



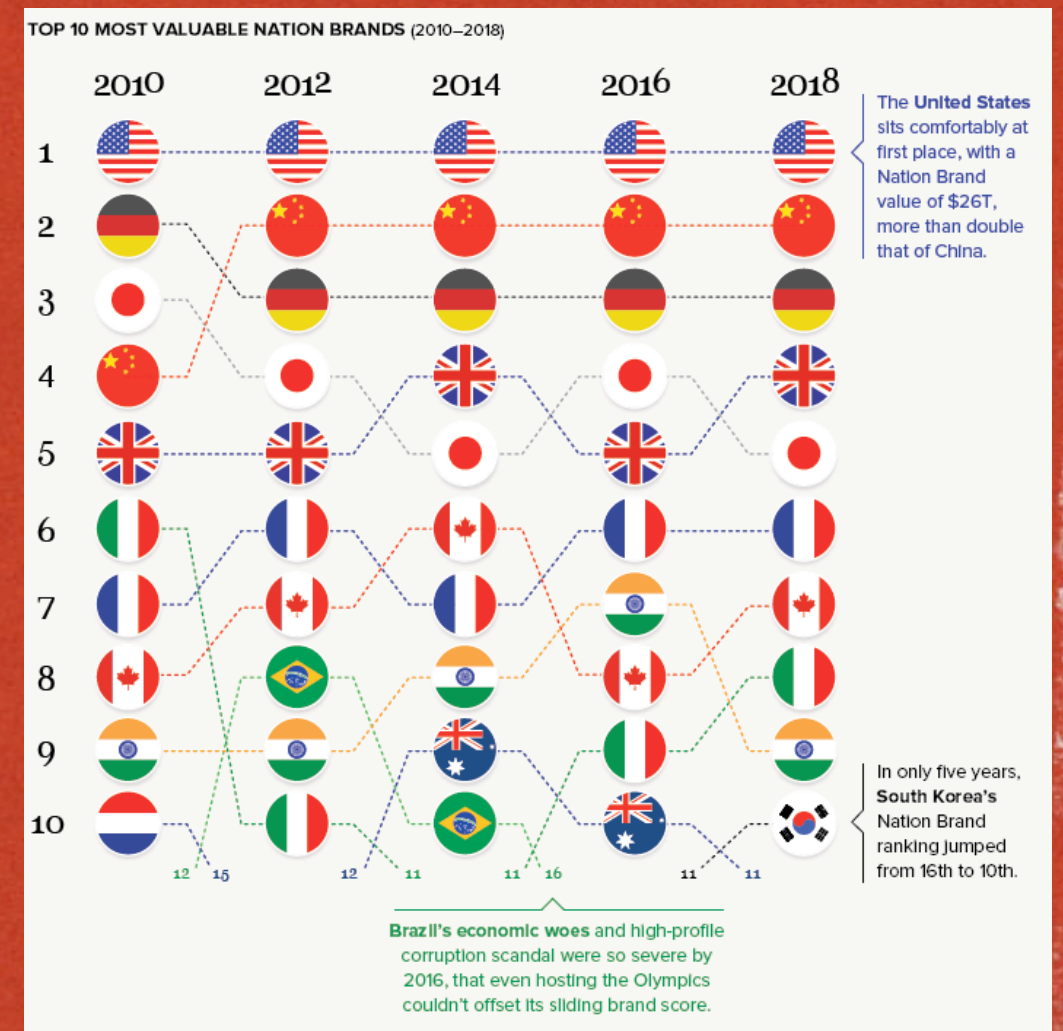
IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Dr Eloise Govier

PART I
IMAGINED COMMUNITIES
REFLECTIONS ON THE
ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF
NATIONALISM
- BENEDICT ANDERSON

MARX AND NATIONALISM

- Since World War II every successful revolution has defined itself in national terms- the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
- By doing so, grounded itself in a territorial and social space inherited from the pre-revolutionary past
- Marxist movements and states have tended to become national not only in form but in substance, i.e. nationalist
- The end of an era of nationalism is 'not remotely insight'



MARX AND NATIONALISM

- Nation, nationality and nationalism hard to define difficult to analyse (3)
- Seton-Watson: no 'scientific definition' of nation can be devised yet the phenomenon existed and exists
- Nationalism an uncomfortable anomaly for marxist theory
- Argues Marx failed to explain the national in relation to the Bourgeoisie.

THE BOURGEOISIE

- Marx 1848: 'the proletariat of each country must [...] settle matters with its own bourgeoisie'
- 'National bourgeoisie'
- Why is this segmentation of the bourgeoisie - a world class in so far as it is defined in terms of the relations of production- theoretically significant?

HOW HAS NATIONALISM COME INTO HISTORICAL BEING?

- Argues nation-ness and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind
- Need to understand how they have come into historical being
- How have they changed over time
- Why do they command such profound emotional legitimacy

HISTORY OF THE TERM

- Argues that they were created end of the 18th Century
- Notes 'nationalism' did not come into wide general use until the end of the 19th Century



SOCIO-CULTURAL CONCEPT

- Universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept
 - Every one can, should, and will have a nationality ... bit like a gender
 - The particularity of its concrete manifestations
 - Greek nationality v french nationality
 - Each is unique (sui generis)

NATIONALISM



- Political power of nationalisms and its philosophical poverty and incoherence
- Nationalism like all isms not produced a great thinker
- Is it an ideology?
- Argues better to associate it with kinship and religion rather than liberalism and fascism

IMAGINED?

- Argues nation is an imagined community
- Imagined political community
- Imagined as inherently limited and sovereign
- Imagined because everyone does not know each other and yet they are in communion

NATIONS

- Gellner:
- Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist
- Anderson doesn't see them as false, but creative - imagined
- Anderson argues all communities are imagined



THE NATION

- What nation dreams of the day when all humans regard themselves as a member?
- Different to religious movements
- Imagined as deep horizontal comradeship
- People will die for it

AN EXERCISE IN IMAGINING A NATION

- Define a portion of time
- Articulate who was doing what
- Write it down

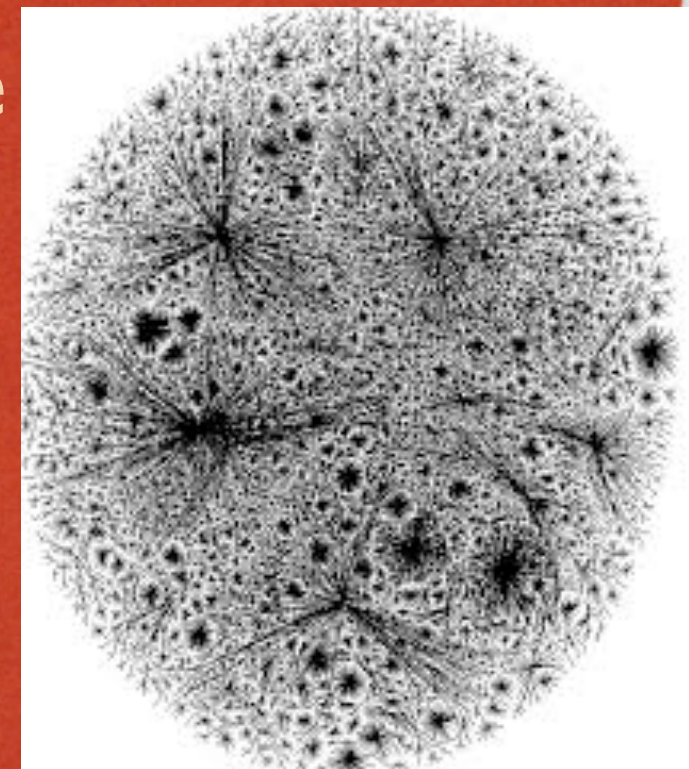


IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

- All these acts were performed at the same time (clocked, calendrical time)
- By actors who are largely unaware of each other
- Shows the novelty of this imagined world



- ‘The idea of a social organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also conceived as a solid community moving steadily up or down history’
- A Brit will never meet or know the names of every Brit, has no idea of what they are up to at any one time, but has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity - see pg 26



PART II
NATIONALIZED PLACES
SARAH RADCLIFFE AND
SALLIE WESTWOOD

NATIONALIZED PLACES

- Affiliations to place
- The neighbourhood, the city, the region, the state
- Expressions of national identity at the international/national interface
- Examines interactions between local and national spheres in social practice

- Non official imaginative geographies and spatial relations with the nation
- People hold clear ideas about how their nation is organised spatially and socially
- Ideas informed by popular cultures
- Conceptions of place, aesthetics of place,
- Geographies of identity



- How do these geographies of identity engage with national imaginations
- Names for place linked to 'people-in-place'
- Populated spaces, specific connotations about the communities located there
- A sense of community relies upon and refers to particular places, whereby a community makes references to itself and the national society and space itself through a series of practices - festivals, graffiti

- Boundaries between the local and national are dynamic contested and multifaceted
- Boundaries are still drawn around certain places as 'ours' or 'theirs'
- In legal terms the relationship between citizen and the space of the nation is deemed static
- Citizenship gives access to most of the national territory...





- ...except those that are concerned with national security
- Outside the space they are temporarily displaced as tourists, workers abroad or relation between the land and the people is broken through war, exile, refuge
- What about the complex affiliations/feelings people have to places within and beyond the national



- What is 'ours' and what is 'theirs'
- How do we understand these multiple relationships?
- Local national
- Identities, nationhood, politics,
- Explores the lived and imaginative geographies of national citizens

“ARE YOU A STRANGER?”

- How does imagery and language structure the distinctive cultural topography
- Regionalism
 - Regional identities cutting through/across affiliations to nations
 - Belonging to a region calls upon a sense of community and identity



- “Part of thinking about regions in social terms is that the communities also think through the region-nation question in racialized terms. Racial demographics - the distribution of racialized groups around the territory - comes to stand as the signifiers of the regions themselves; ‘race’ is regionalized, and regions racialized’ p.111

IDENTITIES

- Regions and difference within the nation, which revise popular senses of place and where different communities 'belong' within the nation
- Knowledge and images of the nation are constituted through verbal and visual representations
- The material and experiential procession of citizens through the national space
- Connected to national belonging



BELONGING

- National senses of belonging are dynamic spatial processes
- Develop through space and time
- Through specific places, practices, migration, colonization, military service...