into modernity provided more advantages for some ethnic communities or ethnically distinct regions than others, promoting the development of national consciousness in the long run.” (Erdem, 2017, 27)

The first type of “elite competition emerges when foreign intruders in preindustrial societies attempt to bring the lands and landowners under control through either constituting a direct link between the peasantry and the state, or replacing the old ruling class, or winning their cooperation.” (Brass, 1991, 12).

The 2nd type of elite competition emerged when the “native religious leaders, in such a situation, will step into action to secure their status by encouraging ethnic consciousness among the followers of the existing religion and mobilizing them against the dominant external

group. The third form of elite conflict, Brass suggests, may occur if a local ruling class unites with an external authority. In that case, those local elites, even if they do not embrace the religion of the foreign authority, accept and support the foreign culture, which in turn puts the authority of local religious elites at risk. This type of conflict between the local aristocracy and religious leaders, Brass argues, is one of the most common divisions that incite ethnic communalism. The final form of elite competition occurs between local religious elites and foreign aristocracies. In such situations, “ethnic identities and the early stages of nationalism were promoted by parish priests and 'the native lower clergy". Ultimately, in Brass' theory, it is these four kinds of elite conflicts that precipitate the early stages of ethnic identity formation.” (Erdem, 2017, 29)

In general terms, “the instrumentalist of the views that national and ethnic units give suitable space for elites to gain the masses, support and secure their prestige and status to gain power and wealth. One of the leading figures in the instrumentalist approach, Paul Brass argues that whether or not the culture of the group is ancient or is newly-fashioned, the study of nationality and ethnicity is the study of the process by which counter-elites and elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interest and compete with other groups". (Erdem, 2017, 29)

Conclusion

Various theorist deals with nation, nationalism, ethnonationalism and ethnosymbolism in a different way. For political scientists such as Connor, the focus of the study should be power, which is preserved in the state. However, the state is absent in Connor's analysis. For Smith, although his study adopted a sociological approach, politicization captured most of his attention in analyzing the transformation of tribes into nations. Snyder, despite his erudite knowledge of history, did not treat ethnicity as the historical origin of nationalism. Perhaps our understanding of nationalism could be improved

if these three scholars would further exploit their strengths within their own disciplines.

For Gellner, “the transformation lies behind the sui generis feature of modernization. Modernization spread over the world unevenly, and rapidly, hitting different regions at different degrees and times, the rapid spread of

modernization, in return, had two striking outcomes. First, traditional social structures (religion, family, community) were literate and undermined, and linguistic culture came into prominence, obliging the residents to be literate and mobile. And the only institution capable of controlling” and nourishing such an immense system was the centralized state.

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