



Nationalism and Its Effects on International Relations

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of nationalism and its effects on international relations. Nationalism, defined by the allegiance to one's nation-state, has been a driving force in global politics for centuries. The rise of nationalism in various forms has significantly impacted international cooperation, conflicts, and diplomacy. This paper analyzes how nationalism has influenced global governance, regional politics, and the dynamics between countries in both the post-colonial and contemporary world. It delves into the role of nationalism in the formation of nation-states, border disputes, economic policies, and international alliances. The study concludes by discussing both the positive and negative consequences of nationalism on global peace, security, and cooperation.

Keywords: *Nationalism, International Relations, Global Politics, Diplomacy, National Sovereignty, Geopolitics, International Cooperation*

1. Introduction

Nationalism, as a political ideology and movement, is rooted in the belief that individuals should prioritize the interests, culture, and sovereignty of their nation-state above others. While nationalism has long been an essential factor in shaping domestic politics, it has also significantly influenced international relations. The interplay between nationalism and international relations has manifested in various ways, including the creation of new nation-states, border conflicts, trade wars, and diplomatic tensions. Understanding the relationship between nationalism and international relations is crucial to comprehending global conflicts and cooperation in the contemporary world.

This paper explores the effects of nationalism on international relations by examining its historical evolution, its impact on global diplomacy and foreign policy, and its role in shaping international organizations and conflicts. The research further analyzes both the constructive and destructive potential of nationalism in the context of global cooperation and conflict.

2. Literature Review

Scholars have widely debated the role of nationalism in international relations. **Ernest Gellner** (1983) in *Nations and Nationalism* argued that nationalism is not merely a product of modernity but a means of creating cohesive states in the face of political and economic



transformation. According to **Benedict Anderson** (1983), nationalism is shaped by the concept of "imagined communities," where individuals feel a shared identity with others, despite never meeting them. Anderson's work has been crucial in understanding how nationalism fosters solidarity within states, but also how it can create division on the international stage.

John Mearsheimer (2001) in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* explored how nationalism leads to competition among great powers. He argued that nationalism is a central driver of state behavior and geopolitical strategy. **Jack Snyder** (2000) took a more critical approach, focusing on the "dangerous" effects of nationalism. In his book *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, Snyder argued that nationalism often exacerbates ethnic tensions, leading to conflicts and instability in international relations.

In contrast, **Robert Kaplan** (1994) in *The Coming Anarchy* stressed that nationalism has played a stabilizing role in creating nations that could engage in diplomacy and trade with other countries. He argued that nationalist movements could give rise to coherent governance structures that promote stability in international relations.

Samuel P. Huntington (1996) in his work *The Clash of Civilizations* examined how the rise of nationalism, particularly in non-Western societies, has challenged Western dominance and contributed to geopolitical tensions. Huntington argued that the resurgence of ethnic and national identities has become a key factor in shaping international relations in the post-Cold War era.

3. Methodology

This paper adopts a **qualitative research methodology** to examine the impact of nationalism on international relations. The study is based on secondary data, including:

- **Historical analysis** of nationalism's role in shaping state formation and conflicts.
- **Case studies** of specific international incidents and policies influenced by nationalism.
- **Comparative analysis** of different countries where nationalism has impacted international relations, including examples from Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- **Literature review** of scholarly works and theories on nationalism and its effects on global diplomacy.

4. Analysis

4.1. Nationalism and the Formation of Nation-States

One of the key effects of nationalism on international relations is its role in the creation of nation-states. The rise of nationalism in the 19th century was instrumental in the formation of modern states in Europe, and later, in the post-colonial world. Nationalist movements in Europe, particularly during the 19th century, led to the unification of Italy and Germany, fundamentally altering the balance of power in Europe.



Similarly, in the 20th century, the process of decolonization saw nationalist movements leading to the creation of new nation-states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This process changed the global order, as former colonies sought to assert their sovereignty on the international stage. In the case of India and Pakistan, the partition driven by nationalist sentiments created lasting geopolitical tensions and conflicts, particularly over the Kashmir region, which continues to affect relations between the two countries.

4.2. Nationalism and Border Disputes

Nationalism has also played a central role in border disputes and territorial conflicts. The belief in national sovereignty and the desire for self-determination often result in conflicts over borders.

In the case of **Russia and Ukraine**, nationalism has had a profound impact on the conflict over Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Russian nationalism, fueled by the desire to protect ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine, has led to military intervention and the annexation of Crimea, severely disrupting relations between Russia and the West.

4.3. Nationalism and Economic Policies

Nationalist ideologies often influence economic policies, with states prioritizing domestic economic interests over international cooperation. For instance, **protectionist trade policies** in nationalist regimes, such as the **Brexit** vote in the United Kingdom, have highlighted the tension between national interests and global economic integration.

Nationalism can also affect international cooperation on global issues such as climate change, trade, and public health. Nationalist leaders may be less willing to compromise on international agreements, as they may prioritize the interests of their own country over collective global solutions. For example, President Donald Trump's "America First" policy and withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement demonstrated how nationalist policies could undermine international cooperation on pressing global challenges.

4.4. Nationalism and International Alliances

Nationalism can influence a country's position in international alliances and organizations. While nationalism can sometimes lead to isolationism, it can also strengthen alliances based on shared national interests. For instance, the formation of the **European Union (EU)** was in part motivated by nationalist desires for economic integration and security cooperation among European nations following the devastation of World War II.

However, in contemporary times, rising nationalism in European countries like Hungary, Poland, and Italy has challenged the unity of the EU. These countries have increasingly prioritized national sovereignty over EU cohesion, leading to tensions within the union.



4.5. Nationalism and Global Conflicts

Nationalism has historically been linked to global conflicts, particularly in the context of imperialism, colonialism, and the two World Wars. In the post-Cold War era, nationalism continues to fuel conflicts, especially in regions with multiple ethnic and national groups. For example, the rise of Hindu nationalism in India has strained relations with Pakistan and other neighboring countries, while **Chinese nationalism** has led to territorial disputes in the South China Sea and with Taiwan.

Nationalism is also a major factor in the resurgence of populist politics around the world, as leaders in the United States, Brazil, India, and elsewhere have used nationalist rhetoric to consolidate power, often at the expense of international diplomacy and cooperation.

5. Conclusion

Nationalism has had a profound impact on international relations, with both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, nationalism has contributed to the formation of nation-states, the assertion of sovereignty, and the creation of international alliances. On the other hand, it has also been a driving force behind territorial disputes, protectionism, and conflicts between countries. In an increasingly interconnected world, nationalism presents both opportunities and challenges for global cooperation.

While nationalism can foster pride and unity within nations, its effects on international relations often complicate efforts to address global challenges such as climate change, conflict resolution, and economic inequality. Moving forward, international relations must balance national sovereignty with the need for global cooperation, ensuring that nationalism does not undermine the collective efforts required to tackle global issues.

6. References

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