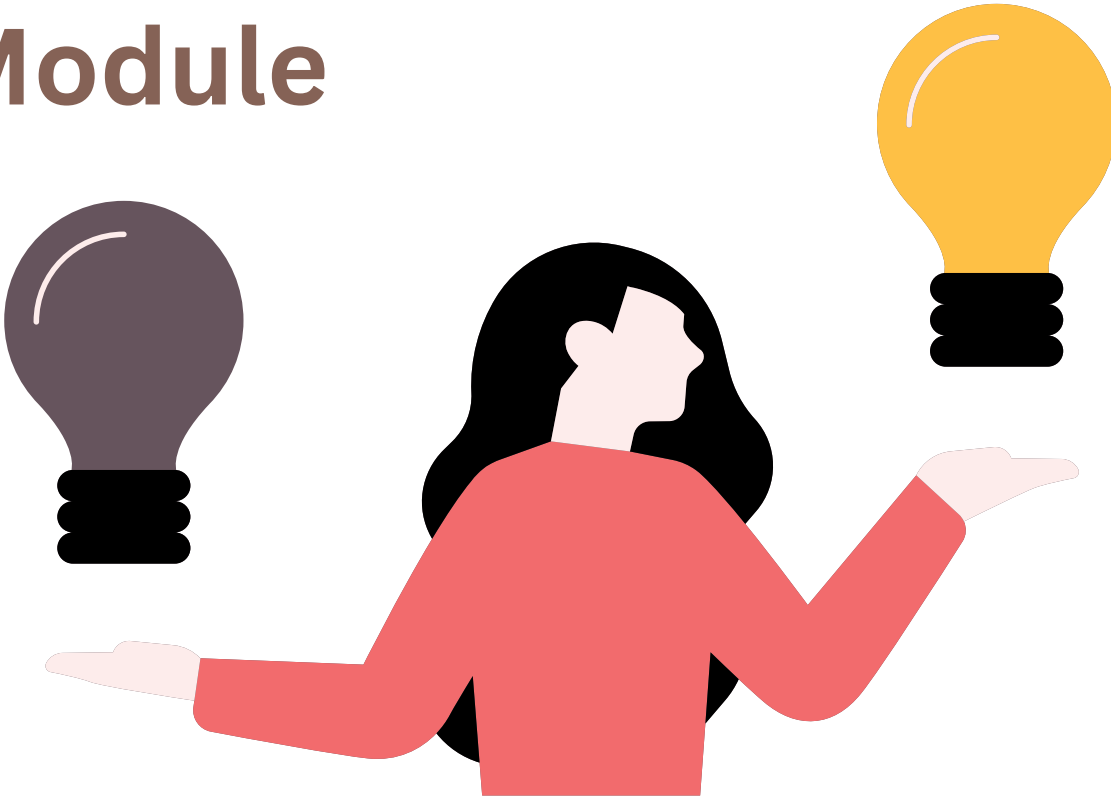


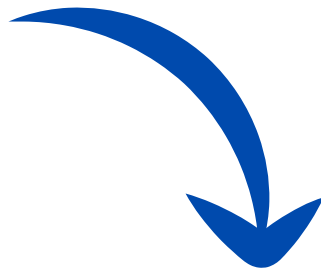


Study Book

Module



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1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

Module



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Chapter One: Understanding International Relations

Introduction

International relations, as it is presented in the flow of daily news concern a large number of disparate events; leaders are meeting, negotiations are concluded, wars are started, acts of terror committed, and so on. In order to make sense of all this information we need to know a lot about the contemporary world and its history; we need to understand how all the disparate events hang together. At university, we study these topics, but it is a basic tenet of the academic study of international politics that this rather messy picture can be radically simplified. Instead of focusing on the flow of daily news, we focus on the basic principles underlying it. This is what we will try to do in this module. So, let us begin by thinking big; what is international relations?, how was it made?, and how did it come to be that way?

Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define the meanings and nature of nation, states and nationalism
- Describe the meaning and evolution of International Relations
- Acquaint yourself with different perspectives, approaches and paradigm of international relations
- Identify and analyze the roles different actors play using the three levels of analysis
- Examine the structure of international system and the laws governing its operation

Brainstorming Question:

- ☞ Why does it matter to understand nationalism, nation and states?

1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

Nationalism is the most influential force in international affairs. It has caused the outbreak of revolutions and wars across the globe. It is noted as a factor for the collapse of age old empires, marker for new borders, a powerful component for the emergence of new states and it is used to reshape and reinforce regimes in history. Nationalism's triumph is the coming of the nation-state as key actors in world politics-accepted as ultimate, legitimate and the most basic form of political entity. According to Heywood (2014), nationalism is the doctrine that asserts the nation as the basic political unit in organizing society.

In common parlance, the words ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘country’ are used interchangeably and this is not correct. For instance, the word the ‘United Nations’ is a misnomer since in reality it is an association or a society of states-instead of nations. In international politics, it is also common but incorrect to refer the ‘Chinese’, the ‘Americans’ and the ‘Russians’ as ‘nations’. Hence, the question remains: what is a nation? According to Heywood, ‘nations are historical entities that evolve organically out of more similar ethnic communities and they reveal themselves in myths, legends, and songs (2014).

On the other hand, at the end of the eighteenth century this state came to be radically transformed. The ‘state’ was combined with a ‘nation’ forming a compound noun – the ‘nation-state’ – which was organized differently and pursued different goals. A nation, in contrast to a state, constitutes a community of people joined by a shared identity and by common social practices. Communities of various kinds have always existed but they now became, for the first time, a political concern. As a new breed of nationalist leaders came to argue, the nation should take over the state and make use of its institutional structures to further the nation’s ends. In one country after another the nationalists were successful in these aims. The nation added an interior life to the state, we might perhaps say; the nation was a soul added to the body of the early modern state machinery.

The revolutions that took place in Britain’s North American colonies in 1776, and in France in 1789, provided models for other nationalists to follow. ‘We the People of the United States’ – the first words of the Preamble to the US Constitution – was a phrase which itself would have been literally unthinkable in an earlier era. In France, the king was officially the only legitimate political actor and the people as a whole were excluded from politics. In addition, the power of the aristocracy and the church remained strong, above all in the countryside where they were the largest landowners. In the revolution of 1789, the old regime was overthrown and with it the entire social order. The French nation was from now on to be governed by the people, the nation, and in accordance with the principles of *liberté, égalité et fraternité*– liberty, equality and brotherhood.

Activity

- ☞ Discuss in groups the similarities and differences of nationalism, nation, nation-state
- ☞ Examine the place of war in the evolution of the European state system

Global Affairs Module

The Congress of Vienna of 1815, where a settlement was reached at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, was supposed to have returned Europe to its pre-revolutionary ways. Yet, nationalist sentiments were growing across the continent and they constantly threatened to undermine the settlement. All over Europe national communities demanded to be included into the politics of their respective countries. Nationalism in the first part of the nineteenth century was a liberal sentiment concerning self-determination – the right of a people to determine its own fate. This programme had far-reaching implications for the way politics was organized domestically, but it also had profound ramifications for international politics. Most obviously, the idea of self-determination undermined the political legitimacy of Europe's empires. If all the different peoples that these empires contained gained the right to determine their own fates, the map of Europe would have to be radically redrawn. In 1848 this prospect seemed to become a reality as nationalist uprisings quickly spread across the continent. Everywhere the people demanded the right to rule themselves.

Although the nationalist revolutions of 1848 were defeated by the political establishment, the sentiments themselves were impossible to control. Across Europe an increasingly prosperous middle-class demanded inclusion in the political system and their demands were increasingly expressed through the language of nationalism. The Finns wanted an independent Finland; the Bulgarians an independent Bulgaria; the Serbs an independent Serbia, and so on. In 1861 Italy too – long divided into separate city-states and dominated by the Church – became a unified country and an independent nation. Yet it was only with the conclusion of the First World War in 1918 that self-determination was acknowledged as a right. After the First World War most people in Europe formed their own nation-states.

As a result of the nationalist revolutions, the European international system became for the first time truly 'inter-national'. That is, while the Westphalian system concerned relations between states, world affairs in the nineteenth century increasingly came to concern relations between nation-states. In fact, the word 'international' itself was coined only in 1783, by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. In most respects, however, the inter-national system continued to operate in much the same fashion as the Westphalian inter-state system. Nation-states claimed the same right to sovereignty which meant that they were formally equal to each other.

In international politics, nevertheless, the implication of nationalism and its essence is highly questioned. Especially in the contemporary period, nation states are put under pressure and their role in world politics is significantly challenged. However, there is also an emerging narrative which advances the idea that a revival of nationalism is happening across the world with the post-cold war assertions of religion, culture and ethnicity as potent forces in world politics – hence we have S.P. Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ as an alternative to Francis Fukuyama’s ‘End of History’ thesis on world politics.



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short note



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1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

➤ the words “nation” “state” and “country” are used interchangeably and this is not correct

◆ Nationalism

- the **most influential force** in international affairs
- It is noted as a factor for
 - ✦ outbreak of revolutions and wars across the globe
 - ✦ collapse of age old empires
 - ✦ marker for new borders & emergence of new states
- used to reshape and reinforce regimes in history
- nationalism is the **doctrine** that **asserts the nation as the basic political unit in organizing society**

◆ Nations

- historical entities that **evolve organically out of more similar ethnic communities** and they reveal themselves in myths, legends, and songs
- A nation, in contrast to a state:
 - ✦ constitutes a **community** of people joined by a **shared identity** and by **common social practices**
- nation was a soul added to the body of the early modern state machinery

➤ The revolutions that took place in Britain's North American colonies in 1776, and in France in 1789, provided models for other nationalists to follow

- In the revolution of 1789, the old regime was overthrown and with it the entire social order
- French nation was from now on to be governed by the people, the nation

➤ **The Congress of Vienna of 1815**, where a **settlement** was reached at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, was **supposed to have returned Europe to its pre-revolutionary ways**, **Yet, nationalist sentiments were growing**:

- Europe national communities **demand to be included into the politics of their respective countries**

- Nationalism in the first part of the nineteenth century was a liberal sentiment concerning **self-determination** – the right of a people to determine its own fate
- the idea of self-determination undermined the political legitimacy of Europe's empires
- Although the **nationalist revolutions of 1848 were defeated** by the political establishment, the sentiments themselves were impossible to control
- In 1861 Italy too – long divided into separate city-states and dominated by the Church – became a unified country and an independent nation
- it was only with the conclusion of the First World War in 1918 that self-determination was acknowledged as a right
- After the First World War most people in Europe formed their own nation-states
- the word "international" itself was coined only in 1783, by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham
 - In most respects, however, the inter-national system continued to operate in much the same fashion as the Westphalian inter-state system
- In international politics, nevertheless, the implication of nationalism and its essence is highly questioned, current:



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Key Points



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Key Points

1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

- **Nationalism** is the most influential force in international affairs
- Nationalism asserts the nation as the basic political unit in organizing society
 - ◆ **Nation**
 - historical entities that evolve organically out of more similar ethnic communities; joined by a shared identity and common social practices
- nationalist leaders came to argue, the nation should take over the state and make use of its institutional structures to further the nation's ends
- The revolutions that took place in Britain's North American colonies in 1776, and in France in 1789, provided models for other nationalists to follow
- **The Congress of Vienna of 1815** was supposed to have returned Europe to its pre-revolutionary ways
- Nationalism in the first part of the nineteenth century was a liberal sentiment concerning **self-determination** – the right of a people to determine its own fate
- Although the nationalist revolutions of 1848 were defeated by the political establishment, the sentiments themselves were impossible to control
- it was only with the conclusion of the First World War in 1918 that self-determination was acknowledged as a right
- After the First World War most people in Europe formed their own nation-states
- in the contemporary period, nation states are put under pressure and their role in world politics is significantly challenged
 - revival of nationalism is happening across the world with the post-cold war assertions of religion, culture and ethnicity as potent forces in world politics