

# Theories and Practices of Nationalism - Assignment 2

Zubair Abid, 20171076

**Question:** *Which of these two ideas take explanatory primacy in explaining the rise of official and colonial nationalisms: the concept of bounded, border contained journeys, or the idea of print-capitalism combined with school education?*

*Word count:* 1331

## Introduction

For the purpose of deciding the primacy of explanatory ideas, I'll be using Anderson's "Imagined Communities - Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism" (2006). I will try to explain why I think that print capitalism combined with school education takes explanatory primacy over the "shared journey", although that is almost as important.

To strengthen the argument, it's also important to realise that it's specifically these two (shared journeys and print capitalism) that enable the rise of nationalisms. Nationalist sentiments don't materialise simply among those sharing a common language, and in fact having the same language is not even a necessity. We begin by diving right into this.

## Lessons from Creole and European Linguistic Nationalism

### Why it isn't about a Common Language:

Theories of nations as requiring a common language aren't uncommon, with several early theorists having posited such based on observation. Nairn (2003) talks of 'the masses' being 'invited into history' by middle-class intelligentsia, something only possible through a language they (the masses) understood; laying a framework for linguistic nationalism. But no explanation is given for the popularity of the idea, on why exactly this would appeal to either the masses or the middle-class intelligentsia, unless as Anderson says we "turn finally to

piracy”<sup>1</sup>

And it isn’t necessary that a common language invites nationalist sentiments. As we see from the chapter on creole nationalism, a common language did not unify the Latin American nations, but neither did the lack of one among the multiple ethnicities living there separate them from rallying under the flag of a single nation.<sup>2</sup>

### **A strong case for print primacy over the shared journey:**

Anderson points out that in Madrid-controlled America, the shared journey had existed for almost three centuries<sup>3</sup> before the whole region split into the eighteen different nations. He raises two factors used to explain the sudden rise of nationalism: the tightening of Madrid’s control, and “the spread of liberalizing ideas of the Enlightenment”.

The latter is only possible in an environment of print capitalism - even though it had not yet “reached these illiterates”, serialised newspapers were a thing - allowing for a plural imagination of a shared time-space where said journeys could be committed to the memory of print, enabling them to be “shared”. Print capitalism manifested in the newspaper thus became a prerequisite for the shared journey to be realised as ‘shared’ and then actualised in the first place.

For the rest of this essay, we will be taking (theory and) examples from the latter two stages, Official Nationalism and Colonial Nationalism (as a subset of the Last Wave), to demonstrate that this prerequisite nature applies across the board.

### **Examining Official Nationalisms**

Official nationalisms aren’t a bottom-up movement in themselves, but an attempt by the existing State to retain its power by co-opting 19th Century Europe’s linguistic nationalism.<sup>4</sup> As a result of such, there is no theoretical explanation to them as such, and we must then explore how the previous stage comes into being. So, we need to show primacy of print capitalism in Linguistic nationalism.

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<sup>1</sup>Anderson (2006, 80). Here he refers to piracy as others lifting the ideas of nations and nationalism from those who have already done so and written it down as a model to use. It is something only possible when there is a system of print capitalism in place.

<sup>2</sup>See Anderson (2006, 47–48)

<sup>3</sup>See Anderson (2006, 50, 61–63)

<sup>4</sup>Anderson (2006, 109–10) talks of official nationalism as a response by power groups. We can also refer to Seton-Watson (1977, 147) which refers to *Kaisertreue* (loyalty to the emperor) as the essential requirement over the concept of nationality.

### **Europe's linguistic nationalism could not come from shared journey**

The middle class' rise as the literate bourgeoisie, imagining fraternity within limitations of mutual intelligibility is key to European linguistic nationalism (Anderson 2006, 77–78), however print capitalism did exist in Europe for quite a bit before nationalist sentiments finally came to light.<sup>5</sup> So one may assume it is not the primary motivation behind the rise of the nationalisms, and the common bounded journey might have a play here.

This is an incorrect assumption: - There is no way to have “common journeys” that would split Europe the way the Americas were. The states were not colonial but central, so the bureaucracy was not bounded the way it was in the colonies. - We might venture to say that in the colonies bureaucracy and the quest for positions by merit birthed the shared journey. Pre-national Europe has none of that. The ruling class is more a large family of interconnected second and third cousins<sup>6</sup> so they are not thinking in terms of nations. In feudal conditions too, power is hereditary and passed on by death.<sup>7</sup> There cannot be a shared journey if there isn't much of a journey to begin with. - This is not to say the shared journey didn't play a part in official nationalisms - but much later. The separate bureaucracies allow for a common journeys among “countrymen” distinct from that of another, serving to strengthen the national bonds, *but the existence of said bureaucracies has to be preceded by print capitalism creating the awareness of nations and distinction in the first place.*

### **The role of print in opening up imaginations**

Print was necessary for realisation of “non-divinity” of languages, giving rise to the identification of languages with their native speakers as since now no language was “holy”, who else to identify it with than with its native speakers? (Anderson 2006, 69). It also allowed for the growth of comparative history through popular reading of others, leading to the thought of Europe as one among many civilizations, as opposed to the only one.<sup>8</sup>

### **Incoming: State monopoly on education**

Although seen in full force later in Colonial nationalism (which we will explore in a minute), official nationalism is also where we begin to see the impact of a State monopoly on Education. Prominent examples being of course, Russification and Macaulayism. A formal study of requiring nationalism to be a dual-pronged

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<sup>5</sup>Editors (n.d.) gives the date for the Gutenberg Press in the mid-15th century, but it is not until printing goes beyond reprints of the Bible that we can assume “Print Capitalism” to have begun in Europe, which would then place it in the early 16th century.

<sup>6</sup>Consider here the example of the House of Hanover - a “German” royalty ruling over Great Britain and Ireland.

<sup>7</sup>See Anderson (2006, 55)

<sup>8</sup>Anderson cites Hobsbawm's “The Age of Revolution” (2006, 70) to highlight the consideration of comparative study in the linguistic field of study.

approach was studied by Hobsbawm much after,<sup>9</sup> , but the idea is simple - educate the masses with a common language that allows them to see whatever has been defined for them as the Nation-state, along with the opportunity to participate in government. In colonial nations this allows a new kind of shared journey to arise, which we will discuss in a minute.

With this evidence for the primacy of Print Nationalism and Education over Shared Journey in Official nationalism, we move on to the Colonial cases.

## Examining Colonial Nationalisms

### A significant display of border-contained journeys

Colonial nations are a lot more demonstrative of the issue of border-contained journeys, because of the overwhelming parallels to their creole partners. For a quick example, consider the non-demonstration of nationalist sentiment from Scotland due to their freedom of movement in an around all of England, versus a nation like Ireland.<sup>10</sup>

Several examples can be taken: the desire of independence of Cambodia from Vietnam, due to limitations placed on the Khmer (Anderson 2006). In India, Bipin Chandra Pal is well known for his comments on Indians educated in British ways who are both not allowed to operate outside of India, and also cut off from the orthodox Hindu Communion (Pal 1932, 1:409). Using parallels to the creoles, it is clear that there is some degree of “shared journey”.

On closer examination, however - this only applies *once* some degree of education, or some system is in place to permit such situations to rise in the first place.

### State-monopoly on Education

Natives getting into administrative positions only to be limited by boundaries and sharing a common goal cannot happen when they aren’t educated by the State to fill roles in government in the first place.

However, Education’s role in nationalism extends beyond that. Take the case of Indonesia (some of this applies to India too) - the government schools provided regulated gradations by age groups, and as one moved up from primary to secondary and then tertiary, a shared journey from the villages to the town centers.<sup>11</sup> It has more visible effects too; despite federalist policy exploiting ethnic differences, Indonesia does not split apart.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>As discussed in class

<sup>10</sup>Anderson (2006, 90) refers to this: The Scottish had “no barricades” in possible paths to the centre (England), compares to those in the Thirteen Colonies, or even Ireland.

<sup>11</sup>See Anderson (2006, 132)

<sup>12</sup>See Anderson (2006, 132)

## Print Capitalism's necessity and role beyond

It goes without saying that the above could not happen without print capitalism.

There is more print capitalism contributes than just a means for Education, of course. Mirroring the creoles again, is the role of the newspaper as manifestation, allowing the growth of vernacular.<sup>13</sup> Newspapers also ended up playing significant roles directly in several struggles for Independence.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Anderson describes the spread of print-capitalism in Spanish-controlled America in (2006, 61–63) through newspapers

<sup>14</sup>India (2015) talks in some detail about the role of press in the National Independence movement. - Pal (1932), pp 409: comparison to creoles