

In the Name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism¹

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Treating nationhood as a political claim rather than an ethnocultural fact, this paper asks how “nation” works as a category of practice, a political idiom, a claim. What does it mean to speak “in the name of the nation”? And how should one assess the practice of doing so? Taking issue with the widely held view that “nation” is an anachronistic and indefensible or at least deeply suspect category, the paper sketches a qualified defence of inclusive forms of nationalism and patriotism in the contemporary American context, arguing that they can help develop more robust forms of citizenship, provide support for redistributive social policies, foster the integration of immigrants, and even serve as a check on the development of an aggressively unilateralist foreign policy.

One hundred and twenty years ago, the great French scholar and writer Ernest Renan delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris on the question ‘what is a nation?’ Renan was speaking 12 years after the Franco-Prussian war, which resulted in the French loss of Alsace-Lorraine, claimed by German nationalists because of its largely German-speaking population. In response to such claims, Renan developed a powerful critique of what he called ‘ethnographic’ definitions of nationhood—a critique of attempts to draw national boundaries on the basis of putatively objective commonalities of race, language, or culture. Renan argued that nationhood was at its core a subjective phenomenon, founded on the ‘will to live together’. In a celebrated metaphor, he characterized the nation as an ‘everyday plebiscite’ (Renan, 1996 [1882]).

This remains a compelling account of nationhood, and one well worth reading today. Yet I want to call attention not to Renan’s answer, but to his question. For while his answer was brilliant, the question he posed—‘what is a nation?’—is not unproblematic. Asking ‘what is a nation?’—as countless analysts have done since Renan—encourages us to define nationhood in substantialist terms; it encourages us to treat nations as entities. The question itself reflects the belief that a nation is a substantial entity of some kind, though perhaps one that is elusive and difficult to define.

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I want to ask a somewhat different question: ‘how does the category “nation” work?’ Putting the question this way displaces our everyday understanding of nations as collectivities, entities, communities; it suggests that we should start instead by considering ‘nation’ as a category, a term, and nationalism as a particular language, a political idiom, a way of using that word or category.

I begin then from the premise that nationhood is not an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural fact; it is a political claim. It is a claim on people’s loyalty, on their attention, on their solidarity. If we understand nationhood not as fact but as claim, then we can see that ‘nation’ is not a purely analytical category. It is not used to describe a world that exists independently of the language used to describe it. It is used, rather, to change the world, to change the way people see themselves, to mobilize loyalties, kindle energies, and articulate demands. Writing a generation after Renan, Max Weber grasped this when he characterized the term ‘nation’ as a *Wertbegriff*, a concept that belongs to the sphere of values (1964, 1992, pp. 675, 677; 1978 [1922], pp. 922, 925). In more contemporary language, we might say that nation is in the first instance a category of practice, not a category of analysis.

I want to make the category ‘nation’ the object of analysis, rather than use it as a tool of analysis. I ask not ‘what is a nation’, but how does ‘nation’ work as a category of practice, a political idiom, a claim? What does it mean to speak ‘in the name of the nation’? And how should one assess the practice of doing so? Is this a practice that can be defended, and that should be cultivated? Or is it at best an anachronistic, at worst a dangerous practice?

I will not attempt to give a general answer to these normative questions, for I do not think a compelling general answer can be given: ‘nation’ is used to do too wide a variety of work in too wide a range of contexts. In addressing these normative questions in the second half of this paper, I will limit myself to the context of the contemporary United States. I begin, though, by considering some differing ways in which the claim to nationhood works in a range of different settings.

In some contexts, the community that is imagined by nationalists as a ‘nation’ does not coincide with the territory or citizenry of the state. In these cases, claims to nationhood challenge the existing territorial and political order. They express the demand for, or at least imply the possibility of, a change in the political map. This need not involve the demand for an independent state, but it does ordinarily involve at least a demand for an autonomous polity—for a polity that can serve as the polity *of* and *for* the putative nation. This was the case for the classic first-wave nationalist movements of Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century; contemporary examples include Palestinian, Flemish, Acehnese, Tamil, and many other nationalist movements.

Such claims to nationhood are addressed first of all to putative members of the nation. They seek to change the way people understand and identify themselves. This may involve getting people who previously understood themselves in non-national terms—in religious terms, for example, or in local terms, or as subjects of an emperor—to redefine themselves as members of a nation. Or it may involve getting people to think of themselves as members of a *different*

nation—to persuade people they are not Spanish but Basque or Catalan, for example; not Turkish but Kurdish; not Canadian but Québécois.

The claim to nationhood is addressed not only to putative members of the nation, but also to those who are in a position to validate the claim. The power to validate claims to nationhood resides above all with states, although influential non-state actors may also be important. By validating the claim of nationhood, I mean granting some kind of official recognition to the putative nation, or creating some kind of official institutional existence for it, up to and including the grand prize of independent statehood.

This, then, is the basic work done by the category ‘nation’ in the context of nationalist movements—movements to create a polity for a putative nation. In other contexts, the category ‘nation’ is used in a very different way. It is used not to challenge the existing territorial and political order, but to create a sense of national unity for a given polity. This is the sort of work that is often called nation-building, of which we have heard much of late. It is this sort of work that was evoked by the Italian statesman Massimo D’Azeglio, when he famously said, ‘we have made Italy, now we have to make Italians’. It is this sort of work that was (and still is) undertaken—with varying but on the whole not particularly impressive degrees of success—by leaders of post-colonial states, who had won independence, but whose populations were and remain deeply divided along regional, ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines. It is this sort of work that the category ‘nation’ could, in principle, be mobilized to do in contemporary Iraq—to cultivate solidarity and appeal to loyalty in a way that cuts across divisions between Shi’ites and Sunnis, Kurds and Arabs, North and South.²

In contexts like this, the category ‘nation’ can also be used in another way, not to appeal to a ‘national’ identity transcending ethnolinguistic, ethnoreligious, or ethnoregional distinctions, but rather to assert ‘ownership’ of the polity on behalf of a ‘core’ ethnocultural ‘nation’ distinct from the citizenry of the state as a whole, and thereby to define or redefine the state as the state *of* and *for* that core ‘nation’ (Brubaker, 1996, p. 83ff). This is the way ‘nation’ is used, for example, by Hindu nationalists in India, who seek to redefine India as a state founded on *Hindutva* or Hinduness, a state of and for the Hindu ethnoreligious ‘nation’ (Van der Veer, 1994). Needless to say, this use of ‘nation’ excludes Muslims from membership of the nation, just as similar claims to ‘ownership’ of the state in the name of an ethnocultural core nation exclude other ethnoreligious, ethnolinguistic, or ethnoracial groups in other settings.

In the United States and other relatively settled, longstanding nation-states, ‘nation’ can work in this exclusionary way, as in nativist movements in America or in the rhetoric of the contemporary European far right (*‘la France ous Français’*, *‘Deutschland den Deutshchen’*). Yet it can also work in a very different and fundamentally inclusive way.³ It can work to mobilize mutual solidarity among members of ‘the nation’, inclusively defined to include all citizens—and perhaps all long-term residents—of the state. To invoke nationhood, in this sense, is to attempt to transcend or at least relativize internal differences and distinctions. It is an attempt to get people to think of themselves—to formulate their identities and their interests—as members of that

nation, rather than as members of some other collectivity. To appeal to the nation can be a powerful rhetorical resource, though it is not automatically so.

Academics in the social sciences and humanities in the United States are generally skeptical of or even hostile to such invocations of nationhood. They are often seen as *dépassé*, parochial, naive, regressive, or even dangerous. For many scholars in the social sciences and humanities, 'nation' is a suspect category.

Few American scholars wave flags, and many of us are suspicious of those who do. And often with good reason, since flag-waving has been associated with intolerance, xenophobia, and militarism, with exaggerated national pride and aggressive foreign policy. Unspeakable horrors—and a wide range of lesser evils—have been perpetrated in the name of the nation, and not just in the name of 'ethnic' nations, but in the name of putatively 'civic' nations as well (Mann, 2004). But this is not sufficient to account for the prevailing negative stance towards the nation. Unspeakable horrors, and an equally wide range of lesser evils, have been committed in the name of many other sorts of imagined communities as well—in the name of the state, the race, the ethnic group, the class, the party, the faith.

In addition to the sense that nationalism is dangerous, and closely connected to some of the great evils of our time—the sense that, as John Dunn (1979, p. 55) put it, nationalism is 'the starkest political shame of the 20th-century'—there is a much broader suspicion of invocations of nationhood. This derives from the widespread diagnosis that we live in a post-national age. It comes from the sense that, however well fitted the category 'nation' was to economic, political, and cultural realities in the nineteenth century, it is increasingly ill-fitted to those realities today. On this account, nation is fundamentally an anachronistic category, and invocations of nationhood, even if not dangerous, are out of sync with the basic principles that structure social life today.⁴

The post-nationalist stance combines an empirical claim, a methodological critique, and a normative argument. I will say a few words about each in turn. The empirical claim asserts the declining capacity and diminishing relevance of the nation-state. Buffeted by the unprecedented circulation of people, goods, messages, images, ideas, and cultural products, the nation-state is said to have progressively lost its ability to 'cage' (Mann, 1993, p. 61), frame, and govern social, economic, cultural, and political life. It is said to have lost its ability to control its borders, regulate its economy, shape its culture, address a variety of border-spanning problems, and engage the hearts and minds of its citizens.

I believe this thesis is greatly overstated, and not just because the September 11 attacks have prompted an aggressively resurgent statism.⁵ Even the European Union, central to a good deal of writing on post-nationalism, does not represent a linear or unambiguous move 'beyond the nation-state'. As Milward (1992) has argued, the initially limited moves toward supranational authority in Europe worked—and were intended—to restore and strengthen the authority of the nation-state. And the massive reconfiguration of political space along national lines in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War suggests that far from moving *beyond* the nation-state, large parts of Europe were moving *back*

to the nation-state.⁶ The ‘short twentieth century’ concluded much as it had begun, with Central and Eastern Europe entering not a post-national but a post-multinational era through the large-scale nationalization of previously multinational political space. Certainly nationhood remains the universal formula for legitimating statehood.

Can one speak of an ‘unprecedented porosity’ of borders, as one recent book has put it (Sheffer, 2003, p. 22)? In some respects, perhaps; but in other respects—especially with regard to the movement of people—social technologies of border control have continued to develop. One cannot speak of a generalized loss of control by states over their borders; in fact, during the last century, the opposite trend has prevailed, as states have deployed increasingly sophisticated technologies of identification, surveillance, and control, from passports and visas through integrated databases and biometric devices. The world’s poor who seek to better their estate through international migration face a tighter mesh of state regulation than they did a century ago (Hirst and Thompson, 1999, pp. 30–1, 267). Is migration today unprecedented in volume and velocity, as is often asserted? Actually, it is not: on a per capita basis, the overseas flows of a century ago to the United States were considerably larger than those of recent decades, while global migration flows are today ‘on balance slightly less intensive’ than those of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century (Held *et al.*, 1999, p. 326). Do migrants today sustain ties with their countries of origin? Of course they do; but they managed to do so without e-mail and inexpensive telephone connections a century ago, and it is not clear—contrary to what theorists of post-nationalism suggest—that the manner in which they do so today represents a basic transcendence of the nation-state.⁷ Has a globalizing capitalism reduced the capacity of the state to regulate the economy? Undoubtedly. Yet in other domains—such as the regulation of what had previously been considered private behavior—the regulatory grip of the state has become tighter rather than looser (Mann, 1997, pp. 491–2).

The methodological critique is that the social sciences have long suffered from ‘methodological nationalism’ (Centre for the Study of Global Governance, 2002; Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002)—the tendency to take the ‘nation-state’ as equivalent to ‘society’, and to focus on internal structures and processes at the expense of global or otherwise border-transcending processes and structures. There is obviously a good deal of truth in this critique, even if it tends to be overstated, and neglects the work that some historians and social scientists have long been doing on border-spanning flows and networks.

But what follows from this critique? If it serves to encourage the study of social processes organized on multiple levels in addition to the level of the nation-state, so much the better. But if the methodological critique is coupled—as it often is—with the empirical claim about the diminishing relevance of the nation-state, and if it serves therefore to channel attention away from state-level processes and structures, there is a risk that academic fashion will lead us to neglect what remains, for better or worse, a fundamental level of organization and fundamental locus of power.

The normative critique of the nation-state comes from two directions. From above, the cosmopolitan argument is that humanity as a whole, not the nation-

state, should define the primary horizon of our moral imagination and political engagement (Nussbaum, 1996). From below, multiculturalism and identity politics celebrate group identities and privilege them over wider, more encompassing affiliations.

One can distinguish stronger and weaker versions of the cosmopolitan argument. The strong cosmopolitan argument is that there is no good reason to privilege the nation-state as a focus of solidarity, a domain of mutual responsibility, and a locus of citizenship.⁸ The nation-state is a morally arbitrary community, since membership in it is determined, for the most part, by the lottery of birth, by morally arbitrary facts of birthplace or parentage. The weaker version of the cosmopolitan argument is that the boundaries of the nation-state should not set limits to our moral responsibility and political commitments. It is hard to disagree with this point. No matter how open and 'joinable' a nation is—a point to which I will return below—it is always imagined, as Benedict Anderson (1991) observed, as a limited community. It is intrinsically parochial and irredeemably particular. Even the most adamant critics of universalism will surely agree that those beyond the boundaries of the nation-state have *some* claim, as fellow human beings, on our moral imagination, our political energy, even perhaps our economic resources.⁹

The second strand of the normative critique of the nation-state—the multiculturalist critique—itself takes various forms. Some criticize the nation-state for a homogenizing logic that inexorably suppresses cultural differences. Others claim that most putative nation-states (including the United States) are not in fact nation-states at all, but multinational states whose citizens may share a common loyalty to the state, but not a common national identity (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 11). But the main challenge to the nation-state from multiculturalism and identity politics comes less from specific arguments than from a general disposition to cultivate and celebrate group identities and loyalties at the expense of state-wide identities and loyalties.

In the face of this twofold cosmopolitan and multiculturalist critique, I would like to sketch a qualified defense of nationalism and patriotism in the contemporary American context.¹⁰ Observers have long noted the Janus-faced character of nationalism and patriotism, and I am well aware of their dark side. As someone who has studied nationalism in Eastern Europe, I am perhaps especially aware of that dark side, and I am aware that nationalism and patriotism have a dark side not only *there* but *here*. Yet the prevailing anti-national, post-national, and trans-national stances in the social sciences and humanities risk obscuring the good reasons—at least in the American context—for cultivating solidarity, mutual responsibility, and citizenship at the level of the nation-state.

Some of those who defend patriotism do so by distinguishing it from nationalism.¹¹ I do not want to take this tack, for I think that attempts to distinguish good patriotism from bad nationalism neglect the intrinsic ambivalence and polymorphism of both. Patriotism and nationalism are not things with fixed natures; they are highly flexible political languages, ways of framing political arguments by appealing to the *patria*, the fatherland, the country, the nation. These terms have somewhat different connotations and resonances, and the political languages of patriotism and nationalism are therefore not fully

overlapping. But they do overlap a great deal, and an enormous variety of work can be done with both languages. I therefore want to consider them together here.

I want to suggest that patriotism and nationalism can be valuable in four respects. They can help develop more robust forms of citizenship, provide support for redistributive social policies, foster the integration of immigrants, and even serve as a check on the development of an aggressively unilateralist foreign policy.

First, nationalism and patriotism can motivate and sustain civic engagement. It is sometimes argued that liberal democratic states need committed and active citizens, and therefore need patriotism to generate and motivate such citizens. This argument shares the general weakness of functionalist arguments about what states or societies allegedly 'need'; in fact, liberal democratic states seem to be able to muddle through with largely passive and uncommitted citizenries. But the argument need not be cast in functionalist form. A committed and engaged citizenry may not be necessary, but that does not make it any less desirable. And patriotism can help nourish civic engagement. It can help generate feelings of solidarity and mutual responsibility across the boundaries of identity groups. As Benedict Anderson (1991, p. 7) put it, the nation is conceived as a 'deep horizontal comradeship'. Identification with fellow members of this imagined community can nourish the sense that *their* problems are on some level *my* problems, for which I have a special responsibility.¹²

Patriotic identification with one's country—the feeling that this is *my* country, and *my* government—can help ground a sense of responsibility for, rather than disengagement from, actions taken by the national government. A feeling of responsibility for such actions does not, of course, imply agreement with them; it may even generate powerful emotions such as shame, outrage, and anger that underlie and motivate opposition to government policies. Patriotic commitments are likely to intensify rather than attenuate such emotions. As Richard Rorty (1994) observed, 'you can feel shame over your country's behavior only to the extent to which you feel it is your country'.¹³ Patriotic commitments can furnish the energies and passions that motivate and sustain civic engagement.

Second, and more specifically, patriotism and nationalism can provide support for redistributive social policies. Such policies require cross-class solidarity and mutual responsibility if they are to be seen as legitimate; and nationalism can generate such solidarity and responsibility. The dramatic increase in inequality in recent decades¹⁴ has multiple causes, and some of these are independent of public policy. But public policies have sharply accentuated this trend, instead of working to counter it. And it is no accident that this has occurred during a period in which the left has been preoccupied with issues of identity and culture, and in which a general 'culturalization' of political rhetoric has made it more difficult to focus on underlying economic issues.¹⁵

Third, the language of nationhood can help foster the integration of immigrants. Critics of nationalism often argue that nationalism does just the opposite—that it excludes ethnically or culturally distinct others, or that the homogenizing logic of the nation-state denies recognition to 'difference'. But one should be careful not to reify nationalism or the nation-state. Neither exists

outside of time, place, and circumstance. Like any other categorical concept, 'nation' is always simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. Any time people are grouped together as members of the same category, they are marked as different from members of other categories. But one can say very little of interest about nationalism in general or 'the nation' in general. The interesting questions concern the particular ways in which 'nation' is used to include or exclude in particular settings.

In a moving appreciation of nationalism, Benedict Anderson spoke of nations as being 'joinable in time', because they are 'conceived in language, not in blood'. Like other statements about nationalism in general, this one is far too sweeping. It obscures the fact that nations are imagined in different ways, and are therefore differentially joinable. Not only are *different* nations imagined in different ways, but the *same* nation is imagined in different ways at different times—indeed often at the same time, by different people.

In some settings, 'nation' is imagined as an ethnocultural community distinct from the citizenry of the state. When 'nation' is imagined in this way, nationalism can be internally as well as externally exclusive, for it can define some fellow residents, even fellow citizens, as outsiders to, perhaps even enemies of, the nation. There are of course many ugly examples of this kind of internal exclusion, this narrow Americanism, or nativism, in American history (Higham, 1955; Smith, 1997). On the whole, however, the American nation has been imagined—by existing *and* prospective members—as relatively open and joinable, certainly as much more easily joinable than most other nations. In this context, Anderson's lyrical formulation is entirely apt. In recent decades, the American nation has been consistently imagined in this way, except on the fringes of the political spectrum; this prevailing way of imagining the nation, I believe, survived even the shock of the September 11 attacks. Given that 'nation' is prevailingly imagined as joinable in time (indeed in a relatively short time), nationalism can indeed serve as a valuable resource for the integration of immigrants.

Many scholars currently writing on immigration would take issue with this view. They see immigrants not as assimilating into American society, but as preserving distinct cultures and identities and forming ethnic and often transnational or diasporic 'communities'. In my view, the 'differentialist' language that these scholars and many ethnopolitical entrepreneurs espouse is both normatively and empirically problematic. Normatively, the celebration of difference makes it more difficult to articulate and act on cross-ethnic commonalities. Empirically, despite the massive differentialist turn in social thought and public policy in recent decades, evidence suggests that second- and third-generation immigrants in the United States continue to assimilate—that is, continue to become similar to other Americans—on a variety of dimensions (Alba and Nee, 2003).

Finally, what about the domain of foreign policy and national security? Here the case for a 'progressive' patriotism seems harder to make. Some might agree that patriotism can help foster civic engagement, support redistributive social policies, and facilitate the integration of immigrants, yet they would still shy away from using the language of nationhood or invoking the symbols of

patriotism in connection with foreign policy and security issues. In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, they would argue, verbal and visual emblems of nationhood and patriotism have become deeply associated with the fateful decision to frame those attacks in the language of ‘war’ rather than ‘crime’; with aggressive unilateralism in foreign policy; with an overdrawn and essentialized opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them;’ with an exaggerated national pride; and with a self-righteous, moralistic, even Manichean rhetoric of good vs. evil.

I appreciate the force of these reservations, even if they provide a somewhat one-sided picture of post-September 11 patriotism, forgetting that Fox News does not speak for all patriotic or even flag-flying Americans. But these prevailing associations make it all the more urgent to ‘reclaim the flag’, as a few commentators (for example, Moyers, 2003) have suggested. They make it all the more urgent to enter the fray, and to contest the terms on which the emblems of the ‘nation’ are invoked. No party should be allowed to enjoy a monopoly of the evocative language and powerful iconography of patriotism. The flag is an immensely powerful vernacular symbol, even if many intellectuals are immune to that power, or embarrassed by it. The power of that symbol, and with it the right to speak ‘in the name of the nation’, should not be ceded to those who would usurp the term ‘patriot’, for example, to label legislation that could just as well be called ‘unpatriotic’ or ‘un-American’ for weakening judicial checks on executive power in the name of dubious gains for national security. Critics of post-9/11 policies can make an effective case as patriots, committed to the security of the homeland, but taking a broader view of security, and committed also to the preservation of those liberties—including the liberty to take a dissenting view—that partly define the United States as a nation.

Of course the question of what ‘defines us as a nation’ is not a matter of brute fact, but of public narratives (Somers, 1994, p. 619), of self-understandings shaped and reshaped by stories. There is a rich repertoire of such storied self-understandings, some very widely shared, others less so, and these shift over time. ‘What defines us as a nation’ at any given moment is no more than a temporary equilibrium in an ongoing argument about what defines us as a nation. Critics of current policies advanced in the name of the nation need to participate in that ongoing argument; they need to tell stories and articulate self-understandings of their own.

From the point of view of those disturbed by civic privatism and passivity, by growing inequality and decaying public services, by the secession of the rich, by the excesses of differentialism and identity politics, and by the Manichean rhetoric and unilateralist stance that marks American foreign policy, it would seem desirable to cultivate solidarity, mutual responsibility, and civic commitment at the national level. Of course, it is also desirable to cultivate wider solidarities and empathies—to stretch the moral imagination to encompass all the people on the planet.¹⁶ But national solidarities and identifications are in urgent need of cultivation as well. I don’t mean national pride; there is more than enough of that in the United States. I mean solidarity with and responsibility for one’s fellow citizens; and I mean identification with and responsibility for what is done by the government in the name of the nation. The anemic quality of

American citizenship is directly related to the weakness of such solidarity, commitment, and responsibility.

To some postmodernist apostles of multiple and differentiated citizenships, the weakness of national citizenship is no cause for alarm. It is compensated for by a proliferating variety of other citizenships—subnational, transnational, and supranational. The literature includes discussions of global citizenship, ecological citizenship, ecofeminist citizenship, ethnic citizenship, cultural citizenship, multicultural citizenship, diasporic citizenship, technological citizenship, corporate citizenship, workplace citizenship, local citizenship, and sexual citizenship¹⁷—and this enumeration is by no means exhaustive.

This burgeoning literature has usefully called attention to the many sites of citizenship within and beyond the boundaries of nation-states. Yet it risks overlooking the persisting importance of national citizenship. The nation-state remains a decisive locus of power in world affairs; it is the only major locus of power with the public sphere and institutional forms, however imperfect, that permit some degree of meaningful and effective civic participation. For this reason, national citizenship—and therefore national solidarity and patriotism—should not be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the conference on 'The Many Faces of Patriotism', Detroit, 11–12 September 2003. I would like to thank Rob Jansen, Kristy Surak, and *Citizenship Studies* Editors and reviewers for helpful comments.
2. Given the depth of these divisions, however—which joint opposition to the occupying power may be able to bridge only in part, and only temporarily—it may prove easier to mobilize 'nation' in the service of a polity-seeking nationalist movement, in the name not of the Iraqi but the Kurdish nation (Wimmer, 2003).
3. Some commentators have argued that there is no American 'nation'—no population defined by a shared American cultural 'nationality'. There is an American state, with American citizens, but no American nation. On this view, the United States is unlike European nation-states; in the strict sense, it is not a nation-state at all, but a multinational state, or an a-national state. Others argue that America is a nation-state, with a distinctive cultural nationality (Hollinger, 1995; Lind, 1995). If one accepts that nationhood is not an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural *fact* but a political *claim*, then the question is not which of these views is correct, or whether there really is or is not an American cultural nationality. The question is rather how the *claim* to American nationhood—or its denial—works in political discussion.
4. From a voluminous literature on this subject, see Kearney (1991), Soysal (1994), Habermas (1996), and Appadurai (1996).
5. For a critique of the thesis of the decline of the nation-state, see Mann (1997).
6. For an elaboration of this point, see Brubaker (1996, pp. 1–3).
7. See, for example, Hollinger (1995), pp. 151ff., Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2003), and Koopmans and Statham (1999).
8. Although Martha Nussbaum characterizes nationality as 'a morally irrelevant characteristic' and national boundaries as 'morally arbitrary' (1996, pp. 5, 14), it is not clear that she makes what I have called a 'strong cosmopolitan argument', for she sees a special educational focus on American traditions as justified, even while arguing that education ought to be made more cosmopolitan (1997, p. 68).
9. See, for example, Walzer (1983). Defending a 'right of closure, without which there would be no communities at all', Walzer at the same time specifies the limits to that right, and the legitimate claims that 'needy outsiders' may have (pp. 64, 98).
10. In doing so, I follow in part the argument of historian David Hollinger, who has made an eloquent case for the importance of national solidarities, located between the claims of the ethnos and those of the species (Hollinger, 1995). A few others on the left, too, have defended patriotism or nationalism (Reich, 1992; Lind, 1995; and, from an African American perspective, Wilkins, 2001), while a small but growing body of work in political theory has made the case for liberal nationalism (Tamir, 1993; Miller, 1995; Canovan, 1996). But these views remain quite heterodox, at least in academia.

11. See, for example, Viroli (1995), and for a recent discussion of the distinction, Vincent (2002).
12. For a short but eloquent statement of this point, see Taylor (1996).
13. *New York Times*, 13 February 1994. Cf. Appiah (1998, p. 95): 'The patriot is the first to suffer his or her country's shame'.
14. See, for example, Reich (1992), or more recently, Krugman (2002).
15. See Gitlin (1995), Hollinger (1995), Lind (1995), and Barry (2001). For a thorough discussion and critique of this line of argument, see Banting and Kymlicka (2003), who find no evidence of a relation between multicultural policies and the erosion of the welfare state (though they concede that there may well be such a relation in the US). As Banting and Kymlicka acknowledge, however, the evidence they consider does not bear on the relation between discourse or rhetoric and commitment to redistributive policies. The argument made here (and, at least in part, by the authors cited above) concerns the effects of political discourse—that is, prevailing ways of framing claims and formulating identities—more directly than it does policies.
16. Indeed, some moral philosophers have suggested that we should push the limits of our moral imagination further still, not only beyond the limits of our nation, but beyond the limits of our species, to embrace all kinds of animals whose complex nervous systems enable them to experience pain.
17. For a discussion of many of these forms of citizenship, see Isin and Wood (1999). For a sustained study of cosmopolitan democracy, see Held (1995). For studies of particular non-national forms of citizenship, see among many others Dobson (2003), Evans (1993), Holmwood and Siltanen (1994), Kymlicka (1995), Laguerre (1998), Pettus (1997), Roche (2002), Smart and Smart (2001), and Weis *et al.* (2002).

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