

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

NOVEMBER'19 (31Oct to 6 Nov)

Nationalism –an obsolete idea?

Globalization, as it's been shown, has allowed for borders to be transcended and has arguably diminished the role of nationalism and national identity as a whole. As a result of globalization and the increased flow of people into different countries, overall singularly identifiable cultural identities have been eroded. Now we have begun to see largely mixed cultures within countries allowing for more globalized socio cultural structures. From this, the former cultural plurality between differing states has largely diminished, resulting in the notion of a single global cultural community identified as a collection of various cultures amalgamating into a single world culture. Although the influx of people has eroded national culture, it has also enabled the flow of technology that has allowed people to explore other cultures. Citizens are allowed to implement newly learned cultural practices into their everyday lives, which essentially corrodes their own ties to their national culture. As a result, the overall national culture undermines the nationalist ideology. In the 21st century, the cultural ties that allow for nationalism to occur have been arguably rendered obsolete.

Moreover, nationalism has further been depleted by the advent and increasing influence of supranational organizations in the international system. Organizations like the European Union (E.U) have allowed for people to identify as post-national citizens. The E.U. has increasingly promoted the idea of a homogenous Europe, and has led more and more people to begin identifying themselves as “European” rather than as citizens from their origin countries. Transforming ideas of citizenship and the lessened feeling of connection to one’s country decrease nationalism since people are now less likely to promote their culture, or nation as a whole, over others.

On the other hand, Nationalism germinates in the white supremacy and xenophobia that is baked into the institutions and structures of the U.S. and of western capitalism. It lurks and feeds around the edges of potentially genocidal geopolitical powder kegs that are caused not only by the capitalist competition for limited fossil fuel and other resources, but also by the devastation and forced migrations of climate change that are the inheritance of that often violent competition. The death toll that the world has suffered at the hands of nationalism would be difficult to calculate, trying to factor to what extent nationalism was a driving factor in

any given violent conflict whether international or civil strife within particular nations. But given the various world wars and other imperialist wars that we know were driven by western nationalist and supremacist ideology, the death toll is in the hundreds of millions.

None of these wars have been just wars. They are wars fought for fossil fuel resource out of reactionary competitiveness. They are wars fought to control labor markets and the workers who make up those labor markets. They are wars to control access to customers for corporate products. They are wars to win power and prevent others from attaining power. If nationalism and patriotism are about supremacy, then so are those wars that driven by nationalist ideology.

Just like our bodies fight to reject infectious diseases, we must fight for the collective rejection of nationalism. As once Albert Einstein said that “Nationalism is an infantile disease, the measles of mankind.” In light of new knowledge an eventual world state is not just desirable in the name of brotherhood, it is necessary for survival. Today we must abandon competition and secure cooperation. This must be the central fact in all our considerations of international affairs; otherwise we face certain disaster. Past thinking and methods did not

prevent world wars. Future thinking must prevent wars. And we cannot deny the truth that For decades, science popularizers have said humans are made of stardust, and now, a new survey of 150,000 stars shows just how true the old cliché is: Humans and their galaxy have about 97 percent of the same kind of atoms.

For reference:-

- <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2019-02-12/why-nationalism-works>
- <https://medium.com/@justinnortonkertson/nationalism-is-a-disease-da5a12d8d7a6>

Additional Readings:-

- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-editorials/raise-the-limit-for-deposit-insurance/>
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-editorials/to-fight-pollution-alter-social-conduct/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/28/the-guardian-view-on-the-politics-of-ageing-dont-let-our-towns-grow-old>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/22/the-guardian-view-on-the-canadian-election-a-win-for-trudeau-but-not-a-triumph>

- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cutting-risk-on-indias-anti-polio-drive/article29801622.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/deep-traps/article29826125.ece>