POST-COLD WAR NATIONALISMS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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The force of nationalism has dictated the course of events in Europe since the late eighteenth century. Since that time, nationalism has become a dynamic force, encompassing a nation s language, territory, customs, traditions, and religions. Nationalism continues to play a major role even today as Europe struggles to establish common nationality through the formation of one unified body.

The brand of nationalisms thus far manifesting themselves in Austria and Germany represent a center road between isolationist xenophobia on one end and a European multi-nationalism on the other. Right-wing political parties have enjoyed a surge in popularity while establishing arguably xenophobic platforms. The multi-nationalist side of the spectrum is reflected in the growing emphasis on such multi-national organizations as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, United Nations, and European Community. Germany and Austria are currently absorbed with internal affairs -- economies, rising unemployment, and a massive influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe. Europe is simultaneously seeking its own brand of national identity and has thus far failed to provide the requisite attention and political will necessary to deal with security threats both home and abroad. At the same time, authoritarian temptation has found a seed in widespread discontent over economic reforms and eagerness to assert national identities while siezing populations from Belgrade to Moscow. In a post-Cold War Europe seeing a return of nationalist thinking, stable German and Austrian nationalisms will be essential if an anchor in an unstable Europe is to be found. The two States form a geo-political outpost between Eastern and Western Europe at which policies of economic integration and immigration will be put into practice.

This comparative study focuses upon the emerging nationalisms of two countries which will play major roles in the formation of a unified Europe as they define their respective national identities. The comparative model adopts a traditionalist approach in its formation of a definition of nationalism which is subsequently applied to discern what forms of nationalism Germany and Austria are adopting. Quantitative methodology will demonstrate that popularity of the right-wing political parties peaked during the post-Cold War years which experienced the greatest amount of immigration and economic trials. A conclusion will show that the two nations are subsequently flowing away from an isolationist brand of nationalism and closer to a more multi-nationalist emphasis in State affairs. The emerging nationalisms in Germany and Austria will play a central role in the future direction of not only Central Europe but the entire continent as it braces itself for the 21st century.