
UNIT 8 NATIONALISM

Structure

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 What is a Nation: How are Nations Formed
- 8.3 Nationalism
 - 8.3.1 Defining Nationalism
 - 8.3.2 Emergence of State and Nation
 - 8.3.3 Agrarian Society
 - 8.3.4 Industrial Society
- 8.4 Stages of Nationalism: Types of Nationalism
 - 8.4.1 Gellner's Typology
 - 8.4.2 Anthony Smith's Typology
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Exercises

8.1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that is very nationalist though not in the sense of the world having become one nation. The world today is very nationalist in the sense that nationalism has clearly emerged as the most dominant political force during the course of the last two centuries. There is no individual or a piece of territory that is not a part of some nation- state or the other. It is therefore important to try and understand this phenomenon. This Unit proposes to discuss the following issues:

- What is nation and how were nations formed;
- What is nationalism and what is its relationship with nations and nation-states;
- The ways in which nationalism has altered the political map of the modern world; and
- What are the different types of nations that have dotted the modern world?

A great paradox of nationalism is that its political power is strangely accompanied by its philosophical poverty. Although the political salience of nationalism is now acknowledged by all, it did not receive much of a scholarly attention that it deserved, until the 1960s. The great nationalist experience of the world remained curiously untheorized until the 1960s. Now that the works on nationalism have poured in, in a big way, we do not as yet have anything like the final word or even a consensus position on it. According to Benedict Anderson, a pioneering scholar on nationalism, the question of nations and nationalism 'finds the authors more often with their backs to one another, staring out at different, obscure horizons, than engaged in orderly hand-to-hand combat.' (Quoted in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, p.1.) It is also strange that those scholars, who fully acknowledge the historical legitimacy, reality and political validity of nationalism, refer to it as an 'invented tradition' (Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*), 'imagined community' and a 'cultural artifact' and sometimes also as a 'myth' (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*). The variety of issues that are still hotly debated relates to the antiquity of nations. Have nations been in existence through the centuries of human history

or are they the products only of its modern phase. The various positions on it can be broadly divided between what might be called the modernists, who believe nations to be a modern phenomenon, and the primordialists, who tend to trace the history of nations to the pre-modern period.

8.2 WHAT IS A NATION : HOW ARE NATIONS FORMED

Are nations formed or is humanity inherently blessed with nations? In other words, are nations a contingency or are they an integral part of human condition? Understandably most nationalists (nationalist ideologues, writers, poets or practitioners of nationalist politics) have tended to look upon nations as given and somewhat perennial. These nations, according to nationalist perception, only needed to be aroused from their deep slumber by the agent called nationalism. In the traditional nationalist perception the role of nationalism has been seen as that of an ‘awakener’ who makes nations rise from their deep slumber. In the nationalist discourse nations appear like sleeping beauties waiting for their prince charming! What is missing in this understanding is the *process* through which nations themselves arrive in this world. Nations were not always there; they emerged at some point. It is therefore important not to see nationalism in its own image.

Definitions on nations have been quite scarce. It would be true to say that nations have been *described* much more than they have been *defined*. Perhaps the earliest attempt to define a nation was made in 1882 by Ernest Renan, a French scholar. He defined nation, as a human collectively brought together by will, consciousness and collective memory (and also common forgetfulness, or a collective amnesia). He called the nation as an exercise in everyday plebiscite. The strength of Renan’s definition lay in providing a **voluntaristic** (as against **naturalistic**) component to the understanding of nation. He forcefully rejected the notion that nations were created by natural boundaries like mountains, rivers and oceans. He emphasized the role of human will and memory in the making of a nation. A human collectivity or grouping can *will* itself to form a nation. The process of the creation of a nation is not dependent upon any natural or objective criteria and a nation, in order to be, is not obliged to fulfil any of the objection conditions.

Renan’s understanding of nation, pioneering though it was, could be criticized on three accounts. One, it overlooked the specificity of nations as a unique form of human grouping. Whereas Renan defined a nation well, he defined many non-nations as well, or groups that could not be considered nations — actual or potential. By his definition, any articulate, self-conscious human group with some degree of living together (a club, a band of thieves, residents of a locality, students living in a hostel or a university) could be called a nation. Will and consciousness are elements which can be found in many (indeed most) human groupings. This definition helps to identify a greater number of human groupings but does not go very far in distinguishing nations (actual or potential) from non-nations. It is a definition-net which, when cast into the sea of human groupings, captures the nations but also many obvious non-nations. It successfully lists all the possible human groupings which have the potential of developing into nations, but doesn’t explain precisely which ones actually do. Two, the question about the role of consciousness in the making of nation is a bit tricky and complex. Consciousness must certainly assume the object that it is conscious of. As Karl Deustch remarked, there has to be *something* to be conscious of (Quoted

in Gopal Balakrishnan, *Mapping the Nation*, p.79). In other words, nations have to first exist, if people have to develop the will and consciousness of belonging to that unit. Consciousness can only follow the making of the nation, not precede it. And if the emergence of the consciousness is of a later date than the making of a nation, then certainly consciousness cannot be seen as having contributed to the making of the nation. Consciousness can at best describe a nation, not define it. This then is the great paradox about the role of will and consciousness in the making of the nation. A human collectivity called the nation cannot exist without 'human will' (As Renan rightly pointed out); yet factors pertaining to will and consciousness cannot be sufficiently invoked to define a nation. The polemical question on their relationship will be: does a national create its own consciousness or does the consciousness create the nation? Three, it was rightly pointed out that coming from France (culturally a fairly homogeneous society that already possessed some of the features of a nation) Renan may have taken the objective factors (like language, territory etc.) that went into the making of a nation, for granted. Renan considered nations to be a specifically Western European attribute. In other words, nations, according to Renan, could only emerge in societies that were already culturally homogenous. That heterogeneous groups could also evolve (or invent, or sometimes even fabricate) homogeneity in their journey towards acquiring nationhood, was something that was not very clear to Renan.

A significant corrective to Renan's understanding was provided by Joseph Stalin in 1912. Stalin offered a much sharper and comprehensive understanding of nations. Nation, according to Stalin, was a human collectivity sharing a common territory, language, economic life and a psychological make-up. His complete definition in his own words: **'A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.'** Stalinist definition consisted of objective yardsticks as against the subjective factors enumerated by Renan. However, the Stalinist definition was not entirely without problems and he may have over stressed the role of factors like language and territory. Stalin may not have taken into consideration the capacity of many human groups to form nations *without* already being blessed by either a single language or a common territory. Jews in the 20th century scattered through Europe and America and completely devoid of a territory they could call their own, nonetheless possessed the necessary prerequisites of a nation, without fulfilling some of Stalin's criteria (though they would fulfil Renan's).

If Renan's definition-net was too wide catching nations as well as many non-nations, Stalin's net tended to be a bit narrow, leaving out significant nations though it eliminated the risk of catching non-nations. It should then be possible to look upon Renan and Stalin as complementing rather than contradicting each other. The question then is: do Renan and Stalin, put together, cover the entire spectrum? Can an assemblage of the two definitions be considered adequate in identifying *all* the nations (actual and potential) of the world? Perhaps not.

The problem with both sets of definitions is that they are both completely rooted in Western European experience and thus leave out of their orbit a significant number of national formations which may not have shared a common territory or even language (e.g. Jews in the early 20th century, Indian Muslims in the 1940s, Poles in the late 19th century etc.). The western European experience of nation is linked directly to state and territory. Therefore drawing upon this experience, these definitions have tended to see nations in precisely these terms. But there is no reason for us to take

such a restricted view of nations. The trajectories of national formations is a varied one and this variety needs to be grasped and retained: some nations inherit empires and slice pieces of nation-states for themselves; some nations inherits states and turn them into nation-states; some nations inherit nothing — no state, no empire, no territory, no single language — and fight (not always successfully) for the creation of a nation-state. It is important to acknowledge the possibility of nations exiting without a pre-existing state and fighting precisely to create a state *of their own*. These have often been referred to as ethnic nations as against territorial nations. This distinction (between ethnic nations and territorial nations) may or may not be valid, but there is no reason for us to privilege one variety of nations over the other.

The range that is covered by the two definitions mentioned about is immense but by no means complete. Stalin and Renan certainly represent two ends of the spectrum. Whereas it is true that both ‘will’ and ‘culture’ should constitute important components in any definition of nation, neither or even both can be treated as adequate. ‘Will’ creates too large a package of nations and non-nations; language and territory tend to leave out significant nations. The former is too inclusive, the latter too exclusive. In fact both the components put together are not able to accommodate all nations. What then is the crucial element missing? It is here that Ernest Gellner provides the answer. In the ultimate analysis, nations are best understood *in the spirit of nationalism*. Contrary to popular belief it is not nations that lead to nationalism, but that nations are created by nationalism. Nations are not the product of some antiquity or the working of some distant historical forces (not always anyway) but they are the creation of nationalism, *in alliance with certain other factors*. Human grouping may possess the characteristics enumerated by Renan and Stalin, but they acquire nationhood only when they are imbued with the spirit of nationalism. So nations are created by the objective naturalist factors like common language, territory, history economic life; along with voluntaristic factors like will, consciousness and memory; *and nationalism*. A particular nation is created by its nationalism. The relationship between the two is somewhat like the proverbial egg and the chicken. It is difficult to determine what came first but easy to predict that they constantly reproduce each other.

The three components — will (Renan), culture (Stalin) and ideology (Gellner) — thus complete our definition of nation. The writings of the three scholars mentioned above (Ernest Renan, Joseph Stalin and Ernest Gellner) are stretched over a period of 100 years. Renan wrote his piece in 1882 and Gellner provided his definition in 1983. We can thus say that a comprehensive definition of nation that is available with us today, took over a century to evolve and is the result of a combination of many intellectual contributions.

8.3 NATIONALISM

Since our definition of nations has become so crucially dependent on nationalism, we need to answer the question: what is nationalism? In this section, we would attempt to provide a definition of nationalism. We will then discuss the emergence of state and nation as constitutive elements in our understanding of nationalism and nation-state.

8.3.1 Defining Nationalism

Strangely enough, a lack of consensus on the question of nation does not quite extend to the question of nationalism. For a global definition of nationalism, it is best to again depend on Ernest Gellner: ‘**Nationalism is political principle that holds**

that national and political units should be congruent.' Among the scholars who have grappled with the problem of nation and nationalism, he really stands out for a variety of reasons. Most of them have begun their enquiry by first trying to define nation, and from there they have gone on to define nationalism as the articulation of the nation (the desire for **autonomy, unity, identity** of the unit called nation, already defined). Gellner is probably the only one who has begun his enquiry by first defining nationalism and then having moved on to nation. His definition of nationalism covers, at one stroke, national sentiment, thinking, consciousness, ideology and movement. The definition is simple and profound. If the two concepts employed in it — **political unit** and **national unit** — are de-jargonized to mean state and nation, respectively, it becomes even simpler. We, living in modern times, tend to take nation and state for granted and moreover, tend to taken them to be more or less the same thing. We do so because they appear to us as very nearly the same things. But there is no reason for us to believe that the two may have always been the same thing, or to use Gellner's words, they may have always been congruent. After all, their congruence is not a condition given to us; it is the insistence of the agent called nationalism. For this coming together of state and nation, there are clearly three pre-conditions — there should be a state; there should be a nation; and finally, they should be nationalism to tell the other two that they are meant for each other and cannot live without each other. In other words, the present day congruence of nation and state (emergence of nation-state) is a product of three specific development in human history. When did the three happen in human history? Let us now focus on the emergence of state and nation as preconditions to the development of nation-state. As mentioned earlier we look upon nationalism as a modern phenomenon and understand it to be rooted in the transformation of the world from agrarian to industrial. We need to therefore answer two questions: Why did nationalism not emerge during the agrarian period? What was it about the industrial society that necessitated the emergence of nationalism? In this section, we will also try and answer these questions by pointing out some salient features of the agrarian society and of the industrial society.

8.3.2 Emergence of State and Nation

State, as the centralized, power wielding agency, did not arrive in this world for a very long time; it may sound improbable but is true that mankind, for most of its life — about 99 per cent, lived happily without a state. Human society, in its pre-agrarian stage, was a stateless society. Societies were small; forms of organization were simple; division of labour was elementary. The nature of exchange, wherever it existed, was such as could be managed easily by people themselves without having to resort to any central authority. People did not need a state and, as a result, did not have one. The pre-condition for the arrival of the state, and therefore nationalism, simply did not exist.

The first agrarian revolution — indeed the first revolution known to mankind-initiated the first major transformation in human life. It liberated a section of the population from having to fend for themselves; it could now be done by others. Those who were freed from the need to procure food for themselves were obliged to do other things. A division of labour came into being. With the passage of time this division became more complex. The availability of large surplus segregated people from each other. Groups of people were separated and stratified. A state came into being to maintain law and order, collect surplus, resolve disputes when the need arose, and, of course, to regulate the exchange mechanism. Of course, not all agrarian societies had a state; only those with an elaborate division of labour did. Simple

agrarian societies resembling their pre-agrarian ancestors, could still manage without one. State, at this stage of human history, was an option, and as an option, was crucially dependent upon the existing division of labour. A hypothetical anti-state citizen of the medieval world could still hope that under conditions of a stable division of labour, state might be dispensed with. Our medieval anti-state protagonist would certainly have been disappointed, if he had lived long enough, by the arrival of the industrial era which increased this division of labour manifold thereby ensuring a long life for the state. State, under conditions of industrial economy, was no longer an option; it became a necessity. As of today, the state is still with us, strong as ever, and the vision of a stateless society in some distant future is there only to test human credulity.

So the state has arrived and shows no signs of disappearing. What about nation, the other pre-conditions? We certainly did not hear of a nation in the medieval times, though we did hear of cultural groups and units. It is possible that nations may have grown out of these cultural units, under conditions favourable for their growth. Cultural units that existed in the medieval world were either very small (based on tribe, caste, clan or village) or very large (based on the religious civilizations of Islam and Christianity). This range was also available to political units. They were either very small (city-states or small kingdoms) or very large (Empires — Holy Roman, Ottoman, Mughal, Russian).

So the cultural units existed in the medieval world and so did the political units. They often cut across each other. Large empires contained many cultural units within their territory. Large cultural units could easily accommodate themselves under many political units. They felt no great need for any major re-allocation of boundaries to suit nationalist imperative. Nobody told them that they were violating the nationalist principle. None — either the political or the cultural unit — was greatly attracted to one-culture-one polity formula. Indeed it was not possible to implement such a formula even if the impulse had existed (which it did not). Why was it that the passion for nationalism, so characteristic of our times, was missing both from the human mind and the human heart during the agrarian times? In order to address this question, we need to focus on some of the features of the agrarian society.

8.3.3 Agrarian Society

So far our contention in this Unit has been that whereas some preconditions (emergence of state, presence of distinct cultural communities) for the development of nation-states had materialized in the agrarian period, some others (transformation of cultural communities into national communities, the emergence of the ideology of nationalism) had not. The question is: Why didn't we see the emergence of state as representative of cultural communities during the agrarian period? Why was the ideology of nationalism absent from the world during the same period? What was it about the agrarian society which inhibited the growth of these preconditions to the development of a nation-state system? Some of these questions can be satisfactorily answered if we could draw a cultural map of the world. Ernest Gellner has actually drawn such a map.

The map consists of three major dividing lines. Line 1, the greatest social divide known to mankind, has the horizontally stratified groups of political, military and religious elite on top of the line and the numerous communities of food producers, artisans and common people below the line. Line 2 divides the three (or possibly four) types of medieval elite — political, military and religious and those who possessed

knowledge through a mastery over written world. In some cases a commercial elite also joined the apex. Their method of recruitment and reproduction varied from society to society. It could be open or closed, hereditary or non-hereditary. Their relationship with each other also varied from territory to territory. The religious elite (Ulema, Clergy, Brahmin) could dominate the political elite or vice-versa. Culturally they formed different groups, but they were all united by their great distance from common people. A China-Wall stood between them and the simple peasant would dare not cross it. Indeed it was impossible for him to do so. To join the exclusive high culture, he would need at least one of the attributes like special pedigree, chosen heredity, privileged status, divine sanction and access to literacy and written word. None of it was available to him.

The third dividing line stood vertically creating laterally insulated communities of common people. They lived for centuries in stable cultural formations, not particularly informed about the presence of other groups across the vertical lines. Written word was rarely available to them. They lived their culture without ever articulating it. They could not write and to understand what was written, they relied upon the clergy or the Ulema or Brahmin. They paid their ruler what was demanded from them. In the absence of literacy they evolved their own system of communication which was context based and would be unintelligible outside the context or the community. This communication would not cut across the vertical line; indeed there was no need for it, for across the line the other cultural group would use its own evolved communication. The use of literacy for them seldom extended beyond the need to communicate. Education among these groups was like a cottage industry. People learnt their skills not in a University but in their own local environment. Only scholars, from the apex went to the Universities to learn Latin, Greek, Sanskrit or Persian. The skills acquired from the cottage industry were handed over from generation to generation. The result: the citizens of the agrarian world lived in laterally insulated cultural groupings. They did not need literacy; they used their own evolved form of communication valid only in their culture. They lived in stable cultural formations. Horizontal mobility did not exist. Vertical mobility was out of the question. They viewed (or did not view) the exclusive high-culture at the apex with an aloof distance and felt no need to relate to it. Both the ruler and the ruled felt no great need for any kind of identification with each other. Man was (and still is) a loyal animal and his loyalty was rightfully claimed by his village, kinship, caste, religious or any other form of ethnic ties. Indeed he was a product of these ties. The exclusive high-culture generally did not attempt to claim his loyalty, for to do so would be risky: it might weaken or even erode the China-Wall. In other words, it might convert the China-Wall into a German-Wall. The common peasant being so distant, felt no compulsion to express solidarity with the exclusive high-culture. There were enough loyalty evoking units available to them. No cultural bonding existed, or could possibly exist, between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler was neither chosen by the people, nor was he representative of them. The people in turn felt no need to identify with their ruler. This was the scenario in which man lived in pre-modern times.

The continuity and stability of the pre-modern world, described above, terminated with the arrival of the industrial economy and society. It is our argument that this transformation — from the agrarian to the industrial — created conditions for the rise of nations and nationalism. In the next section let us look at some of the features of the industrial society.

8.3.4 Industrial Society

The medieval man might have gone on living like this happily ever after, had an accident of tremendous consequence not occurred. The tranquility and the stability of the medieval world was shaken with a jerk by the strong tidal wave or a huge hurricane of industrialization hitting the world, though not all of it at the same time. Nothing like this had ever happened to mankind. This single event transformed the cultural map of the world profoundly and irreversibly. The industrial society, when it was finally established in *some* pockets of the world, was found to be just the opposite of the agrarian society in very fundamental ways. Five crucial features of the industrial society separated it from the agrarian world and had implications for the emergence of the nationalism.

One, it was a society based on perpetual growth — both **economic** and **cognitive**, the two being **interrelated**. Cognitive growth in the realm of technology, though not confined to it, directly fed into economic growth and the latter, in turn facilitated investments for technological updating. Changes had occurred in the agrarian world, but it was never a rule. The industrial society showed a tremendous commitment to continuous change and growth. The idea of progress was born for the first time. Technology and economy got linked to each other in a manner in which they were not in the pre-modern times. A constantly growing society would not allow any stable barriers of rank, status and caste. The two are indeed incompatible. Social structures, which had taken their permanence for granted in the agrarian world, would find it impossible to resist the hurricane of industrialism.

Two, it was literate society. Literacy in the agrarian world was confined to the exclusive high-culture, in other words to the king, priest and the scholar. The common man did not need literacy and did not have it or had it at a very elementary level which could easily be imparted by his family or the community. Industrial society, on the other hand, cannot survive without universal literacy. Why should full (or very nearly so) literacy be a precondition for the smooth functioning, indeed the very survival, of the industrial society and economy? There are in fact many reasons why it has to be so. One, industrial economy requires greater participation in the running of the economy by a much larger section of the population. These participants, drawn from very different cultural backgrounds and involved in very different tasks assigned to them, must be able to communicate with each other in order to ensure the running of the economy and the system. Drawn as they are from different cultural settings, they cannot communicate in their old idioms. They have to communicate in some standardized idiom in which all of them have to be trained. This is an enormous task and can no longer be performed by the traditional agencies (family, guild, community etc). Traditional agencies, rooted in their own cultural contexts, cannot, in any case, impart context-free education. Such training can only be imparted uniformly to all citizens by an agency as large as the State. In other words, **education which was a cottage industry in the agrarian world, must now become full-fledged, impersonal and organized modern industry to turn out neat, uniform human product out of the raw material of an uprooted anonymous mass population.** As a result, people start resembling each other culturally and share the same language in which they have all been taught. The language at school may initially be different from the language at home, but gradually, in about a generation's time, the language at school also becomes the language at home. The Hungarian peasant only initially speaks two languages — the local dialect at home and its refined and comprehensive version at school. Gradually, within a generation or so, the latter replaces the dialect

at home also. This process helps in the creation of a seamless, culturally uniform, internally standardized society and thus fulfils a major precondition for nationalism. Two, the new system also demands that these trained men should be able to perform diverse tasks suited to the requirements of a constantly growing economy.

They should therefore be ready to shift occupationally. Only a generic educational training, imparted by a large centralized agency, can ensure that men are competent and qualified to undertake newer tasks. The paradox of the industrial age is that it is a system based on specialism but the specialism in the industrial age is very general. Every man is a specialist. Every man is *trained* to be a specialist. One half of this training is generic (based on language, cognition and a common conceptual currency); the other half is specific and must be different for different tasks (like doctors, managers, engineers, computer personnel etc.) Now anyone required to shift occupationally can be trained *specifically* for that task because he has already received the generic training. This enables people to move occupationally across generations and sometimes within the span of a single generation. This provides the industrial society a certain mobility, which also facilitates the nationalist project. Three, **an industrial society is one in which work is not manual but semantic**. It does not any longer (certainly in mature industrial societies) consist of ploughing, reaping, threshing, but rather of handling machines and pushing buttons. In the pre-modern world work consisted of the application of the human muscle over matter with the help of elementary technology based on wind and water. All this changed with the arrival of modern technology. A qualified worker in an industrial economy is one who must know which button to press, how to operate the machines, and if possible, to fix minor errors. In other words modern workers have to manipulate not things but meanings and messages. All these qualifications require literacy imparted in a standardized medium. The image of a worker, just uprooted from his village and pushed straight into industry is rapidly becoming archaic. A worker is not inherently suited to the tasks of the modern economy; he needs to be trained (which implies literacy) to perform his tasks suitably and satisfactorily. **Modern economy does not just need a worker; it needs a skilled worker**. A part of the skill is also the ability to perform different tasks, as and when the need arises. As stated earlier, imparting standardized context free education to such a vast number is a monumental task and cannot be performed by the agencies which had been doing it for centuries namely kin, local unit, county, guild. It can only be provided by a modern national education system, 'a pyramid at whose base are primarily schools, staffed by teachers trained at secondary schools, staffed by University trained teachers, led by the products of advanced graduate schools.' (Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.34). Only the state can maintain and look after such a huge structure or delegate it to one of its agencies. The implications of such a literate society are various; emergence of nationalism is only one of them. It creates internally standardized and homogeneous cultural communities. This is just what nationalism needs.

The third, fourth and fifth features of the industrial society are actually an extension of the first and the second (i.e. literate society, committed to perpetual growth). It is mobile society; it is an egalitarian society; and it is a society with a shared high-culture and not exclusive as it was in the agrarian world. Let us briefly look at all three.

The agrarian world was a stable order devoid of any great transformations. The conditions making for any kind of mobility simply did not exist. The industrial society by contrast, is essentially unstable and constantly changing. The changes include the strategic location of the social personnel within it. Positions are changing and

people therefore cannot take their current social status for granted; they might lose it and make way for others across generation. The factors that restricted mobility (or fostered stability whichever way you look at it) are no longer operative in an industrial economy. The area and scope of a man's employability gets enlarged thanks to literacy imparted in a standardized medium. His cultural nests have been eroded and his status is threatened by the arrival of new social and economic roles. The industrial society acquires the features of systematic randomness (something like the children's game of snakes and ladders) in which men cannot take their present position for granted. The mobility (physical, spatial, occupational, social) engendered by the industrial economy is exceptionally deep and sometimes unfathomable. A mobile society has to inevitably be an egalitarian society. Roles and positions are not fixed and are certainly not determined by social status. A peasant's son need not be a peasant; what occupational position he occupies will depend, not on his heredity or community's status, but on his own competence and training. The role of social status does not completely diminish in the industrial society, but it loses the eminence that it enjoyed in the agrarian world. The description of the industrial society as egalitarian does not match with the brutally inhuman and inequalitarian conditions that prevailed in the initial years of the industrial economy. But they were soon overcome, paving way for a more mobile and egalitarian order.

All the four features put together (a society based on perpetual growth, literate society, mobile society and also egalitarian) would ensure the fifth one also. The agrarian world was characterized by deep and stable barriers — both vertical and horizontal. The biggest barrier was that of status and high culture. The high culture(s) of the king, priest and the scholar was/were sustained by access to literacy and the privileged status. Both these features disappear in the industrial society. Everybody gains access to literacy and a growing, mobile society just does not allow any barriers to settle down for long. To quote Gellner again, 'Men can tolerate terrible inequalities, if they are stable and hallowed by custom. But in a hectically mobile society, custom has no time to hollow anything. A rolling stone gathers no aura, and a mobile population does not allow any aura to attach to its stratification.' (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.25). The implication of all this is that the high culture loses its exclusiveness and becomes shared. All this has serious implications for the emergence of nationalism.

The result of the above-mentioned developments was that mankind was shaken out of its neatly nested cultural zones and liberated from the various identities which had claimed its loyalty for centuries. Man ceased to belong to his local ties; indeed they were getting increasingly difficult to recognize. He has now, either already or aspired to be, a member of the shared high-culture. The guidelines for the membership of this shared high-culture were provided to him by the uniform educational system. Man continued to be a loyal animal even in the industrial society, but the units demanding or claiming his loyalty had either disappeared or were in a process of disappearing. Who, or what, should claim his loyalty now? The prestige of the modern man depends not upon his membership of primordial ties but upon his membership of the new shared high-culture transmitted by a uniform education system provided by the state. He is now a product of the shared high-culture and has a vested interest in its preservation and protection. And he knows his culture can be protected only by the state, *its* own state. In other words **a marriage of culture and polity is the only precondition to his dignified survival in a world of dissolving identities.** His national identity is important to him and only a state representative of his nation can ensure the preservation of this identity. *This* is nationalism. And this is why modern man is nationalist.

The large culturally homogenous national units cannot be preserved and protected by the unit itself. They need a political roof of their own. This explains the nationalist man. But it does not explain why the state should be keen on protecting this national unit? Why can't it just be happy ruling over the territory, and bothering about little else, like the medieval state did? Why must the modern state insist on the unmediated membership and loyalty of its citizens? It has to because the modern state, under conditions of modern economy, cannot function without an active participation of its citizens. Didn't it train them to be literate and occupationally mobile? **Modern state needs not only trained men but also committed and loyal men. They must follow the instructions of the state in which they live, and of no other subdivision within the territory. Only nationalism can ensure this.**

To sum up the argument, modern industrial economy has transformed the world culturally and economically. It requires everybody to be literate. This literacy has to be imparted in a uniform standardized manner to facilitate the running of the economy. This process displaces people out of their secure cultural nests and destroys their loyalty inducing local identities. Gradually it rehabilitates them as a member of a new homogenous cultural unit, held together by literacy. The China-Wall breaks down allowing people entry into the high-culture (or rather the high-culture extending to people) which ceases to be exclusive. Rules of the new membership are easy (literacy) and conditions favourable. These new national units owe a great deal to the political unit that educated them. Modern economy had displaced them; the state rehabilitated them as members of a new national community. The two tasks were of course complementary. The new national community (nation, if you like) would be keenly desirous of preserving its identity, autonomy and unity (nationalism, if you like). It has nowhere to go, no past to look back to except romantically. It looks up to the state for its protection; or rather it wants a state of its own for guaranteed preservation and protection. To return to the definition; nationalism insists that nation and state be congruent. We now know why.

One question still remains. Since the bulldozer of the modern economy flattened out all the existing cultural-ethnic differences and also the traditional units of the society, how did it create new national units and loyalties? Bulldozers are not known to create solidarities. In other words, since all the medieval cultural nests were destroyed by modern economy, why didn't the world become one cultural unit requiring one single political roof? Why was the world divided among many nations requiring many nation-states? To put it simply, why did we have many nationalisms instead of one world nationalism called internationalism? Indeed it was predicted by 19th century Marxism and liberalism alike. It simply did not happen. Why?

Part of the answer to the question must reckon with the tidal wave nature of industrialization which did not hit the entire world at the same time and in the same manner. There were clearly at least three waves (possibly more) — the early wave to hit Western Europe and North America; a slightly later wave to hit the rest of Europe and Japan and a third wave that hit the remaining part of the globe that later came to be known as the third world. The recipients of the third wave did not achieve the economic and cultural transformation with which the early industrial wave had blessed Europe and North America. They only underwent political domination by the early industrial countries. The different timing of the waves may have been an accident or may have been because some parts of the medieval world were better prepared for a development of this kind than other parts. But a different timing of the arrival of the industrial wave effectively divided the globe into different

zones. Secondly, modern economy did not just expect people to be literate; it expected them to be literate in a particular language (English, French, German). It couldn't be the classical language of the high-culture like Latin (it would be difficult to train simple peasants in the classical language) or the folk language of the people (the dialect may not be suitable for a large-scale transmission). The literacy would therefore have to be imparted in new modern languages resembling both the folk and the classical. People, after receiving generic training in a particular language, were obliged to look upon themselves as members of the shared high-culture fostered by *that* particular language. Moreover, the language (and the shared high-culture) also determined the boundary of man's mobility. If he travelled beyond the boundary line of that language and the shared high-culture he was trained in, he would not be useful in the new territory (unless he was smart enough to equip himself with the new cognitive set up). It is for this reason that modern man does not simply think; he thinks as French or German. To extend the argument, modern man does not simply exist; he exists as French or German. And he can exist with dignity only under a French or German political roof.

The story so far resembles West European brand of nationalism. Would it be applicable to societies where nationalism took the form of protest? Can it, for instance, be applied to the Indian sub-continent? Indian people acquired a modern state in the form of British imperialist state for the entire territory, but refused to live under it. The essence of western European nationalism was that the Modern English or French man could live only under a state that was English or French, respectively. In other words, the essence of western European nationalism was loyalty to the state. Essence of Indian nationalism, on the other hand, was rebellion against the state. However in spite of basic differences, certain commonness can be found between the European and the Indian nationalism. The arrival of the modern economy, however tentative, indirect and incomplete, did create conditions for transformation, albeit incomplete, of herds of cultural communities into a national unit of Indian people. These people insisted on having *their* own political unit. This insistence (nationalism, if you like) gradually created and fostered an Indian nation. This Indian nation was different from its European counterpart in that it was not being sustained by a uniform educational system imparted in a single language (although English did help in uniting the intelligentsia). It was being created not by the uniform condition of economic development, but the uniform condition of economic exploitation by the alien state. This exploitation was modern in that it was systematic, orderly and efficient unlike medieval forms of loot and plunder. Indian nationalism was based on this cognition and on the desire that the national unit of Indian people should have its own political roof.

The bulldozer of industrialization was not operative in India. The pre-existing socio religious identities were therefore not flattened out: some were politically overcome by Indian nationalism; some made their peace with it; some others challenged it; and some actually became successful in obtaining their own political roof for their perceived national unit. The diversity and cultural plurality of Indian nation (The 19th century Indian nationalists rightly called it a nation-in-making) created the space for the possibility of rival or breakaway nationalisms. Thus came into being Pakistan in 1947 based on the notion of all Indian Muslims being a nation. But the territorial spread of Pakistan (with an east and a west wing on either side of India separated by well over 900 miles) created a further space of yet another breakaway nationalism on territorial grounds. Thus came into being Bangladesh as an independent nation-state in 1971.

One scholar, perhaps articulating the extent of scholarly incomprehension on nationalism, likened nationalism to a genie that had somehow been released from the bottle of history some two hundred years ago and since then had been stalking diverse lands and people without anyone being able to control it. Nationalism may not be as unexplainable as a genie but it has certainly pervaded the entire universe including its people and territories. And it shows no signs of disappearing. The neat and nearly complete division of the globe into roughly 200 more or less stable nation-states is no guaranty against a resurgence of nationalism. But nationalism cannot continue to perform old roles. For nearly 150 years between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the end of the Second World War in 1945, nationalism was the lone promoter of nation-states. Now that this task seems to be over nationalism must now turn into a destroyer of the existing nation-states through the resurgence of breakaway nationalisms seeking to create new nation-states. This means that societies with cultural, religious or linguistic plurality and an uncertain economic development may still go through all the violence, hatred and brutality that have come to be associated with a surcharged nationalism.

8.4 STAGES OF NATIONALISM: TYPES OF NATIONALISM

The above explanation for the emergence of nationalism must make allowance for two factors. One, nationalism could not have emerged in a day but that its emergence was spread over stages which need to be located at various points in the transformation of the world from the agrarian to the industrial. The section above constructed two ideal types of human societies, the agrarian that was largely nationalism resistant and the industrial that appeared destined to be nationalism prone. The two formations must certainly not have existed in their pure form in most cases. But most agrarian societies would have shown resemblance to the model constructed above. Likewise, the advanced industrial societies should possess the traits listed in our description of the industrial society. The timing, pace and trajectory of the transformation from one to the other would inevitably vary from territory to territory. The basic point is that the different stages in the arrival of nationalism are related to this transformation. Since the very nature of this transformation was different for different societies (and probably nowhere was it so neat and complete), the stages of nationalism also varied. It is, therefore, not possible to construct stages uniformly applicable to all parts of the world. It is still important to keep in mind that nationalism, like other global phenomena (capitalism and colonialism) arrived in this world through stages and not in one single transition.

Two, nationalism arrived in stages, but nowhere did it duplicate itself in shape and form. Although the entire world changed dramatically in the last 200 years from being nationalism free to being completely dominated by nationalism, the nature of nationalism differed dramatically from area to area. So profound is the change that some scholars have begun doubting the very existing of the generic category called nationalism. No two nationalisms are found to be similar, yet all nationalisms do share certain basic traits in common. This indeed is the great paradox of nationalism. To put it differently, **nationalism changes its form in different societies yet retains its essence in all of them.** Nationalism led to the transformation of nations into nation-states, but the process of this transformation varied. The various nation-states of the modern world were created through multiple routes, characterized by different *kinds* of nationalisms. A common myth has been to look at the arrival of nation-states through only two routes — the market and the protest, i.e., nationalism

engendered by the market forces or by national movements. In fact the range of nationalist experience is much more varied than that. Two prominent scholars on nationalism, Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith have created their own typologies of nationalism. Let us briefly look at both of them.

8.4.1 Gellner's Typology

Gellner, writing exclusively about Europe, divided Europe into four zones travelling from west to east and formulated four different types of nationalisms applicable to each zone. These can be seen on the map of Europe given here. Gellner understood nationalism in terms of a marriage between the states and a pervasive high-culture and saw four different patterns of this marriage in the four European zones. Zone I, located on the western belt consisting of England, France, Portugal and Spain witnessed a rather smooth and easy marriage of the two, because both the ingredients (state and high-culture for the defined territory) were present prior to the arrival of nationalism. In Gellner's metaphor, the couple were already living together in a kind of customary marriage and the strong dynastic states more or less corresponded to cultural linguistic zones anyway, even before the decree of nationalism ordered them to do so. In other words, these societies fulfilled the nationalist principle before the arrival of nationalism. Only the minor cultural differences *within* these societies needed to be homogenized; peasants and workers had to be educated and transformed into Englishmen, Frenchmen etc. Needless to say this process was smooth and conflict-free and therefore did not require any violence for the fulfilment of the nationalist principle.

Zone II (present day Italy and Germany), situated on the territory of the erstwhile Holy Roman Empire, was different from zone I in the sense that, metaphorically speaking, the bride (high culture for the territory) was ready (among the Italians from the days of early Renaissance and among the Germans since the days of Luther) but there was no groom (state for the exclusive territory). Whereas strong dynastic states had crystallized in zone I along the Atlantic coast, this zone was marked by political fragmentation. The age of nationalism, which had found both the elements (state and high culture for the territory) present in zone I, found only one (high culture) in zone II. So, although no 'cultural engineering' or ethnic cleansing was required here, a state-protector corresponding to the area had to be found or created. It was for this reason the nationalist project here had to be concerned with 'unification'. Here also, as in zone I, nationalism was benign, soft and conflict-free. There were no claims and counter-claims for the territory. Culturally homogeneous territories did not have to be carved out; they already existed. The high-culture also existed; it only needed to reach out to peasants and workers.

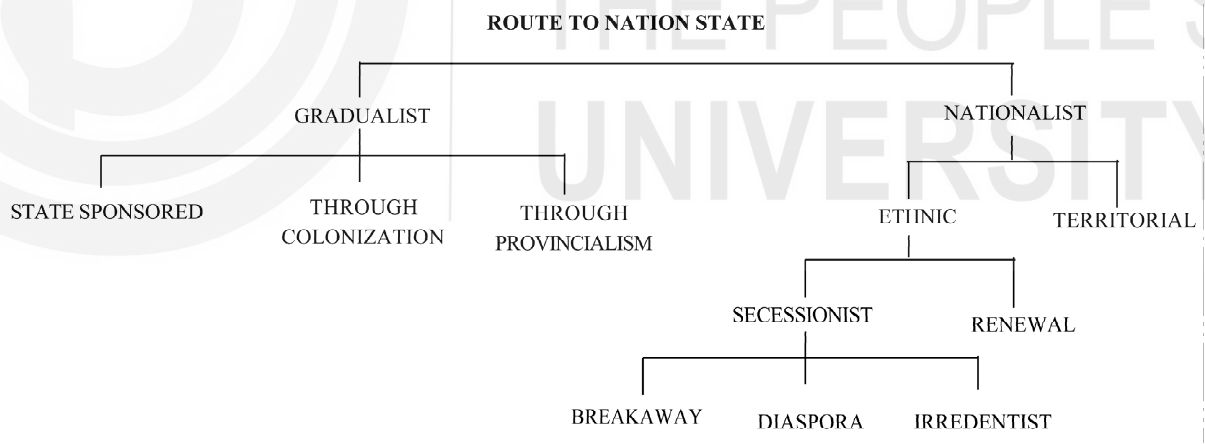
It is in zone III (territories east of Germany and west of Russian Empire, areas of present day Poland, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Balkans etc.) that nationalism ceased to be benign and liberal and had to necessarily be nasty, violent and brutal. The horrors, generally associated with nationalism, were inevitable here as neither of the two preconditions (state and high-culture) existed in a neat congruent fashion. Both a national state and a national culture had to be carved out. This process required violence, ethnic cleansing, forced transfer of population in an area marked by a complex pathwork of linguistic and cultural differences. The cultures living at the margins of the two empires (Ottoman and Russian) did not correspond either with a territory or language or state. Here, in order to meet and fulfil the nationalist imperative (passion for nationalism was quite strong in 19th century Europe), plenty of brutal earth-shifting had to be done in order to carve out areas of homogeneous

cultures requiring their state Culturally uniform nation-states could only be produced by violence and ethnic cleansing. To quote Gellner, ‘In such areas, either people must be persuaded to forego the implementation of the nationalist ideal, or ethnic cleansing must take place. There is no third way.’ (*Gellner, Nationalism*, p.56).

Zone IV is the area of Russian Empire on the farthest east in Europe. This zone was unique in some ways. The First World War relegated the empires of the world (Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian) to the dustbin of history. Yet the Russian Empire survived under a new dispensation and the socialist ideology. The marriage of state and culture did not take place here, or at any rate not for a very long time. The nationalist imperative was kept ruthlessly under check by the Tsarist Empire, and was, contained creatively by the supra-nationalist ideology of socialism, by the soviet Empire. In fact many of the national cultures flourished under the USSR; some were even nurtured by the state. There is no evidence that the collapse of the Soviet Russia in 1991 was brought by nationalism, but nationalism certainly benefited by the dismantling of the empire. In other words, the marriage of state and culture *followed* the disintegration without causing it in any way. A high culture in different cultural zones had been in a way nurtured by the socialist state, and the other element (the state) simply arrived upon the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

8.4.2 Anthony Smith’s Typology

So much for Europe. Is it possibly to create a similar typology for the entire world? Though a neat zonal division of the world (along European lines) is not possible and the pattern would be much more complex, Anthony Smith has attempted some kind of a division of a world into different types of routes that nationalism takes in its journey towards creation of nation-states. It can best be understood through the table given below.



His basic division is simple. The creation of nation-states has taken two routes — **gradualist** and **nationalist**. The gradualist route is generally conflict free and contest free and is one where the initiative was taken by the state to create conditions for the spread of nationalism. Nation-states were thus formed either by **direct state sponsored patriotism** (like zone I of Gellner) or were the result of **colonization** (Australia and Canada: they did not have to fight for independence) or **provincialism** where cultures/ states just ceded from the imperial power, were granted independence and were on their way towards becoming nation-states. One feature of the gradualist route is that it was marked by the absence of conflict, violence, contesting claims over nationhood or any national movement. The other, nationalist route is characterized by rupture, conflict, violence and earth-moving. Smith divides this rupture-ridden route into two sub-routes — those of **ethnic nationalism** and

territorial nationalism. These terms are self-evident and their meanings clear. The ethnic sub-route is divided into two lanes-based on **renewal** and **secession**. Renewal is based on the renewal or the revival of a declining ethnic identity like Persia in the 1890s. The secessionist lane could be further divided into three by-lanes of **breakaway**, **diaspora** and **irredentist** nationalism. The breakaway group (either from empires or multi-national states) sought to sever a bond through cessation like Italians and Czecs from the Habsburg Empire; Arabs, Armenians and Serbs from the Ottoman Empire; and Poles and Ukrainians from the Tsarist Russian Empire. Bangladesh that broke away from Pakistan in 1991 could also come in the same category. The diaspora nationalism is best represented by the Jews. Completely devoid of a state, territory of their own, or even a high-culture till the mid-19th century, Jews lived for nearly two centuries like perpetual minorities on other people's lands. They were eventually constituted into a nation-state through struggle, other powers' diplomacy, ethnic cleansing (done to them by others), earth moving and also by statistical probability of being on the right side in the great world war. Had the war gone the other way, we can be sure that Israel would not have been formed into a nation-state in 1950. The irredentist nationalism normally followed a successful national movement. If the new state did not include all the members of the ethnic group (this mildly violates the nationalist principle) who lived on the adjacent land under a different polity, they would have to be redeemed and the land on which they lived, annexed. This happened in Balkan nationalism among Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians and in Germany of Somalia today.

Territorial nationalism occurred when a heterogeneous population was coercively united by a colonial power. The boundary of the territory and the centralized administration of the colonial power formed the focus of the nation to be. On taking over power (invariably through a national movement) the nationalists try to integrate the culturally heterogeneous population (tribes, various other cultural groups and people living on the margin), who had neither shared history nor common origin except colonial subjugation. This happened for instance in Tanzania and Argentina. In certain instances (Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria) there were national movements that defined their aims in terms of wider territorial units, yet were clearly spearheaded by members of one dominant ethnic group. Later their domination was challenged by other smaller groups, creating space for a breakaway nationalism.

8.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have seen how nations and nationalisms have evolved through a complex historical process in modern times. While there has been a large consensus among historians about their recent origins (despite objections from the primordialists), there is considerable confusion over different stages and types of nationalism. Nationalism is a phenomenon which is part of an ongoing process and which will continue to define our day to day lives for years to come.

8.6 EXERCISES

- 1) Define nation. How were nations formed?
- 2) 'Transformation from the agrarian to the industrial society created conditions for the rise of nations and nationalism.' Explain.
- 3) Is nationalism the ultimate product of modernization? Discuss with reference to Gellner and Smith debate.