

Storm, Eric. *Nationalism: A World History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024. xv + 491 pages. Hardcover. \$27.97.

This timely, extensive, review of the history of nationalism is the work of historian Eric Storm. While readers may wonder if the study of nationalism is exhaustive, Storm offers a criticism of previous research and a new lens through which to view the current state of nationalism. He critiques previous studies for focusing on ethnos-type nations. Most previous research starts with an ethnic or cultural definition of nation. Previous research also seems to focus on the nationalist activists that fuel nationalist movements. Significant in his criticism of the field of nationalism studies is the focus on the western world driving nationalist efforts. Previous research also suffers from a perspective that empires are to be replaced by nation-states. Finally, the methodology of nationalist studies focuses too much attention on one country and fails to note how nationalism might be influenced by actors and actions from beyond that polity's boundaries.

Storm argues that nationalism is a global process. The aim of this weighty volume is "to show both how people become receptive to the nationalist message and how they related to the nation-state" (p.7). Four themes are developed through the many chapters in the book. The first examines the creation of new nation-states. The second theme focuses on the "meaning and reach of citizenship." The third theme is "the impact of nationalism on the cultural realm" while the fourth theme considers the "nationalization of the physical environment (p.7). Rather than very high-level notions of nationalism, Storm guides the reader through many day-to-day aspects of national life. Many readers will recognize these encounters with nationalism.

The four themes are woven throughout the book's chapters which are presented in a chronological order one would expect of a trained historian. Particularly interesting are the "cut points" Storm identifies for the time periods presented in each chapter. After the introductory chapter, the first chapter examines the development of the concept of nationalism. This chapter is the most wide-ranging, introducing the reader to concepts and ideas which are fleshed out in later

chapters. This chapter reaches back to classical civilizations to find the origins of national identities and stereotypes.

Chapter 2 examines the birth of the nation-state and covers a period roughly from 1775 through 1815. Romantic nationalism is the focus of Chapter 3, analyzing the period from 1815 to 1848. Chapter 4 focuses on Nation-Building from 1848-1885 and Chapter 5 focuses on Nationalist Radicalization 1885-1914. The world wars as well as the nationalist challenges of the inter-war years from 1914 through 1945 is Chapter 6, “The Clash Between Extremes: 1914-1945. Chapter 7 presents the process of modernizing nation-states from 1945 through 1979. Chapter 8 analyzes the role of neoliberalism and identity politics and takes the reader from 1979 through the present. A concluding chapter pulls the themes together. Storm concludes that nationalism is not a linear process. Particularly interesting is the historian’s assessment of the role of religion in modern nationalism. Religion appears to be more important than language or culture in the modern nationalist movement. The primary lesson learned from this extensive study is that nationalism and the concept of nation are not “natural phenomena”; they are “products of history” (p.342).

A less-ambitious reader might be taken aback by the sheer heft of this volume. Fortunately, the introduction provides a helpful roadmap to the book. The reader is able to find particular sections of the book that will serve his or her needs. In addition, the author’s ability to bring accessible elements of popular culture into the rigorous historical analysis guides the reader through the many time periods encountered in the book. The examples should be familiar to most readers, providing the reader with greater access to the wealth of information presented in the book.

John David Rausch, Jr., Ph.D.
Teel Bivins Professor of Political Science
West Texas A&M University, Canyon, Texas