

Nationalism at an organised level at the top, as against peasant anti-colonial resistance described above, emerged in India in the late nineteenth century. The rise of nationalism, it is often argued, was favoured by industrialisation, urbanisation and print capitalism. And nationalism in the developing world of Asia and Africa, as Benedict Anderson tells us, is supposed to have followed one or the other model developed in the West. This theory, which denies intellectual agency to the people of Asia in shaping their own history, has recently come under criticism from a wide variety of ideological positions.

Partha Chatterjee (*The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*), for example, has argued that if the West defined subjectivity and prescribed our predicament, and also imagined for us the forms of our resistance to colonial regimes, then what was really left for us to imagine? He argues therefore that long before the political struggle for power began, the Indian society was imagining its nation in a private cultural sphere, even though the state was in the hands of the colonisers. It was here that they imagined their own domain of sovereignty and constructed an Indian modernity that was modern but not Western. It was from here i.e., from this cultural construction of a space for autonomy in the early nineteenth century, that Indian nationalism started its ~~career~~ career.

Benedict Anderson's book is → 'Imagined Communities'