

Civic vs. Ethnic Nationalism: A Comparative Analysis in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Nationalism is still one of the powerful factors which have impact on political identity formation, state legitimacy and democracy in the modern world. The study investigates how the relationship between civic and ethnic nationalism changes within the context of globalization, migration, populism and digital communication by making a comparative analysis of selected states. The main purpose of the investigation is to determine whether the existing dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism is still relevant for understanding modern nationalism or if there are other types of nationalism. The study uses the qualitative comparative approach to the research with the use of only the secondary data from academic sources such as peer reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, government documents, policy reports and the reports of international organizations. The obtained data was analyzed by means of thematic content analysis and the comparative method. As the result of the analysis it has been found out that civic nationalism is focused on constitutionality, democracy and citizenship while ethnic nationalism is concerned with common ancestry, culture, language and religion. But it is clear from the analysis that modern nation-states possess hybrid nationalism, which combines civic and ethnic/cultural aspects of nationalism. Globalization, migration, and populism have actually changed rather than reduced the importance of nationalism and have thus made nationalist identities more flexible and contextual. It can be said that the dichotomy of civic vs. ethnic nationalism is not theoretically irrelevant today but should be further developed to capture the complexities of the contemporary world. The research provides valuable information about contemporary discussions on nationalism.

Keywords: Civic Nationalism, Ethnic Nationalism, Hybrid Nationalism, National Identity, Globalization, Populism, Comparative Politics, Citizenship

Introduction

Nationalism has continued to be one of the dominant factors determining the political community, state legitimacy, and identity in the wake of globalization and international connectivity. Contrary to popular belief, nationalism has become one of the prominent aspects of politics today in the context of debates on immigration, citizenship, sovereignty, and identity in both developed and developing countries. The rise of nationalism as well as the increase in the popularity of populist political parties, issues on border security and multiculturalism are some of the trends that have brought back the academic focus on the changing nature of nationalism in the contemporary era (Anderson, 2006; Smith, 1991).

The dichotomy of civic and ethnic nationalism has formed one of the key analytical categories in studies on nationalism for a long time now. The pioneering work in this area by Hans Kohn (1944) established the difference between civic nationalism based on common political culture, citizenship, and democracy,

and ethnic nationalism that relies on common origins, ethnicity, language, religion, and culture. While civic nationalism represents voluntary political association and constitutional ideals, ethnic nationalism centers on common descent and cultural tradition (Kohn, 1944; Ignatieff, 1993). However, while this dichotomy has greatly affected comparative politics, many later researchers have challenged the inflexibility of such categorization by pointing out that most nation-states combine features of both nationalism (Brubaker, 1999; Yack, 1999).

In addition, current political trends add another level of complexity to the distinction of civic vs. ethnic types of nationalism. Economic polarization, international migration flows, global security threats, and the rise of the Internet have transformed the processes of national identity formation and politicization. Populist politicians tend to use democratic and culturally exclusive rhetoric while liberal democracies keep reconciling between the concepts of multicultural citizenship and national integrity (Mudde, 2007; Miller, 1995). Thus, one can assume that the nationalism of the modern world is largely characterized by its hybrid forms which combine civic and ethnic components.

Against the discussed backdrop, this paper aims at making a comparative evaluation of the civic vs. ethnic nationalism in the 21st century. The selected national case studies will be analyzed in the context of classical and contemporary theories of nationalism. Consequently, the researcher seeks to understand whether the dichotomy of civic and ethnic nationalisms is an appropriate category for the contemporary world or whether there are some alternative explanations of reality.

Significance of the Study

This paper is an effort towards contributing to the understanding of modern nationalism through the analysis of the changing dynamics of civic and ethnic nationalism in the modern age. A comparative approach is used in order to offer useful implications on the basis of the influence of globalization, migration, and populism on national identities.

Literature Review

Conceptual Foundations of Civic and Ethnic Nationalism

Nationalism has emerged as one of the most controversial issues in political science, sociology, and international relations, with scholars presenting various approaches to the definition of its roots, peculiarities, and political implications. In general, nationalism can be defined as an ideology according to which a nation is a unique political and cultural entity whose citizens form a collective identity and have the right to self-determination (Gellner, 1983). While the manifestations of nationalism may vary depending on historical and geographical settings, the dichotomy of civic and ethnic nationalism became one of the central conceptual distinctions to explain national identity.

The classical division of civic and ethnic nationalism has been presented in works by Hans Kohn (1944). According to this author, Western European nations were mostly characterized by the development of civic nationalism, which relied on the principles of citizenship, democracy, constitutional values, and active political participation. Meanwhile, many nations of Central and Eastern Europe witnessed the rise of ethnic nationalism, whose defining features were common origin, language, religion, and cultural heritage.

In contrast to ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism is marked by voluntary political affiliation, equality of citizenship, and commitment to certain constitutional principles. As noted by Miller (1995), civic nationalism builds social unity based on the willingness of individuals with different cultures to

associate themselves under one political institution and democratic principles. In this way, civic nationalism promotes inclusive citizenship, treats the nation as a political community where membership is attained legally and civilly, not by birthright. Civic nationalism has often been considered connected to liberal democracy, constitutionalism, and multiculturalism.

In contrast to civic nationalism, ethnic nationalism is based on common descent, culture, language, and common history. Smith (1991) suggests that ethnic groups or ethnies constitute the culture base for formation of nations in modern times. Unlike in civic nationalism, Smith denies nations as strictly political phenomenon and considers myths of common ancestry, memories, symbols and culture to be crucial for maintenance of national identity over generations. As stated by Ignatieff (1993), ethnic nationalism relies on emotional ties to common heritage, which may increase the feeling of cohesion within the group but also create barriers between insiders and outsiders.

Nevertheless, despite the analytical value of the dichotomy between civic and ethnic approaches to nationalism, some researchers point to the rigidity of its application. For instance, Brubaker (1999) notes that no states are purely civic or ethnic today since national identities are constantly recreated with the help of political discourse, institutions and history of the state. Yack (1999) considers that the dichotomy oversimplifies the complicated issue of the relationship between political citizenship and cultural identity since even liberal democratic states use such elements of their ethnicity as symbols, stories, traditions in order to create the national identity. These approaches imply that civic and ethnic nationalism must be considered as ideal types.

In general, from the discussion of the theoretical concepts of civic and ethnic nationalism, it can be concluded that national identity is formed with the combination of political institutions, cultural tradition, historical experience and social values. Despite the analytical value of the dichotomy between civic and ethnic approaches to nationalism, contemporary research proves that nation-states of our time can combine features of both approaches. Such an understanding becomes a very important background for the study of changes in the nature of nationalism in the twenty-first century.

Table 1. Comparison between Civic and Ethnic Nationalism

| Dimension | Civic Nationalism | Ethnic Nationalism |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Basis | Citizenship | Ancestry |
| Identity | Political | Cultural |
| Membership | Voluntary | By birth |
| Values | Democracy | Heritage |
| Examples | France, Canada | Hungary, Japan |

Theoretical Perspectives on Nationalism

The development of national identity through the years has seen various theoretical perspectives on nationalism attempt to elucidate the genesis, growth, and sustenance of the concept. Some of the major theoretical perspectives that have been used to understand the development of national identity include primordialism, modernism, ethno-symbolism, and constructivism. The various theories provide useful information about civic–ethnic nationalism by explaining how national identity may be either inherited or socially constructed or historical.

According to the modernist school of thought, nationalism is not an ancient or natural concept but a product of modernity. Gellner (1983), for example, asserts that nationalism was the product of the era of

industrialization when nations were required in order to function effectively in industrialized economies that required culturally homogeneous societies that could operate in a centralized form of politics. In his view, nations are created by the state through mass education, administration, and politics. Anderson (2006), on the other hand, defines the nation as an "imagined community" in which the people of the nation imagine being part of the same community even though they do not meet most of the others. He explains that nationalism arose due to print capitalism.

However, in a different perspective, Smith (1991, 2009) rejects the exclusive modernist accounts using an ethno-symbolic approach. He asserts that modern nation-states are founded on pre-existent ethnies which create myths of origins, memories, symbols, and traditions. Although he recognizes the significance of modernization, Smith believes that the importance of culture and history is crucial for the formation of a national identity. His theory provides a way to understand how ethnic nationalism still retains its strong impacts despite high levels of modernization.

Constructivist theories add to the understanding that the identities of nations are not static but constantly constructed through politics, language, and discourse. Brubaker (1996) contends that nationhood must be viewed as a processual phenomenon instead of a social one. In a similar way, Billig (1995) brings up the term of "banal nationalism" to show how national identity is constructed through practices and discourses in everyday life without the need for political mobilization.

Overall, the above-mentioned theoretical approaches prove the fact that nationalism is not something that can be explained from the perspective of one approach. On the contrary, it is the result of the interaction of history, culture, political institutions, and socio-economic changes. Combining these approaches allows us to create an analytical basis for the study of the evolution of nationalism in the new political landscape.

Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in the Twenty-First Century

Contrary to the expectation of previous decades, nationalism is on the rise in the twenty-first century despite the expected diminishing importance of national identities due to globalization. The integration of economies, massive migration flows, technological progress, and international security problems have influenced the political environment and forced academics to question the relevance of the civic-ethnic approach to nationalism. Instead of declining in importance, nationalism has adapted to the modern world by combining the civic idea with ethnic and cultural elements in reaction to changes in the social and political spheres (Smith, 2010).

Globalization has intensified the movement of individuals, capital, and information across borders and created both opportunities and concerns about the sovereignty and identity of the nations involved. Even though it is claimed that globalization tends to promote cosmopolitanism and diminish the importance of nations (Habermas, 2001), other researchers claim that globalization has generated a reaction of the opposite nature and strengthened nationalism. According to Calhoun (2007), globalization has transformed nationalism rather than replaced it. Therefore, many states use policies to find the right balance between openness and cohesion of their national communities.

Migration has become yet another issue in the present-day discussion of nationalism. Migration has been posing a challenge to conventional ideas about citizenship and integration in liberal democracies. According to Kymlicka (2012), multicultural citizenship can be reconciled with civic nationalism through democratic recognition of cultural diversity with guarantees of equal rights and equal access to political participation. Nevertheless, migration trends have also fueled the emergence of ethnic

nationalist movements which focus on cultural homogeneity, continuity, and citizenship. Such a paradox is observable in several European countries, where the discussion about migration, national identity, and borders has been affecting electoral processes and public policy (Brubaker, 2017).

The return to populism adds more challenges to the connection between civic and ethnic nationalism. Populist leaders often appeal to the rhetoric of popular sovereignty and democratic legitimacy at the same time as they propagate exclusivist ideas of the identity of nation-state based on ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). The fast development of digital media technology has only added fuel to this fire by providing tools for political mobilization, propaganda of nationalist ideas, and formation of identity groups through the use of digital channels (Castells, 2010). As a consequence, nationalism in our days moves beyond the civic-ethnic dichotomy as it takes the shape of hybrid concepts uniting constitutional and historical aspects of national identity.

In conclusion, modern research shows that civic and ethnic nationalism are not alternative terms but rather connected dimensions of national identity. The study of such hybrids is necessary for understanding nationalism in the age of globalization.

Research Gaps and Rationale for the Present Study

The current research has made a great contribution to the development of nationalism studies through the analysis of civic and ethnic approaches, the history of their evolution, and political consequences. The classical works of such scholars as Kohn (1944), Gellner (1983), Anderson (2006), and Smith (1991) have outlined the theoretical basis of nationalism, whereas the current research explores its connections with globalization, immigration, populism, and multiculturalism (Brubaker, 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Despite these important achievements, there is still a number of problems in the current body of knowledge.

In particular, many modern researchers still view civic and ethnic nationalism as two separate phenomena that are in opposition to each other. Although the use of the dichotomous approach provides some advantages for the analysis, it fails to take into consideration the current state of affairs, when most of the modern nationalist identities consist of civic and ethnic components. The recent political processes show that the majority of democratic and non-democratic nations build their constitutionally-based citizenship by referring to historical traditions, religious heritage, and national culture at the same time.

Second, most of the studies in this area have been done at a national level or within certain geographical regions, restricting the chances of making any comparative analysis. Although many scholars have studied nationalism in Europe and North America, there have been relatively few cases where the dynamics of civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism have been systematically compared across various settings. This is crucial for recognizing common trends as well as differences in the process of national identity formation.

Third, the changing nature of world politics in the twenty-first century brings forth issues that cannot be easily accommodated by established theories of nationalism. The emergence of digital forms of communication, social media, mass migration, geopolitical rivalry, and rise of populist politics has changed the way in which nationalist discourse was constructed and used (Castells, 2010; Calhoun, 2007). This calls for an updating of our theories to accommodate new political realities.

Moreover, there still lacks consensus on whether civic nationalism leads to democratic inclusion, while ethnic nationalism results in exclusionist politics. In other words, empirical data shows a variety in states

where these two types of nationalism yield different political results, indicating that civic nationalism may have either inclusionary or exclusionary effect and the same applies to ethnic nationalism depending on particular historical background, institutions, and political leadership (Miller, 1995; Kymlicka, 2012). This implies that there should be more comparative studies conducted in order to assess the interplay between these forms of nationalism in different social and political settings.

In this regard, the current paper will conduct comparative study of civic and ethnic nationalism within chosen nation-states of the twenty-first century. Applying classical theories along with modern political events, this paper will attempt to understand whether the traditional dichotomy of civic versus ethnic form of nationalism is valid or not and if it needs to be substituted with some hybrid forms in order to explain modern nationalism better.

Table 2. Summary of Key Literature

| Author(s) | Theory/Concept | Key Contribution |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Kohn (1944) | Civic vs. Ethnic Nationalism | Distinguished civic and ethnic models of nationalism. |
| Anderson (2006) | Imagined Communities | Explained nations as socially constructed communities. |
| Gellner (1983) | Modernization Theory | Linked nationalism to industrialization and modernization. |
| Smith (1991) | Ethno-symbolism | Emphasized myths, symbols, and shared historical memories in nation-building. |
| Brubaker (1999) | Critique of the Civic–Ethnic Dichotomy | Argued that civic and ethnic nationalism often overlap in practice. |
| Billig (1995) | Banal Nationalism | Demonstrated how everyday symbols reinforce national identity. |
| Calhoun (2007) | National Identity | Examined nationalism in the context of globalization. |
| Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) | Populism | Explained the relationship between populism and contemporary nationalism. |

From the reviewed literature, it becomes clear that even though the theories of civic and ethnic nationalism are still highly valued, recent political trends indicate an emerging link between the two. The identified research gap proves the need to undertake a comparative study of nationalism in the new millennium. The suggested conceptual framework for the current study is outlined below.

Conceptual Framework

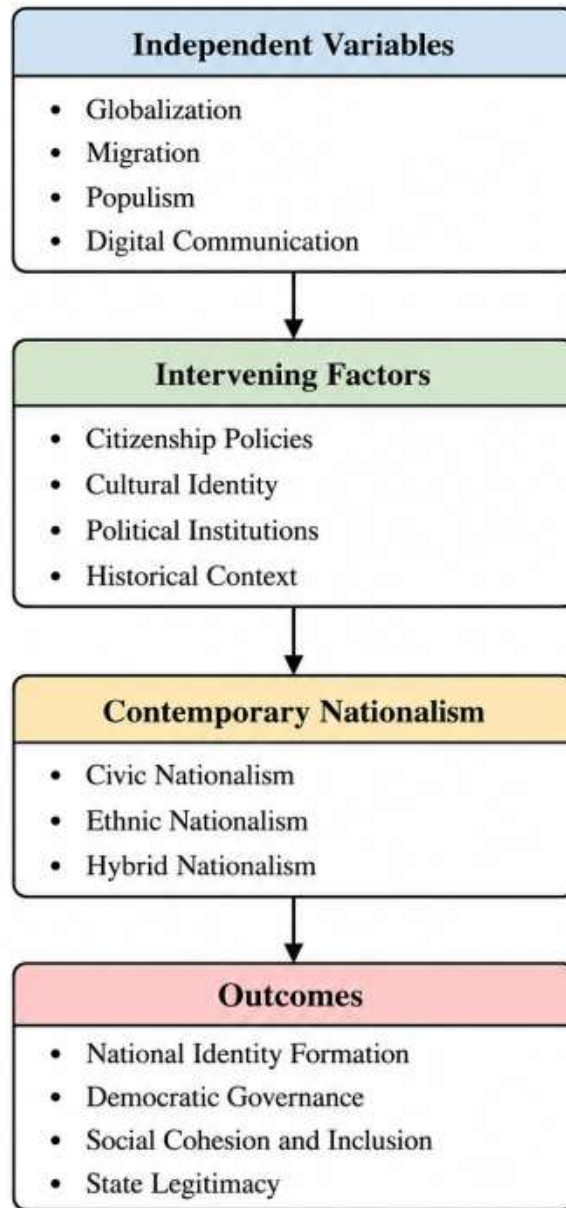


Figure :1

Research Objectives

1. To examine the concepts of civic and ethnic nationalism.
2. To compare civic and ethnic nationalism in selected countries.
3. To analyze the impact of globalization, migration, and populism on contemporary nationalism.
4. To evaluate the relevance of the civic–ethnic nationalism framework in the twenty-first century.

Research Questions

1. What are the essential traits of civic and ethnic nationalism?
2. What are the differences between civic and ethnic nationalism among certain nations in the twenty-first century?

3. What effect have globalization, migration, and populism had on the development of civic and ethnic nationalism?
4. Is the conventional civic-ethnic nationalism dichotomy adequate to explain nationalism today, or are some mixed versions of nationalism more suitable?

Research Methodology

A comparative qualitative research design will be used to analyze the features and development of civic and ethnic nationalism in the 21st century. Qualitative research design can be considered appropriate since it allows for analyzing the political, cultural, and institutional aspects of nationalism in various national settings. The current research is based on description and analysis of contemporary manifestations of nationalism.

The study is grounded exclusively on secondary data gathered from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, government documents, policy papers, constitutions, and reports of international organizations. Literature relevant to the topic has been sought out from reliable academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and Web of Science.

Purposeful sampling technique was used to choose nations which embody civic, ethnic, or hybrid varieties of nationalism so that a meaningful comparison could be drawn. Data thus gathered were then subjected to analysis with the help of thematic content analysis and comparative analysis technique with regard to the issues of citizenship, national identity, cultural values, and state policies. To increase the validity and reliability of the data, the information was crosschecked from several sources.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The research data was processed by means of thematic comparison of civic and ethnic nationalism in selected countries. Relevant information from scientific literature, government papers, policy papers, and institutional papers was studied and systematized by thematic groups, including citizenship, culture, democracy, migration, political mobilization, among others. The results reveal that civic nationalism is based on constitutional values and equal citizenship, whereas ethnic nationalism is characterized by common descent and cultural heritage. Moreover, the results indicate that globalization, migration, and populism contributed to hybrid forms of nationalism, which combine civic and ethnic aspects of nation-building.

Comparative Analysis of Civic and Ethnic Nationalism

Comparative analysis reveals that there are two different but related ways of approaching the formation of national identity – civic and ethnic nationalism. The former is associated with political values, constitutionalism, citizenship, and democracy. This approach considers being a member of a nation as being connected to its political institution and not to one's ethnicity or culture. Nations like France and Canada can be considered to reflect civic nationalism inasmuch as constitutional rights, political equality, and citizenship play a prominent role in them despite the importance of cultural integration as an element of national identity.

Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, focuses on the common ancestry, language, religion, and history of the nation. In this approach, being a member of a nation is something that one inherits from his or her culture and history. Some examples of this include Hungary and Japan.

Further, it becomes clear from the study results that the dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism is not a binary one. There are examples of modern nations in which there is a mixture of characteristics typical of civic and ethnic nationalism, thus forming hybrids. For instance, India combines constitutional democracy and equality of its citizens with powerful cultural and civilizational aspects, while Germany has developed inclusion policies of citizenship, yet retaining a focus on language, memory, and culture. In summary, it can be stated that the traditional dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism is relevant from an analytic point of view; however, it is not enough to understand the processes of nationalism in the modern world.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Selected Countries

| Country | Nationalism Type | Characteristics |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| France | Civic | Republican citizenship |
| Canada | Civic | Multiculturalism |
| Germany | Hybrid | Civic + Cultural |
| India | Hybrid | Constitutional + Civilizational |
| Hungary | Ethnic | Cultural preservation |
| Japan | Ethnic | Ethnic homogeneity |

Impact of Globalization, Migration, and Populism on Contemporary Nationalism

From the analysis above, it is evident that globalization, migration, populism, and digital communication have greatly impacted nationalism in the modern world. Although globalization has facilitated economic integration, innovation, and global interconnections, it has raised questions about national sovereignty, cultural preservation, and economic security. Instead of making the national identity less powerful, these phenomena have made governments and political leaders work harder to build nationalistic discourses to safeguard their domestic interests.

Migration has also been a major contributor to changes in modern nationalism. Increased movement across borders has led to the diversification of populations and redefined citizenship and national belonging. Most democracies have opted to practice civic nationalism that is characterized by equal rights, democratic governance, and inclusive citizenship. The fast rate of demographic change has resulted in ethnic nationalism in societies where migration is perceived to be a threat to their cultural heritage, languages, or religions.

Moreover, it is argued that populism has strengthened the process of nationalism through highlighting the interest of “the native people,” especially in regard to threats from abroad and internally within the country. Populists usually combine their discourse on democracy with references to the cultural and historical legacy and national sovereignty in order to attract voters in times of economic instability and political turbulence.

This tendency has been further fueled by digital technologies because now nationalist discourses are quickly spread via online media. Generally speaking, the results demonstrate that globalization has not led to depoliticization of nationalism but has rather changed it, thus giving birth to hybrid forms of national identity.

Table 4. Influence of Contemporary Factors

| Factor | Civic | Ethnic |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Globalization | Inclusion | Identity protection |
| Migration | Citizenship | Cultural concern |
| Populism | Sovereignty | Exclusivism |
| Digital Media | Participation | Mobilization |

Emergence of Hybrid Nationalism

However, it should be noted that the above comparative study reveals that modern-day nationalism is impossible to be understood with the help of the classical opposition between civic and ethnic nationalism. Indeed, nowadays there are many nations that can be viewed as a combination of democratic citizenship and cultural, historical, and ethnic identity.

It should be said that the findings of the above comparative research indicate that in democratic states constitutional values, equal citizenship, and legality are maintained at the same time as common cultural heritage, historical experience, and national identity are promoted. Thus, it becomes clear that civic and ethnic components of the state's national identity are not incompatible but rather coexist in one system of politics.

In addition, this research proves that economic uncertainty, migrations, international conflicts, and the development of populism also led to the appearance of hybrid nationalism. Governments apply both civic values and cultural values in order to ensure political legitimacy, protect their national interests, and gain popularity among citizens. Thus, nationalism became more flexible and contextual, and it does not correspond to any certain ideology.

On the whole, this research shows that nationalism is better to be perceived as a continuum instead of rigid civic versus ethnic dichotomy. Hybrid nationalism provides a more detailed explanation of the relationship between citizenship, democracy, identity, and culture.

Findings and Discussion

It can be concluded from the results of this study that the dichotomous theory of civic versus ethnic nationalism still proves to be a valid conceptual basis for the analysis of national identity. But the modern-day political trends clearly show that the two forms of nationalism become increasingly interrelated instead of existing separately. Globalization, international migration, technological revolution, and rise of populism have changed the patterns of formation and expression of national identity.

The comparison demonstrates that almost no state fits into either the civic or ethnic model. National identity is determined through constitutional values, democracy, history, and culture. This conclusion proves the current scientific approaches towards the dynamic and contextual nature of the phenomenon of nationalism. The existence of hybrid nationalism proves that the states try to find a balance between political inclusiveness and maintaining cultural identity due to socio-political changes.

Thus, this study proves that the old dichotomous classification cannot fully explain the nature of contemporary nationalism but remains theoretically important. The idea of hybrid nationalism allows for a better understanding of the phenomenon and serves as a basis for further comparative research.

Table 5. Summary of Findings

| Objective | Major Finding |
|-------------|--|
| Objective 1 | Civic and ethnic nationalism differ conceptually. |
| Objective 2 | Most countries exhibit hybrid nationalism. |
| Objective 3 | Globalization reshapes nationalism. |
| Objective 4 | Hybrid nationalism better explains the 21st century. |

Conclusion

Nationalism has been among the major factors behind political identity, political legitimacy, and democracy in the twenty-first century. In this study, the dynamic connection between civic and ethnic nationalism was analyzed through a comparative study of current political trends. From the results of the research, it can be seen that, although the old classification of civic and ethnic nationalisms continues to be relevant as a theory, it is not adequate for explaining the present state of affairs in modern nation-states.

It was revealed that civic nationalism entails democratic ideas, constitutional ideology, equality of citizenship, and political activism while ethnic nationalism is based on common ancestry, culture, language, and religion. However, contemporary nation-states demonstrate such forms of nationalism which are hybrids, combining both civic elements and cultural/historical aspects. In addition, the paper shows how globalization, migration, populism, and digital communications have transformed the language of nationalism. Instead of diminishing national identity, globalization has enhanced the fears associated with sovereignty, culture, and security. Meanwhile, the processes of migration and multiculturalism have deepened discussions on citizenship and integration, while the emergence of digital media has increased the impact of nationalist rhetoric.

On the whole, the work suggests that nationalism is a continuum rather than a binary choice between civic and ethnic aspects of this phenomenon. The acknowledgment of its dual character allows us to better understand today's political reality. This work adds value to the existing literature on nationalism by shedding light on its transformation in the age of globalization and providing practical insights for researchers and policymakers working on balancing inclusive citizenship and democracy.

Recommendations

- In policymaking, it is essential to uphold inclusive civic values without undermining the culturally and historically diverse nature of societies.
- Citizenship education needs to be improved in order to encourage democracy, constitutionalism, and social unity.
- Policies regarding immigration and integration need to find a balance between nationalism and equality of diverse groups.
- It is the duty of political leaders to refrain from creating exclusionary nationalist stories that cause discrimination and division.
- Future studies should focus on exploring hybrid nationalism in other regions through mixed-method or longitudinal studies.

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