Nation, Nationalism, and Other Intervening Concepts: The Tensions, Contentions in Their Meanings

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Abstract

Analyses of nation and nationalism, which are figuratively about "'belonging', "'bordering', and 'commitment'" (Brennan, 1995:128), have come in various ways. While some scholars evaluate it from 1980 upwards (Zuelow, 2006), others concentrate on ideas around it across time (Smith, 1994; Brubaker, 1996; Özkirimlii, 2000). Many others try to group theories of nationalism into typologies, for easier understanding (Smith, 1994; Greenfeld, 1995; Hechter, 2000). There are also various theories on its manner of emergence (Anderson, 1983; Handler, 1988; Gellner, 1983; Hroch, 1996; Renan, 1996). While a grouping of the arguments can be elusive, relationships between the individual and the collective to the state are in the centre of most analyses. Issues are also around ways of considering the relation between the self and the nation. This paper discusses nation and nationalism from the multiple perspectives, and other intervening and related concepts, in the bid to expand the scope of understanding, and concludes that the shades of conceptualisations are still bound to continue.

1.1: INTRODUCTION

In the first instance and as earlier said, the discussion of nationalism can be from different points of view, including ethnic nationalism (Hastings, 1997; Brass, 1991; Guibarnau, 1999), where association with an ethnic group is central. Then, there is romantic or organic nationalism, which emphasises the link between the nation, race or tribe (Grosby, 2005: 14-5). On the other hand, there is cultural nationalism, where a common culture binds a nation (Hroch, 1996; Hechter, 2000). Civic nationalism, implying the dominance of the state over all, as determined by the people is also another (Greenfeld, 1995).

Liberal nationalism considers nationalism without extremist tendencies as common with xenophobes (Guibarnau, 1999; Hechter, 2000). Besides, religious nationalism, which means links with a nation, with faith as its basis (Grosby, 2005: 8) also matters. Then pan-nationalism, meaning a mixture of similar ethnic or cultural groups over a territorial space (Kedourie, 1960; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1991, 1995, 1999; Özkirimlii, 2000) is another analytical approach. But how do we situate these shapes of meanings around the subject matter of nationalism, identity, homeland, and the idea of transnationalism?

1.2: METHODOLOGY

This research has been conducted based on a qualitative analysis of secondary data. The data comprised of literature on key theories around the concepts that have been critically discussed and analysed. These concepts are nation and nationalism, identity, home and homeland, and transnationalism. Though many other concepts may intervene these key subject matters, these few have been carefully selected as they interrelate with other research subjects of interests, like the Media of Diaspora, and Transnational Communication. Analyses have, therefore, been stimulated by the many contending literature and theories around the models.

2.1: NATIONALISM AND THE MULTILEVELLED PLATFORMS FOR ITS DISCUSSION

In late modernity, nationalism can be evident in meanings made out of interactions with technologies, in the process of longing and the negotiation of belonging (Pattie, 2001). Nationalism, as Grosby (2005) argues, can partly be through shared beliefs and structures like through the Jerusalem temple for ancient Israel, through the parliament for England, and through the *Ise* for Japan. It can also be through shared ways like wears, anthems, religion and language. With these, therefore, can it not also be through gatherings around Internet resources like newsgroups that are common to them because of origin or shared interests? The possible trace of nationalism or the absence of it through these technologies is part of this research.

Furthermore, Foucault's discussion of nations and nationalism as a discursive and as an evolving process (cited in Brennan, 1995: 128) was in two significant works on nationalism in 1983 (those of Anderson and Gellner). His discussion highlights its growth as constructive. This takes place through differences and similarities, and through consensus and dissenting. It develops in the consciousness to reveal what is sometimes referred to as nationalism. Anderson and Gellner unite on the importance of industrialisation in the definition of nationalism. However, they depart on the question of what nationalism is, in the age of technology which industrialisation guarantees. First, Anderson (1983) argues that the nation is imagined. This imagination is

limited, sovereign and communal. It comes when "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (ibid.: 6).

An influential discourse on nationalism, the theory regards boundedness as a psychological construct. It comes through a people's interaction with the print media like the newspaper. The coming of the printed word through industrial capitalism, in Anderson's conception, conditions the visualisation of the "absent other" (Giddens, 1990; Gillespie, 2000: 167). It yet leaves behind a memory of a "relationship" with multiple others, indicating an imagined collectivity. Besides, this "may be as important culturally as any information conveyed" (Gillespie, ibid.).

Gellner (1983) argues that the principle of nationalism could be obvious if there is an agreement between the political and the national unit. In this context, he implies that nationalism is a necessity, which arose in an industrial society and a resulting need for continuous growth. There should, therefore, be an integration of culture and the state for the realisation of progress. Before industrialisation (agro-literate period), heterogeneity of culture could be possible given the absence of technologies which reduced the need for the classification of culture.

In modern times, however, industrialisation leads states to enhance technical progress via a meeting of culture and political boundaries (Gellner and Smith, 1996: 367-8). Hobsbawn (1990) extends Gellner's idea, arguing that the principles of nation could sometimes override those of political units. Nations are insignificant except as they relate to territories in a changing sense. He further departs from Gellner by arguing that nation and nationalism cannot only be from above, but from below through the expression of the wishes and aspirations of the constituting people. Handler's (1998) analysis then proceeds from the perspective of "below", through the individual:

> Nationalism is an ideology about individuated being. It is an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity, encompassing diversity. It is an ideology in which social reality, conceived in terms of nationhood is endowed with the reality of natural things (p. 6).

While Breuilly (1985:11) concerns himself with "political movement, principally of opposition, which seek to gain or exercise state power and justify their objectives in terms of nationalist doctrine", Billig (1995) introduces the concept of "banal nationalism", to argue that nationalism is an everyday construction, not necessarily limited to the dissenter, or those at the margin. Using the Western experience, he contends: "Banal nationalism is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced". Furthermore:

> These habits are not removed from everyday life, as some observers have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated or flagged in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism far from being an intermittent mood in established nations is an endemic condition (p. 6).

In established nations, Billig notes, national identity is unconsciously but routinely a priority in habits and ways that turn out to produce the nation. Barely noticeable, regular identification instruments like flags, anthems, language and currency (Grosby, 2005), which represents particular nations revive nationalism on an everyday basis.

In other notions, the question of commonality of culture, collective memory and pronouncement on equality are central in the determination of a nation (Hroch, 1996). Hroch (1996) stresses that nationalism is integral to social transformation through the growth of politics (Özkirimlii, 2000: 104-6). In continuing the argument that nationalism is a construction, Renan (1996) addresses the issue of principle through faithfulness and a common willingness of a people to invent a nation as grounds for its development.

On the other hand, Brubaker (1996) would rather look at forms of nationalism arising from the nationalisation of "political space", as against previous ones that develop through the growth of political boundaries. Unlike Brubaker, Hechter (2000) discusses the subject using typologies. These are state-building nationalism, where a distant cultural group joins a particular territory; peripheral nationalism, where a distinct state resists merger; irredentist nationalism, where an integration attempt is made against a homogenous group; and unification nationalism, where the assimilation of homogenous group is consensual.

Attitude to territorialism and the understanding of this are crucial in the above analysis. Others say the way of appreciating the past and present are equally important. Smith (1991, 1994, 1995, 1999), for instance, argues that integration of the national past and the present need consideration in the understanding of nationalism. He adds that the "two-way relationship between ethnic past and nationalist present lies the secret of the nation's explosive energy and the awful power it exerts over it members" (1994:9). His integrated approach views the subject from the notion of the old and the new. Old in the sense of an appreciation of the *homeland*, (as a historic place), and agitations to protect the territory and valued centres, while it is new in the sense of concern for its evolving or shared culture, customs, traits, languages and thoughts.

On the other hand, Smith (1991) writes that nationalism creates an "identity myth", from a multi-

dimensional form, adding that it, amongst other things, carries political and social meanings. Greenfeld (1995) works on types and times. He argues that nationalism develops both individually and collectively to produce its three types including individualistic and civic nationalism; collectivistic and civic nationalism; and collectivistic and ethnic. The important ethnic question is present in Hastings' (1997) reply to Hobsbawn, wherein he distinguishes between ethnicity, nation, nation-state and nationalism. He writes:

> An ethnicity is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language…a nation is far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity…a nation-state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as 'subjects' of the sovereign but as a horizontally bounded society to whom the state in a sense belongs…nationalism is strong only in particularistic terms, deriving from the belief that one's own ethnic or national tradition is especially valuable and needs to be defended at almost any cost through creation or extension of its own nation-state (p. 2-5).

Besides its temporal determination, Hall (1992) put more emphasis on the spatial element. He notes that nation and nationalism are not easy to construct because of their temporal and spatial processes. For Gilroy (1993, 2000), he argues that the appearances of nationalism are not necessarily pre-given. It is a result of mixing variables over time and space. Through difference, as well, Brass (1979) argues that nationalism is best from the viewpoint of ethnic and national identities' activities in the struggle for power, prestige and wealth.

Kedourie (1960) refers to the course of history and the expressions of nationalism within. He situates his analysis on the expressions of shared thinking amongst groups with similar language over time. The struggle for decolonisation amongst colonial and post-colonial Asian and African nation-states (Nairn, 1977; Nkrumah,1964; Wilmot,2006) are also important in the definition of the concept, as well as the several agitations in the Middle-East, and the distant imagination of the *homeland* amongst diasporas which, Anderson (1998) dupes "long distance nationalism". Fanon's (cited in Ashcroft, et al, 1995: 117) analysis, which has roots in anti-colonial agitations, however, fears that the "national bourgeoisie" could usurp state power for their own good after the agitations. Brennan and Bhabha (1995) also note that the importance of nationalism lies in the rise of the novel alongside it in Europe and in places where their influence spread (cited in Ashcroft, et al, 117).

Often conflicted with patriotism, ethnicity (Jaffrelot, 2003:3), tribalism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and sometimes racism, nationalism may imply a bit or all of these. It is still possible to express nationalism without any. Its conceptual diversity explains why a theory is inadequate for the concept (Calhoun, 1997:123), and because its "historical record is diverse, so too must our concepts" (Hall, 1999:1, cited in Jaffrelot, 2003:3). If this is taken as a license and I tow a trial and error path to view nationalism as partly a product of feelings, belonging, behaviour or attitude towards an entity that the individual relates with, (leading to ideas that emanate from social, political, or economic process), it would amount to viewing nationalism simply as a psychological construct (Deutsch, 1969:16; Anderson, 1983).

Then if there is an overemphasis on the dimension of the state (Breuilly, 1985) in its understanding, it could again amount to reductionism in an affair that is a product of mixing social occurrences. Some of the occurrences are, for instance, ethnicity, which is central in the discussion of Daniele (2004). There is also modernisation, as Smith (2002) notes. Religious conviction that is obvious in the works of Smith (1998) is as well a part. Civil activity, which Brown (2000) reveals, additionally matters. It also includes free enterprise as Anderson (1983), Smith (1998), and Hecter (2000) theorise. Leadership manipulation, according to Billig (1995) and boundaries that Anthony Cohen (1985) explains, apart from civilisations, which is explicit in the theory of Huntington (1997), are significant aspects of the occurrences.

These, therefore, justify the problematic nature of nationalism, as it tends to take a little, and sometimes, everything about most things, while defining the relationship between individuals, peoples and the state. The concern here, however, is about possible nationalism amongst diasporas and migrants. This "crystallise independently of the demand for self-determination (and) are not even territorialized" (Jaffrelot, 2003:7), but is useful enough to impact on institutions they relate with. In modern times, communication enhances these relationships. What does this mean regardless for nation and nationalism?

How do we identify the multi-stranded activities of the person in dislocation in relation to the nation? Nationalism can be defined through a migrants' state of attachment with a departed the *homeland* over time and space. And it is possible to evaluate this condition in relation to different aspects of life. The aspect of communication with a focus on the Internet is partly the pre-occupation of this work, not from a limited position like Bastian (2004) did on Nigerians, but from a critical assessment of the online actions of Nigerian migrants. Also related to the discussion is the question of identity, which I shall now examine.

3.1: IDENTITY: CONTESTED CONSTRUCTION, PROBLEMATIC DECONSTRUCTION

Identity is a concept that implies fluidity and change, sometimes used to address "everything and nothing" (Georgiou, 2006a:39). A contested concept, it has been addressed through theories on its meaning and

construction (Hall, 1996; Bauman, 1996, 2004; Gilroy, 1993, 2000), rather than its shape (Woodward, ed, 2000; Hoffmann-Axhelm, 1992). The division is almost certainly weak, and overlapping. They even up to reveal the problem in conceptualising matters of belonging that identity partly represents. Hall locates identity from two sides (1996:2). The first involves "naturalism" through similarity of origin, ideology, or group.

Raymond Williams also visualises naturalism in his reference to place, or rootedness as source of identification (cited in McRobbie, 2005: 43). The second, according to Hall, is through the "discursive approach", involving ongoing construction. The question of construction, instead of a fixed identity, currently has a dominant theoretical appeal (Ang, 2000:2). The predominance of arguments that identity is a construction and the critique to the essentialisation of identity relates to the complex human condition and position that results from class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, location, age and place (Calhoun, 1994:3; Clifford, 2000:95).

The course of identity construction, Hall notes, cannot be essentialist, nor have roots in the past. It is simultaneously in the past and the future (Ang, 2000). Hall (1996) particularly remarks that its building process:

> Accepts that identities are never unified and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions (Hall, 1996).

This process, though through the point of view of "ethnic sameness and differentiation" is what Gilroy (1993: xi) calls the *"changing same"*. Acknowledging Leroi Jones as the initial user of the oxymoron (Gilroy, 2000: 29), the changes challenges absolutist ideas of identity, particularly through migrancy and diasporic experience. It locates the evolution of identity within the prevailing conditions of space and time, which are continuously in motion. This results in a newness that undermines the essence of a past. Gilroy sums it thus:

> This changing same is not some invariant essence that gets enclosed subsequently in a shape-shifting exterior with which it is casually associated. It is not the sign of an unbroken, integral inside protected by the camouflaged husk….The same is present, but how can we imagine it as something other than an essence generating the merely accidental? Iteration is the key to this process. The same is retained without needing to be reified. It is ceaselessly reprocessed. It is maintained and modified in what becomes a determinedly non-traditional tradition, for this is not tradition as closed or simple repetition (Gilroy, 2000:29).

The theme is also present in Bauman's (1996) metaphor of the pilgrim that is in motion, but who is enmeshed in uncertainties, in her/his routes. Through the desert path, the pilgrim constructs an identity-building place, but soon discovers that the desert lacks lasting structures. "The easier it is to emboss a footprint, the easier it is to efface it. A gust of wind will do. And deserts are windy places" (p. 23). To Robins and Aksoy "identity has functioned as an ordering device, but at the same time, and more importantly, we can see it historically as a device of cultural engineering: put simply, a person who becomes the bearer of an 'identity' becomes a particular kind of person" (2001:687). Implied here is that identity helps differentiations, and is a process of determining the ways of a people, groupings, or categorisations. It assists in the appreciation of varieties, through the labelling of differences.

Identity can, therefore, surface through a construction, destruction, shifty or alteration process. The processes can be gradual or immediate. It can come with ease or pain, slowly or quickly, individually or collectively. Individuals can also make identity (Marx, cited in Gilroy, 2000:127). Its definition may come internally or subjectively, implying how the self is seen, or from external conditioning through social definition of the person in interaction (Woodward, ed, 2000: 7). Identity helps in the definition of individual and society, partly through the questions of "Who am I? And where do I belong" (Gleason, 1995: 194).

The conception of the self nevertheless goes through regular review via reflexivity (Giddens, 1991, 2000), and could conflict, or struggle with the social or external perception of the person (Woodward, ed, 2000: 7; Bauman, 2004: 16). The process is either rewarding or unrewarding, simply as there could be a balance, or a tilt on either side at intervals. It could also be at margins as is the case of migrants and diasporas (Bhabha, cited in McRobbie, 2005: 5). Emerging in the exchange is an infinite construction process, which Ang refers to as "incremental and dialogic" (2000:11). Extending Hall's seminal discourse on identity, Ang argues that its construction process come through the differences "between being and becoming".

Importantly, "being is enhanced by becoming, and becoming is never possible without a solid grounding in being" (Ang, 2000:11). The discourse implies an understanding of one's past, the present, in relation to future projections, and probably the margins in between. Identity can emanate from many sides, and can help positioning. The positioning could be between the self and others, or the self within the context of time, or others against a collective, within time or space; or others against the self, in a spatial or temporal context, as well. In these circumstances, reflexivity enables the proper discerning of position.

As identity is common to matters relating to ethnicity, race, nationalism (Hall, 1995:435; Gilroy, 1993, 2000; Georgiou, 2006a) and other criss-crossing concepts, possessions like the passport (Woodward, ed, 2000; Hoffmann-Axhelm, 1992) can demonstrate identity in political and institutional terms. Politically, the passport

may figuratively associate a person with a nation-state, simply as organisation or institutional identification could relate a person to the group. These further reveal that identity has multiple faces, because it can show in symbols, through documents inscribed via a brief textual narration of the self, or ascribed through an accident of birth. Identity can as well come via accomplishments.

The passport document, for instance, represents simple features of an individual, like name, age, profession, and nationality, but also excludes other vital pointers of the self like ideology, feelings, or what Woodward (ed, 2000) describes as "how we occupy these positions or about what they mean to us" (p. 9). While the possession of the passport enables movements across places (Hoffmann-Axhelm, 1992), the participation of the state as the issuer in identity formation is evident. It adds to the understanding that the phases of identity construction are not only multiple, but goes across geographies and homogenous peoples (Hall, 1998, 1992). Other than that, it justifies the thinking that a person comprises of "multiple social identities" (Rojek, 2003: 180).

Nevertheless, the basis of defining identity is varied and conflicting (Woodward, 1997:1), which is why essentialising its meaning, is hugely unrealistic. While class, nationality, gender, ethnicity, and modern technologies of communication are some sources of its construction, it needs reflexivity (Giddens, 1991, 2000), and narrativisation to situate these variables. This is why Gilroy (1993; 2000) argues further that its shaping cannot be absolute. The shaping takes place in motions and movements and through reflexivity. In addition, the reflexivity is about a consciousness of "thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations" (Giddens, 2000:249), which needs protection in the contradictory age of globalisation (Ang, 2000).

Further to this, Castells (1997: 7) sees identities as "sources of meaning for the actors themselves and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation", in an age of immense global changes. Three "forms and origins" of identity namely legitimatisation, resistance, and projecting are proposed by Castells (ibid., 8). In all, the role of the self and the society are part of its determination, through a conscious facilitation of reviews. More categorically, the reflexivity of identity, according to Giddens (1991), does not make it stationary or hereditary, but a product of an individual imaginative power.

It emerges from a reflection on the dialectical interplay of the self and actors in interaction, in a continuous narrative. Close to this again is Gilroy's (1993; 1997) highlighting of the implication of space in the construction of identity, simply as he stresses its characteristics as a model for "understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which that fragile subjectivity is formed" (1997, 301). It, therefore, becomes relative or relational (Hall, 1989), as it is not a fixed phenomenon, but a progression arising from the "relationship of the other to oneself" (Hall, 1989). The dual logic of one and the other, illustrates identity as a contextual term, one that is dependent on judgements of parties in interaction.

Wendt (1994:395, cited in Fearon, 1999:4) extends this further by defining the contested word as a perception of the self through role expectations and shared societal understandings. It proceeds from a personal understanding of social role and the characterisation of it by society. Hogg and Abrams' (1988:2) approach is simpler. They note that identity is "people's concept of who they are, of what sort of people they are and how they relate to others".

This may appear normative as it takes rationality for granted, but construction is also obvious. Race, religion, and language are in Deng's (1995:1, cited in Fearon, 1999:4) opinion, additional sources of identity construction. Jenkins (1996:4, cited in Fearon, 1999:4), refers to them as ways of differentiating "individuals and collectivities". Many of these underline its shifting, imprecise, and yet real nature. Though Gilroy's concept of the "*changing same*" implies these, through the main notion of construction, through reflexivity and narrativisation, and through being comparative or relational.

The absence of a common definition of identity does not change the reality that certain themes are common to it. These include its relevance in understanding what a person is, and is not, and how the person defines the situation either in agreement or in disagreement with others. It can, therefore, be complex, divergent, and a product of social and cultural processes, as it can be an individual or social construction, whether tangibly and intangibly. The concept is an individual, social and historical construct, which partly flows "from a tool kit of options made available by our culture and society" (Appiah, 2005).

In relation to diasporas and migrants, identity becomes deeply intertwined to spatial, physical and symbolic mobility, arising from travelling and dwelling, and being insiders and outsiders in communities, localities and nation-states. It is not a thing "inevitably determined by place or nationality (or) for visualising a future where new bases for social solidarity are offered and joined, perhaps via the new technologies" (Gilroy, 1997: 304). The Internet as one new technology offers a unique platform for investigating identity amongst individuals, groups and peoples, because its dimensions are diverse and are increasing.

Notably, therefore, time, space and individual conditions are elements that could contribute to the construction of identity. The process might be subjective, through relating with fellow humans, or modern technologies, but possibilities of contestation shape these subjectivities, resulting in a shared social pattern. Amongst migrants, identity can be more ambiguous. This is because of dislocation that begins from source to

destination and the associated challenges of self-representation in the progressions. New technologies offer fresh grounds for the reconceptualization of identities (Gilroy, 1997).

The Internet is principally dynamic in helping a redefinition of the self and groups via its confines (Turkle, 1995). How then does the technology affect Nigerian migrants' identities, or how do their activities affect the network? This is as well the concern of this work. The question of space and place of home and the *homeland* and the related idea of homelessness are central to the construction of identity in the light of the broader representation it offers. More specifically, its significance in the conceptualisation of the dynamism of migration is important. These are the reasons why I will now turn my attention to it.

4.1: HOME AND THE HOMELAND: A QUESTION OF IMAGINATION

In line with its multi-levelled contexts, theories of home have come in different ways. Naficy (1999:6), for instance, sees it as a place that can be anywhere. It is not fixed. To this extent, "it is temporary and it is moveable; it can be built, rebuilt, and carried in memory and acts of imagination". As flexibility reigns in Naficy's argument, so are other elements like security evident in others. Brah describes home as a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination", "a place of return", and "a lived experience of a locality" (Brah, 1996: 192). It all points at its contrasting make up and understandings amongst peoples, groups and individuals.

These different appreciations also draw attention to its complex character, further leading to Tsagarousianou's (2004: 57) reference to it as a thing of subjective experience. In other terms, Rapport and Dawson, (1998: 6) describe it as a "physical centre of one's universe-a safe and still place to leave and return to, and a principal focus of one's concern and control". On the other hand, Hammer (2007), regards home as a "constructed institution" with which a relationship takes place.

Also quoting Sagar (1997: 237), Hammer agues that home produces "bodies, borders, subjects, positions, discourses, and ideologies and mechanisms of surveillance". While the first definition talks about location, the second sees home as progressing from a complex motion. Obviously a value laden (Morley, 2002:16; Mallet, 2004: 84) concept, Bammer (Cited in Morley, ibid.) additionally perceives it as an "enacted space within which we try on rules and relationships or…belonging and foreignness". For Suasek, home is an analytical tool, suitable for gauging the processes of "territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation" (2002: 514). Therefore, home could be a place of habitation, or dwelling, or yet again, a town, or city, or place of birth. Mallet goes further to add that a home could be:

> The place where something is invented, founded or developed: the US is the home of baseball; a building or organisation set up to care for orphans, the aged etc **b**, an informal name for a mental home; **a home from home** a place other than one's own home where one can be at ease; (and) **at home in, on, or with** familiar or conversant with (Mallet, 2004: 3) (*Emphases in the original*).

Mallet's explanations stress its multiple applications. This is why it is a trans-disciplinary concept appearing in architecture, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy and geography. Conception of home may relate to family, when it is about an inhabited place in space; or a place and space for relaxation and retreat (Moore, 1984). Yet, it can be a space of belonging (Ahmed, 1999), where some space is controlled (Douglas, 1991: 289); or gendered, when it is about the traditional idea of the home as the preserve of the woman (Somerville, 1989), while the man plays the role of the breadwinner. It can also be that:

> The home is a major political background-for feminists, who see it in the crucible of gender domination; for liberals, who identify it with personal autonomy and a challenge to state power; for socialists, who approach it as a challenge to collective life and the ideal of a planned and egalitarian social order (Saunders and Williams, 1998:91).

Home is also, "the symbolic and real place that becomes a synonym to familiarity, intimacy, security and identity against the unknown, the distant and the large" (Georgiou, 2006a:85). Therefore, home is a place of rest, peace, winding up, association, leaving and returning. It is a place where the hope to return (Case, 1996; cited in Mallet, 2004: 77), and as Rapport and Dawson above attest to, remains. In the home, the wish to be in it, in the "new and disorienting global space" (Morley and Robbins, 1995: 87) could linger. In spatial or relational sense as in the foregoing, it becomes *homeland,* when land adds to it, which in itself assumes another round of abstraction.

The *Homeland* is again a constructed place in space, where a sense of identity comes. While "the concept of 'home' for many is mobile and nomadic, more synonymous with family than a particular place" (Pattie, 2001: 5), the *homeland* represents that physical or imagined place. It becomes a "cultural hearth" given the emotional attachment to it (Connor, 2001: 53). To Naficy (1999: 6) again, "*homeland* is absolute, abstract, mythical and fought for…" This is because of constant challenges to the places of the *homeland* leading to cases of homelessness. His understanding also implies that the *homeland* can be a variation, a relative phenomenon that depends on the choice of an individual.

The vision for the *homeland* may be blissful in the face of insecurity or persecution abroad. It could also

be one of well wishes in the face of strong idealisation of return. Sometimes synonymous with fatherland, motherland, country of origin, land of my birth, mother country, the *homeland* is constructed through "memory and commemoration" (Appadurai, 1997: 189); historical association, or physical habitation. "Through the normalising processes of forgetting, assimilating and distancing" (Clifford, 1997: 255), the imagination of the *homeland* may witness a gradual reduction or erasure.

Instead of any of these taking place, however, modern media like the Internet, camcorders, tape recorders, telephones, television "reduce distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world's places" (Clifford, ibid.: 247), and in this circumstance, between the modern diasporic or migrant person and the *homeland*. It moreover creates a "temporal convergence", which discourages thoughts of return (Tsagarousianou, 2004: 57 & 62). The Internet has particularly become a virtual *homeland* (Stamatopoulous-Robbins, 2005) for many contemporary diasporas and migrants. Myths of the *homeland* silenced by distance and displacement find a space in the Internet, which is yet understudied. Overall, home and the *homeland* experience construction in relation to place and space, or in between. This is in a wider context of trans-border activities of parties. The activity arises in a complex transnational space, as I would now examine.

5.1: CONCEPTUALISING TRANSNATIONALISM

Analytical themes on transnationalism are diverse, interrelated and evolving. While the word is sometimes understood as a variant of the migrant whose activities bestrides borders (Glick Schiller, et al, 1992: 1; Kearney, 1999: 521; Portes, 1999: 464), it also represents the present-day interrelationship of people across nations where state interventions are unnecessarily absent (Albrow, 1998:2; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xx; Kearney, 1999: 521). Kearney emphasises the citizen perspective further: "Transnational calls attention to the cultural and political projects of nation-states, as they vie for hegemony in relations with other nation-states, with their citizens and 'aliens'" (1999:521). Glick Schiller, et al, (1992:1) add that modern migrants are developing new "social fields", which cut across different sectors including economic, social, political and cultural.

The activities occur between the countries of residence and with origin. The process to the theorists is transnationalism, while those involved are not simply immigrants but "trans-migrants". These activities of people produce relationships across borders in manners that undermine territories (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994), subsequently resulting in multi-stranded interactions. The intensity of the interactions is, in addition, dense as a network across borders (Portes, 1997). Beyond the intensity, Portes (1999) offers a more lucid definition. He writes that transnationalism:

> May be conducted by relatively powerful actors, such as representatives of national governments and multi-national corporations, or may be initiated by more modest individuals, such as immigrants and their home countries' kin and relations. These activities are not limited to economic enterprises, but include political, cultural and religious initiatives as well (Portes, 1999:464).

Yet again, Kalra, et al's, (2005) definition is useful in the light of what transnationalism includes and excludes, and in how it avoids what a key concept like diaspora implies. The authors note that the concept:

> is able to describe wider sets of processes that cannot comfortably fit within the diaspora rubric. Thus, we talk of transnational corporations rather than diasporic corporations. The transnational also manages to avoid the group or human centred notions that diaspora evokes. The term allows a sidestepping of the usual pattern, when discussing diaspora, of having to evoke Jewish or Greek archetypes. At the same time transnational is more precise, if somewhat tame, description of the contemporary world of nations-state that might otherwise be called the World System, Imperialism, Empire or New World Order (Kalra, et al, 2005: 34)

Vertovec and Cohen (1999: xxii-xxv) discuss transnationalism under five categories. Though not essentially exhaustive, the categories are a fair representation. First, they argue that it is a reconstruction of "place or locality". This involves the exchange of understanding across nations. It undermines place and elevates space, through greater movement of peoples and through developments in technologies of communication. The second is the rising movement of capital, whether from "above" or "below".

The former is in the activities of transnational corporations (TNCs), now exceeding 50,000 worldwide (Webster, 2002: 69), and the latter involves remittances by "transnationalists". Third is their description of it as being a form of cultural production. This means the widespread exposure of cultural particularities amongst peoples, through fashion and visual means. Transnational television networks facilitate the flows of these cultural particularities across national territories in manners unprecedented (Chalaby, 2003, 2005a, b). The fourth is the expression of transnationalism through politics. This implies political activities that transcend borders, although with roots within borders.

The activities of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), Transnational Social Movement Organisations (TSMOs) and ethnic groups that act across

borders are cases in point. The fifth and the last category is the understanding of the term through the views of sociologists and anthropologists as being a network of communities across borders. The works of Leslie Sklair (1998) on the growth of a transnational group of capitalists, politicians, bureaucrats, and Castells (1996) on the network society and a networking people, through increase in information exchange helped by developments in communication technologies, are important in Vertovec and Cohen's analysis.

In what emphasises the significance of communities in transnationalism, Portes (1997) examines the rise of these communities that are "neither here nor there". He arrives at three vital points that leads to their growth. I shall as well, reproduce these points, given its position as an important contribution to the debate:

> 1) That the emergence of transnational communities is tied to the logic of capitalism itself. They are brought into play by the interest and needs of investors and employers in the advanced countries. 2) That these communities represent a distinct phenomenon at variance with traditional patterns of immigrant adaptation. 3) That because the phenomenon is fuelled by the dynamics of globalisation itself, it has greater growth potential and offers a broader field for autonomous popular initiatives than alternative ways to deal with the depredations of world roaming capital (Portes, 1997:4).

Portes arguments seek to identify the causes of transnationalism. The expansion of capitalism is central to it, through his notion that the opening out of capitalism equals a consequent need for more labour and probably a cheap one. This labour force is equally eager because of an exposure to consumerists' traits in their borders, through probably the activities of TNCs. Therefore, the transnational movement of capital brings about the need for labour and market. It invariably affects the new or potential labour force, as the local market benefits. The new exposure to consumerism triggers a drive to the metropolis. They also still keep contact with origin within the wider process of globalisation.

This reasoning features in Portes and Rumbaut's early work on the *Immigrant America* (1996), wherein they argue that migration to the West, the main direction of movement, is a product of an exposure "to life-styles and consumption patterns emanating from the advanced world" (p.12). Moreover, "seen from this perspective, contemporary immigration is a direct consequence of the dominant influence attained by the culture of the advanced West in every corner of the globe" (p.13).

 "Movement is better described as continuous rather than completed" (Ley and kobayashi, 2004:1), in the period of transnationalism, therefore creating "confusion as to where exactly is home" (Ley and Kobayashi, ibid.: 21). These happen because the sense of place becomes fluid, linked, and in progress. Dislocations and relocations are endless, as actors move at will between nation states' borders. Places that are far apart turn out to be closer, or integrated through the simultaneous activities of actors in the places. "In this social field there is no finality to movement, but always the prospect of another 12 hour flight and another sojourn", Ley and Kobayashi (ibid.:18) said in a study of middle class returnees from Canada in Hong Kong, where "astronaut family" has also developed (Ong, 1999).

In the case of the astronauts, family heads redefine the linearity of migration from simply moving from country of origin to destination, by regularly circulating between both places, while family is left behind, usually in destination. Like the Chinese businessperson, discussed by Ong (1999), they are "ungrounded" (Ong and Nonimi, eds, 1997), and "can live anywhere in the world, but it must be near an airport" (Ong, 1999: 135). Though the closeness to an airport is metaphorical, it highlights a readiness to move; the reduction of the limitation of borders; and even the ability of actors to act as if the borders are non-existent. In this understanding, travel plans are "continuous not finite" (Ley and Kobayashi, 2004:6).

A word "in the air" (Smith, et al, 1998: 3), transnationalism is taken as a buzzword that addresses a condition within globalisation, and also a specific word that describes cross, or trans-border activities of globalisation agencies and people. The many definitions of transnationalism also involve two forms of analyses. One is that transnationalism can be "from above" (Smith, et al, ibid., 3), through the activities of multilateral organisations and transnational oligopolies. The other is that it functions from below, at the informal segment, through global migration, diasporic movements, and a resulting mixing of cultures (Smith, et al, 1998: 3; Bhabha, 1990; Vertovec, 1999; Georgiou, 2006a).

More like a process, rather than an end in itself, the understanding of transnationalism can come through the hybridisation of cultures. This is because of the increase in migration and a possibly resulting change in identities (Appadurai, 1990; Bhabha, 1996; Clifford, 1997). The activities of some institutions can also help illustrate a process of transnationalism. The global network of the Catholic Church, as an instance, is an avenue for the understanding of transnationalism from the religious perspective.

The activities of global bodies like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Paris and London Clubs of Creditors, global non-governmental organisations represent the political and economic agents of transnationalism. Activities of transmigrants and diasporic communities (Karim, 1998) standing as "counter-narratives of the nation" (Bhabha, 1996:300), complement them at the micro-level. Though a tension exists between this formal

sector of organised public and private institutions, and the informal sector of moving peoples and cultures, it is rarely unhelpful (Smith, et al, 1998: 5).

Noting themes through which scholars portray the concept, Vertovec (1999: 1) discusses it as representing "a social morphology; a type of consciousness; a mode of cultural production; an avenue of capital; a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of 'place' or locality." He subsequently defines it as a:

> Condition in which despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet spanning yet common-however virtual-arena of activity (p. 1-2).

These thematisations indicate some of the themes easily associated with the concept. A few of them are those of "weaker", but complementing players in a universal networking age. The definition of the term as a process is clear in viewpoints that the agencies of global bodies, transmigrants and diasporic communities are instances of transnationalism. Glick Schiller, et al, (1992:11), stress that transmigrants construct "fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in the host societies". It is within this framework that they negotiate citizenship though "self-making or being made" (Ong, 1999: 112), sometimes resulting in a hybrid or "new ethnicities" (Hall, 1991, cited in Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xxiii).

Transnationalism is, therefore, about cross border movements and interrelationships of peoples, groups, communities and their cultures (Glick Schiller, et al, 1992; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999; Kalra, et al, 2005). It is also about the exchange and movement of capital (Sklair, 1998), and about interweaving cross border social and political relationships (Portes, 1997:199). In modern times, the media simplify transnationalism, because they function across geographical divides, in real time and in nearly no time. "New possibilities of being in two places at once" (Scannell, 1996: 91, cited in Tsagarousianou, 2004: 62) comes into focus. In doing this, transnationalism undergoes shades of reshaping, which open new avenues for scholarly investigations.

Robins and Aksoy (2003) depart from discourses of transnationalism situated from the viewpoint of imagined communities, or from culturalist diaspora perspectives. They argue that this models can be restrictive as they centre on issues around "community, identity and belonging" (ibid.: 90), originally derived from a national framework. The common, national perspective prevents the location of new meanings possible in the course of transnationalism. Individuals' power of imagination should be significant in itself, rather than concentrations on a collective imagination.

Using their investigation of Turkish migrants as a reference, they argue that transnational television, for instance, brings everyday reality of the *homeland* life closer to the migrant. Then therefore, "the 'here and now' reality" of the *homeland*, disrupts the thoughts of the *homeland* as being "there and then". It thus works against notions of idealising the *homeland* and "the romance of diaspora-as-exile (making) transnational television…agents of cultural de-mythologisation" (Ibid.: 95). The model highlights the manner in which migrants' transnationalism becomes banal, and everyday. Recent rise in transnational media, particularly television in the case of the investigated Turkish migrants, facilitates this. The *everydayness* of cross-border mediation between hostland and the *homeland* expands the imagination, thereby upsetting the old believe in the idealisation of the *homeland*.

As with other migrants and diasporas, transnationalism for the Nigerian migrant is banal through regular engagements with people and places, especially on the Internet. It emerges via a routine exchange of e-mails with fellow migrants, with host community members and with some people in the *homeland*. The everyday desire to familiarise oneself with current affairs in origin, through surfing online editions of the *homeland* newspapers, or in the course of visiting news inclined websites of fellow migrants, and in an interest in cross border businesses online, reflect this.

The process, as Robin and Aksoy (2003) argue, upsets the previous belief in migrants and diaspora idealisation of the *homeland*-an idealisation that was probably likely in the past because of greater difficulties in accessing transnational media. Consequently, like the Internet could facilitate seeming expression of nationalism, as earlier explained, it is also the case that transnational activities, amongst migrants can be facilitated online through cross border networking, information exchanges, and interactions in real time, across different nation-states.

6.1: CONCLUSION

This work has attempted a critical discussion of some key concepts, having proceeded from the fact of the existence of disparities in notions around the subject matters. While giving credence to individual analyses and understandings, the paper argues that further trends are likely to emerge still, given the increasing complexity in the social and political life of the age, as powered by the gains in information and communication technologies. The processes come with the need for explanations of the new growths and developments, and the implications of these growths for the future.

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