Political Ideas – Nationalism (non-core ideas)

Politics Edexcel and AQA – revision notes – based on Hodder Education revision guides

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(1) The origins of nationalism.
(2) The different types of nationalism.
(3) Core ideas and principles.
(4) Differing views and tensions.

(1) The origins of nationalism

Nationalism = political ideas and movements which focus on the nation at the core of their beliefs and theories.

- Liberal revolutionaries in the 18th century, such as **Rousseau**, were looking for the creation of a new democratic political system to replace the communities governed by hereditary monarchs = **the nation**.
- Conservative thinkers such as **Herder** considered the world to be divided into nations based on common features such as culture, heritage and language.
- During the European empires, nationalism was at the root of opposition to imperial domination: especially in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Hungary, parts of Italy and parts of the Ottoman Empire.
- Some peoples become divided into independent states, such as the Germans, Italians and Slavs, by establishing collective movements based on common national identity. **Mazzini**, for example, is considered to be the creator of unified Italy in the 1860s.
- During the 19th century, moderate conservatist movements in Britain and France accentuated nationalism as the basis for nurturing patriotism alongside an organic society.
- During the 20th and 21st centuries, nationalism evolved differently in different places facing contemporary challenges. In the USA for example, particularly during the 1960s, a strand of black nationalism and anti-colonialism was emerging, especially associated with **Garvey**.

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(2) The different types of nationalism

2.1: Liberal nationalism.

2.2: Conservative nationalism.

2.3: Expansionist nationalism.

2.4: Anticolonial nationalism.

2.5: Black nationalism.

2.1: Liberal nationalism

- In the early 19th century, most European states were monarchies.
- The Enlightenment, together with thinkers such as **Rousseau** who wrote about civic nationalism, galvanised the consolidation of ideas that focus on the state as a legitimate entity because it is predicated on active participation of its citizens that is not limited to a privileged elite.
- In Italy, **Mazzini** developed this idea into **romanticism** = an artistic and intellectual literary movement during the 1880s in reaction to **rationalism** = a philosophical view that perceives logic and reason (innate ideas independent of sensory experience) to be the source of knowledge as opposed to empiricism (direct observation via our senses). Rationalism and empiricism are opposing epistemological views.
- The idea of the nation-state as the legitimate political entity that is predicated on **popular consent** is emerging.
- Liberal nationalism is closely related to **Republicanism** = a democratic political system that is not based on hereditary monarchy.
- **Progressive nationalism** = forms of nationalism that link national autonomy and pride with social and economic improvements.
- Liberal nationalism is considered progressive because:
  - Associated with the promotion of democracy.
  - National self-determination (= the process by which a country determines its statehood and forms its own government) is required for social, cultural and economic progress.
  - Domination by external states is in opposition to national progress, like in Scottish nationalism.
  - Focus on the future, and the future is predicated on democracy and liberty.
  - Liberal internationalism = the modern emergence of nationalism that is based on supranational bodies such as the UN and free trade alliances like the EU. Mazzini, in fact, was preoccupied with such future developments more than with the establishment of the united Italy itself as an objective.

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Key thinkers

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Key work: ***The Social Contract*** **(1762)**

Key concepts and ideas

- General will = the government should be based on the collective will of the community and nations have the right to govern themselves, based on the collective will.
- Civic nationalism = legitimacy of the state is based on active participation of its citizens.
- While Rousseau is not necessarily a nationalist himself, his ideas were adopted by French revolutionary nationalists and republicans at the end of the 18th century, especially the below.
- Patriotism and civic pride are crucial for the identity of the nation.
- National identity forms the basis for the formation of the political community.
- National identity provides the unity that is required to foster a single unitary consciousness.
- Rousseau had a romantic idea of the nation, identifying some kind of national 'spirit' that is the galvanising force of cohesion.
- He believed in collective freedom of people.
- **Three conditions to life:** first, the state of nature = man is free and independent; second, society = where man is oppressed and dependent on others; third, the social contract = where man becomes free through obligation and independent through being dependent on law.
- Equality is essential to attain liberty.
- Legislation needs to preserve equality; freedom will be attained if the people to whom the laws are applied were also the ones prescribing the laws.
- His philosophy can be described as rationalism.

Key quotations

"In a world, it is the best and most natural arrangement that the wisest should govern the many, when it is assured that they will govern for its profit and not for their own."

"Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains. The world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless."

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Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872)

Key work: ***On Nationality*** **(1852)**

Key concepts and ideas

- **Nationhood** = believed that humans could express themselves only through the nation.
- **Freedom** = based on the creation of one's own nation-state.
- **Action** = rejected intellectualism and rationalism to create an idea known as '**thought and action'**.
- Considered to be the father of Italian nationalism.
- A revolutionary figure; considered to be the founder of united Italy in the 1860s. His 'Young Italy' movement was republican dedicated to abolish the monarchy.
- A nation can consider itself free only when it is a pure democracy.
- Recognised the prominence of **'national spirit'**, like Rousseau.
- Associated with national liberation movements such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and modern Scottish and Catalan nationalism.

Key quotation

"A Country is not a mere territory; the particular territory is only its foundation. The Country is the idea that rises upon that foundation; it is the sentiment of love, the sense of fellowship which binds together all the sons of that territory."

2.2: Conservative nationalism

Conservative thinkers in the 19th century were concerned in preserving the status quo to foster stability and therefore were apprehensive of self-determination because it threatens traditional institutions and stability. Consequently, different strands of conservative nationalism were formed:

1- **Traditional conservative nationalism**
   - Fearful of liberalism and excessive freedom as a threatening the unity of the nation.
   - Associated with unifying movements, such as **Benjamin Disraeli** and the endeavour to restore 'one nation' and Germany's chancellor **Bismarck**: both a reaction to revolutionary socialism and for national unity and pride.
   - The nation is **organic** rather than a collection of individuals, and they emphasise the exclusive nature of the nation over sociocultural diversity.

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Key thinker

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803)

Key work: ***Treatise on the Origin of Language*** **(1971)**

Key concepts and ideas

- **Cultural nationalism** = every nation is different and each one has its own unique cultural features.
- **Volk** = German for 'the people'; it is at the root of each national culture and therefore, the unifying cement for its national identity.
- Common language; a key feature of national identity because it is the expression of common culture.
- **Volksgeist** = common culture and the 'spirit' of people.
- He believed that this Volksgeist is important to unify Germany that was divided into many individual states.
- Considered to be the inspiring thinker behind the reunification of Germany under Bismarck in 1871.

Key quotation

"Each nationality contains its centre of happiness within itself, as a bullet the centre of gravity."

2- **Regressive nationalism**
   - A form of liberalism that looks back at when the nation was successful, strong and unified, and aims to resurrect this success.
   - Tends to be ultra-conservative with focus on dismantling any external or domestic threat to the nation.
   - Tends to be xenophobic and against immigration, to the point of being anti-Semitic, such as with Maurras.
   - Examples are the French Maurras and Spanish fascism between the WW1 and WW2.

Key thinker

Charles Maurras (1868-1952)

Key work: ***For a French Awakening*** **(1943)**

Key concepts and ideas

- **Integral nationalism** = an emotional form of extreme right-wing nationalism promoting sentiments of patriotism, pride and loyalty.
- **Militarism** = necessary given the integral nationalism ideology.

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- He was anti-democratic and supportive of the monarchy as the symbol of the powerful glorified state.
- He considered the French people to be superior (= **chauvinist nationalism**, suggesting that a particular nation is superior to other nations) and was a quasi-fascist.

Key quotation

"The love of all people, except the French people, is deep in the mind of the great doctors of the French Republic."

3- **Nativism**
   - Share many features with regressive nationalism but they emphasise economic protectionism by being anti-free trade and globalisation.
   - Thus, states should impose tariffs to protect domestic trade and thereby national economy.
   - Tends to be populist and authoritarian.

2.3: Expansionist nationalism

Key elements are:

Imperialism = a movement involving a nation seeking to build an empire outside the reach of its borders. It can be described as colonialism.

Militarism = when nationalism is intertwined with a desire for military might and conquest.

Chauvinism = an exaggerated belief that a particular nation is superior to others.

Racism = the idea that a particular race is superior to others, Nazism.

1- **Radical nationalism**
   - Often predicated on racism accompanied by national superiority.
   - Nazism and Italian fascism.
   - Tends to resort to mythology to encourage national identity.
   - Claims to be progressive because their ideology is a catalyst for the nation to move forward to a brighter future; at the same time opponents consider radical nationalism to be regressive as it is obsessed with a glorified past.
   - Extremely anti-liberal.
2- **Imperialism**
   - Primarily historical.
   - Historically, the nation's glory was attached to its colonial possessions overseas: Britain, France, Spain, Japan and the Netherlands.

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- Modern imperialism is mostly restricted to economic and political dominance in a specific region such as the case with Russia and its outreach in Eastern Europe.

2.4: Anticolonial and post-colonial nationalism

These movements are among nations that resist imperialism or freed themselves from its control, including by form of global corporations.

Examples

- **Fanon** (1925-1961) in Algeria, colonial power France, Marxism.
- **Gandhi** (1869-1948) in India, colonial power Britian, liberalism/social democracy.
- **Nasser** (1918-1970) in Egypt, colonial power Britain/France, pan-Arabism.
- **Mugabe** (1924-2019) in Zimbabwe, colonial power Britian, moderate Marxism.

Their key features:

- Tend to be characterised with an authoritarian government, that is needed to facilitate a strong central authority to rebuild the national identity that was compromised under colonial domination.
- Tend to be socialist in their nature because such movements aim to encourage an economy that is not dominated by global capitalism.
- Some movements are pan-nationalist, coming together to form a meta-identity within a new grouping together.
- Leadership cults with the character of the **leader** as the symbol of the unity.
- Pan-Africanism, black nationalism and pan-Arabism as examples.

2.5: Black nationalism

Refers to the idea that black people all over the world are part of a nation; a reaction to oppression worldwide.

Relatively a modern movement with the features:

- A belief in common ancestry of black people in Africa.
- Associated with the belief in **'black consciousness'**, a collective identity that is predicated on the common experience of slavery and oppression.
- One practical application in the creation of Liberia as a state/home for freed slaves.

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Key thinker

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)

Key work: ***The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*** **(1986)**

Key concepts and ideas

- Influential in the West Indies and in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s. A Jamaican anti-colonialist.
- **Black pride** = encouraging pride in black heritage regardless of where in the world.
- **Pan-Africanism** = African people in every part of the world are one people and must relinquish their differences if they wish to progress.
- Imperialism as the obstacle to black pan-nationalism.
- **Ethiopia** as the birthplace of all black peoples and the source of their common identity despite their differences.

Key quotation

"Up, you mighty race, accomplish what you will."

(3) Core ideas and principles

1. Nations

All perspectives of nationalism put the concept of nation at their heart of their ideas:

- Language.
- Culture and history.
- Geography.
- Ethnicity.
- Religion.

2. Self-determination

- Predicated on the idea that a nation is a political entity, and its people decide how they wish to be governed.
- Self-determination is at the core of various conflicts within states or nations.
- Yugoslavia, for example, ceased to exist in the 1990s after different ethnic groups fought for their own self-determination.
- A current example of a continuing struggle is Scotland for Scottish nationalists. In 1914 though, a referendum resulted in agreement to remain part of the UK.
- Brexit can be related to the concept of self-determination because of deep erosion on sovereignty.

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3. Nation-state

- The state can be a nation or a collection of territories organised under one government.
- Nation-states tend to have geographical boundaries that delineate their sovereign territory.
- Europe before and after WW1 and WW2, and at the end of the cold war, demonstrates the significant shifts in boundaries of the state.

4. Culturalism

- Maintains that unique cultural features are the glue that holds national identity.
- Rooted in deep emotional ties that underpin the idea of Herder's romanticism albeit were initially related to the German people.
- In the 19th century, culturalism was reserved for those who identified as people yet had no state such as the Germans and Italians.
- Later, during the 21st century, culturalism is a feature for people who perceive they possess a culture that is not only different to the dominant mainstream culture but also threatened by it.

5. Racialism

- Refers to the belief that all members of a particular race share features that are unique to that race compared with other races.
- This term is employed especially to indicate some superiority versus inferiority of one race compared with another.
- Racialism is not to be confused with racism that is characterised by:
- A belief that a racial group is the basis of nationhood, exclusive.
- The race in question is often perceived as superior.
- Expressed as discrimination and/or oppression.
- Nazi Germany and white supremacy in the USA and the South African apartheid movement.
- Racialism includes:
- Considered to be neutral and not by definition rooted in supremacy.
- The world though is naturally divided between different races.
- Race and culture are strongly linked.
- Japanese nationalism before the Second World War is an example.

6. Internationalism

Internationalism is rejecting the primacy of the concept of the nation-state and therefore it seeks to diminish the divisions between people that are attached to the nation-state features.

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1- **Liberal internationalism**

- Liberal democratic state is the ideal model and international cooperation is necessary to protect liberal values.
- Mazzini was a thinker associated with liberal internationalism because while he united Italy he was seeking ultimately a united Europe similarly to the EU today. The UN embodies his ideas hence its intervention in states that considered to fail to protect their citizens.

2- **Socialist internationalism**

- Marx and Engles = with their ideas about the identity of workers being superior to all other forms of national identity.
- The idea of the international revolution aiming to establish a classless and stateless global society.

(4) Differing views and tensions

1. Romantic versus rational nationalism = concerning the wider distinction between conservative forms and progressive democratic forms; Mazzini versus Maurras.

2. Progressive versus regressive nationalism = progressive considers the aim of the movement to improve various socioeconomic parameters compared with the regressive that aims to resurrect a past golden-age; black nationalism versus French nationalism.

3. Inclusive versus exclusive nationalism = inclusive is less concerned with factors such as ethnicity, religion and culture, thus accepting the idea that a state can be composed of a multinational society; compared with exclusive nationalism that is based on the idea of the nation sharing such sociological features; liberal nationalism versus Garvey.

4. Expansionist nationalism versus nativism = expansionist focus is on the nation dominating other territories compared with nativism that focuses more on the domestic arena and national identity as attached to exclusive society; for example, imperial Britian versus Trump in the USA.

5. Conservative versus liberal nationalism = consists of various strands in each but generally, conservative nationalism considers the nation as an organic entity compared with liberal nationalists that focus on free individuals that share identity.

6. Nationalism versus internationalism = nationalists consider the world to be divided by distinct national groups, compared with internationalists that blur these distinctions and tilt towards globalisation; Russian nationalism versus multiculturalism.

7. Racialism versus multiculturalism = racialists consider the world based on distinct races and nations based on common ethnicity, compared with multiculturalists that

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believe in coexistence between distinct ethnic groups under the umbrella of a unifying national identity; German Nazism versus multiculturalism.

Nationalism today

- Nationalism stands in opposition to globalisation.
- The decline of the nation-state due to features of globalisation.
- The rise of nativism as a reaction to globalisation including the rejection of immigration, Trump in the USA.
- The world is divided into trading blocks, such as the EU and NAFTA and it is affected by nationalist sentiments.
- In many cases postcolonial movements had failed and resulted in 'failed states'; like Rwanda.
- The synthesis of religion and pan-nationalism, primarily with respect to Islam is posing a challenge to Western values; ISIS for example.

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