Theories and Practices of Nationalism Term Paper

Will nationalism survive globalisation? Or will globalisation, in its current information technology mediated version, lead to the fading away of nationalism and nation-states?

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Abstract

Something something summary of paper

Introduction

Googling to learn about globalisation brings about an interesting dichotomy. Half the results talk about "The Death of globalisation," while the other half talk of "globalisation as the future of Humanity." What gives?

We will be examining that – to an extent. In this paper, we are more specifically looking to see if and how globalisation would impact the existence of nationalism and the nation-state.

For understanding globalisation we rely heavily on Scholte (2005), and we compare it against the various theories taught in class to demonstrate why we think nationalism will *not* be superseded by globalisation. However, we will put some emphasis at the end to the theory the minimal self-reproducing unit required to sustain a community, introduced by Gellner (1983).[1]

Globalisation is not dead; What even is it?

To make a case for or against globalisation, we need to know what it is. As it is such a poorly defined concept, it would perhaps be wiser to begin with what it isn't.

What globalisation is not

When looking up globalisation, one is likely to meet a flood of articles – most, financial thinkpieces – announcing its death. Hence you have Saval (2017) writing on the "fall" of Globalisation due to (then) recently elected world-leaders opting for "nation first" approaches, or Michael O' Sullivan calling for a "new [multipolar] world order" (2019). These operate under an understanding of "globalisation" as a synonym for "internationalisation." Such a definition is not beneficial to begin with[2] due to the redundancy. It also reduces globalisation to the limits of internationalisation, which by definition conceives the idea of nations as the primary political unit.

Another common thread is to align it with liberalisation – removing official border constraints on international trade and the like – making globalisation about the spread of contemporary neoliberal

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[1] More specifically, Gellner specified the need for a community to sustain an independent educational system if it hoped to sustain itself in modern society (see Gellner 1983, 32). We will explore this later.

[2] See (Scholte 2005, 52–54), on how definitions should try to "advance knowledge," and why the new word should not be expressible as a synonym for another existing concept. Redundancy in general is a feature most definitions to try and shy away from.

macroeconomic policies.[3] The usual arguments about invalidity due to reduction apply, but this is important because as a policy implementation of 'globalisation' for a majority of corporations and many countries, it is common to assume *neoliberalist globalisation* to be the only one available, and thus (the authors comment that) most opponents to to 'globalisation' are often just opposed to *neoliberalist globalisation.*

Yet others define globalisation as universalisation, or globalisation as westernization (more specifically *anglification,* with the culture of the United States and the United Kingdom as the 'universal'). Albeit different, we discuss them together in the interest of space. Universalisation talks of uniformity all across. Naturally the reduction argument can be applied again, but more specifically plenty of variation is made to 'global' products – kosher McDonald's in Israel and the McAloo Tikki (and Halal) in India, for example. As for apparent Americanization – while globalisation has tended to follow the trend, it isn't at all a one way road. Just looking at all the cuisines available almost everywhere confirms as much.

Globalisation as a shift in social space

For the definition of use, we primarily use the proposal put forth by Scholte (2005) - globalisation as a shift in the social space, expressed through the spread of transplanetary and supraterritorial connections between people.

What does the shift in social space mean? It's a realignment of spatiality – imagine social relations operating now on Planet Earth as a whole, and not just at the locality, town, or national level.This is a bold claim, and we're trying to justify why we claim that the social space has in fact shifted so much. As much can be done by looking at the changes to transplanetary relations and supraterritorial connections.

Transplanetary relations are by no means new, but globalisation has certainly brought about far higher numbers than in centuries past due to the availability of cheap air travel. What does this mean? It means there's more connectivity across the world – realistic relationships with relatives coming home for summers once a month is viable and done by millions; the ease of reach makes international business much easier as both people and money can be ferried around in under a single day from one side of the globe to another. Diseases spread faster too – Hand Foot Mouth (HFM), COVID-19, and so on. And sped up travel is playing a significant part of realigning spatiality – but alone, it is not enough. Which is where supraterritoriality comes into the picture.

What is supraterritorial? As Jan Aart Scholte says,

> As the word suggests, 'supraterritorial' relations are social connections that substantially transcend territorial geography. They are relatively delinked from territory, that is, spatial domains that are mapped on the land surface of the earth, plus any adjoining waters and air spheres.[4]

This is where global communication methods come in big – the telephone yes, but especially the internet. With the ability to instantaneous communicate with anyone in the world at any point in time, territorial restrictions mean less and less. Yes, it isn't the same as physical presence – we would know – but it's better than writing emails about yonder large mountain for 4 months.

So that is what we have.
Fast worldwide travel. Shared currencies, and common exchange rates. Ecological changes affecting everyone on the planet. Global sports events, divided by countries or not. Events in Wuhan changing

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[3](Scholte 2005, 56). As the book says, "large-scale globalization and widespread economic liberalization have frequently transpired concurrently in the past quarter-century ... it is quite
something else to conflate the two concepts, so that globalization and liberalization become the same thing."

[4](see Scholte 2005, 61)

planetary history. Imagination of a common 'humanity' that gets emphasised whenever even private agencies like SpaceX send people to the ISS.

Essentially, globalisation is a paradigm shift in many ways. So will it stand the test against nationalism?

Why do people herald the death of the nation-state?

Given this rudimentary understanding of globalisation, we are yet to examine exactly why it has been heralded as the successor to the ideology of nationalism. We look at that now.

For some context, we should be aware that the bulk of the work surveyed was in the 90s/early 2000s, in the heyday of global optimism. As such, some concepts – especially involving the internet – will seem dated.

A Paradigm Shift

The conditions that allowed globalisation as a viable ideology – better communication and transport across vast distances – was a paradigm shift in how people perceived the world. One might imagine instantaneous communication akin to the printing press,[5] a revolution in communication – the way the latter was the herald of print capitalism. And not just telephonic or internet network-based communications: broadcast radio and television, global brands in peoples' day-to-day lives, and the ability to travel the world in under a day all brought about an awareness of 'global consciousness' to the masses, something that was a hundred years ago "generally limited to fleeting perceptions in limited élite circles."[6] Globalisation – when not perceived as Internationalisation – allows people to imagine themselves as global citizens in a discourse dominated by nation, be a "man without his shadow" sans the ostracization.[7]

Democratization of the Internet, if only for a brief moment

A key factor played by the internet here is in its access to a bilateral information flow – and in earlier days, the general democratic nature[8] of it.

Previously with radio and television, information flow was centralised. Sure, people could talk to each other on the phone in a rudimentary peer-to-peer "network," but it did not match the scale the government, or ad company, or media group had. This is something we consider central to Gellner's theory of community self-reproduction: when the nation controls the information, even with democratic checks and balances the propaganda required to sustain the state can come through unfettered and unchallenged. With the internet as an open-to-all forum, the means of publishing was decentralised (if only for a short while).[9]

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[5]It is true that telephonic conversation was a thing since the late nineteenth century, but as Scholte noted in his chapter "Globalization in History," early phone and telegraph systems were slow, unreliable, and very expensive – as such, unavailable to a vast majority of even the 'civilised' world.

[6](see Scholte 2005, 116)

[7](Gellner 1983, 6) spoke of how it is near-impossible for someone to imagine themselves nation-less: statelessness is still imaginable, if not viable, but to be without a nation would be like a man without a shadow (his interpretation of a book by Chamisso, a French immigrant in Germany).

[8]Now, a case can be made to claim that the early internet was *anarchist*, not democratic. The point here is that it was not controlled by centralised State governments, or private firms.

[9]It is worth clarifying that "mass communication" was limited to people capable of getting on the internet in some capacity, which – without the ample support of governments and corporations, is a rather small number limited primarily to enthusiasts and academics. So while it is one thing to wax and wane about the "death of the free and democratic internet," it was never a democratic system in the first place if only a small "elite" could access it – and the unfettered universal reach of the netizen-journalist was limited to this group.

Chat rooms and USENETs/Forums gave people the ability to talk to a lot of people they did not know, unlike with telephones where at least some knowledge of the other person was a prerequisite. Access to a global state of sorts, in line with the respatialization mentioned earlier.

This is not entirely the case now. Private corporations based in the United States provide much of the services we use on the internet today, and users are bound to adhere to the rules set in place by them – sometimes in good faith, sometimes not. China monitors their entire population of a billion and some more.

But even under corporate control, there is still dissemination of information from more than just one side. It is only under censorship – which does happen – that groups are unable to share their opinions, and so far these are mostly bypassable censors by individual companies. As for States trying to control the content on the internet, well, as (Conversi 2012, 13) puts it:

> Attempts to control the web over ideological content and ethnic dissent can occur only at the price of curtailing fundamental human rights.

Gellner called nationalism "inherently weak," requiring constant propaganda to keep up the nationalist sentiment. A democratic mass communication system seems to be, at first glance, at odds with that. But Gellner's statement was on the influence of a particular nation, and not nationalism the concept as a whole. The democratization of the internet did change *some things* with regards to nations, but it was never realistically competing against the ideology as a whole.

Academic work

Bamyeh (2000) makes some bold claims in his book, "The Ends of Globalisation," speaking of the inherent totalitarianism of nations[10] and the inevitability of globalisation. His analysis is pre-9/11 and slightly dated for the reason – not anticipating the infusion of purpose the attacks would give the American people a year later, he claims the nation is "purposeless," assigning vague enmity to sporadic terrorist groups in a drought of rivals in the post-Cold War period. In a review of his work Podobnik (2006) mentins that his discussion on the likely trajectory of global capitalism is "somewhat problematic" – that capital had not in fact, contrary to claims, managed to reacquire autonomy from political regulation, as evidenced by post 9/11.

Comparing against Nationalism

Now it is time for our own analysis.

Over class, we have discussed many ways to analyse why Nationalism is as strong as it is. So now, we will apply the same lenses of analysis to Globalisation as well. In the following section, we will take some of the popular explanations of nationalism, and try to look for modern-day equivalents for globalisation, or demonstrate how the existing explanation either helps or hinders the global plan.

Anderson's Imagined Community

Anderson's theory of imagined community (Anderson 2006) has had far-reaching impact on the study of nation-states and nationalism. The idea itself is simple – any community larger than a village of a few hundred is imagined; with a nation this number is somehow scaled up a few orders of magnitudes to tens, hundreds, and thousands of millions. Most of these people will never meet each other, and

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[10]Bamyeh (2000) says, "In an age of nation-states, everyone wanted to hear the good news that nationalism and totalitarianism could be disentangled from each other. Only a few had the bad manners to try to spoil the feast by pointing out the obvious, namely, that the preconditions of totalitarianism … for example, singled out—the transformation of classes into masses, the elimination of all group solidarity, a pervasive sense of individual loneliness—are conducive just as well to national mobilization."

there will be a lot of difference in class, creed, and so on; but the nation is still conceived as a horizontal community, with its citizens willing to die for the abstract concept of this nation and the imagined brotherhood among those that live in it. In a sense, Anderson notes, it is more like religion than a strongly formed political ideology (like Marxism). This allows the nation and its nationalists to look past the various paradoxes nationalism brings with it.

A key feature of nationalism is that the community is restricted – the existence of nationals implies the existence of non-nationals, and at no point is there (most of the time) a desire to expand so far as to conquer the entire world under the banner of "India," for instance. Wars are primarily fought over resources and not land, when they are fought.

In order to compete with nationalism, globalisation will have to somehow attain an imagined community encompassing the entirety of the planet's human life, while attaining similar levels of political power. To that extent, it is worth looking at some of the mechanics Anderson described as tools of nationalist propaganda: (border-contained) shared journeys and print capitalism. For globalisation to succeed in overtaking nationalism as the most significant ideology of our times, we will have to examine newer mechanisms that perform similarly.

Global communication networks is the print capitalism of the modern age. Like print capitalism bringing about a change in the imagination of a shared space and common and free time among those residing within a nation, the existence of global networks of communication – either peer-to-peer or as large groups, but primarily the latter – enables the imagination of the planet as a shared common space of human beings, rather than a collective of nations engaging in diplomacy. This is absolutely crucial for the respatialization defined earlier as the need for understanding the new framework of globalisation, and is the closest equivalent there is to print capitalism, by Anderson's theories.

Where the parallels fall of however are with regards to (border-contained) shared journeys. First of all, they cannot be border-contained if the goal is to have a global shared journey. Most commonly known shared journeys shared by people across the world are either religious – such as pilgrimages like the Hajj – or national, such as moving to the United States from a third-world country for better prospects and living out "The American Dream." There is no explicit non-religious equivalent of this shared journey with globalisation.

Some might make a case for **"shared experiences"** that the benefits of global broadcast bring to us all – such as watching man on the moon in the 60s, the four-yearly cycle of tuning in to the Olympics, millions of people across the world watching a K-Pop band premiere their music video on youtube. These are all valid, and online communities do spring up on the basis of such shared interests, but none of these are of the type that can replace the imagined community of nation – at least, not yet.

Finally, to come back to global communication networks, it is true that they help the imagination of the 'global community' – but they are also employed by nationalist forces. We shall come back to it in a later section, but it is a theme that will persist through the rest of the subheadings.

Kohn's Replacement for Religion

The similarity of Nationalism to Religion wasn't noticed just by Anderson – Kohn spoke extensively on the matter. Quoting him,

> ... man's loyalty was due to his church or religion; a heretic put himself out of the pale of society in the same way that a "traitor" to his nation does today.[11]

In fact, one of the key downsides of earlier philosophically rich global ideologies like Marxism and Liberalism had been that, steeped in reason, they failed to answer the question of purpose. Why are we here? It is a question that cannot be attempted scientifically, as there is no observation that can be

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[11] (see Kohn 1939)

made. Marxism and Liberalism could go on about dialectics and rights, but only the Church provided an answer to purpose – at least until nationalism. The ideology of a community of brotherhood, a higher cause to look forward to (the benefit of the nation), attachment to an abstract concept that was supposedly ancient, just lost to the sands of time.

It is this 'completeness' that allowed nationalism to eventually hold strong and retain its place while the other ideologies either disappeared, or reformed themselves under its wing. Now we must question if globalisation could hold up to the same standards of spiritual completeness.

But globalisation is not a religious doctrine; it does not demand allegiance or piety to a God or a Nation equivalent. At best, one can assume the purpose of 'furthering mankind,' but all beyond is personal speculation. Globalisation does not seem up to the task of non-rational attachment.

Gellner's Nationalism precedes Nations

Among Gellner's best known theories is the idea that Nationalism precedes Nations (Gellner 1983). That industrial society brings about with it a number of changes such as more general education, and easier training periods for a multitude of jobs. This allows for the creation of a "homogeneous culture," which in turn is finally responsible for the initiation of a shared bond among the already-homogenized populace.

For an equivalent Global world to rise, therefore, there must be at least a degree of homogeneity across all the people on the planet – such that a globalised political system can rise in place of the various nations at the moment. We have already mentioned that University is *not* globalisation, although aspects of it naturally bleed into the respatialization worldview. That being said, there is a degree of local variation introduced with 'universal' experiences (not that it affects nations).

The biggest actual challenge to the idea of globalisation taking over nationalism from such standpoint is that nationalism is still an incredibly dominant ideology: many that immigrate out of compulsion, for instance, feel as strongly about their host nation as any other resident would. It is possible that via global communication networks a resident may begin to disbelief the propaganda of their government, but they are unlikely to swear off of the idea of nations altogether.

Hobsbawm's Invented Traditions

Instrumental to having a nation is believing in its paradoxes: that despite its recent construction the nation is ancient, or that any arbitrary group of people living within the territorial boundaries in the past would have considered themselves to be people of the nation, despite no such concept existing at the time.[12] Hobsbawm's *invented traditions* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992) explains how, despite the absence of any sort of evidence of antiquity, many 'traditions' considered sacred by various communities are, in fact, made up and intentionally dressed up as ancient, or simply accidents that got memorialised as tradition just because.

It is not entirely unthinkable that an invented tradition for a global society could be made up – after all, Scholte pointed out that several people believe that globalisation is nothing new, and simply another iteration in an always-running cycle. It is also possible that the invented traditions of individual nations might give way for the global cause. It is however unlikely that all nations would fold over without noticing something off.

Likening to the "Colonial Indian Elite"

- The colonial indian elite were the ones with aspirations of nationalism/of having a say in policies for them

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[12]See methodological territorialism, (Scholte 2005, 66)

- Globalisation is the upper middle classman's dream, and the upperclass' reality. Idea of the global citizen: taking advantage of the best options available to one, without national bindings.
- Needs a Gandhi-type beat.

Information-mediated Nationalism

An important consideration to make is that while globalisation gets all the benefits of the information-mediated nature of modern society, all of these benefits are also available to the national movements and propagandists too. As such, any method of communication that can bring people on disparate corners of the globe together can also band ultra-nationalists within a nation.

To quote Eriksen,

> Far from being a 'disembedding' technology, the Internet has in fact proven to be a 're-embedding' technology. It can easily be used to strengthen identities which might, in an earlier era of slower and more cumbersome communication across oceans and mountains, have been forgotten or changed beyond recognition by the third or fourth generation.[13]

In fact, Anderson has also spoken on the matter of non-citizens engaging in the politics of the country of their origin (Anderson 1998), without facing any accountability for the politics they do – ignored by the host nation due to their non-involvement beyond enforcement of basic duties, and unchargeable by the nation origin.

> [t]he participant rarely pays taxes in the country in which he does his politics; he is not answerable to its judicial system; he probably does not cast even an absentee ballot in its elections because he is a citizen in a different place; he need not fear prison, torture or death, nor need his immediate family. But, well and safely positioned in the First World, he can send money and guns, circulate propaganda,and build intercontinental computer information circuits, all of which can have incalculable consequences in the zones of their ultimate destinations.

Specifically referred to as "long distance politics," it shows how despite displacement across the globe to the point of changing citizenship, people use the very tools that allow them to move around to engage with the nationalism of their birth. And it amplifies with the internet. Conversi (2012) in an inspired study mentioned how diaspora were likely more radicalised than those living in the country themselves, going as far as to fund militant organisations for a fight they shall never see themselves.

However, it is possible such only lasts for the first generation of immigrants, *maybe* their children at best. The point isn't to demonstrate devotion to a nation across generations, but the utilisation of digital additions for such devotion in any instance.

Moreover, such movements are unlikely to lead to stable national movements. Conversi says,

> It may therefore be easier for dispersed diasporas to build militant virtual communities by emphasising conflict, incompatibility and even violence, while it is much harder to transform these virtual networks into locally rooted programmes of cultural regeneration and economic revival.[14]

Concluding

- Have mentioned enough reasons that globalisation should not *replace* nationalism. It might exist alongside. I'll add some more reasons, sort of informally, then propose something that might

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[13](see Eriksen 2007, 7)
[14](see Conversi 2012, 9)

in fact replace nations and nationalism as a consequence of their inability to deal with a global framework.

- Nations and globalisation are mutually incompatible as it leads to a violation of Gellner's nationalist sentiment in global economy. Also, countries are not able to deal with companies operating in a 'global' context
- Even if you broke away from Nations and made it individual States of residence, incentivising States for person retainment would reintroduce nations, as an emotional conduit to raise support for state governance.
- Most people do not move (Cohn and Morin 2008). For them companies like Facebook is a social bubble, so the internet does not provide access to the globe either.
- What is key is control over devices of reproduction: schooling and mass communication. The government controls, but corporations…
- Pobodnik mentions that capital has not managed to reacquire autonomy from political regulation, but especially with tech sector being new ground, lots of gaps showing up in the national framework (methodological territorialism from Scholte). The new East India Company.
- Globalisation would require policy implementation, but those in charge of education either favour national interests (government) or neoliberal interests (corporations). No framework for reproduction.
- Statelessness as an example, unable to continue without a framework of reproduction and trampled effectively by the advent of communication and fast, convenient travel.

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