Chapter One: Understanding International Relations

1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

Nationalism

- Nationalism is one of the modern ideologies that has influenced international affairs, political and social movements.
- It expresses the state of being national, national affection, and nationality.
- It is a set of ideas that members of a particular state, nation, society or region may collectively feel towards their nation.
- Nationalism advocates national unity and independence and this could be a cause of great wars and revolutions.
- Nationalism argues that a group of peoples who share similar culture, history, psychological make up should have their own government or state.
- So, it is a political doctrine , that believes that nations should be self -governing.
- The end goal of nationalism is to have one's own **independent state** and **nation-building**
- Nationalist believe on "**self-determination"** as the right of a people to determine its own future and fate.
- But **self-determination** undermines the legitimacy, sovereignty and territorial integrity of existing states.
- 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.
- Ex. Italy 1861, Germany 1871, Greece, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria

Con't

- **Subject Nationality**: is a nationality that has not achieved independence. Ex. Catalan, Basque, Kurds, Scottish Nationalism, Western Sahara, Tibet
- **Chauvinism**: is an extreme nationalism that exaggerates one nation, culture, civilization and contribution. Ex. Nazism, Fascism

Development of Nationalism

There are three historical periods for the development of European nationalism.

1. **During the Middle Ages**

Until the 15thc both nationalism and the idea of the national states did not exist. People during the middle ages felt their greatest loyalty to their **church**, **feudal lords**, **city states** and **provinces**.

2. **The Westphalia Treaty of 1648**

- The **Westphalia treaty of 1648** ended the Thirty Years' War between the Catholics and Protestants.
- The treaty introduced the first inter-national system to operate based on the recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the state. It institutionalized Nationalism.
- After Westphalia Treaty international politics was a matter of relations between states not religious leaders and others.

3. **The French Revolution of 1789**

- contributed for the development of intense nationalism that spread throughout Europe and the rest of the world.
- people placed their country's national interest above all other considerations
- Three ideals of the revolution, liberty, equality and brotherhood helped for the strength of peoples' loyalty and patriotism towards their nation.

Cont.

4. **The Congress of Vienna of 1815**

- Was held to reverse Napoleonic effect
- The new division of Europe imposed by the Congress had no respect for the identity of peoples such as **Belgians**, **Polish**, **Finish**, **Italians** and **Germans**.

i.e. **Belgium to Holland, Polish & Finish to Russia, Italy to Austria German etc**.

- 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.

Nation

- A nation is a historical entity that evolves organically out of a more similar ethnic group who reveals its self through **myth** or **legends** and other discourses (Heywood,2014)
- Nation is a group of people who have a shared culture, history, geography, psychological make-up and believe that they have common destiny.
- If a nations has a state it forms a compound noun – the 'nation-state'
- nationalist leaders argue, the nation should take over the state and make use of its institutional structures to further the nation's ends e.g. **Independence, nation-building, cultural purity, cultural preservation, expansion**
- The nation is taken as a soul added to the body of the modern state

e.g. Jew,

State

- The state is said to have emerged with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.
- The **Montevideo Convention** on the "Rights and Duties of the state" defines the state has four features: a defined territory, permanent population, an effective government and sovereignty.
- Nation-State: Nation state is an independent country containing a single nationality or homogeneous society.
- New ethno-cultural nationalism and religious fundamentalism and revivalism happening across the world with the post-cold war assertions of religion, culture and ethnicity as potent forces in world politics that also affect the state.