

NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

ERNEST GELLNER



- Theories and Practices of Nationalism
- HSS444 – Monsoon 2020
- Aniket Alam

Definition

- “Nationalism is primarily a **political principle**, which holds that the **political and national unit should be congruent**”
 - Nationalist **sentiment** is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of this principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment.
 - Nationalist **movement** is one which is actuated by a sentiment of this kind.
- “Nationalism is a **theory of political legitimacy**, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and that ethnic boundaries within a given state... should not separate the power-holders from the rest”
 1. “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they **share the same culture**, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating”
 2. “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they **recognise each other** as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities”

Pre-National Agrarian Society

- Three Major Stages of History:
 - Hunting and Pastoral,
 - Agrarian,
 - Industrial
- Agrarian society is based on Literacy
 - Literacy is confined to a small class (clerks/clerisy)
 - “Almost everything in agro-literate society militates against the definition of political units in term of cultural boundaries”
- Literate High Culture Separate from Mass Folk Culture

Power and culture in the agro-literate polity

These two crucial and idiosyncratic forms of the division of labour – the centralizations of power and of culture/cognition – have profound and special implications for the typical social structure of the agro-literate polity. Their implications are best considered jointly, and they can be schematized as shown in figure 1.

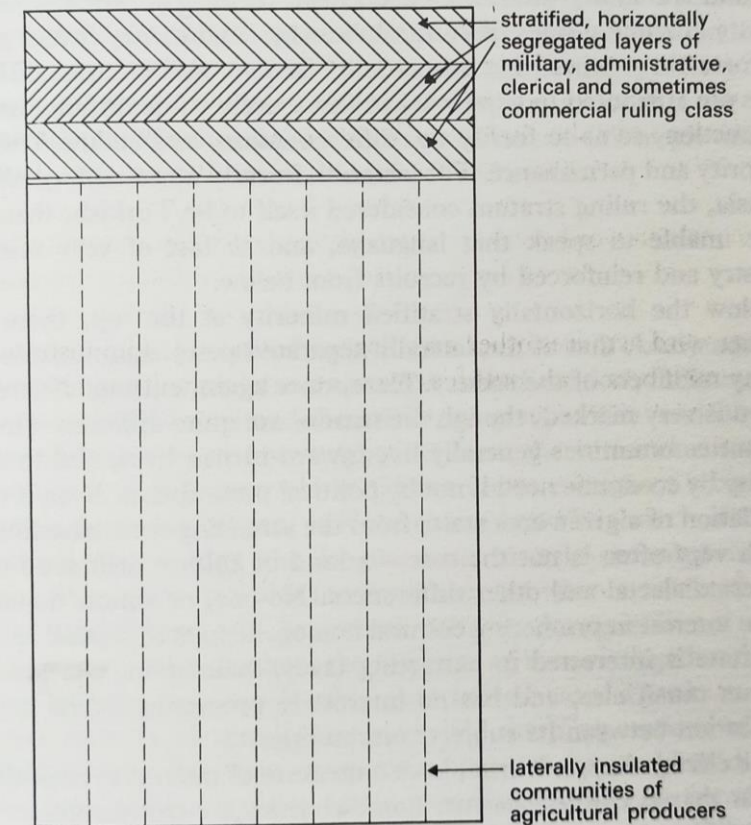
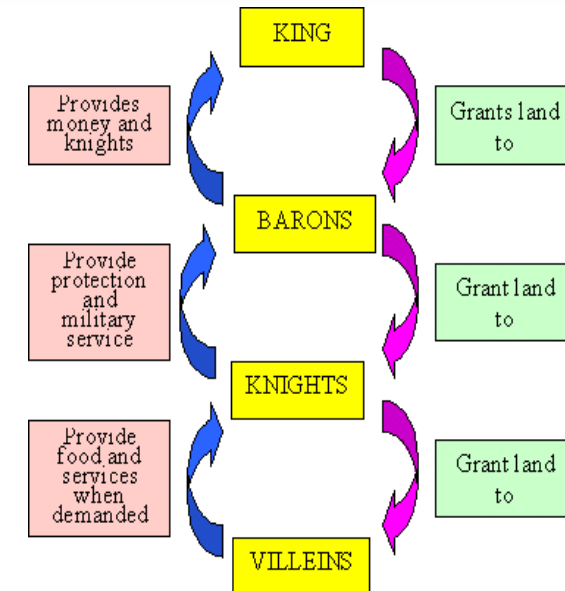
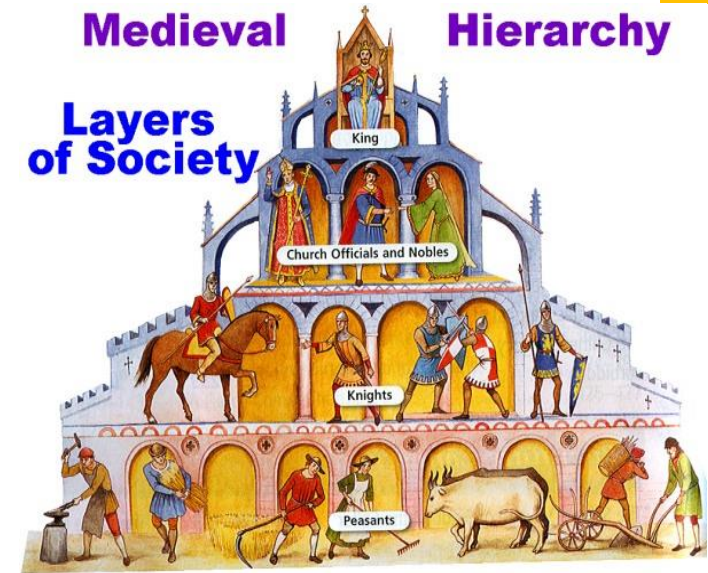


Figure 1 General form of the social structure of agrarian societies.

In the characteristic agro-literate polity, the ruling class forms a small minority of the population, rigidly separate from the great majority of direct agricultural producers, or peasants. Generally

Stability and Ambiguity

- No interest of the ruling classes or clerks to impose their culture on peasantry
- **Literacy is a specialisation** itself within society
- High Culture based on large ideological systems like religion spread over vast geographical and ethnic spaces
- Folk cultures are by definition ambiguous and fuzzy-boundaried
- But also, limited in scope and spread
- **Stability of society** important
- Co-existence of multiple, not properly united, but hierarchically related sub-worlds





Industrial Society

- “Industrial society is the only society ever to live by and rely on sustained **perpetual growth**, on an expected and continuous improvement. Not surprisingly, it was the first society to invent the concept and ideal of progress, of continuous improvement. Its favoured mode of social control is **universal Danegeld**, buying off social aggression with material enhancement; its greatest weakness is its inability to survive any temporary reduction in the social bribery fund...”
- “The conception of the **world as homogeneous**, subject to **systemic, indiscriminate laws**, open to interminable exploration, offered **endless possibilities** of new combinations of means with no firm prior expectations and limits: no possibilities would be barred, and in the end **nothing but evidence** would decide how things were, and they could be combined to secure desired effects.”

Musical Chairs

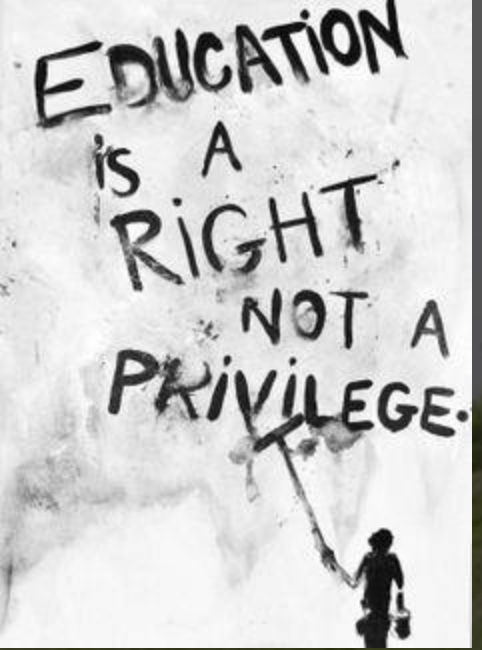
- “**Roles become optional and instrumental**. The old stability of the social role structure is simply incompatible with growth and innovation. Innovation means new things, the boundaries of which cannot be the same as those of the activities they replace. No doubt most societies can cope with an occasional re-drawing of job-specifications and guild boundaries, just as a football team can experimentally switch from one formation to another... but what happens when such changes are constant and continuous, when the persistence of occupational change itself becomes the one permanent feature of social order?”
- “When this question is answered, the main part of the problem of nationalism is thereby solved. **Nationalism is rooted in a certain kind of division of labour**, one which is complex and persistently, cumulatively changing.”
- “A society which is destined to be a permanent game of musical chairs **cannot erect deep barriers of rank**, of caste or estate, between various sets of chairs which it possesses.”
- “Stratification and inequality do exist, but they have a muted quality due to gradualness of distinctions of wealth and... by the illusion or reality of **social mobility**”



Specialisation of Labour, not Education

- Craftsmen had one calling: an entire product from scratch to finish
 - Children initiated early, life-long work for perfection
 - Peasants had one skill: growing plants
- Industrial society pushes **division and skills to extreme levels**
 - One small aspect of one small part of a larger production line; where a few of these production lines makes one commodity
 - Massive number of specialisations
 - Yet distance between them is small
- Training in industrial society is **generic**!
- **Education system** is least specialised, most universally **standardised**.
 - Same education given to all children till late age
 - Specialised schools have prestige only in late (last?) stage
- **Paradox**: unspecialised training for a highly specialised society





Universal Education

- Creating a population where **everyone is Educated**
- This allows people to move from one occupation to other
- Industrial society turns everyone into a clerk – cleric
- Society is no longer reproduced by small social units tied to production
- Society is reproduced in the universal education systems: Schools
- Communication has to be impersonal and universal
- State needs not just monopoly of legitimate power, but **monopoly of legitimate education**
- Nationalism: “the organisation of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogenous units.”

Universal High Culture

- Replaceability of individuals means a **uniform cultural form**
- This is produced in a uniform manner in schools
- Employability, dignity, security, self-respect tied to education
- People acquire skills and sensibilities which make them acceptable socially and economically by being handed over by their families and kin-groups **to the education machine** which alone is equipped to produce the generic cultural base
- Culture is no longer the preserve of specialists with life-long training
- Culture now has to be, by definition, **universally accessible**
- **State and Culture are now linked**: unavoidable



Cultural Homogeneity

- Industrial society creates **mass of atomised individuals** who have been uniformly educated
- Nationalism **does not** impose homogeneity
- Nationalism is an ideology which **emerges from the homogeneity** created by industrial society
- Nationalism conflated with other consequences of industrialism
- “Though nationalism is indeed an **effect** of industrial social organisation, it is not the *only* effect of the imposition of this new social form.”

Protestantism

- Draws on Max Weber's argument about the linkages between the Reformation and Protestantism, and the rise of Capitalism
- Nationalism is like **Protestant ethics**
 - Both provide a larger ideological cover to the new society created by mercantile and industrial capitalism
- European colonies saw the imposition of a new economy driven by industrialisation and markets
 - Nationalism helped consolidate these for the industrial society
 - Nationalism in the colonies helped **colonial people organise politically** in a society which was changing under the impact of this industrial economy driven colonialism

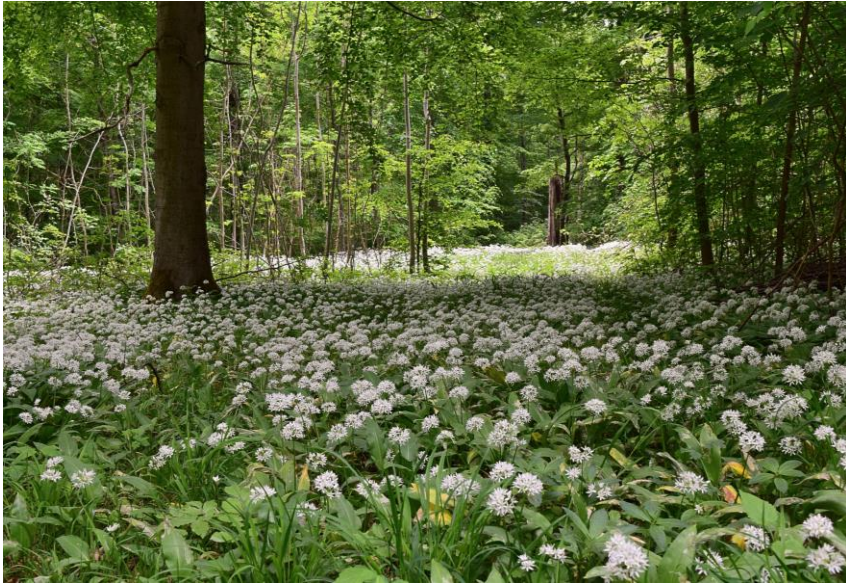
Inherent Weakness

- There are many **more potential nationalisms than actual ones**
- Assume each language group stands for a possible nation-state
 - Proxy indicator
- There are about 8000 recognised languages in the world
- But there are only about 200 successful nations
 - Criteria: these got a political roof over their heads
 - Even if we think double or quadruple, only 1/10 potential nations manage to actualise themselves
- Most people are happy to let go off their languages, cultures, traditions (nations) to enter into a larger talent pool through an established nation's education system : high culture
- Thus Nationalism is a **pragmatic tool**, a utilitarian device used by people to negotiate living within industrial society which imposes homogeneity



Evidence of Weakness

- Because nationalism is such a weak drive, most nationalists have to spend all their energy trying to “wake” people up: **propaganda**
 - Propaganda needed only when reality is frail
- Nationalism is not the awakening of old, natural, given cultural units
- On the contrary, nationalism is **crystallisation of new units**, using raw material from old cultures, to create social forms which are congruent with new division of labour
 - Extreme differentiation of tasks but easy shift from one task to another
- It has set the accepted standard for political organisation and legitimacy; forced it on everyone
- Needs constant attention



Wild and Garden Cultures

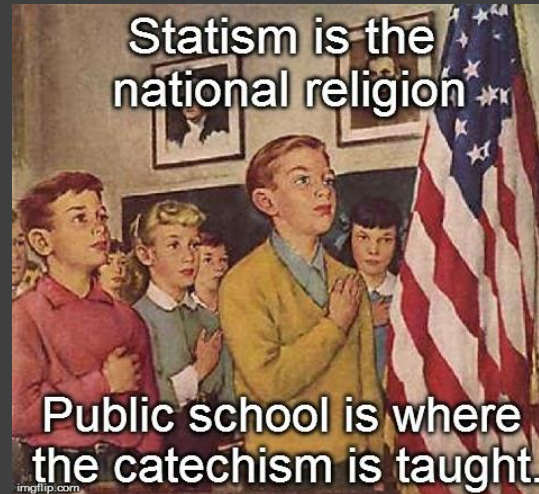
- There are many robust cultures in the world
 - Some surviving over centuries and millennia
 - They do not need conscious design, supervision, surveillance, special nutrition to survive and reproduce
- Nationalism is a **Garden Culture**
 - New High Culture drawn from the varieties of existing cultures
 - Cannot survive without constant political support and underpinning
 - Education system (not just schools), and communication systems
 - State support and fencing in (**Greenhouse**)
- Nation is a delicate plant, which will die if not constantly tended
 - Nationalism is the practice, the idea, which corrals everyone to work for it!

Nationalism creates Nations

- It is the constant activity (movement) and the constant propagation of this ideology which creates the Nation
- Constant activity and propaganda also needed to sustain it daily
 - “It is **nationalism which engenders nations**, and not the other way round. Nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures and cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored.”

CONSUMERISM IS OUR
NATIONAL RELIGION

JENNIFER STONE
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Sport is
Australia's
national
religion



Like Religion

- Nationalism is not contingent, artificial
- Nationalism has grown “very deep roots in our shared current condition”.
- Like religion, nationalism creates its own reality: **social self-worship**
 - Nationalism erases all other forms of social reality (cultures, religions) and draws on them to forge its own creations
 - It rules on their name, but is really a new high culture sustained by the protection of the State
- Social Entropy and Equality
 - The **solvent nature** of the idea of equality
 - Old communities, tribalisms, if they survive industrial society, can only do so as nationalism