

A Historical Contemporary Analysis of Nationalism

Shreya Anand*

Department of Political Science, University of Zurich, Switzerland, Europe

DESCRIPTION

Nationalism, a concept rooted in the idea of shared identity, culture, and history, has played a crucial role in shaping the modern world. While nationalism is a complex and multifaceted ideology, its influence has been both constructive and destructive throughout history. In this essay, we will explore the concept of nationalism, its historical development, and its contemporary manifestations, focusing on the profound impact it has had on societies and international relations.

Emergence of Modern Nationalism as we understand it today began to take shape in Europe during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This period marked the end of the Enlightenment and the growing aesthetics, which emphasized the importance of individual and collective identity. Intellectual movements and political events such as the French Revolution spurred a sense of shared identity and purpose among different groups of people.

Language and culture have long been important elements of national identity. The standardization of languages, the publication of national epics and folklore, and the promotion of cultural heritage played a significant role in nurturing nationalist sentiments. For instance, Johann Gottfried von Herder, a German philosopher, argued that language and culture were essential in defining a nation's identity.

Simultaneously, political movements like Italian unification and German unification were instrumental in advancing the cause of nationalism. Leaders such as Giuseppe Garibaldi and Otto von Bismarck harnessed the nationalist fervor within their respective nations to achieve political unity.

The emergence of nationalism was not limited to Europe. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, nationalist movements gained traction in Asia, the Middle East, and other parts of the world. Leaders like Sun Yat-sen in China and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey sought to build new nation-states by asserting the cultural and political identity of their people.

There are positive aspects of nationalism which include preservation of cultural heritage. It encourages the protection and promotion of traditional arts, languages, and customs,

which can be vital in maintaining a diverse and rich global cultural landscape. Nationalism has played a pivotal role in the principle of self-determination, where groups of people seek to determine their own political destiny. This principle has been crucial in the decolonization process and the formation of new nation-states, allowing communities to have control over their governance.

Nationalism has the potential to unite diverse groups within a nation. By emphasizing shared values and a common identity, nationalism can foster a sense of belonging and unity that transcends differences of race, religion, or ethnicity. In some cases, nationalism has driven nations to prioritize their own economic and social development.

Policies geared towards strengthening domestic industries, investing in education, and reducing poverty have been pursued under the banner of nationalism.

Nationalism can take a dark turn when it fosters ethnocentrism and xenophobia. Excessive pride in one's nation can lead to the exclusion and discrimination of minority groups or foreigners, contributing to intolerance and social division. History bears witness to how nationalism has been a catalyst for conflicts and wars. The fervent belief in a nation's superiority can lead to territorial disputes, aggressions, and even world wars, as was the case in the early 20th century. Nationalist governments may suppress dissent and limit individual freedoms in the name of national security and unity. This can erode democratic principles and hinder the development of a healthy civil society. While nationalism aims to foster unity, it can also be highly divisive. Nationalist movements may advocate for secession or demand autonomy, challenging the unity of larger nation-states.

In recent years, populist movements and leaders around the world have harnessed nationalist sentiments to gain political support.

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, commonly known as Brexit, was driven in part by nationalist sentiments. Proponents of Brexit argued that it was essential to regain control over national sovereignty and borders. The forces of globalization have generated both positive and negative

Correspondence to: Shreya Anand, Department of Political Science, University of Zurich, Switzerland, Europe, E-mail: shreya.anand@graduateinstitute.ch

Received: 04-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. JPSPA-23-27522; **Editor assigned:** 07-Sep-2023, Pre QC No. JPSPA-23-27522 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 21-Sep-2023, QC No. JPSPA-23-27522; **Revised:** 28-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. JPSPA-23-27522 (R); **Published:** 05-Oct-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2332-0761.23.11.024

Citation: Anand S (2023) A Historical Contemporary Analysis of Nationalism. J Pol Sci Pub Aff Res. 11:024.

Copyright: © 2023 Anand S. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

reactions in relation to nationalism. While globalization has facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and culture, it has also raised concerns about the erosion of national identities and sovereignty. Some argue that nationalism is a response to these challenges, as nations seek to protect their interests and identities.

India provides an interesting case study of the complex interplay of nationalism and identity. The country's history is marked by its struggle for independence from British colonial rule, a process that involved the nurturing of a unique Indian identity. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the importance of unity in diversity. This form of nationalism has raised concerns about the marginalization of

religious and ethnic minorities and has sparked political and social tensions within the country.

Nationalism is a potent force that has shaped the course of history and continues to influence contemporary politics and society. While it has led to remarkable achievements, such as self-determination and cultural preservation, it has also been the root of conflict, division, and exclusion. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, understanding the dynamics of nationalism and its consequences is essential for navigating the complexities of our globalized era. Balancing the positive and negative aspects of nationalism is a challenge for policymakers and citizens alike as they seek to utilize its potential for the greater good while mitigating its harmful effects.