

How far has  
nationalism changed  
over the last hundred  
years?



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Nationalism emerged from the perception of “ feeling and “ identity” and that a “ nation” be based on the people rather than a dynasty or God.

It was one of the most successful political engines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both “ identity nationalism” and “ liberal nationalism” were spawned from the middle-classes. Liberal nationalism tends to focus on the good of the nation, its economy, its world power status, and its military strength. Whereas identity nationalism tends to infect large groups of mostly males who feel they should be part of something. The wearing of uniforms is a strong attraction for young males, and, when accompanied by violence and someone to focus it on, becomes a stronger force in itself.

This is one of the reasons Hitler’s SA was so influential and effective. Two methods exemplified nationalism:- The French method of “ inclusion” - anyone accepting the loyalty of the state was regarded as a citizen. This involved the breaking down of regional accents and dialects, which is similar to Russification and Gillian Shepard declaring war on regional dialect in 1994. The U. S has also implied elements of inclusion by school children reciting the pledge of allegiance at an early age.- The German method was to define the “ nation” in ethnic terms.

In practice, this boils down to speaking a form of German and having a German name and was first put forward by von Schoederer’s ideology of the Aryan race in Germany. Although many German-speaking Slav middle-classes adopted the theory, it became even more important the Germans. Not all nationalisms result in aggressive practices if boundaries are drawn. It would still allow outsiders to become part of the nation-state. To study the

change in nationalism, it would be necessary to look at several different cases of nationalism from 1890 to the present day. These include; the Weltpolitik, Mussolini's march on Rome and the use of the fear of socialism, Hitler's use of Propaganda, Stalin's "socialism in one country" and present day nationalism particularly football hooliganism.

Each represent similar ideologies of nationalism, but a different way of expressing them in terms of realisation and the image they portray." The expansionist power policy sought to enhance Germany's international role by gaining access to overseas markets and raw materials, which would lead to self-sufficiency and greater industrialisation" iWilhelm had three conditions by which to change Germany's foreign policy that outlines the nationalistic ideals of the Weltpolitik: 1. Germany allowed the Reinsurance Treaty to lapse in 1890, and thereafter neglected her traditional policy of alliance with Russia. 2. Germany scorned the British offers of alliance, believing that Britain was so much in need of support against France and Russia that she would eventually have to pay a far higher price for Germany's support than she was willing to at the time. 3.

In 1898, Germany began building an imperial fleet capable of challenging the Royal Navy, so that when Britain clashed with France and Russia, Germany would be able to intervene, decisively in any settlement. iiBy considering her position only, Germany forced various consequences of the change in the policy. By lapsing the Reinsurance treaty, Russia was driven to create an alliance with France and by dismissing the alliance with Britain, caused them to negotiate their problems with France and Russia. When Wilhelm launched the development of the Imperial Navy, the British were also forced to

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compete, while enhancing her relationship with France and Russia. In February 1906, Britain launched the first Dreadnaught-class battleship that dominated the First World War. The Germans rebutted by passing the Naval Law of April 1906, which required the widening of the Kiel Canal and the construction of six new ships equal to that of the dreadnaught.

Such acts boosted national pride in both countries, increasing a nationalistic atmosphere in supporting their country through the naval race. A rivalry between the two European powers has always sparked nationalistic feelings in both countries, be it a sports event or a naval race. The Weltpolitik sparked a type of nationalism amid the German government in to protecting the interests of the country. They isolated themselves from other leading powers to unite against a common enemy: Britain, in terms of the naval race." The smallest slur upon his own unit, or any implied praise of a rival organisation, fills him with uneasiness, which he can relieve only by making some sharp retort" iiiThis quote from George Orwell, outlines one part of nationalistic thought i.

e. obsession. Wilhelm was obsessed with Germany being the all-powerful nation of Europe and as soon as Britain threatened that position he had to return the compliment, as it were. Obsession also leads to insecurity and instability, according to Orwell where the country becomes paranoid of any military developments by their rivals. The Weltpolitik, and later "Mitteleuropa" (a form of dominating Europe by controlling a customs system), was an obsessive attempt to make Germany the all-powerful European nation and a clear example of nationalism.

The image forwarded by the Kaiser at this time was that of a blatant determination to out class the rest of Europe in terms of military strength and economic prowess. The Weltpolitik outlined Germany's intentions to raise morale within her infrastructure from the working classes to the aristocracy and it worked. The naval race with Britain provided the German people a motive for their hatred of them. This united them from this time and leading to world war one.

The March on Rome was a band of thirty thousand men who planned to storm Rome and cease power for Mussolini and the fascist party. Mussolini was forced to act through pressure from leading fascists at the time. The mere suggestion led, even Mussolini to doubt its success, as he had already booked a train ticket to Switzerland for the aftermath he believed would occur: failure. The Fascist party planned to overthrow several towns surrounding Rome in order to cut off communications and hold a siege on the capital. The liberals feared such a movement and the king as no resistance was put forward against the notoriously violent fascists.

On the 27th October Mussolini was poised to accept a ministerial position, but was persuaded not to by his advisors. The weakness of the King and government was accentuated by their indecision to enact martial law upon the fascists. There were clear anterior motives as regards to the influence the fascists could have if they were to gain power. The threat of a March on Rome caused any suggestion of a liberal coalition with the fascists to be abandoned. Probably the most influential factor that led to the march on Rome was the fear of the left. Fascism increased its support and, as a result,

began to appeal the more respectable of society as a means to eradicate socialism for good.

There were, however doubts of fascisms political validity leading up to the 1921 elections, but in November, they formed as an official political party of Italy: the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), where they clearly outlined their anti-socialist motives. Despite the march on Rome being a so-called myth, the reaction by liberals that the fascist militia could eradicate socialism was a powerful ally for the fascists. There was no fear of the left, however, as Mussolini created it. They lacked organisation and a strong leader, whereas, Mussolini offered both through the march on Rome.

He had the support of the church, which was quite possibly the most influential institution of the time. With the support of the liberals and the church, Mussolini had influence over the entire population of Italy, as the liberals influenced the industrialists and the church influenced the peasants. The returning soldiers of World War one, bitter at the Versailles treaty joined Mussolini's quest for power as compensation for their wasted efforts. The power Mussolini had at this led the King and the liberal government to collapse under the threat of an attack on Rome, when in fact it was merely a myth created by Mussolini's oratory skills and ability to manipulate the press. It was Mussolini's cult of personality that led to his appointment as Prime Minister.

He was, of course, appointed he did not seize power. The myth of the march on Rome wasn't that powerful, it was the weakness of the King that led to Mussolini's appointment, and the naivety, that led them to believe they

could control him once elected. Mussolini used the polarisation of politics to his advantage. He outlined the problems of socialism and, most importantly, he used the attraction of violence, which has been a major factor of nationalism throughout the last century, to gain more support.

Violence appeals to all walks of life, it is the driving force behind the majority of fascist movements and the fear it induces caused further support for the movement. His use of the Black shirt movement provided uniformity among his supporters and featured the "inclusion" elements of the French revolution. A lot of these supporters had switched from socialism as they were attracted by the violence. George Orwell describes this as "instability": "The intensity with which they are held does not prevent nationalist loyalties from being transferable" iv This relates to the polarisation politics, in particular that of post-war Italy, as those who supported the liberal government found they were attracted by the violence and promises to end socialism, where the movement from the left-wing may have been the result of a fear of fascist violence. The March on Rome was merely a tool used by Mussolini to manipulate Stalin - Socialism in one Country After the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and Lenin's death in 1924, it was believed that socialism would be followed by communism and gradually takeover Europe, country by country. This was not the case, however, as in most European countries a socialist threat had been overpowered due to their lack of support and organisation.

Only government's fear of them led them to be a threat. This led to "Socialism in one country" promoted by Joseph Stalin after he came to power.

He felt that before socialism could spread throughout the globe, the Russian  
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economy and her infrastructure had to be strengthened if this were to be so. The Great War, revolution and Civil war had left Russia in disarray. In order to ensure the survival of the revolution, Stalin had to enact several right-wing policies to strengthen her:" Stalin's argument was that the spread of revolution to the West was obviously the most desirable thing, but with the delay in this, Russia had no alternative but to set itself the aim of building Socialism in the belief that she had all that was necessary to complete this." vIn order to complete his objectives, Stalin had to enact an industrialisation programme that would unite the people of Russia.

In 1928, the first of three Five Year Plans was established for the rapid modernisation and industrialisation of the Soviet Union. This involved developing heavy industry to provide the foundations to develop Russia into a power military force. In order to complete this task of an industrial revolution and agricultural revolution must occur prior to it. He attempted to accomplish this through collectivisation. The expansion of the military, however, contradicted Socialist policy, but due to the later threat of war from Germany, it was a necessity as a means of upholding the revolution. Stalin himself said:" We are fifty to one hundred years behind the advanced countries.

We must make this distance in 10 years or we will be crushed" viThroughout the first five-year plan a sense of liberal nationalism was forwarded by Stalin and created by the increasing competence of Russian industry. The industrial expansion sparked a unity among the Russian people to work together to make Russia a great nation once more. Propaganda was rife among the workers; Stalin perpetuated folk tales of men accomplishing tens times their  
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quota of coal mined. Especially in the countryside, there was a sense of national, but not in a positive way.

Many farmers who were more successful than others were labelled as “Kulaks” and were destroyed. They were believed to have strayed from the values of the revolution as they were beginning to comply with capitalist policies. The irony falls were Stalin’s entire industrialisation policy fell into the category of capitalism. Oblivious to the fact, the Russian people were united to improve the Russian economy and world strength. This unity began to waver, however, during the Purges.

Stalin felt that to strengthen the values and continuity of his “socialism in one country” policy he had eliminate those suspected of opposing it. He arrested 8 million people between 1936 and 1938 whom he considered to be enemies of the state. Stalin used the fear of being purged to unite Russia into increasing its industrial and military capabilities. What seems bizarre during this time was that despite wanting to strengthen the military he purged the most important members of the Red Army.

It has been said that this was due to his increasing paranoia and that the Red Army’s new found strength could over power him at some point, he therefore appointed Stalinists in their place. In 1941, the German began an invasion of Russia. This prompted the entire Russian population to work to defend their country. This largely involved an increase in industrial quotas, which was now, completely devoted to mobilisation of the Army.

Propaganda was increased to insight shear hatred towards the Germans among the population and formed part of the “Great Patriotic War”. Such <https://assignbuster.com/how-far-has-nationalism-changed-over-the-last-hundred-years/>

elements increased the work ethic through fear if nothing else. Repression was increased and censorship tightened. Stalin used the 1917 revolution as a framework upon which to base his right-wing ideologies. By justifying his actions through the revolution and god-like Lenin and by removing Trotsky and purging Trotskyists, he held his position forthwith. This indicates that the left wing and the right are, in actual fact, closer together than one would realise and clearly not opposites as the naming suggests.

There are elements of socialism in fascisms and element of fascisms in socialism. Stalin merely justified his fascism as a stepping stone towards the Communist Utopia Karl Marx had predicted and Lenin strived to achieved. Propaganda in the Nazi Rise to power: Propaganda was a vital part in the Nazi's rise to power, accompanied with their brainwashing of the German population into detesting " non-Germans or non-Aryans" to the point of condoning their murders. Adolf Hitler wrote in " Mein Kampf": " The function of propaganda does not lie in the scientific training of the individual, but rather in directing the attention of the masses toward certain facts...

It must be direct toward the emotions, and only to a very limited extent toward so-called intellect" Therefore, all propaganda has to limit itself to a very few points and repeat them like slogans until even the very last man is able to understand what you want him to understand" viiThe Nazi's used such techniques to saturate the country with their beliefs. These typical right-wing policies led the German people into knowing one thing: Germany is great; everyone else is not (to put it simply). The Nazi's used all manner of communications, including the mass media, to brainwash their public. Over 70% of the German population owned one or more radios in their home and <https://assignbuster.com/how-far-has-nationalism-changed-over-the-last-hundred-years/>

were encouraged to listen to the Nazi broadcasts that filled over a quarter of all daily broadcasts. Those without a radio merely stood in the streets and listened to huge public announce systems erected by the Nazi party.

Unemployment was high, due to the instability of several industries, and as a result the unemployment listened to the radio, subjecting themselves to the anti-Semitic, military based propaganda broadcasts.

Even in schools, most subjects somehow related to the military. This question appeared in a German School Maths textbook: "A modern bomber can carry 1, 800 incendiaries." How long is the path along which it can distribute those bombs if it drops a bomb every second at a speed of 250 kilometres and hour? How far apart are the craters?" viii There were some children's storybooks that even appalled some Nazis. Julius Streicher wrote a bedtime story called "The Poisonous Mushroom" which outlines various anti-Semitic themes.

Adolf Hitler, however, found his campaign "skilful and amusing". The Youth of Germany were also encouraged to join Hitler's crusade by becoming members of the Hitler Youth or the League of German Girls. All forms of Nazi propaganda were successful and had common themes: strengthen the military and hatred towards the Jews. Hitler believed that Germany should not have more than one enemy, but to concentrate on one: the Jews. The belief was that it was the Jews that that killed Jesus Christ as they failed to accept him as the Messiah and challenged the system of Christianity.

Such beliefs were those of Anti-Semites in general and were perpetuated by Nazi propaganda. Hitler perpetuated the "inclusion" theory brought forward

by the French during the revolution with recognisable hand signals, and almost a sense of brand imaging by using the swastika as a sort of company logo, if you will. The promotion of the SA was key to Hitler's success, as it was a means of venting one's anger at the government handling of the depression and attracted many young men with the violence and uniformity of Hitler's private army. The economic struggle accompanied with Hitler's cult status and god-like status among the population, proved to attract enough members to form a formidable force and following. His use of Shoederer's ideology (by which he based his own) of the Aryan race and the influence of anti-Semitism in Austria, led him to point the finger at the Jewish community during the depression. This was the perfect time for him to execute his political advertising campaign.

His oratory skills swayed the polarisation of politics to the right by blaming the Jews for the depression and that socialism would only make the situation worse. British Soccer Hooliganism: Hooliganism at Britain's football matches was at its peak between 1961 and 1980, where the most intense and continuous stretch of violence occurred. The emergence of the "superhooligan" appeared in the early 1980s that travelled from ground to ground, reeking havoc amongst opposition fans, who were skilfully organised into gangs with their own distinctive names. Some of the more notorious hooligan gangs became well known in the British tabloids. The original superhooligan groups emerged in London: the "head-hunters" of Chelsea and the "Inter-City Firm" (ICF) of West Ham United, so named because of their practice of travelling on the Inter-City trains of British rail, avoiding the obvious soccer special trains.

The Chelsea Head-hunters were known for dressing smart in Armani pullovers and other designer clothes. The main attraction to these gangs was the violence. It is surprising to some that the typical profile of a soccer hooligan does not fit with these “superhooligans”. It may not seem a logical continuation from the Nazi propaganda, but modern-day nationalism takes the form of extreme patriarchy and pageantry. There are striking parallels between the activities of soccer hooligans and the actions of past dictators and right wing ideologies.

“Big money was involved here, much of it untraceable. With typical panache, a number of members of the ICF turned up in style in Italy for the World Cup Finals in 1990, staying at the five-star Carlton Hotel in Bologna” ix. Such parallels with dictatorship occur throughout the history of hooliganism. This example proves that money or big business are ever present in nationalistic situations i. e.

the rise of Hitler and Mussolini involved big business and their fear of the left. For example, “forceful individuals who took responsibility for and directed the actions of the rest of the fellow hooligans led most of these superhooligan groups” x. The root causes of present-day soccer hooliganism are deep and complex. Newspapers, in particular the tabloid press, “Have made a contribution of some significance to the rise of present-day hooliganism and to giving it its distinctively contemporary form” xi. Articles featuring stories on superhooligan group leaders, although not necessarily condoning them, rarely condemned their activities. If the press condemned such activities, it is likely that there would be less violence at sports events.

Once again this present parallels with Hitler's rise to power. His "lebensraum" policies directly contradicted the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, where the League of Nations acted like the press in this situation, neither condoning his actions nor condemning them and taking action to rectify and uphold the treaty. If the press give the impression to be in support of the superhooligans (despite them opposing their actions) it provides them with a cause for their violence as well as protecting the pride of their team or country. Similar to fascist black-shirts of Italy, a common dress of the superhooligan immediately identifies them with each and offers a sense of fraternity, sternly promoted by right wing parties. Soccer hooliganism seems a rather mild form of nationalism compared with the dictatorships of Italy and Germany. On the other hand, it quite possibly the most prevalent form of nationalism in liberal society today.

It is known as "the disease of Britain" xii by leading broadsheet journalism, which suggests nationalism has no place in society in the contemporary world and people should adopt a more liberal attitude. Nationalism does not just occur between nations in this sense but regions as "English xenophobia is replaced by Italian values of machismo" xiii during domestic games in Italy and other European countries. The similarities with extreme nationalism of the War Years, occurs with the fraternity and narrow-minded isolationism from other fans and relieving this tension with violence. They contain now political ideology; as such, but still infer the basic elements of them, including xenophobia, strong leadership and the attraction of violence. Since the Weltpolitik in the late nineteenth century, nationalism has formed an arc

in terms of its extremity. The nationalism leading up to the First World War was relatively moderate compared to that of the Second World War.

The Weltpolitik marked the isolationist, expansionist form of the right wing ideology through trade and access to overseas raw materials to improve their industry. The nationalism occurs in the selfish nature of Germany's intentions of trade agreements. Although it has been said that Germany's expansion of the navy was a means of settling disputes across Europe, one has to presume that they had anterior motives involving expansion and the creation of an empire, leading to the First World War, where, inevitably, nationalism would increase in support of their own country: " Many men cheerfully volunteered to fight and die for their country" xiv. The key turning point between these forms was the Treaty of Versailles, as it caused huge repercussions throughout history, especially in Germany. This was the basis for Hitler's foreign policy and Mussolini's values of Romanita through the " mutilated peace".

The conditions of the treaty caused massive economic problems in both countries and as Marxist historians would support, economics cause the majority of problems in the world. Politics polarised and subsequently, industry went right leading to the most extreme forms of nationalism seen this century. Stalin's socialist policies formed a similar isolationist policy to the Americans of the 1990s to a certain extent. Stalin would have preferred to contain socialism in the USSR and watch it flourish beyond the other superpowers.

Unfortunately the Second World War drained their resources. However he did impose seriously extreme right wing policies in his civil duties during the purges and the way each Five Year Plan was administered. Post Second World War, nationalism has somewhat become insignificant in the Western world and has developed into a sort of liberal patriarchy in most forms during periods of war. The 1960s preached peace and love, which has almost been administered within society as most military excursions are condemned by society. This liberal patriarchy has its extremes: namely soccer hooligans.

It seems futile to compare it with Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, but forms an important continuation of nationalistic views. Mussolini himself, dwelled on Italy's sporting triumphs as a means of dominating the world, but nowadays this becomes less important. Hooliganism forms within a small minority of soccer fans and is a logical continuation of the nationalism of the early part of the century, as it has caused so much grief and angst. Nationalism tends to dwell in small corners of the Western world today, as most of society view the world equally in a much more liberal environment than the past.

However, as Benito Mussolini claimed, nationalism is a part of everyone and lies subconsciously, waiting to be woken