

# Lecture 9

Nationalism and globalisation

# Defining globalisation (1)

- G means ‘increasing interdependence’
- The fate of all parts of the world bound together more intensely than before
- Economic, political, cultural relationships across borders
- The idea of ‘global village’:
- All local, regional, national elements tied together in one interdependent whole

# Problems with this definition:

- 1) what is new and distinctive about contemporary globalisation? (interconnections between countries have been intensive even before; what makes the last few decades so different?)
- 2) forgets about the uneven impact of G across different parts of the world
- 3) does not explain the extent to which this interdependence has captured people's imagination

# Defining globalisation (2)

- G is seen in more negative light
- G = 'homogenisation', 'Westernisation'
- G perceived as the domination of Western economic and cultural interests over the rest of the world (facilitating perpetuation of inequality between rich and poor countries)
- implying the forces transforming the world are beyond human control (justifying expansion of Western culture and capitalism)
- 'Americanisation' of global culture (McDonaldisation)

# Problems with this definition:

- G is not a single all-conquering and homogenising force, driven by Western cultural imperialism and capitalism
- Cultural experiences have not been simply moving in the direction of cultural uniformity and standardisation
- Such a conception overlooks the impact of non-Western cultures; there is still room for reproduction of considerable social and cultural diversity within the interconnected global structure

## Defining globalisation (3)

- Emphasis on the diminishing significance of time and space as the world becomes more interconnected
- ‘time-space compression’
- Intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa

# Comments to this definition

- More helpful than previous two
- Helps distinguish the contemporary phase of G from earlier phases
- Alerts to the pivotal role of the rise of a global consciousness:
- ‘G = a social process in which constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding’
- ‘glocalisation’ (local is an aspect of G, not counterpoint to the global)

# G and N

- The ‘crisis’ of the nation-state
- The nation-state is besieged from on **top** (by growing interdependence of the world; changes brought by G) & from **below** (pressures of identity politics; rediscovering identities)



# The end of the national era?

- Can states preserve their sovereignty intact? (increasing cross-border economic activity and regulation; politics being conducted at supranational and subnational level...)
- Will belonging to the nation (national identity) be replaced by other forms of community that offer alternative focus?

# What is being argued

- Growth of nonterritorial identities and cosmopolitan solidarities; increase in cultural ‘hybridisation’ (some call it ‘creolisation’)
- The nation is no longer the only form of community that counts for many people (rise of nonnational frameworks of belonging along the lines of class, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation...)
- The state is fast becoming outmoded by economic globalisation

# But...

- Economic G has not yet overrun the state: not transcendence of the state as such but a transformation of its functions
- Nation continues to be important source of pol. and cultural identity for many
- Security and identity are felt by many to be under threat, hence N →
- Recent revival of ethnicity and N interpreted as resistance to the disruptive impact of G

# G and the growth of N

- G reduces relative power of states – more difficult to counter the rise of minority nationalisms within their borders
- Ethnic and national movements can exploit transnational networks to advance their cause
- It is premature to consider N outmoded form of consciousness

# G as an opportunity

- G offers an opportunity to think of and produce alternative, postnational forms of community and belonging
- Nation seen as only one frame of reference among many
- Deterritorialisation, pluralisation, hybridisation