

# Protestant reformation and nationalism



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Nationalism; One might ask, what is Nationalism? Nationalism is popular political ideology that developed in the 18th century and that it identifies “people” and the purposes that control an independent “state” the key to “nation” is the definition in the identification of a “nation” This definition originally came from France and Spain prior to the 18th century, it refers to a small, elite group of men who would meet and converse with each other. (Getz T. R. , & Brooke J. E. , 2012).

That is until the 18th century, this is when “nation” became redefined as a large group of people, spanning the social classes, one who established a political and cultural community of citizens, thus forming what were known as “Nationalists” they were people who felt as though these groups of citizens should have control over their government and country rather than leaving control in the hands of the aristocratic elite, or the hands of distant power. This is how nationalism was successful in challenging the governments of small kingdoms, or large empires, this in part it what made it a defining political institution of modern age (Getz, T. R. & Brooke J. E. , 2012).

There is also another definition of nationalism this side excludes a bond to a diverse state where the subjects do not share the same ideas, or moral values and a common culture. “Nationalism is also a normative political theory under which a geographically compact distinct people has a right to self-determination (Ignatieff, 1993: 145). Since an “ought” cannot be derived from an “is,” one might admit the existence of a Serbian nation prior to World War I, while denying that the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was benign.”

Although there is a fine line between nationalism and patriotism one may have a hard time in distinguishing the difference. What is necessary for people to be able to express their nationalism they must first identify themselves as belonging to one nation, this would include a large group of people who have many of the same reasons or something in common as a group. This is one reason feudalism was eliminated. In the realization that many shared the same common history, language, religion, and or race was what helped them form what is known as national identity.

In having a common identity and with the proper authority structure over a large area (i. e. , the state) is what made nationalism become possible (Kohn, H. 1967, *The Idea of Nationalism*). Nationalism would come about in the way that Europe was geographically fractured, as they had many enemies in order to hold onto their many domains. Their problems included aspirations of France and the other rising nation-states within their regions, and conflicts due to the Reformation. Individualism played a role in the Protestant Reformation by giving individuals salvation and morality.

Other Protestant groups like Mennonites, Anabaptists, and Quakers developed emotional and mystical forms of worship, stressing personal experience and individual interpretation of the Bible. Similar movements like the Jansenists and Quietists emerged within the Roman Catholic tradition as well. The technological innovation of the printing press played a role in the Protestant Reformation," Luther drafted a list of 95 points (theses) for public debate on salvation and penance.

Luther targeted the Church's practice of issuing indulgences-that claimed to remove the sins, which Luther equated selling salvation. Luther's implications of corruption and fundamental error on the part of the Church brought down the wrath of Church officials as well as of powerful lords and nobles. Luther fled persecution, but along the way, he used the printing press to follow up his initial challenge with numerous pamphlets and a German translation of the Bible, reaching a broad audience. (Luther, M. (1517). The 95 Theses.

What makes this uniquely modern is that the rise of nationalism; The first thing necessary is one being able to identify themselves as one nation, meaning a large group of people who have things in common, the second would be that of the rise of centralized government; meaning it will place everyone under one rule and put an to the feudalism. The reality of this is that one may possess a common history, religion, race this helped the people in forming their national identity with this common identity and formal government, then nationalism become possible.

The 18th century was a long one, where major economic transformation and the rise of political upheaval in the seaboard dynasties of the Western half of Europe establishing the first modern nation-states. (Hearn, J. University of Edinburg, para. 2. 1) Although with the growing of middle class, which they had a desire for political power, along with this and the development of a democratic political theory were connected and with the outcome resulting in the creation of modern nationalism.

There are many theories to nationalism, although nationalism has a continuing important factor that makes one evaluate the pros and cons, good, bad, or the benefits and costs. The easy way of explain nationalism's appeal is that it is like emotions we as humans feel, the way we love our family and friends, and the things that bond us together, and gives us a sense of solidarity which is one of the most basic needs of humanity.

Nationalism also fosters a homogenous culture, with a high and low end, things that a common culture would offer, ““ To ‘ do business with each other’,” notes Charles Taylor, or to “ operate a system of courts, run a bureaucratic state apparatus and the like, we need millions who can communicate without difficulty in a context-free fashion” (Taylor, 1998: 192). Although such theories have been thought to be the rise of nationalism in Europe during the 19th century.

The events prior to the rise of nationalism was based on the impulse to solidarity would come through the means of religion Christendom this was the religion choice prior to the Reformation. According to Ernest Gellner (1997), “ nationalism was a response to the anomie of modernity that followed on the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy.

Nationalism united an alienated society, with “ Gessellschaft using the idiom of Gemeinschaft. ” The deserted village was reinvented in the nation-state, and a “ mobile anonymous society simulate[d] a closed cosy community” (Gellner, 1997: 74; see also Berlin, 1999).

There would be another benefit of nationalism, by bonding people together nationalism increases the impulses and decreases free riding. The general

cement of our society is that we perform acts of good will, serve in our military, and contribute to charity when we are bonded with others. The rise of Nationalism is thought to actually help reduce in the event of war. The conditions necessary for one to be able to express nationalism: one it is necessary for one to identify them as belonging to a nation, meaning a large group of people who have things in common with one another.

The rise of centralized government, placing people under one rule and eliminating feudalism is what made this happen, With the reality of common history, religion, language, race helped in forming the national identity and forming a government is what made nationalism happen. (Nationalism: Its Meaning and History 1965). This subject is different to what came before the modern age? The way things were before the modern age was a time of great suffering and death. At the one set of the modern era, many areas were in dire crisis.

The Black Plague nearly decimated the population, stripped away any political stability, dislocated the trade system and the local economies collapsed. Before nationalism, there was the rule of the Mongol empire; this was a militant type of government, they would kill many innocent people, they told the people what their religion beliefs would be, they did not give the right to have any say in any matter. Women at this time had no rights what so ever, their way of life was staying home and taking care of their families.

In the long struggle for humanity there has been two crisis, one when it was formed and then again it was perpetuated and the second was in the time of

the Civil War it was a time of great strain and struggle for humanity. In the many stages of advancement of humanity, the biggest conflict has been with those who possess much more than they have earned, and those who have earned more than they possess this is the central of progression (The New Nationalism 2010). The evolution of modern age would affect the different civilizations of the world?

Through religious and scientific revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries influenced yet another wave of intellectual, social challenges also known as Enlightenment. The enlightenment believers believed that the advancement of science and the industry was an indication that a new age of progress and a new level of fairness was in store for mankind. “ Though its major figures shared a common intellectual heritage and drew on a great continuity of thought and method, the Enlightenment was a diverse collection of movements with a variety of goals and directions.

Critical examinations of religious and scientific traditions expanded to political and social customs, the arts, society, and human nature itself. ” Enlightenment relates to the American and French Revolutions in the way that America got its freedom from Britain, they developed ideas from the Enlightenment. This gave people the “ freedom of speech and the ability to debate” according to the Bill of Rights 1689 (Fordham University, 1997).

China and Western Europe sent explorers out to discover and learn about the world that was around them. This helped them expand the knowledge of the people, and resulted in new routes and trade opened between civilizations. Making goods and products to be shipped to other nations in exchange for

goods they specialized in. In 1931, Pope Pius XI would denounce nationalism due to its “statolarty in which natural rights of the families contradicted with the supernatural rights of the church”(Catholic Church and Nationalism, 2000).

Although at this time the Church feared the co-optation of those faithful in the modern and the anticlerical state, but at the same time felt the racial tendencies of totalitarian nationalism was seen as offensive towards morality. So in conclusion Nationalism, started with the first ideas of the Enlightenment, and people found new freedom of religion and speech, along with the great strides of many others were soon to follow and this would spread over the entire world.

This also proves that the United States was not the first country to gain their freedom we kind of stole the ideas from where it started in Europe. Although all the people all over the world have found new freedom, the freedom of speech, and religion and along with all the great strides and setbacks, We the American people are right in asking for a New Nationalism, although we will as a country still have to deal with new problems just as the old ones.

We need to treat local issues as local and national issues as a national issue not as if it was a local problem, but sometimes we are regressing back to the old ways when all that mattered was the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, why does only a few elite get to get rich while everyone else gets poor, It should work if our country is going to get in on the whole going green revolution, then they should make it affordable or let everyone have stock shares that way everybody makes money and the division of the

classes would be eliminated, then everyone would be more equal and can share the joys of life not just the elite getting to enjoy life.