

# Chapter 1

## Nationalism: A Conceptual Framework

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### Introduction

Historians undertook the study of nationalism before anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists shifted their attention to the subject. After World War II, a vast body of literature emerged on the subject, but a sense of terminological and historical chaos came alongside it. Calhoun (1997) writes that nationalism is too diverse to be explained by a single theory. Various combinations of cultural traditions and leadership roles determine the orientation of nationalism. Calhoun's scepticism was shared by Hall (1999:1), who believed that the theory of nationalism could not be bound universally. As the historical record is diverse, so must the concepts.

As such, there cannot be any periodic boundaries to understand the exact time frame for the emergence of nationalism. Scholars have tried to mark the critical historical events essential to understanding the emergence of nationalism. Hutchinson and Smith (1994) marked the partition of Poland in 1775 as a crucial date, the installation of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, the commencement of the second phase of the French Revolution in 1792, and when Johann Gottlieb Fichte addressed the German nation about the higher meaning of the love of Fatherland in 1807. It is essential to point out that imagining a theory of nation and nationalism is not the same thing. The institutional dimension of nations is state-oriented, hence the idea of the nation-state. Meanwhile, nationalism operates as an ideology that

promotes one's superior identity over the other and seeks control of the nation. Therefore, the fundamentals of nationalism are embedded in identity politics.

This chapter tries to map out critical theoretical debates on nationalism. It looks at the scholarship around nationalism and finds out that the idea of exclusion emerges complementarily to the concept of nationalism. The chapter attempts to understand how exclusion converts itself into the derivative discourse of ethnic nationalism in a heterogeneous society. It identifies the basis, strategies, and principles of ethnonationalism and throws light on how ethnonationalism is constructed through sociopolitical grievances.

## The Study of Nationalism During the Early Years

The emergence of nationalism is commonly associated with the French Revolution, during which the rights of man were recognised as the rights of the citizen. Hence, the nation emerged as the source of political authority. Junaid (2008) writes that conceptually, the origin of a nation can be traced to the Hebrew Bible, where the connection between land, language, and kinship was established after the deluge and dispersion of Noah's sons.

This section looks at the major influences on the study of nationalism in three phases: from the 18th century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from 1944 to 1980, and from 1980 to the present. The first intellectual traditions for understanding the nation are primordialism and perennialism. Primordialism recognises nations as organic givens and natural divisions of humanity. They regard nations as fixed and permanent entities of the world and trace the nature of national ties to primordial attachments. Smith (1999) recognises the power of such social groups in rooted kinship and genetic bases of human existence. Subsequently, they survived later processes and developments.

Schleiermacher (2004) and Fichte (1808) were the significant theorists who argued on the primordial/perennial grounds where nations are ancient and natural phenomena. As the nation appears timeless, na-