

March 1, 2005

## 8 STATE, NATION, CULTURE

Read: Schein: The consumption of color and the politics of white skin in post-Mao China  
Gupta and Ferguson: Beyond “culture”: space, identity and the politics of difference  
Urla: Contesting modernities: Language standardization and the production of an ancient modern Basque culture

- I. Review: some of the analytical points made so far:
  - A. Our subject matter is classifications of people
    1. Made by scholars attempting to find out the truth
    2. Also made by ideologues, state officials, propagandists—anyone with an agenda, oftentimes interested in bending the truth
    3. Both parties use the same terms (“nation,” etc.)
  - B. We are analyzing social, cultural, political processes
    1. Movements, especially political movements
      - a. Nationalism, ethnogenesis, etc.
  - C. We must always incorporate power issues into our analysis
    1. How powerful bodies/entities like states, empires, colonizing countries, operate
    2. How people, groups, movements will resist power, or accommodate to it, etc.
  - D. We are also looking at the role of psychological factors
    1. Consciousness, intention, feelings
      - a. Investment, a lot at stake, etc.
      - b. Hobsbawm refers to “desire”
- II. Review in terms of: 1) what we know, and 2) what we don’t know
  - A. What we know:

1. Ethnic and national identity are about classifying humans into groups
2. And about these groups' relations to other groups: we're always talking about a *relation*
3. These groups change over time, are *never* static, despite appearances
4. They change as a result of outside forces
  - a. In Europe, examples of states
  - b. In China, different governmental policies toward the Hui (Sun Yat-Sen, PRC, what happened in Taiwan)
  - c. In USA, Native Americans were first radically changed by the colonists, then the push to the west, now the bureaucratic state (Bureau of Indian Affairs, etc.)
  - d. But this change from outside is always an interaction
5. The terms we use in our analysis for the most part are terms used by the actors
  - a. "Nation," for example—used by scholars
    - 1) "Nation of Islam"; "Wealth of Nations," "United Nations": the word appears frequently
    - 2) Some words are limited to scholarship: "ethnogenesis," for example
  - b. These terms have multiple meanings (e.g., "nation")
  - c. The meaning can be complex, and emotionally loaded
    - 1) Many of these words elicit strong feelings—there can be high stakes involved
    - 2) Terms that circulate widely will not be neutral
6. The identity of any individual will consist of identity components
  - a. Some of them will be related Russian-egg fashion: wooden eggs that contain smaller, ever-decreasing eggs inside
  - b. Family, lineage, region, country

- c. Other identity components will cross-cut (e.g., sex, religion)
  - d. But some of these will have more demands made on them
    - 1) Will be more salient
    - 2) The individual will be required to think/feel/behave in certain ways in many areas of life
    - 3) Often it's his or her ethnicity or nationality that is constructed as highly significant
    - 4) As Hobsbawm put it: nations are dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people
      - a) Which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist
      - b) But sometimes they are—strongly so
      - c) Part of the project of “nation-building” is to foster these appropriate inner states (thoughts, feelings) that result in appropriate actions (patriotism, etc.)
7. We know the stages of nationalism in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe:
- a. Purely cultural, literary and folkloric
  - b. Then a body of pioneers and militants of ‘the national idea’ developed and political campaigning for this idea would begin
  - c. Then nationalist programs come to acquire mass support
    - 1) Nationalism, ethnic recovery movements, for example, are one result
    - 2) Nationalism is primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent
    - 3) The idea of nations them being natural, God-given is a myth

8. We know how nationalism develops
  - a. Sometimes takes preexisting cultures and turn them into nations
  - b. Sometimes invents them
    - 1) Often obliterates pre-existing cultures
  - c. Nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around
  - d. Nationalism emerges only at a point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation
  - e. At a particular stage of technological and economic development
    - 1) For example, standard languages, cannot emerge before printing, mass literacy and hence, mass schooling

B. What we don't know

1. The criteria that will be used for classifying a given ethnic group
  - a. For example, being Jewish: identify themselves even though they share neither religion, language, culture, tradition, historical background, blood-group patterns no an attitude to the Jewish state.
2. We don't know before the fact which groups will become a national state—although the constraints have changed over time
  - a. Earlier in Europe, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a campaign for self-determination wasn't sufficient
  - b. The group had to be seen as a viable state (culturally, economically, size) if it was to gain sympathy and support
  - c. Even in the Wilsonian era: Luxemburg and Liechtenstein embarrassment, nor the Free City of Danzig (what is now Poland)
  - d. Size: only since 1945 have we made way for entities like Dominica or Maldives or Andorra.
3. We don't know where or when ethnic resurgence will happen

- a. Nagel shows that the dire predictions of Indians becoming extinct was way wrong
4. We certainly don't know what the congruence will be between state and nation
- a. We can define states pretty well
    - 1) **Discuss:** what is a state?
  - b. And the new meaning of "nation" of a people who are independent, sovereign, inalienable
    - 1) But we don't know what constitutes "a people"
    - 2) Certainly the American colonists spoke the same language, came from the same stock, culture as the British, yet they were declaring themselves a people, a nation, indivisible, independent
  - c. Which states contain only one people? They are small—Dominican Republic is one some Gulf states, emirates, some Pacific islands
    - 1) Japan almost qualifies—Ainu, Koreans
5. We don't know before the fact how nationalism will tie in with state formation
- a. It can occur before creation of a national state (Ireland)
  - b. Sometimes afterwards
  - c. And sometimes never (many Third World examples)