Anti-Colonial and Post-Colonial Nationalism

• Historical overview
• Nationalism and theories of decolonization
• Example: India
• Post-colonial nationalism
Historical Overview

• Anti-colonial nationalism can be seen as a type of separatist nationalism

• Three waves of decolonization:
  – Dominions breaking away from Britain and Spain in the 18th and 19th centuries
  – After WWI, Middle Eastern wave
  – Post-WWII wave of decolonization
Post-WWII Anti-Colonial Nationalism

• In 1945, the UN had 51 members; in 1990, there were 159 member states.
• Most of the new states emerged in Asia and Africa.
• In 1960, the “Africa Year”, the process accelerates in sub-Saharan Africa with 17 states becoming independent.
Examples of Post-WWII Decolonization

- **British empire:** Jordan (1946), India, Pakistan (1947), Ceylon, Burma (1948), Israel (1949), Malaysia (1957), Nigeria (1960), Sierra Leone, Tanzania (1961), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Zambia (1964), Zimbabwe (1980)
- **French empire:** Vietnam (1949), Cambodia, Laos (1954), Morocco (1956), Guinea (1958), Ivory Coast, Senegal (1960), Algeria (1962)
- **Dutch empire:** Indonesia (1949)
- **Belgian empire:** Congo (1960)
- **Portuguese empire:** Mozambique (1974), Angola (1975)
Explaining decolonization

• Three levels of analysis:
  – The international level
  – The metropolitan level
  – The peripheral level

• Multi-level explanation

[Diagram showing interconnections between Cold War, Empire, and Colonies]
Peripheral level

• “Romantic nationalist liberation” along essentialist lines: Nationalist leaders joined by the masses in toppling colonial rule.

• Problem: There was little or no mass support. The social, cultural, and infrastructural conditions were absent.
Metropolitan level

• “Paternalistic explanation”: colonial powers tried to educate the periphery and then let them go
• “Self-interested explanation”: colonies too expensive
• Problem: Public opinion in France and Britain was not against empire.
International level

• Geopolitical approach: In Cold War era, no room for empires (European post-WWII weakness, and superpower opposition)

• Problem: Weakness didn’t lead to collapse automatically, and it wasn’t necessarily in the interest of the US
A modified nationalist account

• International level
  – the role of the UN

• Metropolitan level
  – elite education & linguistic unification
  – communications
  – administrative regionalism

• Peripheral level
  – constructive identity-formation solving mobilization and coordination problems
The Indian case of anti-colonial nationalism

- South Asia was first colonized by the East India Company; from 1858 the British state
- From the beginning, nationalists were western-educated elite:
  - Phase B: Shift from elite collaboration to nationalist agitation in 1910s
  - Phase C: Gandhi’s mass movement in early 1920s and in 1931-32
  - Independence in 1947: religious violence between Hindu and Muslim populations
Evaluating the Indian case

• Essentialist account exaggerates the cultural cohesion of the anti-colonial opposition

• Breuilly’s constructivist interpretation comes closer to the truth
  – Imperial policy: provocation and collaboration
  – Party organization
  – Leadership
Post-Colonial Nationalism

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<tr>
<th>Common state?</th>
<th>Common nation?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Failed secession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Failed nation-building</td>
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Post-colonial puzzles (I)

• Why so little nation-building?
  – Modernization theory
  – Essentialist accounts
  – Constructivist accounts
    • Colonial legacy
    • Post-colonial state policy
Post-colonial puzzles (II)

• Why so many cases of attempted secession?
  – Uncompromising regimes
  – Assimilation
  – Migration of ethnic strangers

• But why so few cases of successful nationalist secession?
  – Nature of secessionist area and “rump state”
  – But mainly international factors