

# Constructions of nationalism and race



## Making Others/Making Us: Constructions of Nationalism and Race

The essay presents a critique of various articles based on concepts of space and identity. The different articles analyzed discuss how individuals from different races interact in a given space as well as geographical location. The article 'Latino immigrants and the regeneration of place and belonging in small town America' by Lise Nelson and Nancy Hiemstra offer a comparison of the politics of place and belonging within two communities namely Woodburn (Oregon) and Leadville in Colorado. As explained in the article, the two communities have experienced a considerable rise in the number of Latino immigrants in the last two decades; hence the members of the society face the issue of belonging. The article authors present detailed explanation regarding the demographic information of the members of the two communities, as well as the impacts of the immigration on place identity and social belonging.

The article is informative since it brings out a significant negative impact on the increased number of immigrants. As explained by the authors, the individuals who currently immigrate to America hold different perspectives as compared to their counterparts who settled in the country a century ago. The new and post-modern immigrants are barely interested in assimilating into the American culture since they have adopted a rather parasitic approach to the US. Therefore, the issue of belonging and place identity sets in since the current immigrants only want to attach themselves to their American host and later feed off it, and at the same time, maintain their native cultures and identity. However, the authors fail to appreciate the positive impacts of immigrants in the United States. According to the

authors, the immigrants only benefit from the communities, in which they finally settle, hence referring to the individuals as parasites. The authors have ignored the numerous benefits brought about by the immigrants. Such benefits include the availability of new skills and expertise in US companies, the rich culture which ultimately leads to acculturation, as well as work efficiency particularly due to the presence of millions of undocumented workers in the country. Nonetheless, the authors further ventures into assessing the concept of 'immigrant incorporation' which has been debated on multiple instances of assimilation, transnationalism, and multiculturalism. The issues about immigrants have been well reviewed using concepts of place and belonging. Even though individuals moving to new places adapt to the new culture, it is quite difficult to shed previous identities and cultural or political affiliations. In that light, the authors appreciate the fact that immigrants are expected to maintain active social networks as well as conduct essential life activities across national boundaries, form trans-local spaces of community, political action and affiliation.

The article further ventures into appreciating the concept of space and identity in regard to the immigrants to the two communities in the US. The authors describe the concepts of place and identity pertaining to the socially recognized membership of immigrants. The literature in the article is considerably adequate in elaborating the concept of belonging, as the authors describe belonging as the 'desire for some attachment, either of other places, people, ways in which people and groups are involved in attempting to long or wanting to become.' Furthermore, the authors have provided an excellent description of the concept of place and the

community. As explained in the article, structures of class, race, as well as illegality in migration shape whether the immigrants are viewed (or view themselves) as full members of a given community or geographical place.

The authors have concluded that there are shortcomings in treating immigrants as an undifferentiated mass, particularly in homogeneous circumstances. In that light, the analysis of the immigrants into the two communities in the US is pertinent to identifying the underlying principles of the concept of place and identity. As elaborated by the authors, the Mexican immigrants who settled in Woodburn and Leadville positioned themselves as per the hierarchies of class, race, and illegality. Therefore, it would be quite difficult to attain nationalism in those two communities since the immigrants still had strong ties with their original cultures despite being assimilated into the American culture.

A similar concept of the legality of migration has been discussed in McClintock's article on Nationalism, Gender, and Race. As explained by McClintock, all nationalisms are gendered, and in most instances, it is dangerous since it represents relations to political power as well as various constructs of violence. The article provides a detailed explanation of the negative impacts of nationalism as it attempts to demean immigrants and their original way of life. As the article states, nationalism invents nations where they do not exist and also tries to construct most modern countries regardless of their appeal to an honored and immemorial past, but the nations are all of the recent invention. McClintock further notes that nationalism ends up being constitutive of individuals' identities through social competitions that are usually violent as well as gendered. The article <https://assignbuster.com/constructions-of-nationalism-and-race/>

has successfully assessed the concept of gender difference in terms of provision of access to resources and rights in the country. According to McClintock, no nation has ever been bold enough to offer women and men the same access to national resources or even granted equal rights to the two genders.

The article by McClintock provides an exclusive description of the concept of nationalism as he equates gender with power in any nation. According to the author, gender differences between men and women are symbolic to the limits of differences in a country as well as the governmental power among men. Women are typically viewed as the symbolic bearers of the country whereas men are regarded as the policy makers as well as rulers. In that light, nationalism is a gendered discourse that would be challenging to understand without consideration of a theory of gender power. There is an excellent examination of the different entities that tend to differ with the gendering of countries. On the other hand, white feminists have been greatly involved in the identification of the downside of the concept of nationalism. However, the feminists have been considerably slow in recognizing that nationalism is more of a feminine issue.

The third article that focuses on constructions of nationalism and race is 'The Most German of Towns: Creating an Ideal Nazi Community in Rothenburg ob der Tauber' by Joshua Hagen. The article explores the means through which Rothenburg was manipulated to further the ideologies the Nazi believed to be the major features of Germany and its history. According to the article, it was during the Nazi period that the Rothenburg town (which was a symbol of Germany's culture) acted to illustrate as well as model the

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Nazi's ideas of the landscape and also how to run the country. The article offers a rich introduction that lays the foundation of the paper by explaining that such activities as tourism, anti-Semitism as well as historical preservation went through changes and also acted as key issues to further the policies of the Nazi rule. The article provides detailed insights into the issue of 'imagined communities' in attempts to explain the impacts of the Nazi rule in the nation, particularly in Rothenburg Town.

Through the examination of the concept of the imagined communities, the article has adequately provided a key to understanding how the issues of culture, identity, and relations in the society have been expressed in terms of historic places and landscapes. The author further details the perfect picture of a nation through the exploration of geographical space that is romanticized and involving a historical landscape. Through the explanation about the concepts of space and place as provided by the author, the article makes it evident that nationalizing certain historical landscapes and places are of great significance as it represents the idea of the country as well as its part. Besides, the process of nationalizing such entities becomes essential in limiting, contesting, as well as shaping the contexts through which the communities in the countries are imagined. Therefore, the Nazi capitalized on landscaping and space in efforts to frame their envisioned national community.

Another article addressing a similar concept of the imagined communities is 'Imagined Communities Selections' by Anderson. As Anderson puts it, nationality (nation-ness and nationalism) are cultural artifacts regarded to be of a particular kind. The article by Anderson presents an excellent account of <https://assignbuster.com/constructions-of-nationalism-and-race/>

the origin of the concept of nationality, a concept that is related to the idea of imagined communities. With the description of the ways through which nationality as a concept has come into being, as well as why nationalism currently commands great emotional legitimacy, the author fully paints the picture of the imagined communities. The article can also be described as informative as it provides a detailed explanation of the reasons as to why the cultural artifacts continue to arouse such deep emotions and attachments, particularly in the construction of modern societies. Anderson further proposes a way to discern between communities upon consideration of nationalism. According to Anderson, nationalism masquerades under false pretenses and therefore, there is the need to assimilate the term ‘invention’ to ‘falsity’ and ‘fabrication’ instead of referring to it as ‘creation’ or ‘imagining.’ In that light, true communities exist, and they can be advantageously positioned to nations. However, despite the full description of the concepts of nationalism and imagined communities, the article does not warrant a sure way or style to imagine communities. As opposed to Joshua Hagen’s article that accounts how the Nazi fully designed Rothenburg Town to become a modern town, Anderson fails to give a detailed description of how individuals can imagine the new and modern communities. As Anderson claims, communities are to be discerned by the style in which they are imagined rather than by their genuineness or falsity. The major shortcoming to Anderson’s belief is that different societies may hold different styles or ideas of their imagined communities.