

Boundary making, symbolic politics, and supranationalism

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Nationalism poses a boundary problem between two opposing visions of the legitimate political community. The first grants legitimacy to the governing institutions of a territorially bound *state*, with its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within its borders.¹ The second grants legitimacy to the political community, the *nation*, which should wield political power in the name of its members. Ernest Gellner pithily argued that much of nationalism's bite as a political movement centered around the fact that these two boundaries – the political and the cultural – were seldom congruent.² Nationalists past and present have sought to make these boundaries congruent through nation-building policies.

This boundary problem has lost strikingly little relevance in the 21st century. If the nation-state – a political organization in which the cultural boundaries of the *nation* and the administrative boundaries of the *state* overlap – has long been accepted as the dominant and legitimate political unit in world politics, then it is no less true that few states fully meet this standard in practice. Some – such as Japan, Poland, or Norway – approximate it, with a dominant cultural group exercising a monopoly on claims of legitimacy.³ For most states this is less clear-cut. Some, such as India, South Africa, or the Russian Federation, each home to dozens of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups with political histories and particularistic claims, depart from this model quite starkly. Yet one can also peer beneath the surface of “typical” nation-states such as France to reveal a similarly kaleidoscopic picture in which Breton, Corsican, and Basque claims (amongst others) remain reminders – albeit muted – of the limits of cultural hegemony.

The first argument this article makes is that nation-building – the process through which national majorities are constructed, making these boundaries congruent⁴ - can be meaningfully understood in terms of *symbolic politics*. Whether rooted in modernization and/or industrialization, elite-driven processes, or bottom-up (re)creation of nationalist practices, accounts of nation-building offer macro-level,

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¹ Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 1919.

² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cornell University Press, 1983).

³ In many respects the notion of a “nation-state” is an ideal type. This does not mean, therefore, that there can be *no* other cultural groups in the territory – this is impossible – but rather that such groups do not offer competing claims regarding legitimacy.

⁴ Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

institutional, or micro-level explanations for how durable and potent intersubjective meanings about the nation can emerge, become dominant, and endure. Despite the importance of symbolic politics to questions of nationalism more broadly, however, symbols and their production remain undertheorized and hampered by a lack of comparative study.

The second argument this article makes is that whilst nation-building is often understood in terms of *removing* or *softening* nationalism's boundary problem – in other words, fusing the boundaries of the *state* and the *nation* together – this is not the only approach to fostering a shared political identity. Scholars of democratic politics, federalism, international organizations, and regional integration have each pointed to the importance of policies which accommodate existing cultural and national diversity whilst simultaneously fostering an overarching supra-national identity within the polity. Multinational unions therefore not only offer a rich sites for empirical inquiry, but can help us to move beyond nationalism studies' enduring methodological nationalism by interrogating the conceptual and temporal boundaries of the nation itself.⁵

Nation-building

The French example is also instructive for thinking about change; this boundary problem is not set in stone. Few scholars would dispute that nations are historically contingent and shaped by social, political, and economic processes.⁶ In turn, because the boundaries of the group are malleable, they have often been made to fit with administrative ones, for which the French case is indicative: mandatory schooling, conscription, and the standardization and promotion of the Parisian dialect of French were all instrumental in turning “peasants into Frenchmen” in the 19th century.⁷ Put in more general terms, nation-building represents the processes through which the boundary problem is resolved.⁸

⁵ Harris Mylonas and Maya Tudor, ‘Nationalism: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 24 (2021).

⁶ Alexander Maxwell, ‘Primordialism for Scholars Who Ought to Know Better: Anthony D. Smith's Critique of Modernization Theory’, *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 5 (September 2020): 826–42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.93>; Mylonas and Tudor, ‘Nationalism: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know’. Maxwell 2020.

⁷ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford University Press, 1976), <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=3200>.

⁸ Harris Mylonas defines nation-building as “the process through which these majorities are constructed.” As I suggest later, such majorities need not come from a single nationally defined group. See Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*, Problems of International Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139104005>.

There are two main approaches to resolving this boundary problem. **One is to *remove or soften the boundary***. Most studies of nation-building focus on this approach, despite important differences in their levels of analysis, the relevant actors, and the causal paths posited for nation-building outcomes. The wide range of coercive phenomena that seek to do this – ranging from assimilationist and integrationist policies to secession, population transfers, mass violence, and ethnic cleansing – are of clear political and normative importance, with many of the twentieth century’s most traumatic tragedies foreshadowed by the emergence of states and of nationalist movements. At the same time, extensive findings across social science research have underscored the importance of a cohesive sense of national community in accounting for outcomes such as civil and interstate wars, political violence, public goods provision, voting and political behavior, trust in institutions, and state legitimacy.⁹

Yet there is also another approach to the boundary problem: one of *managing or accommodating existing differences*. This shares the same fundamental preoccupation with nationalism’s boundary problem, but instead focuses on the ways in which existing nations can be accommodated within a single state or state-like political organization. Whilst less common in the nation-building literature, this approach has been extensively investigated by scholars of both federalism and democratic politics, as well as of international organizations and regional integration.

Nation-building: removing the boundary

Recall that much of the nation-building literature is focused on coercive mechanisms for *removing or softening* the boundary problem. Three broad clusters of arguments exist: accounts of modernization’s effects on integration within a political community, accounts of elite-driven accounts, both in pursuing nation-building policies or in mass mobilization of national groups, and accounts of bottom-up (re)production of the nation as a meaningful political community.

Modernization theorists:

The first type of explanation emerges from modernization theorists, who posit that changing material conditions promote integration within a national political community. This has a long lineage in sociological and political science accounts of state formation. According to these perspectives, a combination of geopolitical factors¹⁰

⁹ Andreas Wimmer, *Nation Building* (Princeton University Press, 2018), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691177380/nation-building>.

¹⁰ Charles Tilly, ‘Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990–1990’, in *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change* (Routledge, 2017); Jeffrey Herbst, *States and*

and economic processes¹¹ enabled elites to regulate and tax their populations, consolidating control over territory and leading to increased capacity for public goods provision, infrastructural development, and technological innovation.

State formation was instrumental in promoting identification with a national community through the codification and standardization of a set of meanings and symbolic content that could be shared by members of the nation. Karl Deutsch was an early advocate of understanding nation-building by focusing on the shared communicative skills that bound members together.¹² Accordingly, he understood membership in the nation to be characterized by “the ability to communicate more effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with outsiders.”¹³

Communication itself, however, required what Deutsch described as cultural “equipment” for this task: “such learned memories, symbols, habits, operating preferences, and facilities as will in fact be sufficiently complementary to permit the performance of these functions.”¹⁴ In a classic account of the emergence of nationalism, Ernest Gellner argued that the development of shared modes of communication – most notably through language – constituted a functional response to the demands of industrial labor markets.¹⁵ And for this, Gellner argued, the “monopoly of legitimate education is more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence.”¹⁶ Common *national* languages were spread through processes of standardization, institutions such as the military, and national schools. Yet these processes provided much more than linguistic knowledge: they provided meaning to millions of individuals. Education in a national language transmitted specifically *national* values and content to younger generations, who would grow up being able to “replicate the history of the nation...sing the national songs...recite the national poets, and explain the significance of dates and symbols of national importance.”¹⁷ By

Power in Africa and *Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control - Second Edition* (Princeton University Press, 2014); Wimmer, *Nation Building*.

¹¹ Douglass C. North et al., *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Harold Joseph Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Harvard University Press, 1983); Carles Boix, *Political Order and Inequality* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State (Verso World History Series)* (Verso Books, 2013); Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Beacon Press, 2015).

¹² Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2nd ed., 1966.

¹³ Deutsch, 87.

¹⁴ Deutsch, 96. Deutsch posited six factors for understanding the rate of assimilation: the similarity of communications habits, facilities for learning and teaching, frequency of contacts, material rewards and penalties, values and desires, and symbols and barriers. See chapter 7, “Unity or Diversity: the Balance of Quantitative and Qualitative Factors” pp. 153-164.

¹⁵ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

¹⁶ Gellner, 33.

¹⁷ Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, ‘The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse’, *World Politics* 59, no. 1 (2006): 101.

naturalizing a given political community, education entailed a process of *forgetting* pre-national values: something Ernest Renan perceptively noted over a century ago.¹⁸

Whilst these scholars focused mostly on the macro-level effects of shared communicative capabilities, it was also important to account for their micro-level causes: in other words, what was driving individuals to identify with the nation amidst broader changes occurring within society as a whole? Here scholars drew upon insights from game theoretic approaches in microeconomics to provide useful pathways for theorizing the nation.

Whilst classical liberal economics - with its focus on methodological individualism and rational choice - might not seem a natural place to find an emphasis on symbolic meaning, figures such as David Hume and Adam Smith understood the importance of what we might describe today as a social psychological understanding of individuals' behavior in complex economic systems, with an emphasis on shared communication for achieving social outcomes.¹⁹ Whilst the upshot from the *Wealth of Nations* would be the driving force of individual self-interest (over the "benevolence" of the butcher, the baker, the brewer, etc.), this interest was nonetheless molded – tempered, one might say – by the social aspect of human relations, most often captured by what writers of the time would describe as "sympathy." Sympathy enabled affective communication – that is, for individuals to transmit and instill emotions in others through their own "passions" – which itself constituted a sort of social *invisible hand* that moderated and helped coordinate behavior in mass society. As Smith wrote in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, "we must view them [interests], neither from my own place nor yet from his, neither with our own eyes nor yet with his."²⁰ Even later neo-liberal thinkers such as Friedrich Hayek would ground their methodological individualism and distinction of types of "order" by similarly defining society in relation to such mutual adjustment,²¹ with "new institutionalist" scholars such as Elinor Ostrom and Douglass North emphasizing the importance of informal communication and sanctioning mechanisms within groups – in other words, informal institutions - to overcome collective action problems.²²

The implications from these insights on questions of ethnic and nationalist politics led scholars to investigate how such identities could serve as a conduit for the

¹⁸ Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-Ce Qu'une Nation ?' (1882).

¹⁹ Adam Smith and Dugald Stewart, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments: To Which Is Added, a Dissertation on the Origin of Languages* (G. Bell & Sons, 1892); David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning Into Moral Subjects; and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* ([etc.] Longmans, Green and Company, 1878).

²⁰ Smith and Stewart, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, chap. 3.

²¹ Friedrich Hayek, 'Kinds of Order in Society', 1964, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/page/hayek-on-kinds-of-order-in-society>.

²² Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

transmission of these informal institutions.²³ These insights have also been used to explain assimilation into the national community: David Laitin formulated a well-known tipping model derived from game theoretic models to account for individuals' decisions to either separate or merge with the dominant culture through acquiring attributes that signal group membership, such as learning a given language.²⁴ Accordingly, Laitin understood a *nation* as a “population with a coordinated set of beliefs about their cultural identities,”²⁵ offering micro-level mechanisms to account for societal-level coordination.

Elite-driven nation-building policies:

At the same time, however, whilst such insights can help account for payoffs once national categories are salient, i.e., whether to assimilate into a given national group or not, they tell us less about why certain categories become salient in the first place.²⁶ Put differently, they can tell us how boundaries may disappear, but tell us less how the boundaries come to be drawn.

This leads to the second type of explanation for nation-building outcomes, which focuses on elite-driven policies aimed at homogenizing a population within a territorially bound state. Many of these works share modernization theorists' focus on the historical contingency of nation-building and can be seen as providing empirical evidence for specific institutions and mechanisms related to modernization, including a sensibility towards *failed* nation-building efforts.²⁷

Education is perhaps the most prominent mechanism studied, with a substantial body of scholarship emphasizing the effects of literacy in a national language for nation-

²³ James Habyarimana et al., ‘Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?’, *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 4 (2007): 709–25; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, ‘Explaining Interethnic Cooperation’, *The American Political Science Review* 90, no. 4 (1996): 715–35, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2945838>; Jan Delhey and Kenneth Newton, ‘Predicting Cross-National Levels of Social Trust: Global Pattern or Nordic Exceptionalism?’, *European Sociological Review* 21, no. 4 (1 September 2005): 311–27, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jci022>; Christopher J. Anderson and Aida Paskeviciute, ‘How Ethnic and Linguistic Heterogeneity Influence the Prospects for Civil Society: A Comparative Study of Citizenship Behavior’, *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (1 November 2006): 783–802, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00470.x>. Also Hechter 1986, 2000.

²⁴ David D. Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence* (OUP Oxford, 2007); David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Cornell University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence*, 40.

²⁶ Laitin, *Identity in Formation*, 24.

²⁷ As Ernest Gellner and others have pointed out, a problem with analyzing only successful cases of nation-building is one of “selecting on the dependent variable” of existing nations. For Gellner, the very fact that so few nationalisms were successful serves as evidence of the weakness of nationalism as a movement, using the number of languages – around 8,000 – as an imperfect proxy for the number of *potential* nationalisms that were not activated. See Gellner, pp. 44–48, also for “Loser nationalisms” see Charles King, *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence, and the End of Eastern Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

building outcomes.²⁸ Modernizing states also benefit from their ability to standardize, to enumerate, and to categorize individuals, with scholars highlighting the effects of top-down classification policies on how individuals would come to reify these very categories.²⁹ The success of such policies was shaped by state capacity,³⁰ with colonial institutions,³¹ as well as the state's own understanding of its identity³² all influencing the ability for elites and intellectuals to extend nationalizing policies over their territories once independent.³³

Other scholars have highlighted the role of exogenous factors such as the international system and the threat of conflict, which can create incentives to nation-build. Recent work by Keith Darden and Harris Mylonas found that external threat provided powerful stimuli for elites to pursue homogenizing education policies, thus supporting earlier insights from scholars such as Charles Tilly and Barry Posen on the central role of international conflict in state formation and development.³⁴

These educational policies are partly coercive – ranging from prioritizing a standardized national language and constitutive story of the nation to outrightly prohibiting the use of dialects, unofficial languages, and criticism of these foundational stories and myths - but they were not the only policies nationalizing elites sought to carry out to remove or soften national boundaries: mass expulsions and ethnic cleansing serve as tragic reminders that nationalizing elites have often implemented highly coercive policies in their attempts to make the boundaries of the state and the national group congruent. Many sought to do so as ethnically-religiously defined nation-states became the

²⁸ Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; Darden and Grzymala-Busse, 'The Great Divide'.

²⁹ Evan S. Lieberman and Prerna Singh, 'Census Enumeration and Group Conflict A Global Analysis of the Consequences of Counting', *World Politics* 69, no. 1 (2017): 1–53; Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Dmitry Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), <https://www.cambridge.org/us/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521818079>.

³⁰ Wimmer, *Nation Building*.

³¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107295636>; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006); Maya Tudor, *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³² Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Harvard University Press, 2009); Şener Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Diana Kudaibergenova, *Toward Nationalizing Regimes: Conceptualizing Power and Identity in the Post-Soviet Realm*, 2020, <https://upittpress.org/books/9780822946175/>.

³³ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 1986).

³⁴ Keith Darden and Harris Mylonas, 'Threats to Territorial Integrity, National Mass Schooling, and Linguistic Commonality', *Comparative Political Studies* 49, no. 11 (1 September 2016): 1446–79, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015606735>; Tilly, 'Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990–1990'; Barry R. Posen, 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict', *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1 March 1993): 27–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339308442672>.

dominant form of legitimate political organization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some accounts have focused more on the internal determinants of ethnic cleansing – such as the existence of cross-cutting cleavages, the inclusion of non-core groups in central bureaucracies and power structures, or the political opportunities provided by elites to local actors and nationalist organizers.³⁵

Elite-driven mass mobilization:

Others have emphasized the importance of international actors, whether in destabilizing extant ethnic hierarchies through invasion and occupation,³⁶ or by supporting non-core groups within the state: something which can either lead to more accommodating or exclusionary policies depending on the state's relations and foreign policy goals.³⁷

Many of these accounts of mass mobilization underscore the importance of symbolic politics in mobilizing groups in conflict, yet leave open the question as to how intersubjective meanings arise in the first place.

Daniel Posner presents perhaps the most parsimonious approach to thinking of group mobilization, according to which formal institutions condition both the “identity repertoire” that individuals can choose from, as well as the incentives to select a given identity.³⁸ Identity is therefore emptied of much of its affective content, with the actual group labels or boundaries epiphenomena. For Posner, “symbols, history, customs, and traditions – the usual stuff of identity politics – still matter, but as post hoc explanations for why people should embrace particular social groupings rather than as first-order sources of the salience of those groupings.”³⁹

The implication here is that individuals will tend to have a good sense of what cleavage makes sense to emphasize: they will seek a “minimum winning coalition” to maximize individual gains. Symbols, insofar as they matter, are explanations of this phenomenon, which should make us skeptical of the type of symbolic claims made by elites and ordinary people. This is an important critique: symbols might be understood

³⁵ Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 1985, <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520227064/ethnic-groups-in-conflict-updated-edition-with-a-new-preface>; H. Zeynep Bulutgil, *The Roots of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe*, Problems of International Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316476949>.

³⁶ Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁷ Erin K. Jenne, *Ethnic Bargaining, Ethnic Bargaining* (Cornell University Press, 2015), <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.7591/9780801471803/html>; Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building*, 2013.

³⁸ Daniel N. Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808661>.

³⁹ Daniel N. Posner, ‘When and Why Do Some Social Cleavages Become Politically Salient Rather than Others?’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 12 (26 September 2017): 2004, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1277033>.

as “categories of practice” rather than analytically useful markers;⁴⁰ or they may lead us to infer historical “groupness” from contemporary markers – often backed by state power - aimed precisely at creating such an impression.⁴¹ Lisa Wedeen’s account of symbolic power in Syria, whilst otherwise methodologically very different from Posner’s approach, tackles precisely this sort of issue, interrogating the symbolic and performative content of the Assad personality cult.⁴² Insofar as “state action in the symbolic sphere is legible in the effects it produces,” she shows how the this action generates a politics where citizens act “as if” they revere their leader without this being the case.⁴³

In Posner’s language, then, Wedeen’s politics “as if” shows that people have a good sense of what type of cleavage should be emphasized (in this case, paying lip-service to the Assad cult), and that it is this outcome – rather than the symbols per se – which is crucial to explain. At the same time, however, Posner’s claim that symbols are just a type of “post hoc explanation” appears overstated.⁴⁴ For Wedeen, after all, what the politics of symbols does is to produce power, generating ways of complying – and contesting – the regime. This is unthinkable without reference to the *meanings* of the symbols. Indeed, Posner recognizes the role of symbols in making new cleavages appear salient in the first place, which explains why elites spend enormous amounts of energy “making the case – by invoking history and symbols and traditions – for the salience of the new cleavage they are pushing.”⁴⁵

While we should be skeptical to take symbols’ claims at face value, we need to be able to distinguish those which are post hoc created from those which do the work of making certain cleavages salient at a given time.

Roger Petersen’s work on ethnic rebellion in Eastern Europe attempts to strike this balance between understanding symbols as heuristic devices and as “thick” meaningful ones. Developing Donald Horowitz’s theory of relative group worth, Petersen argues that changes in group hierarchies generate resentment, at which point the presence of “symbol sets” can determine how easy it is to coordinate resistance. For Petersen, symbols are coordinating devices that can act as focal points – “clear and unambiguous symbols... that embody symbols that are clear and unambiguously antiregime.”⁴⁶ In his case study of Lithuania, the “symbol set” was far richer under

⁴⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁴¹ Harris Mylonas, ‘Methodological Problems in the Study of Nation-Building: Behaviorism and Historicist Solutions in Political Science’, *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (2015): 740–58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12189>.

⁴² Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 2nd ed., 2015, <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/A/bo22776830.html>.

⁴³ Wedeen, 6.

⁴⁴ Posner, ‘When and Why Do Some Social Cleavages Become Politically Salient Rather than Others?’, 2004.

⁴⁵ Posner, 2004.

⁴⁶ Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, 36–37.

Soviet rule – pervaded by Catholicism and anti-Russian sentiment – than under Nazi rule, enabling better coordination of resistance.⁴⁷ An important contribution Petersen makes is by demonstrating how an appropriate “symbol set” is at the same time both multifaceted and relational, which suggests that examining the set of appropriate symbols for a given dyad can be an important factor in understanding interethnic relations.

Yet Petersen’s theory runs into difficulties when moving beyond the coordinative role of such “symbol sets” to explain why certain symbols are appropriate whilst others are not. Culture, defined as “a set of symbols and symbolic actions with shared meaning,” is often attractive for elites to manipulate, but its “malleability is lower than many suppose.”⁴⁸ Related, the events that shape a given “symbol set” are “complex and difficult to categorize,” being hard for leaders to “blatantly manufacture.”⁴⁹ For the purposes of his outcome of interest – rebellion – it makes sense to focus on the coordinating role of symbols, and to qualitatively trace which symbol sets existed at a given time. But a more theoretically convincing account would, rather than taking a “symbol set” as given, seek to explain why certain roles and symbols are appropriate to begin with; after all, a key determinant of successful rebellion is whether or not a “symbol set” is large enough to act as a useful coordinating device. In this case, then, understanding the formation of latent “symbol sets” in times of peace turns out to be an important unexplored mechanism. Specifically, how do certain symbols become “loaded” with anti-regime meaning, and by whom? Disentangling these processes and actors can also help mitigate the issue of endogeneity: whether a given “symbol set” is itself a product of the ethnic conflict being explained.

Stuart Kaufman offers perhaps the most systematic theoretical account of symbols in existing political science literature. At the core of his theory is that political behavior can be explained by “symbolic predispositions” (SYPs); namely, that SYPs, as “durable inclinations people have to feel positively or negatively about an object,” cause people to react to a particular symbol with a specific emotion.⁵⁰ Engaging in what he describes as “intellectual fusion,”⁵¹ he seeks to combine SYPs and threat perception with existing rationalist explanations rooted in means and opportunities to account for the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of ethnic conflict.

Whilst Kaufman’s treatment of symbols is rich, drawing upon insights from a range of disciplines into a workable, testable theory, by theorizing symbols’ roles in periods of conflict or tension, we are left with largely unsatisfying implications for how symbols operate in periods of peace. This conclusion is partly determined by the

⁴⁷ Petersen, 100.

⁴⁸ Petersen, 38.

⁴⁹ Petersen, 204.

⁵⁰ Stuart J. Kaufman, *Nationalist Passions* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 13.

⁵¹ Kaufman, 61.

centrality of prejudice in Kaufman's causal chain. The absence of "action," as he puts it, is necessarily attributed to a lack of prejudice. Because prejudice is, he argues, "itself a cause of conflict and contributes to threat perceptions that further increase conflict,"⁵² the conclusion is that "in cases of stable ethnic peace... such prejudices are usually weak or absent."⁵³ As a theory of symbolic politics, we are constrained to this action/prejudice dichotomy, whereby action is explained in terms of prejudice and prejudice explains action. What of actions that do not stem from prejudicial SYPs? All sorts of outcomes could conceivably stem from the pre-threat part of Kaufman's explanation without encountering prejudice. Even with those outcomes that approximate the ones Kaufman is interested in – independence movements come to mind – it is not clear that prejudice is central. Kaufman's theory is innovative and offers the most sophisticated treatment of symbolic politics in recent political science scholarship. Yet it needs some refinement in order to account for the kind of non-conflictual symbolic politics that constitute the norm of elite-driven nation-building policies.

These approaches help to understand the incentives and external conditions which can drive state capacity and political violence. Yet nation-builders often have a range of choices for where to draw the boundary between inclusion and exclusion. Indeed, not all elites sought to homogenize their populations according to ethno-religious conceptions of nationhood,⁵⁴ and as Sener Aktürk has argued with regard to Germany, Russia, and Turkey it is possible, although not easy - for the state to change its attitude vis-à-vis non-core ethnic groups if counter-elites possessed with new ideas about ethnicity end up in a position of political hegemony.⁵⁵

Scholars have similarly studied the tensions between ideas of ethnicity and of citizenship, whether by examining multi-ethnic states, immigrant communities,⁵⁶ kin-states,⁵⁷ irredentist/separatist regions and *de facto* states.⁵⁸ Similar dynamics can be seen in more recent manifestations of nationalism (often described as "populist"),⁵⁹ in which

⁵² Kaufman, 22.

⁵³ Kaufman, 15.

⁵⁴ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.

⁵⁵ Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*.

⁵⁶ Rafaela M. Dancygier and David D. Laitin, 'Immigration into Europe: Economic Discrimination, Violence, and Public Policy', *Annual Review of Political Science* 17, no. 1 (2014): 43–64, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-082012-115925>.

⁵⁷ Eleanor Knott, 'What Does It Mean to Be a Kin Majority? Analyzing Romanian Identity in Moldova and Russian Identity in Crimea from Below', *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (2015): 830–59, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12193>.

⁵⁸ Nina Caspersen and Gareth Stansfield, *Unrecognized States in the International System* (Routledge, 2012).

⁵⁹ There is considerable debate regarding what populism is and whether it is analytically distinguishable from nationalism. For definitions that juxtapose a "pure" people to a "corrupt" elite see Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Cas Mudde, 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, 2004; Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?, What Is Populism?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.9783/9780812293784/html>.

elites – usually political leaders - have sought to invoke and make potent hierarchical boundaries among groups within society, whether on racial (i.e. Donald Trump) or ethno-religious (Narendra Modi, Marine le Pen) lines.⁶⁰

These bodies of scholarship all share an acknowledgement of the central role played by elites in attempting to render congruent the national and state boundaries. Yet they also suggest that while external factors can drive elites' material capabilities and incentives for such policies, *where* the boundary is drawn is the product of historical and social forces that can shift. And whilst scholars have consistently noted the importance of intersubjective meanings in questions of mobilization, these insights are less applicable to how the symbolic content of nation-building is generated and contested over time.

Bottom-up (re)production of the nation as a meaningful community:

The third cluster of arguments takes this limitation as its departure point, sharing with elite-centered approaches a concern for agency in accounting for nation-building outcomes, but re-orienting it towards the individuals who consume, contest, and replicate the nation as a meaningful category of practice. Accordingly, the removal or softening of national boundaries is generally approached in two different ways: the first, by scholars using insights from social psychology; the second, by scholars of “banal” or “everyday” nationalism, who tend to privilege an interpretive epistemology in their search for intersubjective meanings of nationhood.⁶¹

Social psychology has produced perhaps the most influential research paradigm to emerge in studies of ethnicity and nationalism in the past few decades. Social Identity Theory (SIT), pioneered by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in the 1980s, found that individuals have an in-built drive to seek group membership and to categorize themselves as part of one or more groups.⁶² This has a long pedigree: the desire for recognition – *thymos* for Plato - formed one of the three constituent parts of the human soul.⁶³ Importantly, Tajfel found, this drive for recognition leads to greater ingroup bias and differentiation with outgroups, a finding that has proven to be remarkably consistent across research: such group-oriented behavior was found to occur when participants thought in terms of sharing a common fate with others.⁶⁴ This has led to a sizeable

⁶⁰ Mylonas and Tudor, ‘Nationalism: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know’.

⁶¹ As I argue below, the distinction here is first and foremost a methodological one, both between “banal” and “everyday” nationalism and between these and social psychological approaches. This makes it difficult to bring these bodies of literature together, although there are clear complementarities between them.

⁶² H Tajfel, ‘Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations’, *Annual Review of Psychology* 33, no. 1 (1982): 1–39, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245>.

⁶³ See Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

⁶⁴ As Henry Hale argues, however, this is not synonymous with categorizations emphasising ethnicity or nationhood; in fact, such categorizations could be quite banal and yet still produce

scholarly output across the social sciences identifying the sorts of categorizations and experimental treatments which could generate such group identifications.

Henry Hale argues that SIT only tells us part of the story of why ethnic and national identities acquire such potency at certain times for individuals. If the act of categorization can induce group-oriented behavior, it is less able to account for its potency or “thickness.” As he argues, ethnicity helps to reduce uncertainty in a complex social world: in moments of heightened uncertainty, such as state collapse or economic crisis, ethnicity gains salience as a cognitive mechanism to navigate such complexity, providing an opportunity for political entrepreneurs to mobilize supporters around “ethnic” claims.⁶⁵ Other scholars, too, have focused their attention on the role played by political elites in driving separatist demands, whether in terms of party elites⁶⁶ or bureaucratic and administrative elites.⁶⁷

At the same time, a related body of scholarship – in “banal” or “everyday” nationalism - has drawn upon alternative epistemological traditions to provide bottom-up explanations for the success of nation-building policies that seek to remove or soften national boundaries. Michael Billig’s work on the mundane daily practices that evoke the nation is often taken as the theoretical impetus for this research direction.⁶⁸ By problematizing what he perceived as a Western fixation on the contentious or “hot” manifestations of nationalist politics elsewhere, Billig focused attention to more “banal” quotidian reminders of the nation at home, such as unwaved flags - which served to make nationalism unnoticed, despite its pervasiveness within society.⁶⁹ “Banal” or “everyday” nationalism as a research direction has grown considerably in recent years, but its origins overlap to a considerable degree with SIT: Billig was a colleague of Tajfel and influential in his own right as a social psychologist, and *Banal Nationalism* shared a concern with scholars of SIT with identifying sources of group-oriented behavior.

Billig’s work also resonated as a methodological critique, and it is in this spirit that scholars working in interpretivist research traditions have eagerly uncovered other unnoticed reproductions and reminders of the nation. In recent years, scholars have

such group-oriented behaviour in experimental settings. Henry E. Hale, ‘Explaining Ethnicity’, *Comparative Political Studies* 37, no. 4 (1 May 2004): 458–85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414003262906>.

⁶⁵ Hale; Henry Hale, *The Foundation of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511613593>; Elise Giuliano, *Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia’s Republics* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶⁶ Astrid Barrio and Juan Rodríguez-Teruel, ‘Reducing the Gap between Leaders and Voters? Elite Polarization, Outbidding Competition, and the Rise of Secessionism in Catalonia’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 10 (9 August 2017): 1776–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1213400>.

⁶⁷ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*.

⁶⁸ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (SAGE, 1995).

⁶⁹ Billig.

moved beyond Billig's focus to investigate how ordinary people and everyday social practices allow agents to invest in, contest, or subvert nation-building policies and the unnoticed ways in which the nation is manifested in daily life. As such, everyday nationalism focuses on the meanings of national identities for those on the ground,⁷⁰ and has provided detailed empirical studies of how varieties of nationalist practice help sustain and strengthen ethnic and national boundaries.⁷¹

Multinational unions and the boundary question:

The above approaches each focus on important mechanisms and processes through which nation-building outcomes are achieved. **Despite differing across methodological, disciplinary, and substantive areas, they are all united by examining how boundaries are effaced, removed, or softened to achieve these outcomes.**

However, this is not the whole story. There is also a rich body of work across the social sciences examining how states have sought to accommodate and integrate nations within a single polity. Given that it is unlikely that new states will emerge on the scale of the waves of nation-state creation intertwined with the dissolution of empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these insights are important for thinking about contemporary nation-building.

Two bodies of scholarship provide insights for thinking about accommodating and integrating multiple cultures within the boundaries of a single political unit. The first draws upon a rich body of writing in political theory, federalism, and democratic politics to problematize the homogenizing tendency of nation-states, providing conceptual and institutional pathways to accommodating difference whilst promoting strong positive identification with an overarching (often federal) state.

The second draws inspiration from a similar intellectual well, but instead focuses on the boundaries of national identities under conditions of state integration and cooperation, with the most cutting-edge scholarship coming from scholars of

⁷⁰ Knott, 'What Does It Mean to Be a Kin Majority?'; Marco Antonsich, 'The "Everyday" of Banal Nationalism – Ordinary People's Views on Italy and Italian', *Political Geography* 54 (September 2016): 32–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2015.07.006>; J. Paul Goode, 'Guest Editor's Introduction: "Everyday Nationalism in World Politics: Agents, Contexts, and Scale"', *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 6 (November 2020): 974–82, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.73>; J. Paul Goode and David R. Stroup, 'Everyday Nationalism: Constructivism for the Masses*: Everyday Nationalism', *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (September 2015): 717–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12188>.

⁷¹ Goode and Stroup, 'Everyday Nationalism'; Guzel Yusupova, 'Cultural Nationalism and Everyday Resistance in an Illiberal Nationalising State: Ethnic Minority Nationalism in Russia', *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 3 (2018): 624–647, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12366>; Abel Polese et al., 'National Identity for Breakfast: Food Consumption and the Everyday Construction of National Narratives in Estonia', *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 6 (November 2020): 1015–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.131>.

international organizations and regional integration. **In other words, whilst the first body of scholarship looks at national diversity *within* a bounded state, the second examines identities *above* the level of the bounded state.**

Accommodating national diversity within states:

A rich literature on federalism and democracy has problematized the homogenizing tendency of nation-states: the demos need not be an ethnos. But the historical climate that provided the intellectual foundations for such arguments was not in any sense *national* in the way that debates around political organization in the 19th century would often be framed. Instead, it was rooted in a long period of over two centuries, dating from the Reformation and encompassing Europe's wars of religion, the Thirty Years War, and the Enlightenment more broadly. Nationalism is but one of several legacies – including the state, the international system, the scientific method, individual rights, political economy, and countless others – to trace their emergence to the slow-moving yet profound material and ideational changes that would occur during the Early Modern period.

During this time, perhaps the most pertinent debate was not about accommodating *national* diversity, but *religious* diversity within polities. For centuries Catholicism had constituted a unique type of supra-local identity across much of Western Europe, until widespread religious and political strife erupted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the wake of the Reformation.⁷² Writing on the emergence of religious toleration, Ingrid Creppell described the period following the Reformation as characterized by a “measure of unsettledness and a lack of clarity regarding which collectivities one should support.”⁷³ For Thomas Hobbes, writing during the English Civil War, the *Leviathan* was necessary not simply to provide heavy-handed arbitration over warring individuals, but was to fulfil a far more fundamental role: that of the “great definer,” as Sheldon Wolin put it, who would regulate and define

⁷² Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Robert Tombs, *The English and Their History* (VINTAGE, 2016); Philip S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2003); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jan Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (OUP Oxford, 2007). The precise causes of these conflicts is beyond the scope of this article, but it is important to note that religion intersected in crucial ways with emerging national consciousness as Bibles were translated into vernacular languages. This was particularly important for Calvinism and the Dutch Republic, but was also revolutionary in England: William Tyndale's English Bible – translated from original Hebrew and Greek texts in the 1520s – was seen as so revolutionary that Henry VIII forbade laborers and non-gentlewomen from reading it. If English elites in the early 17th century were still largely Latinate, within a century all subjects would speak and write in the vernacular.

⁷³ Ingrid Creppell, *Toleration and Identity: Foundations in Early Modern Thought* (Routledge, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203616451>.

a unified political language for the purposes of social cohesion.⁷⁴ The erosion of sovereign power unshackled the potential for “every private man...[to be]...Judge of Good and Evill actions,” which underpinned Hobbes’s autocratic institutional solution. In other words, Hobbes’s *Leviathan* was a function of the necessity to forge shared intersubjective meanings and unified standards of judgement among individuals in political society.⁷⁵

Even more conventionally liberal theorists such as John Locke would root an endorsement of religious toleration in a recognition that differing religious beliefs could drive emotively powerful – and politically deleterious – claims.⁷⁶ In an era marked by violence over scriptural interpretation, Hobbes proposed to efface these interpretive boundaries in a way not too dissimilar to future generations of nation-builders, who would use coercive mechanisms to seek to standardize and regulate speech and thought. For Locke, on the other hand, the symbols and beliefs that drive people to act and differentiate themselves from one another were simply part and parcel of human nature, and so instead of proposing to efface these boundaries, Locke and others would propose emphasizing and delineating boundaries of difference *within* the polity in order to define the limits of acceptable political claims.⁷⁷

These arguments would also be influential for thinking about federalism. “Extend the sphere,” James Madison wrote in *Federalist 10* in 1787, “and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests.”⁷⁸ One of the chief concerns of the Founders was in avoiding both faction and tyranny, for which institutional balances were seen as necessary. This provided a powerful impulse for securing the republic through representative government in a federal system. In this respect the American experience has been influential by proponents and practitioners of federalism across the globe, who similarly pursued institutional solutions – delineating layered spheres of authority - to the challenges of governing a diverse citizenry.⁷⁹

Nation-building with multiple nations?

⁷⁴ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought - Expanded Edition* (Princeton University Press, 2016), 232.

⁷⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes: Leviathan: Revised Student Edition*, ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 29, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808166>.

⁷⁶ Creppell, *Toleration and Identity*.

⁷⁷ Creppell.

⁷⁸ Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (OUP Oxford, 2008).

⁷⁹ William H. Riker, *The Development of American Federalism* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2012); Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (Penguin Books India, 2004).

Yet one might legitimately ask here: what has all of this got to do with nation-building? If liberal and federal solutions emphasize institutional fixes to cleavages among cultural or other lines, then surely there is no need to engage in “nation-building” at all?

The answer is twofold. On the one hand, it is true that few of these works sought to directly address nation-building, except as a way of contrasting their own normative prescriptions. Again, Madison is instructive in this regard: whilst “giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests” might prevent faction from arising, he nonetheless advocates instead for mitigating the *effects* of faction.⁸⁰ On the other hand, there is a palpable tension between such policies and the exigencies of crafting a common loyalty to the polity, or, in other words, generating a “we-feeling.”⁸¹ One of the challenges faced by theorists of multiculturalism is in addressing the boundaries of appropriate intervention and coercion where cultural group rights are affirmed and bounded.⁸² Indeed, Will Kymlicka warns that “multicultural states cannot survive unless the various national groups have an allegiance to the larger political community they inhabit,” though whilst he sees two of his proposed solutions – representational rights and polyethnic rights – as aiding integrational processes, the third – self-government rights – he suggests may encourage secession.⁸³

The question of whether institutional solutions to divided societies help or hinder separatism and loyalty to the polity has been widely debated by scholars of comparative politics, with little sign of consensus. Ethnic groups can be incentivized to secede under periods of central state weakness and collapse as part of an ethnic “security dilemma,”⁸⁴ which can be heightened when the central government is viewed as exploitative or has taken steps to limit ethnic autonomy,⁸⁵ or when the groups in question are socioeconomically disadvantaged enough for there to be few barriers to exit.⁸⁶ Alternatively, as Henry Hale argues, the threat of state collapse in multiethnic polities tends to arise from the presence of a “core ethnic region” whose members may develop a loyalty to an imagined core-group nation-state rather than the union itself.⁸⁷ Some

⁸⁰ Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*.

⁸¹ Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations India and Other Multinational Democracies*, 13.

⁸² Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Clarendon Press, 1996); John Rawls, ‘The Law of Peoples’, *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1 October 1993): 36–68, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448700>; Susan Moller Okin, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁸³ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 9–13.

⁸⁴ Posen, ‘The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict’.

⁸⁵ Hale, *The Foundation of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*; David S. Siroky and John Cuffe, ‘Lost Autonomy, Nationalism and Separatism’, *Comparative Political Studies* 48, no. 1 (1 January 2015): 3–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414013516927>.

⁸⁶ Donald L. Horowitz, ‘Patterns of Ethnic Separatism’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 2 (1981): 165–95.

⁸⁷ Henry E. Hale, ‘Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse’, *World Politics* 56, no. 2 (January 2004): 165–93, <https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2004.0011>.

scholars favor partition as a solution to such crises.⁸⁸ Others advocate for either joint governance in the form of consociationalism or “big tent” multiethnic coalitions flanked by ethnic parties⁸⁹ or federalism.⁹⁰ A third group refrains from fully endorsing one or the other; as Elkins and Sides caution, “federalism appears to encourage *both* an alternative identity to the state and pride in the state [emphasis mine].”⁹¹ For Posner, partition or federalism are only important insofar as they influence the institutional divides in the state, which drive individuals’ incentives to seek a “minimum winning coalition” to maximize gains.⁹²

Whilst these debates remain inconclusive, what is less contested is that a common shared identity can help maintain societal cohesion and possibly mitigate some of the factors that scholars posit drive such conflict in the first place. In large part a critical response to Jürgen Habermas’s notion of “constitutional patriotism,” Linz, Stepan, and Yadav argue that loyalty to the norms and values of an overarching liberal polity are insufficient without “other elements of symbolic and emotional nature we still do not know well,” namely a “constitutionally sanctioned respect for common symbols, institutions, and individual rights, thus facilitating the maintenance and nurturing of multiple but complementary, as opposed to singular and conflictual, identities.”⁹³

Psychological research also suggests that national identities need not be exclusive with an overarching sense of loyalty to a polity. Indeed, experimental research has shown that priming respondents to think about broader, more inclusive identities – the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIGIM) – can dampen hostility to outgroups by recategorizing them as members of a common ingroup.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Thomas Chapman and Philip G. Roeder, ‘Partition as a Solution to Wars of Nationalism: The Importance of Institutions’, *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 4 (2007): 677–91; Chaim D. Kaufmann, ‘When All Else Fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century’, *International Security* 23, no. 2 (1 October 1998): 120–56, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.2.120>.

⁸⁹ Arend Lijphart, ‘Consociational Democracy’, *World Politics* 21, no. 2 (1969): 207–25.

⁹⁰ Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (JHU Press, 1999); Alfred C Stepan, ‘Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model’, *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 4 (1999): 19–34, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1999.0072>.

⁹¹ Zachary Elkins and John Sides, ‘Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States?’, *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 4 (2007): 704.

⁹² Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*; Posner, ‘When and Why Do Some Social Cleavages Become Politically Salient Rather than Others?’

⁹³ Such “exemplary” cases are cited as Belgium, Canada, Spain, and India. See Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations India and Other Multinational Democracies*, 12,16; Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (John Wiley & Sons, 2018).

⁹⁴ Matthew Wright and Jack Citrin, ‘Saved by the Stars and Stripes? Images of Protest, Salience of Threat, and Immigration Attitudes’, *American Politics Research* 39, no. 2 (1 March 2011): 323–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X10388140>; Samuel L. Gaertner et al., ‘The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias’, *European Review of Social Psychology* 4, no. 1 (1 January 1993): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14792779343000004>; John E. Transue, ‘Identity Salience, Identity Acceptance, and Racial Policy Attitudes: American National Identity as a Uniting Force’, *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 1 (2007): 78–91, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00238.x>.

Integration and international organizations:

The above discussion has mostly focused upon overarching loyalties *within* a polity; yet it is also clear that many of the concerns transcend the boundary of the state itself. Scholars of international organizations and regional integration have similarly been deeply invested in understanding the porousness of the state in the international system, and more recently have turned to questions of supranational identities.

Again, the Early Modern period is instructive. At the same time as Hobbes suggested a *Leviathan* within domestic society to ensure social cohesion, thinkers elsewhere in Europe began to consider seriously the possibility of some “*conseil général de l’Europe*” that would offer a supranational solution to religious and civil strife.⁹⁵ The idea of a supranational European state would be hotly debated throughout the 17th and 18th centuries as a guarantor of “perpetual peace” by figures such as Voltaire and Rousseau, though it was Kant’s essay (1795) that was most enthusiastically taken up by scholars of international relations in the 1980s.⁹⁶ Kant recognized the tension between national and supranational identities that such integration entailed. The “Federation of Free States” would, as he stressed, *not* be the same thing as an international (i.e. supranational) state:

“For the idea of an international state is contradictory, since every state involves a relationship between a superior (the legislator) and an inferior (the people obeying the laws), whereas a number of nations forming one state would constitute a single nation [emphasis mine]. And this contradicts our initial assumption, as we are here considering the right of nations in relation to one another in so far as they are a group of separate states which are not to be welded together as a unit.”⁹⁷

Instead, Kant suggested, this “Federation of Free States” would be a type of regional “security community” among existing states. As Karl Deutsch described, a security community - a “group of people who has become integrated” – was most likely to be successfully institutionalized when a) the values relevant to political decision-making are compatible; b) that the units can respond to one another’s needs and messages

⁹⁵ This was the plan of King Henry IV of France, as recounted by his minister the Duke of Sully. *Mémoires de Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Sully, principal ministre de Henri-le-Grand, mis en ordre, avec des remarques, par M. L. D. L. D. L. Tome premier (-huitieme): Tome 8, 1778, 340–41.*

⁹⁶ Patrick Riley, ‘The Abbé de St.Pierre and Voltaire on Perpetual Peace in Europe’, *World Affairs* 137, no. 3 (1974): 186–94; Michael W. Doyle, ‘Liberalism and World Politics’, *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986): 1151–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960861>; Hans Reiss, ed., *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nibset (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁹⁷ Reiss, *Kant*, 102.

quickly and non-aggressively; and c) their behavior would be mutually predictable.”⁹⁸ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett built upon Deutsch’s work, distinguishing between “nascent,” “ascendant,” and “mature” security communities.⁹⁹ Similarly to Deutsch, they underscore the importance of communicative and symbolic “glue” in forming “regions of social cognitive and normative bonds that can encourage peoples to identify, and to expect their security and welfare to be intimately intertwined, with those that exist on the same side of spatial and cognitive borders.”¹⁰⁰

Adler and Barnett note that the development of security communities need not come at the expense of transcending the nation-state: a claim that scholars of the European Union (EU) have, in recent years, more consciously interrogated. Aware that prevailing neo-functionalist or intergovernmentalist approaches to integration have tended to focus predominantly on material interests, scholars have begun to explore the extent to which a European supra-national identity is forming and its relation to existing national identities.¹⁰¹ For some, whilst the EU has achieved “identity hegemony”¹⁰² – in other words, the adjective *European* is increasingly understood by its silent epithet *Union* – a “European” identity has generally only emerged among occupational and social classes who have “deep economic and social ties with their counterparts across Europe,” benefitting “materially and culturally” from Europe and “more likely to travel for fun, work, and education.”¹⁰³ This has taken place at the same time as a reevaluation of the EU’s historical purpose: on the one hand, as Willem Maas argues, supranational European citizenship was an integral part of the political purpose and the post-war

⁹⁸ Deutsch distinguishes between “pluralistic” and “amalgamated” communities, with the latter being single states (i.e. the USA). The conditions outlined here are common to *both*, and so serve as necessary conditions for full political integration. Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North American Area*, 1968, 140, <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691649429/political-community-and-the-north-american-area>.

⁹⁹ Emanuel Adler et al., *Security Communities* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁰⁰ Adler et al., 59.

¹⁰¹ Richard K. Herrmann, Thomas Risse, and Marilynn B. Brewer, *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Kathleen R. McNamara, *The Politics of Everyday Europe: Constructing Authority in the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein, *European Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Thomas Risse, ‘The Euro between National and European Identity’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 10, no. 4 (1 January 2003): 487–505, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350176032000101235>; Thomas Risse, *A Community of Europeans?: Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Cornell University Press, 2015); Willem Maas, *Creating European Citizens* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007); Laura Cram, ‘Does the EU Need a Navel? Implicit and Explicit Identification with the European Union*’, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 71–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02207.x>; K. Amber Curtis, ‘Inclusive versus Exclusive: A Cross-National Comparison of the Effects of Subnational, National, and Supranational Identity’, *European Union Politics* 15, no. 4 (1 December 2014): 521–46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116514528058>; Ian Manners, ‘Symbolism in European Integration’, *Comparative European Politics* 9, no. 3 (1 July 2011): 243–68, <https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2010.11>; Neil Fligstein, *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe* (OUP Oxford, 2008); Judith G. Kelley, *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁰² Herrmann, Risse, and Brewer, *Transnational Identities*.

¹⁰³ Fligstein, *Euroclash*, 250.

values that led to European integration.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, scholars have also started to reframe the EU's founders to reveal a more explicit endorsement of supranational identity construction as a core purpose of integration itself.¹⁰⁵

Scholars have also begun to examine how European identity is being constructed from the bottom-up. Kathleen McNamara's work on the everyday construction of Europe traces how the EU is "deracinated" and "localized" through symbols and practice, producing a legitimate – albeit thin – identification with the EU.¹⁰⁶ Whilst this has enabled European and national identities to co-exist – per Thomas Risse's metaphor of a "marble cake" of local, national, and supranational identifications – she does nevertheless express a degree of caution as to whether this is possible as the EU assumes more responsibilities vis-à-vis its member states.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, it is also important to consider that an EU identity is not the only possible supranational identity that individuals may find potent, nor is it the only *European* identity.¹⁰⁸ More recent research on what Rogers Brubaker defines as "national populism" has also shown that discursive civilizational boundaries – an identarian "Christendom" – is bought into by supporters of far-right populist parties,¹⁰⁹ and that civilizations represent meaningful "categories of practice" for large numbers of individuals, which is often in stark contrast to the ideologies of political and economic elites.¹¹⁰ In other words, while organizations such as the EU possess considerable resources for crafting and engaging in nation-building policies, they do not represent the only possible identity categories above the level of the nation.

¹⁰⁴ Maas, *Creating European Citizens*.

¹⁰⁵ This is in part because influential accounts of European integration have tended to focus more exclusively on the figure of Jean Monnet. Scholars have more recently begun to reframe Robert Schuman's influence and vision of the European project. Schuman only wrote one short book, but repeatedly stressed the need for a European "supranationality" and for the European community to be above all a cultural community. See Léonce Bekemans and Victoria Martin de la Torre, 'Robert Schuman's Concept of "European Community": What Lessons for Europe's Future?', *Online Journal Modelling the New Europe*, no. 28 (2018): 38–57; Margriet Krijtenburg, 'Schuman's Europe: His Frame of Reference' (Campus The Hague, Faculty of Law, Leiden University, 2012), <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/19767>.

¹⁰⁶ McNamara, *The Politics of Everyday Europe*, 19.

¹⁰⁷ McNamara, 166; Risse, 'The Euro between National and European Identity'.

¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, existing cross-sectional surveys offer only limited insights: Eurobarometer surveys tend to only ask respondents to assess whether they see themselves as "national," "European," or occasionally one or the other, with this data often being used to infer the strength of a specific *EU* identity.

¹⁰⁹ Rogers Brubaker, 'Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (21 June 2017): 1191–1226, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1294700>.

¹¹⁰ Henry E. Hale and Marlene Laruelle, 'Rethinking Civilizational Identity from the Bottom Up: A Case Study of Russia and a Research Agenda', *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 3 (May 2020): 585–602, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.125>; Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives* (Routledge, 2009); John J. Mearsheimer, *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (Yale University Press, 2018).