

## **Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in Nepal: Distinct Features or Intertwined Essentials?**

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### **Abstract**

This research paper attempts to explore the complex dynamics of civic and ethnic nationalism in Nepal, assessing whether these two aspects of nationalism contrast or intertwine against the backdrop of the country's diversity and plurality. This study provides a comprehensive critical appraisal of the literature regarding nationalism in Nepal, analyzing the dichotomy between civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. It attempts to explore the historical, cultural, and political factors that contribute to molding the discourse of nationalism in Nepal, shedding light on the tensions and implications of these two contrasting forms of nationalism. This study examines how civic and ethnic nationalism has evolved, influenced, interacted, and contrasted with the diverse socio-political landscape of Nepal. The debate on the historical roots of civic and ethnic nationalism can be traced back to the "integration" campaign of King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the 18th century. On the one hand, Shah's campaign was interpreted as a great work of "national integration," on the other hand, it was termed as an act of expansionism and internal colonialism. Against this backdrop, the discourse of Nepali nationalism has evolved so far. Moreover, the historical roots of ethnic nationalism in Nepal can be traced to the assertion of ethnic identities and demands for cultural recognition. This study, through a comprehensive analysis of historical, theoretical, and empirical contexts, with a qualitative approach, attempts to unveil the complex dynamics between two aspects of nationalism. On the one hand, civic nationalism claims to emphasize shared values and collective representation whereas ethnic nationalism focuses on distinct cultures and identities blaming each other for leading the country to secession or trying to continue the historical discrimination in the name of unity. Amidst this, this research illuminates the different trajectories of Nepali nationalism discourse for social cohesion, state-building, and unity in diversity.

### **Keywords**

Civic nationalism, ethnic nationalism, representation, identity, intergradation, political landscape

### **Introduction**

Nepal is a country rich in the tapestry of history, culture, and diversity, which has an appalling background to scrutinize the intricate dynamics of nationalism. Nationalism is a concept that contributes hugely to shaping a nation's identity, political landscape, and social cohesion among diversity. This study seeks to explore the multifaceted literature regarding

nationalism in the context of Nepal especially focusing on the dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism. Nepal is home to 125 ethnic groups and 124 languages. The national census of 2021 records 16.45 percent of Chhetris, 11.29 percent of Brahmins-Hill, 6.9 percent of Magars, 6.2 percent of Tharus, 5.62 of Tamangs, and 5.04 percent of Bishwakarmas among a total population (National Population and Housing Census 2021).

Nepal has 124 mother tongues with 12 foreign languages categorized as others due to a small number of speakers. Among them, 44.8 percent of the total population speaks the Nepali language as their mother tongue. Maithili is spoken by 11.05 percent, Bhojपुरi by 6.24 percent, Tharu by 5.88 percent, Tamang by 4.88 percent, Bajjika by 3.89 and Avadhi by 2.96 percent of the total population (National Population and Housing Census 2021). Likewise, more than 10 religions are in practice in Nepal. A remarkable number of the population follow Hinduism. According to the 2021 census, Hinduism is followed by 81.19 percent of the total population, Buddhism is followed by 8.21 percent, Islam by 5.09, Kirant by 3.17, and Christianity by 1.76 percent. Similarly, 0.35 percent of the total population follows the Prakriti religion, 0.23 percent follows Bon and 0.01 percent follows Jain (National Population and Housing Census 2021).

Against this background, Nepal has a history of social cohesion, tolerance, cooperation, and coexistence within diversity. On a discursive level, civic and ethnic nationalism are often in tension as the former emphasizes common identity blaming the latter for pushing the country toward possible separation, and the latter seeks recognition and autonomy accusing the former of trying to continue the discrimination in the name of unity in diversity.

The historical trajectory of Nepal is abounding with a diverse array of cultures, languages, ethnicities, traditions, and geography against the backdrop of which the emergence of nationalism is molded with historical, social, and political evolution. The scholars and thinkers remain cut apart as to whether the modern Nepal that emerged under the leadership of King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the late 18th century only forged a common "Nepali" identity exterminating the diversity or allowing the diversity to bloom in a broader national framework.

The debate continues even today on whether Nepali society adopts diversity or attempts to eliminate it in the name of creating a broad national identity since the unification era. Against this backdrop, civic and ethnic nationalism coexist in Nepal garnering profound academic attention. Civic nationalism focuses on creating a unified national identity with shared values whereas ethnic nationalism underlines the importance of ethnic identity, traditions, culture, and heritage as important elements for fostering a sense of ownership among diverse ethnic groups as a unified nation. The former blames the latter for only emphasizing ethnicity in the name of diversity leading the country to become xenophobic. On the other hand, the latter blames the former for exterminating diversity, imposing a single culture and language, and ultimately being a racist. Amongst such contrasting paradigms, this research paper aims to explore the concords and discords arising from two divergent concepts of nationalism. In doing so, this study delves into the primary research question such as how such contrasting concept of nationalism traverses, influences, and outlines the discourse of nationalism in Nepal. To answer the research question, this study needs to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To examine how two arraying concepts of nationalism, civic and ethnic, share similarities and differences against the backdrop of blame-game each other.
2. To scrutinize the interfaces, convergences, and divergences between two forms of nationalism.
3. To evaluate the contemporary implications of civic and ethnic nationalism for the nation-building process of Nepal.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of how the discourse of nationalism has been shaped in general and how the simultaneous existence of civic and ethnic nationalism shapes the socio-political landscape of Nepal in particular. The findings of the research hold implications for understanding the reality of Nepal's nationalism, supporting policymakers and implementers to gauge the intricacies of nation-building and societal integration in broader contexts. This research paper analyzes existing literature, contemporary debates, historical records, and academic works on Nepali nationalism. Since the landscape of nationalism is continually evolving and new developments may have arisen, this research paper could not analyze all of them. As this study focuses on critical appraisal of literature aiming to provide a comprehensive overview, it does not include extensive fieldwork and primary data collection.

### **Literature Review**

The discourse of Nepali nationalism can be traced back to the era of King Prithvi Narayan Shah when he started unifying different principalities in the second half of the 18th century. The Shah-led unification effort marked the emergence of forming collective identity among diverse ethnic groups. The unification effort of Shah marked the cut-off time from when the discourse of Nepali nationalism began. From writers, historians, thinkers, and analysts in general people regard that time as a seminal epoch as a departure point of debate on civic and ethnic nationalism. The discussion on national identity underpins the concept of civic and ethnic nationalism as a theoretical framework. Civic nationalism emphasizes shared values and inclusive citizenship. The concept of Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" highlights the role of symbols, narratives, and institutions in fostering a sense of belonging beyond ethnic divisions (2006). However, ethnic nationalism aligns with primordialism and constructivism probing how collective identity is constructed by ethnic bonds, historical memories, and cultural components. Moreover, the ethnosymbolism of Anthony D. Smith and the analysis of ethnic conflicts by Walker Connor provides a theoretical foundation for explaining civic and ethnic nationalism. Smith opines that since civic nationalism emphasizes shared values and culture it ultimately can foster inclusivity and democracy (1991). On the other hand, John Breuilly sheds light on how ethnic nationalism can pose a threat to democracy in multi-ethnic states by focusing on exclusive identity matrixes (1993).

In the article entitled "Ethnic Nationalism in Nepal and the Newars," Bal Gopal Shrestha examines how the ruling minority's dominance has fueled tensions between ethnic and civic nationalism creating complex dynamics in Nepal (2007). Uwe Kiewelitz examines the heterogeneous nature of Nepali society, especially through linguistic society including Nepali

language speakers who share diversity which shows how Nepali society is complex in terms of ethnic identity and nationalism. His work "Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Nepali Context" sheds light on the dynamics of ethnicity and nationalism for national integration (1996). David N. Gellner's work "How Should one study ethnicity and nationalism?" points out the need for studying ethnicity and nationalism in the historical context in a wide range for a comprehensive understanding of the country's diverse ethnic tapestry (2001). Studying civic and ethnic nationalism in Pakistan, Tayyaba Latif sheds light on the importance of the interplay between these two forms of nationalism. Latif also talks about religious nationalism focusing on the interplay of different forms of nationalism in a nation (2022).

Kalyan Bhandari in his article "Understanding Nepali Nationalism" sheds light on the formation of Nepali nationalism. He argues that the foundation of Nepali nationalism was based on the attempt to maintain boundaries with 'outsiders' especially from India and China (2022). Nepal has witnessed the rise of ethnocultural nationalism of late. The issues related to ethnicity and culture have become the subject of politics giving rise to ethno-cultural nationalism. Ravi Bhandari, Nanda R. Shrestha, and Dev Raj Dahal in the article "Rising Ethno-Cultural Nationalism in Nepal: Postmodern Illusion or Democratic Delusion?" suggests resolving the crisis of rising ethnocultural nationalism addressing the conditions of inequality for sustained democracy (2009).

In Nepal, the issue of nationalism is often intertwined with conflict. Mahendra Lawoti and Susan Hangen examine how identity intersects with different forms of economic and political inequalities (2013). Basu Sharma sheds light on two types of nationalism such as ethnic and civic nationalism regarding the first as negative and the latter as positive. Sharma says this is the high time for ethnic nationalism. According to him, civic nationalism attempts to picture the nation as a community of citizens of equal rights regardless of caste, race, gender, and ethnicity. On the contrary, ethnic nationalism regards a nation as a community of common descent. He argues that Nepal needs a territorially-based federal structure with an economic system that motivates capacity creation (2007). Moreover, Bishnu Raj Uprety talks about different approaches while analyzing ethnicity and nationalism in Nepal. Uprety supports civic nationalism that he terms territorial nationalism arguing that the concept of "exclusive ethnicity" cannot address the problems of plural Nepali society. Uprety examines different categories of analysis about ethnicity and nationalism (2014).

According to Surendra Singh Rawal, civic nationalism is regarded as good nationalism because it accepts diversity and welcomes multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious society unlike "ethnic-religious" nationalism. He claims that civic nationalism is more tolerable which endures criticism and opposition. So, Rawal suggests promoting civic nationalism and liberalism for unity in the diversity of Nepal (2021). Civic nationalism focuses on shared values and inclusive citizenship intending to develop a sense of belongingness for all transcending ethnic divisions. On the other hand, ethnic nationalism emphasizes ethnic bonds as a foundation for constructing a nation.

Ashutosh Varshney examines how civic ties among different ethnic communities can mitigate the possibilities of ethnic violence in India. Varshney observes Indian cities such as the city with a history of communal violence and relative communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. He suggests that civic engagement such as business organizations, trade unions, political parties, and professional associations can control potential ethnic conflict between Hindus and Muslims (2003). Likewise, Will Kymlicka explores the rights of minority cultures in Canada focusing on multiculturalism and the rights of minority beliefs. He underlines the importance of individual and group rights, the value of culture, and the representation of minority groups (1995). Several scholars have conducted comprehensive studies regarding nationalism against the backdrop of a multicultural context. The history of India, Canada, and Switzerland are some examples of how different forms of nationalism coexist within complex multicultural contexts.

Thus, this existing literature offers an ample understanding of nationalism in Nepal. However, the persisting gap points out the need for researching how the interplay between civic and ethnic nationalism contributes to forming policy and maintaining social and communal cohesion. Moreover, a nuanced understanding of indigenous communities, marginalized groups, and Dalits can contribute to holistic indulgence regarding different forms of nationalism in Nepal.

The relationship between civic and ethnic nationalism is dialectical— harmony and tension. Civic nationalism advocates for a sense of unity through shared values and representation while ethnic nationalism stresses preserving and promoting cultural uniqueness (Gellner 1983). The contesting concepts come together as civic nationalism accepts diversity and ethnic nationalism favors civic participation. However, tensions arise as the debate on the primacy of either identity persists. The inclusive claim of civic nationalism is challenged by the ethnic nationalists whereas the exclusive boundaries of ethnic identity are criticized by the civic nationalists (Laitin 1998). However, the nature of the two nationalisms tends to be contrasting, the intertwining aspects can be found in their divergence.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to comprehensively analyze the dynamics of civic and ethnic nationalism in Nepal. The qualitative aspect involves an in-depth assessment of existing literature and scholarly discourse on nationalism to address the research questions. An extensive analysis of existing discourse leads to the assessment of the contrasting and intertwining aspects of civic and ethnic nationalism. This approach provides historical context, theoretical insights, and contemporary viewpoints on civic and ethnic nationalisms.

### **Civic Nationalism in Nepal**

Civic nationalism is a political ideology that claims to be in favor of a united nation with shared values, citizenship, and identity discarding exclusive ethnic affiliations. Civic nationalists believe that people from diverse backgrounds can come together for a united nation with shared values, principles, and citizenship, unlike ethnic nationalists who emphasize shared heritage or ethnicity. One of the first modern writers on nationalism Hans Kohn in 1944 defines civic

nationalism as, "...rational and liberal way of thinking founded on respect for human rights and personal freedoms..." (quoted in Tamir 2019). For Kohn, civic nationalism "is characteristic of liberal-minded Western states and is a modern political phenomenon closely related to the pursuit of personal liberty..." (qtd. in Tamir 2019).

In the democratic movements of Nepal, whether that of 1951, 1990, or 2006, people were in the streets demanding democracy and rights for all Nepalis transcending ethnic boundaries. These movements are marked when people came together for equal rights and liberty irrespective of their caste, gender, and ethnicity as Kymlicka affirms that civic nationalism encourages citizens to identify with common values, symbols, and institutions (2001). Thus, civic nationalism motivates people to unite for a common cause despite their identity differences. The 1990 Constitution of Nepal established the foundation for civic citizenship by emphasizing equal rights and opportunities for all citizens including a commitment to democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law regardless of their ethnic or cultural background as Article 4 of the constitution asserts that "the Nepalese people irrespective of religion, race, caste or tribe, collectively constitute the nation" (4). The history of the emergence of civic nationalism can be traced back to the national "integration" process led by Prithvi Narayan Shah in the 18th century by unifying several principalities. Civic nationalism emerged as a response to the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups in the newly formed state, emphasizing a common Nepali identity that transcended ethnic differences. This historical context laid the foundation for civic nationalism in Nepal (Gurung 2001).

The Nepalese state has played a significant role implicitly and explicitly in promoting civic nationalism. The state has promoted Nepali language and culture. The government's policy to promote the Nepali language as the national language has been defined as an example of civic nationalism in an attempt to foster a common linguistic identity among the diverse population of Nepal, emphasizing unity through a shared language. According to Bhim Lal Gautam, Nepal has a long history of politics of language since the beginning of modern Nepal. Nepali became the language of law and administration after Prithvi Narayan Shah captured Kathmandu valley in 1769. Shah's mother tongue was Khas (Nepali) (2011). The state has adopted policies and measures to reinforce this civic identity, including the promotion of Hindu festivals such as Dashain and Tihar as the festivals of all Nepali people.

The interim constitution of Nepal 2063 promulgated after the second people's movement of 2006 recognized all mother tongues of Nepal as the languages of the nation. According to Gautam, "Apart from further confirming the right of each community to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civility, and heritage, the *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063* (Part 3, Article 17) clearly explained the right to each community to acquire basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law. The same was well articulated in the *Constitution of Nepal 2072*" (2022).

Article 7 (1) of the constitution of Nepal 2015 states, "The Nepali language written in Devanagari script shall be the language of official business in Nepal" (1). Likewise, Article 7 (2) states, "In addition to the Nepali language, a province shall select one or more national language

that is spoken by a majority of people in that province as the language of official business, as provided for by the provincial law" (1-2). Recognizing all languages is another way of promoting civic nationalism because it motivates people to come together with their languages being respected, acknowledged, and respected. Citizenship is principally based on the obligation to uphold the Nepali identity rather than being defined by ethnicity, race, or religion. The Citizenship Act of 2006 outlines the criteria for acquiring Nepali citizenship by underscoring loyalty to the nation and its values, not in terms of any ethnicity or religion. This act reinforces the state's obligation to civic nationalism by making it possible for individuals from various identities to become Nepali citizens without discrimination based on ethnicity religion or any other identity priorities (*Nepali Citizenship Act 2006*).

Nepal observes national holidays and cultural celebrations, religious as well as non-religious such as Republic Day, Democracy Day, Dashain, Tihar, Christmas Day, Chhath, Tamu Lhoshar, and Bakar Id among others. These events promote a sense of unity and collective ownership enhancing the shared sense of belonging and a common Nepali identity.

To sum up, civic nationalism embodies national unity and inclusivity in a country like Nepal with ethnic and cultural diversity. The emphasis on shared civic values, equal rights, inclusivity, and human rights as outlined in the 2015 constitution of Nepal endorses the notion that being Nepali is not confined by ethnicity or any other identity but rather defined by Nepali whether one belongs to any ethnicity, caste, region or religion of Nepal. This approach acknowledges and respects Nepal's rich cultural diversity while endeavoring to make a more inclusive society where all citizens can participate regardless of their identities. Promoting civic nationalism by different means reinforces Nepal's ongoing exertions to construct a harmonious and united nation, highlighting unity in diversity.

### **Ethnic Nationalism in Nepal**

Ethnic nationalism has gained impetus with the aspirations of several ethnic and indigenous groups seeking political recognition, rights, and preservation of their culture and identity of late in Nepal. However, the historical roots of the emergence of ethnic nationalism in Nepal can be traced back to Prithvi Narayan Shah's "integration campaign" in the 18th century when Shah conquered different principalities; some of them led by the ruler belonging to ethnic communities such as Kirant, Ghale, Newar and Tamang. Moreover, the origin of ethnic nationalism is rooted in a hierarchical social structure that marginalized, excluded, and discriminated against ethnic communities in one way or another which was perpetuated by the traditional monarchy and high-caste Hindu elites. Nepal witnessed several ethnic movements in its history by different ethnic groups such as Tharu, Kirant, and different ethnic groups of Terai/Madhes in the name of Madhesi. However, Madhesi in itself is not a separate ethnic group.

Several movements in Terai/Madhes have taken place led by different political parties based on Madhes. Such movements sought equal rights, dignity, and identity. Nepal witnessed three Madhes movements within almost one decade in 2007, 2008, and 2015. The first Madhes movement broke out in 2007 after the interim constitution refused to incorporate the concept of federalism. The second Madhes movement took place in 2008 demanding federalism,

proportional representation, and population-based election constituency. The third Madhes movement took place in 2015 just after the promulgation of the new constitution. The movement was against the number and boundaries of provinces (Onlinekhabar 2017).

The ethnic movement that started taking place after the political change of 1990 is a result of common accusations of the Nepali state or the establishment of being an exclusionary, non-participatory, and non-representative state. Their common approach to the state is that it discriminates against indigenous, ethnic, Madhesi, Dalit, women, and other marginalized communities based on ethnicity, caste, sex, class, language, religion, and geographical territory (Gurung 2010). To address such common aspirations by leading the common grievances, the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) was established in 1990 and now consists of 54 indigenous organizations. NEFIN has claimed to fight against all forms of discrimination based on ethnic identity (NEFIN 2004). NEFIN has been coordinating ethnic movements since then. For the latest example, province 1 was named “Koshi” on March 1, 2023. Since then, some ethnic groups named Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, and Kirat Rai Yayokkha have started street protests demanding to rename the province reflecting the identity of the major ethnic communities of the region and NEFIN has been trying to coordinate the movement. These movements pursue recognition, representation, and rights within the broader national context. According to Kohn, ethnic nationalism is "a mystical, religious, and ethnocentric mindset predicated on tribal feelings" (2019). Ethnic nationalism in Nepal emphasizes distinct ethnic groups' unique cultural, linguistic, historical, and geographical identities. For Kohn, "ethnic nationalism is typical of Eastern states, focused on folk culture, language, and ethnicity, and therefore primitive, emotional, and motivated by blood and belonging (2019). In Nepal, ethnic groups such as Sherpas, Tamang, Kirant, and Newars play a vital role in forming ethnic nationalism.

The issue of federalism in Nepal has flared up a heated debate in Nepal, especially about whether federalism is based on ethnic identity. However, the debate has also contributed hugely to amplifying ethnic nationalism in Nepal. The adaptation of federalism through the interim constitution charted in 2008 was an acknowledgement of ethnic nationalism though the federal states do not get ethnic names. It was that high time when Nepal directly felt that the issue of ethnic nationalism could further exacerbate ethnic tension if not managed effectively.

The complexity of accommodating diverse ethnic aspirations is a challenge of ethnic nationalism. Since ethnic nationalism exclusively emphasizes one particular ethnic aspiration, it advocates others to exclude which creates tensions with the rest of other identities. In Nepal, Chhetri Samaj Nepal and other groups demanded Adibasi (indigenous) status with a series of street protests after the government declared some ethnic groups Adibasi. Then the government of Nepal on 18 May 2012 announced to categorize the Brahmin, Chhetri, Thakuri, Dasnami, Sanyasi, and Dalit communities as “Khas Arya Adibasi.” However, NEFIN and some Dalit organizations rejected the government's decision (Relief Web 2012). Both of them always seem to be scared of whether one can snatch the other's rights and political power enduring a potentiality of conflict.



## **Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in Nepal: Distinct Features or Intertwined Essentials?**

Civic and ethnic nationalism share similarities as well as differences in the context of Nepal whose identity has been based on myriad cultures and diverse tapestry. Both of them demand loyalty and a sense of belonging. Civic nationalism focuses on shared values and adherence to common establishments whereas ethnic nationalism centers around unique, linguistic, and historical identities. However, both of them attempt to create a cohesive sense of identity within a nation (Kymlicka 2001). Civic nationalism claims to be broadly incorporating diversity while ethnic nationalism is criticized to be particularly ethnic-centric. No matter whether civic nationalism claims to be broad and nationalism of all, it is criticized for trying to continue the dominance of one language, culture, and caste in the name of unity diversity, and equality for all. Ethnic nationalism is criticized for excluding those who do not belong to the dominant ethnic group. However, civic nationalism tends to be more inclusive. Ethnic nationalism tends to discriminate and exclude other minority groups whereas civic nationalism tends to promote equality and inclusion based on shared values, beliefs, and political ideals.

Thus, conflict and tensions tend to arise because of the conflicting priorities and perceptions of civic and ethnic nationalism. Civic nationalism claims to transcend ethnic boundaries and endorse a unified identity based on common values. However, ethnic nationalism affirms the importance of preserving unique cultural identities and often perceives civic nationalism as assimilationist or neglectful of ethnic aspirations in the name of nationalism for all. According to Kristin P. Johnson and Ashlea Rundlett, "Conflicts that occur along ethnic or nationalist lines are often the most protracted, violent, and difficult to resolve in the long term. Civil wars are often divided into two distinct types: ethnic/religious wars (identity), and revolutionary wars (nonidentity)" (2018). Tensions and even physical conflict tend to arise when ethnic groups feel that they are discriminated against or marginalized based on their identities and their identities are being diluted within the framework of civic nationalism. After the promulgation of the 2015 constitution by the Constituent Assembly (CA) of Nepal, various ethnic communities opposed it saying that their aspirations were denied addressed adequately.

However, ethnic diversity can contribute to national unity and development if it is harnessed constructively. It needs to strike a balance between acknowledgments of unique identities while fostering a broader sense of national unity. The interplay between two aspects of nationalism in Nepal is both- intricate and multidimensional which share contrasting as well as intertwining features that pose challenges and opportunities. As different ethnic groups compete for representation and resources, it can lead to potential conflict. But the threat of such possible conflict can make both of them more balanced, logical, and tolerant, too as Susan Hangen argues that ethnic politics can strengthen rather than destabilize democracy (2009) which is also the guiding principle for civic nationalism. Moreover, efforts of social inclusion in Nepal are crucial to addressing the tensions between the two nationalisms. Social inclusion does not only mean stopping exclusion. Rather it is "solidarity based on equality with difference" (Gurung et al. 19). The pursuit of national integration in Nepal demands overcoming barriers among ethnic groups and acknowledging diverse cultures, races, and religions (Sharma 1986). The dynamics between

civic and ethnic nationalism are reflective of Nepal's nation-building process, marked by ongoing negotiations between unity and diversity for building a cohesive nation.

The simultaneous existence of both nationalism is not only possible but also necessary to foster unity in diversity addressing ethnic aspirations in Nepal. According to Uma Pradhan, "the notions of ethnicity and nationalism cannot be understood exclusively as a choice between maintaining the integrity of the nation and completely rejecting it" (2018). Rather Pradhan suggests accepting both of them simultaneously as "Ethnic identity as imperative to national identity" (2018). Bhim Lal Gautam and Prem Prasad Poudel assert, ". . . democracy alone does not necessarily contribute to the protection of linguistic diversity. In line with this concept, democratic practices could even be counterproductive in the promotion and protection of linguistic diversity" (2022). It can be stated that ethnic nationalism has contributed a lot to its nation-building efforts against the backdrop of the multicultural and multilingual context of Nepal.

The 2015 constitution defines Nepal as secular, inclusive, democratic, and socialism-oriented, fabricating the features of both- civic and ethnic nationalism in its constitutional framework. The principle of social inclusion and exclusion indicates the intertwining of ethnic considerations in the social fabric (Gurung et al. 19). So, civic and ethnic nationalism are not distinct features but intertwined essentials in Nepal. The nation-building process that started in the 18th century has been shaped by the simultaneous existence of both civic and ethnic elements in Nepal. The multicultural and multilingual context of Nepal has led to the intertwining of these concepts, with the nation preserving 'ethnic' nationalism in its efforts of nation-building, as evident in its social fabric and constitutional as well as legal and practical framework.

### **Conclusion**

The interplay between civic and ethnic nationalism has shaped the nation's identity narrative and influenced its sociopolitical landscape against the backdrop of the multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural context of Nepal. The present Nepali nationality is the product of continuous interplay between ethnic and civic nationalism. The historical analysis of Nepal shows the evolution of nationalism explicitly or implicitly affected by pre-colonial sentiments to the impact of colonial rules in neighboring countries and modern nation-building efforts. In Nepal, the apposition of civic and ethnic nationalism has overwhelmingly influenced the identity narrative and its sociopolitical landscape. This research contributes to the field of nationalism studies by providing a comprehensive analysis of civic and ethnic nationalism in Nepal. It highlights the implications of these ideologies on social cohesion, state-building, governance, and public policy formation. This paper offers insights into how nationalism manifests in a diverse nation like Nepal and its implications for both domestic and international contexts. The conclusion of this study suggests formulating inclusive policies in an attempt to recognize and celebrate ethnic diversity while upholding civic values. Further, it points out the need to ensure equitable representation of diverse ethnic groups in governance structures and decision-making processes.

It is high time to highlight the need to promote civic education that instills shared values, fostering a sense of national unity while recognizing and respecting diversity. To address grievances and promote understanding, it is necessary to encourage open dialogue and collaboration among different identities in the public sphere, academia, and the media. Further research avenues in the realm of civic and ethnic nationalism studies include a comparative analysis of nationalism in Nepal with other countries, to assess the long-term impact of policies aimed at reconciling civic and ethnic identities on national unity, to explore the role of media in shaping civic and ethnic identities, and its influence on nationalism and study on how the younger generation's perceptions of civic and ethnic identities influence the future of Nepali nationalism. To sum up, civic and ethnic nationalism continues to outline Nepal's identity landscape, reflecting the intricate dynamics between unity and diversity. A balanced approach that recognizes shared values while celebrating distinct identities is essential for maintaining social cohesion, inclusive citizenship, and a united nation against the backdrop of the dynamic socio-political fabric of Nepal. The complexity of nationalism and its potential for both fostering unity and posing challenges in the nation-building process are necessary for the healthy development of any country with dialectical coexistence of contrasting as well as intertwining features.

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