

Contemporary Debates on Nationalism

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The article attempts to critically position the major debates on nationalism in the realm of religion, ethnicity, and culture, against the backdrop of globalisation. Religious and ethnic nationalism allows for a clearer understanding of the complexities and politics of nationalism. The debate on nationalism has become exclusive and ubiquitous leading to the emergence of a school of nationalist ideologues and theoreticians. The primordial (with an emphasis on the emotional and kinship ties) along with the constructivist (with an emphasis on the social and historical circumstances) dimensions of nationalism continue to be relevant. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the research draws on various academic disciplines and data sources to analyse arguments, identify trends, and offer a coherent analysis of contemporary debates on nationalism. Both the top-down and bottom-up theories of nationalism, along with the intersections and cross-currents, challenges posed by new-right nationalism, cultural and economic nationalism are also discussed. Contemporary nationalism seems to be caught between globalisation and identity politics. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of nationalism's impact on identity, belonging, global governance, and the future of nation-states.

Keywords: Nationalism, ethnic, religious, cultural, globalisation

Nationalism, as a concept and political ideology, has been a subject of ongoing debates, particularly in the contemporary global context. As the world grapples with various social, political, and economic dynamics, the question of how nationalism manifests, evolves, and shapes societies has become increasingly salient. This research article delves into the multifaceted nature of contemporary debates on nationalism, aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of different perspectives, key arguments, and prominent theories surrounding this complex phenomenon.

To embark on a nuanced exploration of contemporary debates on nationalism, it is crucial to acknowledge the historical roots and evolutions of this ideology. Nationalism, often defined as the sentiment of loyalty and devotion to one's nation, has played a significant role in shaping political movements, identity formation, and societal dynamics throughout history. From the rise of nation-states in Europe to independence movements around the world, the influence of nationalism has been profound.

Given the resurgence and diversification of nationalist sentiments in recent years, it becomes imperative to critically analyse and understand the multiple dimensions

and ramifications of nationalism in today's world. Contemporary debates on nationalism touch upon a wide array of contexts and themes, including national identity, ethnic and cultural diversity, globalisation, populism, regional autonomy, and global politics. Examining these debates helps shed light on how nations grapple with questions of unity and diversity, inclusivity versus exclusion, and the balance between national sovereignty and international cooperation. In this context, this article intends to provide a comprehensive review of the contemporary scholarship on nationalism by exploring and synthesising the divergent perspectives and arguments put forth by scholars, policymakers, and activists engaged in the discourse on nationalism. By doing so, the article seeks to identify commonalities, areas of disagreement, and emerging trends within the debates.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, this research article adopts a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. Drawing on a wide range of academic disciplines such as political science, sociology, history, anthropology, and cultural studies, it gathers research inputs from various sources, including scholarly articles, books and relevant case studies. The structure of the article follows a coherent framework that outlines the different dimensions of contemporary debates on nationalism, analyses the arguments presented, and synthesises the key findings.

Evolution of debates on nationalism

The debate on nationalism has become exclusive and ubiquitous. Often one is caught in a dilemma of whether to criticise or to embrace it. Nationalism has become a matter of intense political controversy and debate. The growth of nationalism as a theoretical phenomenon has led to the emergence of a school of nationalist ideologues and theoreticians. The world has witnessed many holocausts, world wars, ethnic cleansing, and revolutions, all in the name of nationalism. More recently in January 2019, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that nationalism is an ideological poison (Wimmer, 2019). Nationalism has made a comeback from a nativist and populist perspective.

German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder was the first to coin the term in the 18th century. He argued that one nation's characteristics are incommensurable with those of another. Over the years, the perception of a state for every nation and notions of love for one's nation have caught on. Herder's nationalism was less political and more cultural, unlike Mazzini's. Nations were assumed to have cultural and linguistic properties (Hamilton, 2011). This is because he lived under a dynastic-aristocratic regime and was a child of his time. Ironically his outlook had to be unpolitical for distinctly political reasons. For Mazzini 'every nation a state, and one state for the whole nation'. From Mazzini's perspective, the nation was worthy of affection. Nationalism could mean the redrawing of boundaries and even the overturning of regimes. His nationalism came to inspire many nationalist movements in 19th-century Europe by stressing the importance of religion, history and language.

With changing times, nationalism has been considered as being politically necessary, socially functional and historically rooted (Smith, 1995). Hobsbawm conceptualized "nationalism as the ideology that the political and national units should coincide." Nations as a modern construct have evolved through different stages. Moreover, certain political, administrative and economic conditions are necessary for the emergence of a nation. His idea of nationalism is constructed from

above, though it needs to be analysed from below too (Hobsbawm, 1990). Gellner perceived “nationalism as a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 2008)”. Perhaps one of the most popular and accepted theories of nation and nationalism is Benedict Anderson’s notion that “a nation is an imagined community that is imagined into existence (Anderson, 2006)”. His is a constructivist notion of nationalism, which theorizes the emergence of nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in the Americas. A nation is also a cultural artefact and an abstract phenomenon, where the members of a community imagine themselves as a community, thereby creating a national imagination. Anderson falls into the historicist or modernist school of nationalism like Gellner and Hobsbawm, shifting from that of a Eurocentric vision of nationalism to that of a global one as Anderson does.

Partha Chatterjee argues for a rethink of some of the stereotypes about nationalism by making a critical analysis of the ideology of nationalism. He contests Anderson’s notion of the imagined community from certain modular forms that leave little space for nationalism in the rest of the world to imagine. Hence spirituality also becomes important which carries with it the cultural markers of society. Religion, caste, language, culture, schools, family, women, culture are all factors that influence the process of nation formation. History according to Partha Chatterjee shows that the family plays a critical role in preserving the national culture. Hence, he argues that Indian nationalism was to some extent derivative, though not entirely (Chatterjee, 1993).

His narrative of nationalism revolved around differences in the Western notions of nationalism. Hence, he suggests that anti-colonialist nationalists produced their domain of sovereignty within colonial societies much before the commencement of their colonial struggle with the imperialists. There has been much debate about anti-colonial nationalism. Hence in the process of trying to come to grips with anti-colonial nationalism, it is not just enough to borrow from colonial powers but also to show how colonial differences were maintained and at times challenged. Anti-colonial nationalism brought out the differences between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized (Chatterjee, 1993). He draws a link between political and cultural nationalism to understand the relationship between nationalism and colonial difference. While the former challenges the notion of colonial difference, the latter seems to maintain it. This is where the cultural divide between the material and the cultural domains assumes significance. Hence the ideology of nationalism presents problems in terms of epistemology as well as political philosophy.

In more recent times, yet another dimension of nationalism has been brought about by Yoram Hazony who argued that the world is best governed when nations can chart their course. More than the moral right of nations to claim a state of their own, he emphasized the practical benefits of locating governing authority at the level of the nation. For Hazony the holocaust was not the result of nationalism, rather it was caused by the ultra-imperialism of Hitler, who wanted to expand his 1000-year Reich. Hitler longed for his vision of the German Holy Roman Empire. The Nuremberg Laws were passed in the name of protecting German honour and blood. It even prevented marriage between Jews and Aryans along with a variety of other restrictions. Nationalism tore Germany apart (Hazony, 2018).

He further argues that the Second World War was caused by imperialism and not

by nationalism. In other words, he defends the virtues of nationalism. The problem is when nationalism tends to become an obsession with its adherents. Hazony defends nationalism as a broad political worldview to which many countries tend to adhere, vis-à-vis the UN or the European Union. It is not of course easy to go entirely along with this reasoning provided by Hazony, because, from the German perspective, the nation was to make the state. It was nationalism with very clear racial dimensions. Hitler's nationalism was not supra-national or even multinational, rather it revolved around the vision of a 'national state' (Hazony, 2018).

Hazony argues that Christians, Muslims, liberals and Marxists all seem to consider nationalism to be a vice, as it erects barriers and hurdles. However, Hazony contends that nationalism is a virtue and makes a case for nationalist political philosophy being inherently good (Hazony, 2018). Contemporary right-wing nationalists would feel quite reassured by this argument. The election of Trump as US President in 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, Putin's annexation of Crimea and Brexit have witnessed the emergence of radical new right political parties leading to a renewed discussion on nationalism. Hate speeches and rants are not only decimating the norms and values of political speech but unfortunately weaponising them. The idea of 'belonging' is being renegotiated and monopolised. Democratic backsliding adds to this new image of nationalism. Often the term neo-nationalism is used to refer to right-wing populism, economic protectionism, nativism, religious fundamentalism, opposition to migration and anti-globalisation. Societies are getting increasingly polarized. Nationalism seems to have taken a cultural colour as reflected in the phenomenon of ethnonationalism.

During the Second World War, nationalist passions resulted in conflicts and war. Hitler's nationalism can be categorised as fanatical nationalism. The issue is whether one needs to perceive nationalism as a solution or a problem. The former recognises an ensemble of individuals, popularly referred to as a nation, and the latter signifies the love for one's country. Nationalism is not necessarily the same thing as patriotism, national identity, national consciousness, national sovereignty, or national pride. In many countries, people seem to have a strong sense of identity, but that is not necessarily nationalism. Nationalism is a historic phenomenon and is still in the making because there is nothing universal about nationalism. The way nationalistic trends take shape can be either democratic or authoritarian. The uniqueness of a country's exceptionalism tends to blur one's understanding of nationalism.

There is a tendency for populist nationalists to disparage universalism along with certain distinguishing trademark features. Loyalty to the nation is a critical component of the working of liberal democracy. Yet the terms and conditions of loyalty prescribed by the populist nationalists do not necessarily fit into the prescriptions of the democratic theorists. "What distinguishes the national populists is that they never apologize for anything their nation has ever done in its history. To act like a villain while retaining the moral right to feel like a victim is the nationalistic populists' signature conceit" (Krastev, 2014).

The tragedy is that often identity gets weaponised, one against the other. We are witnessing the return of geopolitical competition and the revival of nationalism. The trend seems to be one where states are falling back less on democratic methods and more on socio-cultural politics. Often it leads to scenarios where marginalisation and persecution seem to echo like forces of nature when they are in reality man-

made. The catchwords seem to be nationalist, right-wing, fundamentalist, supremacist, and even fascist.

Manifestations of Nationalism in the 21st Century: Issues and Complexities

Based on some of the major theoretical assumptions and arguments made above, this section will focus on the divergent manifestations of nationalism in the 21st century, especially the ethnic, religious and cultural dimensions of nationalism.

Ethnic Nationalism

The majority of the modern-day states are multi-ethnic in their texture and existence. The multi-ethnic character also leads to the prevalence of peaceful coexistence across ethnic disparities on one hand and intolerable violent ethnic clashes on the other end. Although stableness and peacefulness are prevalent in most multi-ethnic societies, some states experience turbulence due to ethnic diversity (Laitin, 1996). An extreme version of ethnic nationalism can act as the catalyst for igniting ethnic clashes in a state. When nationhood is grounded in the hereditary qualities of religion, race, language, culture and common biological descent, ethnic nationalism comes into the limelight. This will subsequently pave the way for the demand for the constitution of the state where citizenship or membership is based upon various ascriptive identities. This, in turn, will make the state a cultural entity rather than a political entity because the concept of citizenship is based upon the right of blood. The historical records of ethnic nationalism can be historically located in the state-building processes in nineteenth-century Italy and Germany. Later the ethnic version of nationalism got its reverberations in Eastern Europe (Gledhill, 2005), South Asia (Sabhlok, 2002), Africa (Heywood, 1989), the Middle East and Central Europe (Roshwald, 2002). Social psychology acts as a stimulating factor in escalating ethnic nationalism (Tajfel, 1982). This also makes the policymakers and the rulers biased while formulating public and welfare policies. Displeasure over spending money on African Americans (Broman, 2000), unfavourable views of Albanians by Macedonians in Macedonia (Engström, 2002), anti-Tutsi prejudice in Rwanda (Uvin, 1997) and anti-immigrant sentiment in many European countries (Escandell, 2008) are the practical expression of biased social psychology. Even if peaceful and successful democracy prevails in the 21st century, instances of fear, violence, hatred and animosity are not new in modern times. The root cause behind the exacerbation of ethnic clashes in modern times is the prioritisation of ethnicity over citizenship by the state.

Political parties, ethnic leaders and media play a noteworthy role in enhancing the outreach and intensity of ethnic nationalism. Political parties have the potential to politically mobilise and utilise ethnic identities (Stokke, 2019). The ethnic political parties campaign and canvass during the electioneering process by championing the cause of an ethnic section. Rather than bridging the gap, the ethnic parties reiterate and reinforce the ethnic cleavages (Horowitz, 2000). There are instances of political leaders using the ethnic card to increase political mileage during elections. Alex Salmond (Scotland), Jorg Haider (Australia), P. W. Botha (South Africa), Radovan Karadzic (Bosnia) and Ian Paisley (Ireland) are many among the few who made a political career by ethnic card.

Political leaders and political parties require a strong institutional base to convert

ethnic identity into votes during the election. Opportunities to buy and sell chauvinism, fundamentalism and resentment associated with ethnic identity are possible when mass media and civil society directly or indirectly promote and augment ethnic nationalism. The consciousness of the people residing in a state will get manipulated and tuned when ethnic nationalism is operated with dexterity and passion by the combined efforts of ethnic leaders, political leaders, political parties, propaganda, civil society and mass media. This will also open the gateway to a plethora of challenges including intolerance, disharmony, frustrations, riots, genocide, fragmentation and disintegration in the state. Ethnic tensions that happened during the partition of India, the Bangladesh liberation war, Eritrea's 30-year war, Yugoslav wars of succession, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam led Sri Lankan civil war are living examples of militarised ethnic violence.

Multidimensional strategies need to be designed and implemented to overcome the threats posed by ethnic nationalism. Granting some degree of self-rule to the alienated ethnic groups through devolution, federalism and autonomy is one of the best institutional remedies to check the challenges raised by the protracted and poisonous ethnic warfare. Devolution of power arrangements in India between the state and central governments, autonomy granted to Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia in Spain (Lecours, 2001), the authority granted to Scotland and Wales in England (Loughlin, 2000) proves how devolution of power institutionally can serve as a conflict regulating device in multi-ethnic societies. Coalition politics can also pacify the problems of ethnic nationalism to a certain extent by accommodating the ethnic political leaders in the formation of the government as part of the consociational policies (Wilkinson, 2000). Cross-ethnic voting proposed by Horowitz is also another social engineering system that can be utilised to minimise the grave consequences of extreme ethnic nationalism. According to this accommodative policy, candidates need to get a certain minimum number of support from ethnic communities other than their own (Horowitz, 2004). On account of widely prevalent ethnic diversity, globalisation and migration, acknowledging and coping with multiculturalism are the best possible means to thwart potential challenges of ethnic nationalism.

Religious Nationalism

Religious nationalism is a practised form of nationalism in the present and past. The widespread conviction that religious nationalism is more effective for the expression and acceptance of public values and reinforcement is bringing secular nationalism to the backseat. The coexistence of religion and politics becomes a powerful force in providing religiosity and attitude and empowers religion and politics in influencing each other's affairs.

Religious nationalism is the "fusion of nationalism and religion such that they are inseparable (Rieffer, 2003)." Religious practices, identities, beliefs and convictions constitute the resource pool of religious nationalism. It will also lead to the alignment of goals of religion and nationalism where political recognition is sought by the nationalism and religion support the same for the nation as well as religion itself. There are instances in world history where religion has helped to cement national identities and nation-building processes. The contribution of pietism to German nationalism (Lehmann, 1982), Catholicism to Polish nationalism (Genevieve, 2006) and Shinto to Japanese nationalism (Fukase, 2008) are some of the evidence from world history where the fusion of nationalism and religion was experienced.

Nationalism induced and tuned by religion is posing multi-dimensional challenges. Religion-backed political appeals can be detected in South Asia, Latin America, Western Europe and post-Soviet states (Shterin, 2018). Quotes like “if a man of God can’t govern us, then nobody can” by evangelical populist candidate Fabricio Alvarado during the 2018 Costa Rican presidential (Reif, 2018), “Brazil before everything, and God above all” by Jair Bolsonaro (Osborn, 2019) corroborate the commingling of religion and politics. Subsequently, the national identity will be redefined by excluding or marginalising the religious minorities. This will ultimately destroy the attributes of a pluralistic society. The minority religious communities will be vulnerable to the threat of forcefully getting assimilated with the majoritarian religion through means of pressure, isolation, bloodshed and violence.

Religious nationalism is also compatible with a culturally homogenised state and the preservation of national religious symbols, beliefs and practices. Due to this, the population practising religious nationalism will also display resentment and aggression towards immigrants and people not belonging to the majority religion fearing the dilution of national identity and culture. Here religion shapes the attitude of individuals to immigrants. Christian nationalists in the United States (McDaniel, 2011) are the classic example of the same.

Religious nationalism has a far-reaching influence on the public policy process. Religion can influence and affect the policy formulation and implementation of public policies related to education, health, marriage and family. Church intervention in policies related to same-sex marriage and abortion in Christianity-dominated countries validates the role of religion in public policy in states led by religious nationalism (Kilp, 2015). In fact, in these countries, that recognise the power of religion, politicians do not dare to criticise religious institutions and leaders fearing backlash at the ballot box. Indeed, even without being part of the government, religious institutions and leaders can play a decisive role in policy formulation in those countries where religion and politics have a formidable and mutual alliance.

There are also reasons to convey that religious nationalism can ignite violence and fights. Mark Juergens Meyer recognised an increase in religious violence and he acknowledged religion has increasingly motivated terrorist groups (Juergensmeyer, 2003). Attacks on Hindus, Christians and Buddhists in Bangladesh (Iva, 2009) and attacks on Christians and Hindus in Pakistan (Jaffrelot, 2020) are some instances of religious nationalism resulting in insecurity and loss of life.

A holistic and prudent approach is required to tackle the challenges posed by religious nationalism. Strengthening the rule of law by promoting legal literacy, ensuring an impartial and independent judiciary, lending legal assistance to minorities and advocating multi-religious policy changes can pacify the negative consequences of religious nationalism. Promoting and reiterating multicultural democracy can also act as a means to prevent the menace associated with the blending of religion and politics.

Cultural Nationalism

Due to overlapping features and attributes, it is tedious to draw watertight compartmentalisation between cultural and political nationalism. This is because often the propagators of cultural nationalism engage and influence the affairs of the political version of nationalism and pronouncers of political nationalism tend to

gain and bargain mileage for their activity by relying on the ancient and distinctive culture possessed by the state. Nevertheless, in the words of John Hutchinson, the source of motivation behind political and cultural nationalism can be different. When the political nationalist draws a civic and political identity to the state, one who preaches cultural nationalism is more inclined to consider the state as a moral and cultural entity (Hutchinson, 2015) Benedict Anderson argued that “whether there is a state or not, the national community is to a great extent imagined (Anderson, 2006).” Cultural nationalism targets to design and implement visions for the state primarily based on legacy, history and culture. Cultural nationalists emphasise heritage, culture, history, literature, songs, religion, ideology, symbols, land, language and monuments. There are many incidents and developments in world history that paved the way for the origin and spread of cultural nationalism. The roots of cultural nationalism in eighteenth-century Europe can be attributed to the “emergence of historicism, Indo-European historicism the rise of Romanticism in literature and the arts; and a growing commitment to constitutional politics and the idea of rule by the people (Rigney, 2014).” The enhanced confidence developed among the historicists about the possibility of progress acted as a catalyst for the development of cultural nationalism (Jusdanis, 2011) Poets, historians, architects, painters, philologists, cultural organisations and academicians play a significant role in the dissemination of cultural nationalism.

Too much stress on cultural nationalism can pose serious challenges to the survival of minorities, immigrants and multiculturalists. Propagating a national culture as the reflection of the majority culture or a combination of subgroups within the majority culture will affect the peace and security of life of those people who are outside the realm of the same. Cultural nationalism also facilitates, a “single generation’s perception of its national culture over the choices of subsequent generations of the same nation (Bauman, 2013).” On account of cultural nationalism, wherever multiculturalism prevails, state and state agencies will be negatively biased towards those who do not belong to the culture recognised and promoted by the cultural nationalists. This will also create an atmosphere whereby individuals will have to customise their livelihood, practices, thought processes, festivals and beliefs as per the choices sheltered from the surroundings and social environment designed by the cultural nationalists. Subsequently, the possibility of improvement and progress that are part of the transmission of culture will be stopped and tuning the mindset and perceptions of individuals to an orthodox one. This will also force people and the state to conveniently ignore potholes prevailing in the majority culture, or the culture which is being picked up by the cultural nationalists, in the name of preserving and glorifying the legacy and identity. This will also “distinguish citizens based on their faith, give vent to intolerance, insinuate otherness, and promote disquiet and insecurity (India, 2022).”

Multipronged approaches are required to keep the modern period insulated from the negative impacts of cultural nationalism. Public education shall be used as a platform to educate the mass about the importance of multiculturalism. Legislature, executive and judiciary shall do the needful to promote the significance of coexistence within the diverse culture. Cultural tourism can be utilised as another means to promote the glory of diverse cultures at the bedrock of unity in diversity. The constitution and the law-and-order machinery of the state shall be vigilant to check the menace associated with cultural nationalism.

Globalisation and Nationalism

The world is changing at a breakneck pace. Change has an influence and reverberations on all types of growth. In today's world of change and progress, globalisation takes centre stage. Globalisation facilitates worldwide commerce, which has accelerated growth. Globalisation has left its imprint on the social, economic, cultural, political, religious, and intellectual spheres of human life. Since globalisation performs and facilitates the integration process, the socio, economic and cultural life of the West is easily getting transmitted to the non-western parts of the world and vice versa.

In the academic community, two opposing viewpoints on the link between globalisation and nationalism predominate. One school of thought contends that domination and extensive globalisation have destroyed nationalism, while others contend that globalisation has resulted in the reiteration and reinforcement of nationalism.

Because of the cross-border movement of information, it is difficult for individuals to keep and protect the distinctive traits and attributes connected with their single national identity from the fusion tendency created by other national identities. This weakens the notion of a single national identity linked with nationalism. Because individuals have become consumers of global products and services, the state and government no longer have the only authority and ability to impose cultural control over their inhabitants and territory. This makes the concept and practice of nationalism weak in the global village (Barber, 2003). The nationalist orientation towards politics and the economy is also influenced and affected by the overshadowing effects of globalisation. The rising presence of international organisations, international commerce, and economic interdependence makes it harder for the state to maintain the nationalist agenda in the state's political economy. Globalisation is undermining nationalism's potential for mass mobilisation and identification by causing transformation and transfusion in the social, cultural, economic, and political forms of human existence. Indeed, at the outset of globalisation, "nationalism's role as the main force shaping politics was decreasing (Hobsbawm, 2007)."

Globalisation's influence and overshadowing effects have encouraged some nationalists to fight and support nationalist ideals. According to Douglas Kellner, "[I]ndeed from the late 1980s to the present, there has been a resurgence of nationalism, traditionalism, and religious fundamentalism alongside trends toward growing globalisation. The explosion of regional, cultural, and religious differences in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia as well as explosive tribal conflicts in Africa and elsewhere suggest that globalisation and homogenization were not as deep as its proponents hoped and criticised feared" (Kellner, 1998). This quotation also emphasises that when globalisation attempted to weaken the originality of national identity through assimilation, proponents of nationalism replied passionately and forcefully in order to drive the globalising trends away from their local national identity. Subsequently, "the revival of local nationalism and an accentuating of local identities are directly bound up with globalising influences to which they stand in opposition" (Giddens, 1994). Globalisation has resulted in increased avenues and mediums of communication and technology, which has led to a greater awareness of national identity and nationalist principles, paving the way for increased initiatives for the preservation and propagation of ethnic, cultural, and historical identities associated with nationalism. As a result of ethnic and cultural insecurity caused by

globalisation and the global village, the globe witnessed the birth of aggressive nationalism with the purpose of preserving ethnic and cultural legacy and purity. The confrontations between Serbs, Muslims, and Croats, Armenians and Azerbaijanis are examples of the same (Godfrey, 2008).

Therefore, it is evident that globalisation and nationalism have two types of relations. On one hand globalisation with its snowball and far-reaching effects, has posed a severe challenge to nationalism by diminishing the originality and legacy claimed and preserved by the nationalists and on the other hand amplified vigour of globalisation has also led to an increase in the sense of nationalism.

Conclusion

Nationalism never seems to run out of steam, and the nationalist sentiment has only been on the rise. Nationalism is not necessarily the same as national identity. In most countries, there has been a tradition of nationalism that often gets contested. Nationalism, populism, and authoritarianism can often be mutually reinforcing. In the past, colonialism and imperialism were often rationalised by nationalism. Today the concern is about the rise of exclusionary right-wing nationalism and its implications. In this sense one may recall Albert Einstein's view that "nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind".

The world has come a long way since the days of anti-colonial nationalism. Contemporary nationalism reflects the challenges of identity formation and assertion, largely based on ethnicity, language, religion and culture. We are witnessing two trends. On the one hand, the populist and aggressive manifestations of nationalism, and on the other, the reconfiguration of nationalism.

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