



Cracks in the Liberal Edifice

Extract from *The Great Delusion:
Liberal Dreams and International
Realities*

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(Graphic by Michael Lopez, Army University Press)

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Two of political liberalism's most salient features are also its two significant flaws: the prominence it accords individualism, and the weight it places on inalienable rights. Contemporary liberalism, as we saw, is largely synonymous with progressive liberalism, although *modus vivendi* liberalism still affects the contours of political life. My criticisms of political liberalism in this chapter apply equally to both variants, as there is little daylight between them regarding the importance they ascribe to individualism and rights. In this chapter I am concerned with assessing liberalism as a political ideology. A liberal democracy's foreign policy, and international relations more generally, are reserved for later chapters.

The first problem with liberalism is that it wrongly assumes that humans are fundamentally solitary individuals, when in fact they are social beings at their core. This commitment to far-reaching individualism leads political liberals to downplay nationalism, which is an especially powerful political ideology with profound influence inside every country in the world. Liberalism's fate is therefore bound up with nationalism. Although these two isms differ in important ways, they can coexist inside a country's borders. But when they are at odds, nationalism wins almost every time. In short, nationalism places serious limits on liberalism's influence, including its emphasis on natural rights.

Liberalism's second problem is that its story about individual rights is not persuasive. The claim that rights are inalienable and that this is "self evident," that almost everyone should be able to recognize both the universality and importance of rights, is not compelling. The influence of rights in people's daily lives is nowhere near as profound as liberals seem to think, which is not to say rights are of no concern at all. But their impact is limited, even in places like the United States, where liberalism is deeply wired into the culture.

These shortcomings are by no means fatal. Nor do they cripple this ism in any meaningful way, as it still has a number of important virtues. What these flaws show, however, is that liberalism's ability to shape daily life inside any country will encounter limits. And as

I will argue in the next chapter, those limits are even more pronounced in the international system. Here I will stay within the nation-state, concluding with a discussion of the possibility that liberal countries might be intrinsically unworkable because the factions within them have strong incentives to capture the state permanently and prevent rival factions from taking the reins of power. While this argument should not be taken lightly, mature liberal democracies have certain features that go a long way toward ameliorating this problem, but they are not foolproof.

The Nationalism Problem

Liberalism's most important shortcoming is its radical individualism. In focusing almost exclusively on individuals and their rights, it pays little attention to the fact that human beings are born into and operate in large collectivities, which help shape their essence and command their loyalties. Most people are at least partially tribal from the start to the finish of their lives, a point that is largely absent from the liberal story.¹

The nation is the highest-level social group of real significance for the vast majority of people around the world. Nations are large collections of people who have much in common and who also have a powerful allegiance to the group. Individuals live as members of a nation, which fundamentally shapes their identities and behavior. Nations, which privilege self-determination and worry about their survival, want their own state.² At the same time, states themselves have powerful reasons for wanting their people to be organized into a nation, which leads them to play a critical role in fusing the nation and the state together. Thus it is no surprise that the world is populated with nation-states, the embodiment of nationalism.

If liberalism and nationalism are both powerful forces in our world, what is the relationship between them? Three points are in order. First, nationalism is at play in every country, which is reflected in the fact that we live in a world of nation-states. Liberalism, however, is not a powerful force everywhere. True liberal democracies have never made up a majority of states in the international system. Second, given nationalism's pervasiveness, liberalism must always coexist with nationalism. It is impossible to have a liberal state that is not a nation-state and thus nationalist to its core. Liberalism, in other

words, operates within the confines of nation-states. Finally, liberalism invariably loses when it clashes with nationalism.

What Is Nationalism?

Nationalism is a theory that explains how people around the world are organized socially and politically. It holds that the human population is divided into many different nations composed of people with a strong sense of group loyalty. With the possible exception of the family, allegiance to the nation usually overrides all other forms of an individual's identity. Furthermore, members of a nation are deeply committed to maximizing their nation's autonomy, which means they prefer to have their own state. As Ernest Gellner famously put it, nationalism "holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."³ This is not to say that every national group can have its own state, but that is the ultimate goal, given their yearning for self-determination. States, meanwhile, have powerful incentives to govern people who are organized into nations, which leads political leaders to work hard to foster nationalism. Nationalism is both a bottom-up and a top-down phenomenon.

In popular discourse, nationalism is sometimes said to reflect "ancient hatreds," which implies it has plagued the planet for most of recorded history. This perception is false: nationalism is a recent phenomenon. It first emerged in Europe, and by extension North America, in the second half of the eighteenth century, although it was incubating in Europe before then.⁴ Liberalism actually came onto the European scene roughly a century before nationalism. Moreover, although nationalism can lead to hatred among peoples, that is only one facet of a complicated phenomenon that has positive as well as negative attributes.

The best starting point for understanding nationalism is to describe the basic characteristics of a nation and show how it differs from prior social groups. I will then discuss the essential functions that nations perform for their members, why nations want their own state, and why states want to govern their own nation. These complementary incentives work to fuse the nation and state together, which accounts in good part for why nationalism is such a powerful force. I will also describe how the modern state differs from the political forms that preceded it.

What Is a Nation?

Nations have six fundamental features that, taken together, distinguish them from the other kinds of large groups that inhabited the planet before nations came on the scene.⁵

A Sense of Oneness

A nation is a large community of people with a powerful sense of oneness, even though each member knows only a small number of fellow nationals. Benedict Anderson's famous description of a nation as an "imagined community" nicely captures this feature.⁶ A nation is imagined in the sense that no person knows more than a tiny fraction of the other members, and yet almost all of them identify as part of a community. They have a strong sense of loyalty to the community's other members, which means they tend to feel mutually responsible for each other, especially in dealing with the outside world. That the bonds among fellow nationals are tight tends to make the boundaries between different nations clear and firm.⁷

In addition to this sense of solidarity, a nation's members also tend to treat each other as equals.⁸ They view themselves as part of a common enterprise, and although the group contains leaders and followers, the people at the top and those at the bottom are ultimately all members of the same community. Anderson captures this point when he notes

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that even though there will always be different kinds of “inequality and exploitation in any society, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁹

Before the coming of nations, the bonds among members of the large social groups that populated Europe were not tight. Those earlier groups tended to be quite fluid, which meant that identities were relatively malleable. Consider the historian Patrick Geary’s discussion of social life in Europe after the collapse of

Bell captures this transformation when he writes that “neither Virgil nor Richelieu or Mazarin envisioned taking entire populations—from elegant courtiers to impoverished sharecroppers, from well-polished intellectuals to urban beggars—and forging them all, in their millions into a single nation, transforming everything from language to manners to the most intimate ideas.”¹³ This melding of people in a society (which has its limits) inclines them to feel like equals.

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the Roman Empire: “The fourth and fifth centuries saw fundamental changes in the European social and political fabric. In the process, great confederations like those of the Goths disappeared, to reemerge transformed into kingdoms in Italy and Gaul. Others like the Hunnic Empire or the Vandal kingdom seemed to spring from nowhere, only to vanish utterly in a few generations. Still other, previously obscure peoples, such as the Angles and the Franks, emerged to create enduring polities.”¹⁰ Such fluidity is unthinkable in the age of nationalism, in which nations tend to be tightly integrated, permanent entities separated by clear boundaries.¹¹ It is hard to imagine any contemporary nation disappearing or even undergoing the sort of rapid transformation in its identity that Geary describes.

Furthermore, there was no sense of equality within those earlier social groups. While there is not strict equality in a nation, there was a marked reduction in the gap between elites and their people. Pre-national Europe was largely agricultural and comprised two main classes: the aristocracy and the peasantry. The gulf separating them was huge, under the Roman Empire, during the Middle Ages, and in the era of dynastic states that preceded the appearance of nation-states.¹²

But by the late eighteenth century, the chasm had narrowed significantly, in good part because elites and their publics came to communicate in the same language and see themselves as part of a shared enterprise with a common destiny. The historian of France David

None of this is to deny that individuals have other identities and loyalties besides national allegiance. Everyone has multiple identities: they almost always belong to a variety of organizations and groups, and have multiple interests, friendships, and commitments. Nevertheless, aside from family ties, a person’s highest loyalty is almost always to his nation, and that commitment usually overrides others when they conflict. Marxists, for example, emphasize that individuals identify most strongly with their social class, be it capitalists, the bourgeoisie, or the working class, and that this identification surpasses national identity. This thinking, clearly reflected in the *Communist Manifesto*, explains why some Marxists believed the working classes of Europe would not take up arms against each other when their governments went to war in 1914.¹⁴ They discovered that while social class is often a powerful form of identity, it is not in the same league as nationalism, which tends to fuse classes together by providing them with a higher loyalty. As the historian Michael Howard puts it, “The appeals for class unity across international frontiers were scattered to the winds once the bugles began to blow in 1914,” and the workers of the world fought with their fellow nationals against rival nation-states.¹⁵ In short, national identity is not the only identity an individual possesses, but it is generally the most powerful.

Nor is it to deny that individuals in a nation sometimes act in selfish ways and take advantage of other

members. We all face situations where there is much to be gained by acting like the proverbial utility maximizer. And selfish behavior sometimes leads to bitter, even deadly, disputes between fellow nationals. Nevertheless, this kind of egoistic behavior takes place within a nation, where individuals have obligations to the wider community and where there are powerful reasons to act in ways that benefit the collective. When those two logics conflict, most people privilege loyalty to their nation over loyalty to themselves.

have roughly the same “degree of strong identity and pride in membership in the state.”¹⁸

It is impossible to generalize about which cultural features allow us to distinguish one nation from another. Language might seem like a good marker, but different nations often speak the same language. Just think of all the countries in Central and South America that speak Spanish. The same is true of religion. Catholicism, after all, is the dominant religion in Austria, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, just to

“ Cultures are not fixed because individual identities are not hardwired into people at birth. Instead, they are socially constructed and are more fluid than primordialists recognize. ”

A Distinct Culture

What separates nations from each other is culture. Each nation has a distinct set of beliefs and practices that are shared by its members and that distinguish it from other nations. The practices involve things like language, rituals, codes, music, and symbols, while beliefs involve matters like religion, basic political and social values, and a particular understanding of history. The members of a nation tend to act and think in similar ways in their daily lives, and this helps foster strong bonds among them.

But it would be impracticable for all of the individuals who make up a nation-state to share the same practices and beliefs. There is instead a substantial commonality, which varies from case to case. It makes sense to distinguish between thick and thin cultures, which reflect the amount of cultural diversity a nation has. Thick cultures have significant cultural homogeneity, while thin cultures are more diverse.) Nation-states that are largely composed of a single nation, such as Japan and Poland, have thick cultures. Those that have a core nation and minority nations, such as Canada, India, and Spain, have thin cultures.¹⁶ In other words, there is a thin national identity at the level of the state, but the core and minority nations also have their own identities.¹⁷ Most societies’ elites would like to mold a thick national identity, but that is usually not practical in societies containing two or more nations. Nevertheless, research shows that members of thick and thin cultures

name a few examples, and Islam dominates throughout the Arab world. Beliefs and practices that cut across cultures show that different cultures’ defining features may overlap substantially. Germany and Austria are a good example. Nevertheless, they have differences as well, seemingly minor to outsiders but which the members of each nation invariably rivet on. Sigmund Freud famously called this phenomenon the “narcissism of minor differences.”¹⁹

One might also think that culture is synonymous with ethnicity, which is sometimes defined as a set of ancient, fixed characteristics of a group that have been carried forward to the present. According to this primordialist perspective, a nation’s roots are its bloodlines: its common descent from relatives who lived long ago. But large social groups, and nations in particular, have evolved in ways that contradict that definition of ethnicity, which is why I do not employ the term in this book.

Cultures are not fixed because individual identities are not hardwired into people at birth. Instead, they are socially constructed and are more fluid than primordialists recognize. Elites often play a key role in shaping a nation, as reflected in this comment by a prominent Italian leader in 1861, when Italy was being unified: “We have made Italy. Now we have to make Italians.”²⁰ If I did use the word *ethnicity*, I would use it in Max Weber’s sense, to mean “a subjective belief in ... common descent,” or the belief that a particular people share a common

cultural tradition.²¹ Those definitions are consistent with my story.

In essence, the real basis of nationhood is psychological, not biological, which is why Walker Connor says “the essence of a nation is intangible.”²² A nation exists when a large number of people think of themselves as members of the same unique social group with a distinct culture. In other words, a nation is a large group that considers itself a nation²³ and that has tangible beliefs and practices that matter greatly for its common identity. Once nations are formed, they are exceptionally resistant to fundamental change, partly because individuals are heavily socialized into a particular culture from birth, and typically accustomed to and committed to its beliefs and practices.

There is another important reason for the durability of national loyalties: the movement from oral to written traditions. Until the nineteenth century, most people learned about their social group’s history by word of mouth. Few people could read, and for them there were few popular history books. It was reasonably easy to change stories about the past to accommodate newcomers as well as shifting circumstances. But once a group’s history is written in books, it is difficult to change the story to suit new conditions. As the political scientist James Scott notes, “The key disadvantage of monuments and written texts is precisely their relative permanence.”²⁴ In a literate world, people’s identities inside large social groups become more fixed, and boundaries become less fluid. The movement from an oral to a literate culture not only created tighter bonds within Europe’s burgeoning nations but also made those communities more robust and resistant to change.

A Sense of Superiority

Regardless of what other nations do, people take pride in their own nation because it is a home to them. But they also think about how their nation compares with other nations, especially those they interact with frequently. Chauvinism usually follows.²⁵ Most people think their nation is superior to others. It has special qualities that merit its being privileged over other nations. The German nationalist Johann Fichte captures this perspective with his comment that “the German alone ... can be patriotic; he alone can for the sake of his nation encompass the whole of mankind; contrasted with him from now on, the patriotism of every other

nation must be egoistic, narrow and hostile to the rest of mankind.”²⁶ Lord Palmerston, Britain’s liberal foreign secretary in 1848, was no less chauvinistic: “Our duty—our vocation—is not to enslave, but to set free: and I may say, without any vainglorious boast, or without great offence to anyone, that we stand at the head of moral, social and political civilization. Our task is to lead the way and direct the march of other nations.”²⁷

Unsurprisingly, this sense of specialness leads some nations to think they have been singled out by God. This belief has a rich tradition in the United States, going back to the Puritans, who believed, as many Americans have over time, that there is a special covenant between God and the United States, and that God has given it special attributes that make its people smarter and nobler than other peoples. Of course, one does not have to believe in God to believe in American exceptionalism. Woodrow Wilson, for example, made no reference to God when he said: “The manifest destiny of America is not to rule the world by physical force ... The destiny of America and the leadership of America is that she shall do the thinking of the world.”²⁸ Nor did Secretary of State Madeleine Albright appeal to God when she famously said in 1998: “If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation.

We stand tall. We see further into the future.”²⁹ Americans, as Reinhold Niebuhr noted, generally believe they are “tutors of mankind in its pilgrimage to perfection.”³⁰ All of this is to say Americans are nationalists to the core, even though this is not how most of them think of themselves.

Nations sometimes go beyond feeling superior to other nations and end up loathing their competitors. I call this hypernationalism: the belief that other nations are not just inferior but dangerous, and must be dealt with harshly or even brutally. In such cases, contempt and hatred of “the other” suffuses the nation and creates powerful incentives to eliminate that threat with violence.³¹ Yet nations do not always loathe each other; sometimes they get along quite well.

A Deep History

History matters greatly for all nations, although they tend to emphasize creating myths rather than getting the facts right. Nations invent heroic stories about themselves to denigrate the achievements of other nations and

buttress their claim that they are special. “Chauvinist mythmaking,” as Stephen Van Evera notes, “is a hallmark of nationalism, practiced by nearly all nationalist movements to some degree.”³² Those myths, he argues, come in different varieties. Some are meant to glorify past behavior, while others are invented to whitewash instances where the nation acted foolishly or shamefully. Other myths malign rival nations by making them look inferior or blaming them for the home nation’s past or present problems. But even when some myth proves impossible to sell, the usual response is to defend the nation anyway, because “it is my nation, right or wrong.”

Nations also employ myths to argue that they have ancient roots, which explains in part why ethnicity is occasionally defined in terms of timeless features. Most people want to believe their nation has a long and rich tradition, even though few do. History is altered or rewritten to remedy the problem. This phenomenon was commonplace in nineteenth-century Europe, when nationalism was sweeping the region and history was becoming a scholarly enterprise. Patrick Geary describes the result: “Modern history was born in the nineteenth century, conceived and developed as an instrument of European nationalism. As a tool of nationalist ideology, the history of Europe’s nations was a great success, but it has turned our understanding of the past into a toxic waste dump.”³³ Mythmaking and nationalism go hand in hand, which is why Ernest Renan said, “Historical error is an essential factor in the creation of a nation.”³⁴

Sacred Territory

Nations invariably identify with specific geographical spaces, which they treat as sacred territory.³⁵ People form a deep emotional attachment with land they perceive as their rightful homeland. The principal aim is to establish sovereignty over that territory, which is inextricably bound up with the nation’s identity. And if any part of that imagined homeland is lost, the nation’s members are almost always committed to recovering it. A good example is China’s attitude toward Taiwan. It is widely and deeply believed among mainland Chinese that Taiwan is a part of China and must eventually be reintegrated, even though the Taiwanese have developed their own identity in recent decades and want Taiwan to be treated as a sovereign nation-state. Successive governments in Beijing have emphasized that they would go to war if Taiwan declared itself an independent country,

even though a war would likely do significant damage to China’s economy.³⁶ All nations, not just China, are obsessed with exercising authority over the territory they believe is an integral part of their hallowed homeland.

The large social groups that came before nations also cared about controlling territory, but they rarely viewed it as sacred space. Territory mattered largely for economic and military reasons. Prime real estate, which included much of the land in Europe, contained valuable resources, including manpower, that were essential for building a powerful economy and a formidable military force. Some territory was also strategically important: it provided defensible borders or access to an important waterway or ocean. This instrumental view meant that leaders could treat their territory as divisible under the right circumstances. But a nation’s territory holds enormous intrinsic value as part of its cultural heritage, which means it is indivisible.³⁷

Sovereignty

Finally, nations aim to maximize their control over their own political fate, which is another way of saying they are deeply concerned about sovereignty, or how political authority is arranged inside a state as well as among states. In domestic terms, sovereignty denotes where supreme political authority lies within a state.³⁸ The sovereign holds the ultimate authority to formulate and execute domestic as well as foreign policy.³⁹

There can be only one sovereign within a state, as sovereignty is indivisible. In the dynastic states that populated Europe between roughly 1500 and 1800, sovereignty rested exclusively with the king or queen and was said to be conferred on the crown by God. Thus it was commonplace during that period to talk about the “divine right of kings.” But this perspective on sovereignty is incompatible with nationalism. In a nation-state, supreme authority resides in the people or the nation. The people are not subjects who owe allegiance to a monarch but citizens with the rights and responsibilities that come with being members of a nation. As such, they are all equals.

This notion of popular sovereignty is clearly reflected in the French constitution of 1791, which states: “Sovereignty is one, indivisible, inalienable, and imprescriptible; it belongs to the Nation; no group can attribute sovereignty to itself nor can an individual arrogate it to himself.”⁴⁰ That challenge to monarchical authority

would have confounded Louis XV, who said, “The rights and interests of the nation, which some dare to regard as a separate body from the monarch, are necessarily united with my rights and interests, and they repose only in my hands.”⁴¹ (This is simply a more prolix version of his predecessor’s famous outburst, “Tetat, c’est moi!”) Before the coming of nationalism, writes the international relations scholar Robert Jackson, “sovereign rulers were preoccupied with territory but were largely indifferent

in the international system will limit a sovereign state’s menu of options, but sovereignty demands that other states not purposely intrude in its politics. States are deeply committed to self-determination, and nations, which are inextricably bound up with the state, care greatly about self-determination, both in dealing with other nation-states and inside their own states.

This emphasis on self-determination, coupled with the sense of oneness integral to nationalism, points

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to the peoples that occupied it, provided they accepted their authority.”⁴² Kings and queens often felt they had more in common with their fellow sovereigns than the populations under their control.

The notion of popular sovereignty must be qualified, though, because it is virtually impossible for a nation to collectively make policy decisions, in an emergency especially, but also in normal times. Speed and efficiency demand that in an existential crisis, supreme authority rests with a single person or at most a few people.⁴³ In more ordinary circumstances, decisions can be made by either autocrats or democratically elected leaders. The key feature in all of these circumstances, however, is that the decider or deciders have a close bond with their people and believe they are acting on the people’s behalf. As the political theorist Bernard Yack writes, “Even authoritarian and totalitarian nationalists invoke popular sovereignty to justify their demands for extreme forms of national assertion.”⁴⁴ The dynastic sovereigns did not consider themselves servants of the populations they controlled, but instead acted to serve either their own interests or what they perceived to be the state’s interests.

Internationally, sovereignty means that the state wants the ability to make its own decisions on both domestic and foreign policy, free from outside interference. That viewpoint applies to both dynastic states and nation-states. Of course, various structural forces

us to the democratic impulse embedded in this ism.⁴⁵ Robespierre captured the link between democracy and nationalism when he wrote: “It is only under a democracy that the state is the fatherland of all the individuals who compose it and can count as many active defenders of its cause as it has citizens.”⁴⁶ This is not to say nationalism is the principal cause of democracy, because it is not, but it is an important contributing factor. It is no accident that over the past two centuries, democracy has spread across large portions of the globe at the same time that nationalism was gaining sway around the world. Note, however, that I am talking about nationalism’s relationship with democracy, not with liberalism. Liberalism and nationalism sometimes clash in fundamental ways.

In sum, nations have six core features that, taken together, distinguish them from the kinds of large social groups that dominated the landscape before nations came on the scene. These features are a powerful sense of oneness, a distinct culture, a marked sense of specialness, a historical narrative that emphasizes timelessness, a deep attachment to territory, and a strong commitment to sovereignty or self-determination.

The Essential Functions of a Nation

Nations serve their members in two critically important ways: they facilitate survival and fulfill

important psychological needs. In this they are no different from their predecessors, although the actual mechanics vary somewhat between them.

Nations are primarily survival vehicles. Their underlying culture allows members to cooperate easily and effectively, which in turn maximizes their chances of securing life's basic necessities. Take language, for example. The fact that a nation's people mostly speak

web that gives members a sense they are part of a long and rich tradition.⁵⁰ This veneration of the nation acts as a formidable bonding force that enhances its cohesiveness and boosts its prospects for survival.

Why Nations Want States

So far I have paid little attention to the political dimension of nationhood, but as I explained in chapter 2,

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the same language makes it easy for them to communicate and work together to achieve important goals.⁴⁷ The same is true of a nation's customs and rituals, and its behavioral norms. Cooperation also facilitates building reliable security forces that can protect individual members if they are threatened by another member or an outsider. A nation's culture and sense of oneness help it create clear boundaries with other nations, which also help identify and protect against outsiders. Finally, nations care greatly about self-determination, in part because it allows them to make the decisions they think are necessary to protect them from rival nations.

But nations are more than survival vehicles. For most people, they also fulfill important emotional needs. We are all social animals and have little choice but to belong to groups, but there are many social groups.⁴⁸ What makes a nation so special is that it provides an existential narrative. It gives its members a strong sense that they are part of an exceptional and exclusive community whose history is filled with important traditions as well as remarkable individuals and events. Their culture, in other words, is special. Members want to live together to carry on those traditions, “validate the heritage that has been jointly received,”⁴⁹ and share a common destiny.

Furthermore, nations promise their members that they will be there for future generations the way they were there in the past. In this sense, nationalism is much like religion, which also does an excellent job of weaving the past, present, and future into a seamless

all large social groups, including nations, need political institutions from the beginning to survive. For a nation, the best possible situation is to have its own state.

What, then, is a state? Some scholars use the term to describe almost all of the higher political institutions that have existed over time. For example, Charles Tilly writes in his seminal book *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, “States have been the world's largest and most powerful organizations for more than five thousand years.”⁵¹ Such a broad definition, however, fails to capture important differences among the widely varying political forms that have existed in Europe and other regions throughout history. Instead, I restrict the term *state* to the particular political entity that began to take shape in Europe during the early 1500s and eventually spread across the globe. It differs significantly from its many predecessors, which include (to name just a few) city-states, empires, tribes, principalities, duchies, theocracies, and feudal monarchies. The state in my story takes two forms: the dynastic state, which predominated from about 1500 to 1800, and the nation-state, which replaced it.

A state is a political institution that controls a large territory with well defined borders and has the ability to employ force to break or discipline the individuals and groups living within those borders.⁵² Within these borders, in other words, the state has “exclusive supreme command, enabling it within this territory, to overrule the lower administrative echelons as well as disregard

private property.”⁵³ Decision making is centralized in a state: power is concentrated at the center. In practical terms, this means a state has a permanent bureaucracy, a system of rules and laws, and the capacity to levy taxes on the people living within its borders. Most importantly, the central administration controls the lawful tools of violence. The state, of course, looks outward as well as inward, and thus engages in diplomacy, economic intercourse, security competition, and war with other states.

One might think that medieval kings had significant political power. But the most powerful political actors were usually the resident nobles and the bishops who ran the local churches. Central authorities were generally no match for these local forces, which had much more influence on an individual’s daily life than did monarchs. As the historians Joseph Strayer and Dana Munro note, “Kings were neither especially dignified nor especially important. In most regions of Europe they did not

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The concept of sovereignty was conceived just as dynastic states were emerging in Europe, which is why they are sometimes referred to as sovereign states. Sovereignty was vested in the crown in those dynastic states, but with the coming of the nation-state, it became lodged in the people. Although sovereignty is all about who has supreme political authority, not actual political power, in the real world authority and power are closely linked. Who possessed ultimate authority mattered greatly in the emerging states, because those people could become remarkably powerful, which meant they would have a huge influence on the people who fell under their purview.

Before the dynastic state came on the scene, both political authority and political power in Europe were much more decentralized. It was often difficult to tell where sovereignty resided. During the Middle Ages (roughly 500 to 1500 AD), writes the political sociologist William Sewell, “The social system was both corporate and hierarchical. ... People belonged to a whole range of constituted solidarity units, sharing communities of recognition in a simultaneously negotiated fashion with overlapping collections of other persons.”⁵⁴ The Catholic Church had some authority, but so did kings, the local nobility, towns, cities, and even guilds. Political authority was, as Robert Jackson puts it, “diverse, dislocated, and disjointed.”⁵⁵ The difficulty of determining who had supreme authority was abetted by the fact that no political entity in Europe was significantly more powerful than its competitors.

receive the primary allegiance of their peoples and could not determine the political destinies of their countries. ... The personal bond between a man and his lord was far stronger than the vague idea of allegiance to the state.”⁵⁶

The situation began to change in the early 1500s with the emergence of the dynastic state, which was committed to asserting political control over all people within its borders. This meant weakening the authority of the Catholic Church in Rome as well as that of local authorities. Nevertheless, it took time for the dynastic state to centralize control within its borders, because the technology of the day did not permit easy projection of power by the crown. Road systems across Europe were primitive, communication could travel no faster than a horse or a ship, and the capacity to make multiple copies of documents was just beginning to develop.⁵⁷ Not until some three hundred years after the first states began appearing in Europe did it make sense to talk about concentrated power at their centers.

By the late 1700s, however, the state was much better positioned to confront the local authorities inside its borders. Not surprisingly, the newly emerging nations paid this development much attention. Each wanted its own nation-state.

Nations covet a state for two reasons, the first of which is self-determination. Like any large social group, nations prefer to run their own affairs and determine their own fates as much as possible. The best way to achieve those ends is for a nation to control the political

institutions that shape its daily life. In the modern world, that translates into having one's own state. Of course, not every nation can fulfill this ambition, and nations that cannot are not necessarily doomed to disappear. As the political philosopher Yael Tamir notes, "The right to self-determination can be realized in a variety of different ways: cultural autonomies, regional autonomies, federations, and confederations." But she acknowledges that "unquestionably a nation-state can ensure the widest possible degree of national autonomy and the maximum range of possibilities for the enjoyment of national life."⁵⁸ Nations push from the bottom up to establish states they can dominate and run.

Nations also want their own states because this is the best way to maximize their survival prospects. Nations face a variety of threats to their existence, starting with the intrusive nature of the modern state. The dynastic state did not interfere much in the daily lives of the people within its borders. It mainly collected taxes and looked for relatively small numbers of young men who might serve in the army. Otherwise, people were pretty much left alone under the purview of local cultural and political institutions. But as the state became more deeply involved in its citizens' lives, that changed drastically. States had a powerful incentive to mold their people into a single culture with a common language and a shared history.⁵⁹

This impulse to homogenize the culture, which is synonymous with nation-building, presents a grave danger for any minority group in a multinational state, simply because the majority is likely to ensure that the emerging common culture is defined by its own language and traditions. Minority cultures are likely to be pushed aside and maybe even disappear. As Walker Connor points out, states that engage in nation-building are invariably in the business of nation-breaking as well.⁶⁰ The best way for a nation to avoid that fate is to have its own state. This logic explains why so many multinational states have broken apart over the past two centuries.⁶¹

Another reason members of minority nations worry about their survival is that they might be killed in a civil war. A good example is the Hutu genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. A murderous campaign against a minority group might happen for a number of reasons. It might be driven by resentment over the minority's disproportionate influence in the economy,

or the minority might be seen as a fifth column, like the Armenians in Turkey during World War I.⁶² It is always safer to have your own state than to be on the short end of the power balance in a fractious multinational state.

Finally, national survival was a matter of great concern for subject peoples during the age of imperialism, and fear of conquest played an important role in spreading the modern state system beyond Europe.⁶³ Between the early sixteenth century and the early twentieth, the European great powers created empires covering large portions of the globe. The indigenous people who became subjects of those far-flung empires often saw their cultures badly damaged by the imperial powers, which frequently restricted the natives' education, destroyed their economies, conscripted their young men, confiscated their farmland, and even forced native peoples into virtual (or actual) slavery. Local populations, spurred on by their elites, eventually began to see themselves as nations and to think about self-determination. In most cases, the only way to achieve that end was to break away from the empire and establish an independent nation-state.

These persuasive reasons for a nation to want its own state have contributed greatly to the development of the nation-state. The converse is true as well: dynastic states had compelling reasons to turn themselves into nation-states, as states benefit greatly when their people are organized into nations.

Why States Want Nations

Nationalism is essential for economic as well as military success, both of which matter greatly for a state's survival. Governing elites also foster nationalism through their efforts to make their populations governable—never an easy task.

In the industrial age, states that want to compete economically have no choice but to create a common culture, as Ernest Gellner argues in his classic work *Nations and Nationalism*. Industry requires laborers who are literate and can communicate with each other. This means states need universal education as well as a common language. Industrial societies, in other words, demand a high degree of cultural homogeneity; they require a nation. The state plays the leading role in fostering that shared culture, especially through education, where it plays a central role in determining what is taught in the classroom. "The monopoly of legitimate education," Gellner

writes, “is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence.”⁶⁴

There are also compelling national security reasons for states to promote nationalism.⁶⁵ As Barry Posen notes, “Any argument that one can make for the economic function of literacy and a shared culture is at least as plausible for a military function, particularly in mass warfare.”⁶⁶ There is an abundance of evidence showing that educated soldiers perform far better in

both before and during battles. Rulers built their armies with mercenaries and “the criminal, the vagabond, and the destitute” from their own societies, and these soldiers felt little loyalty to the country for which they were fighting.⁶⁹ By far a greater motivation was to avoid getting killed. Desertion is much less of a problem when soldiers are drawn from a nationalistic population: they are primed to defend their country by putting themselves in harm’s way. Napoleon captured this shift when he

“Nationalism can have a profound effect on the outcome of a war when one side uses it to build a powerful military while its opponents do not.”

combat than illiterate ones. And compared with those with different languages and cultures, soldiers who speak the same language and share many of the same practices and beliefs are more easily molded into an effective fighting force.⁶⁷

There is another way in which nationalism is a huge force multiplier. Because nationalism creates tight bonds between a people and their state, leaders in wartime—especially in times of extreme emergency—can usually get their citizens to steadfastly support the war effort and put on a uniform and fight.⁶⁸ Nation-states can raise large militaries and sustain them for long periods of time. None of the great powers in World War I, for example, ran out of soldiers. During each year of that unbelievably bloody conflict, the governments routinely replaced their many thousands of lost soldiers with a new crop of eligible males. (In the end, the war killed about nine million in uniform and seven million civilians.) This does not mean armies never collapse after years of deadly fighting, as the Russian army did in the fall of 1917 and the German army did a year later. The French army mutinied in the spring of 1917. Nor is it to deny that public support for a nation-state’s war may quickly evaporate.

Nationalism, however, does more than increase the size of a country’s military forces. It also makes soldiers, sailors, and airmen more reliable and committed to fighting for their country. In the age of the dynastic state, desertion was a major problem for military commanders

proclaimed, “All men who value life more than the glory of the nation and the esteem of their comrades should not be members of the French army.”⁷⁰

Nationalism can have a profound effect on the outcome of a war when one side uses it to build a powerful military while its opponents do not. After French nationalism in the wake of the 1789 Revolution helped Napoleon create the mightiest army in Europe, Carl von Clausewitz, who fought against it as an officer in the Prussian military, described its prowess: “This juggernaut of war, based on the strength of the entire people, began its pulverizing course through Europe. It moved with such confidence and certainty that whenever it was opposed by armies of the traditional type there could never be a moment’s doubt as to the result.”⁷¹ Other countries could hope to survive only if they built an army like the French army, and the only way to do that was to cultivate a nation-state.⁷²

Finally, there is a two-pronged logic behind governing a state that works to promote nationalism. First, leaders of all kinds desire popular allegiance. They want their people to be as united as possible and feel loyal to the state, which is not easy to achieve given that no society can ever reach a thoroughgoing consensus about what constitutes the good life. By fostering a common culture and tight bonds between the people and their state, nationalism can be the glue that holds otherwise disputatious people together.

Consider Britain and France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when states were just emerging as a political form and both countries were riven with conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. In his book *Faith in Nation*, Anthony Marx explains how the ruling monarchs in London and Paris diligently worked to end those conflicts and construct a common culture in their respective countries. Their aim, he notes, was not simply to generate greater

cultures and building a unified nation, even if that is not the intent.

In sum, just as nations have powerful reasons to want their own states, states invariably try to mold their populations into nations. The complementary logics at the root of nationalism work to meld nations and states together into nation-states and have made them the dominant political form in the world. This is one of the realities that liberalism must deal with.

“By fostering a common culture and tight bonds between the people and their state, nationalism can be the glue that holds otherwise disputatious people together.”

cohesion in the populace but also to build loyalty between the people and their rulers.⁷³ They were largely successful in both cases, although they did not go so far as to create nations, which came later. Nevertheless, their efforts explain why Britain and France were among the earliest dynastic states to evolve into nation-states.

States also have powerful incentives to shape their societies in ways that make day-to-day governance easier. Political leaders and bureaucrats alike abhor complexity, because it makes it difficult for them to make sense of the world around them and manage it to their state's advantage. They especially dislike trying to run a country where a variety of local cultures have their own boundaries, educational systems, measures, property systems, rules, and languages. To remedy this problem, governing elites engage in social engineering aimed at making it easier to gain knowledge about their country, which, in turn, makes it easier to administer. The key to success is to eliminate heterogeneity, which, according to James Scott, involves complementary processes: simplification and legibility. “A thoroughly legible society,” Scott writes, “eliminates local monopolies of information and creates a kind of national transparency through the uniformity of codes, identities, statistics, regulations, and measures.” But the “most powerful” of all “state simplifications” is “the imposition of a single, official language.”⁷⁴ Making a society more homogeneous means transcending local

Living with the Dominator

The best starting point for understanding the relationship between liberalism and nationalism is to list their main differences. There are five key ones. First, liberalism focuses on the individual and pays little attention to social groups. Nationalism does the opposite: it rivets on the social group, which of course is the nation. The individual, while not irrelevant, is subordinate to the nation, which provides him with a powerful sense of participation in an enterprise with a timeless and grand tradition.

Second, natural rights and toleration are central components of liberal theory. Nationalism pays them little attention, although a nation-state can certainly have its own set of rights and preach toleration.

Third, liberalism has a particularist strand, which stems from its assumption that there are no final truths about the good life, and a universal strand, derived from its emphasis on inalienable rights. A certain tension exists between these strands. Nationalism does not have a universalist strand; despite its universal appeal, it is particularist all the way down.

Fourth, although the state is of central importance for both theories, its relationship to the wider public is different in each. With liberalism, the state's main functions are to act as a night watchman, arbitrate disputes, and do significant social engineering for the purposes of promoting individual rights and managing the various problems that attend daily life in a modern society. *Modus vivendi* liberals are opposed to social engineering, especially for the purpose of fostering positive rights,

but that is a battle they have lost. Liberalism cultivates hardly any emotional attachment to the state among its citizens, even despite their enormous dependence on it. This functional view of the state explains why it is hard to motivate people to fight and die for a purely liberal state. The nationalist state also maintains order and does substantial social engineering, but it inspires powerful allegiance. People are willing to fight and die for it.

Fifth, liberalism and nationalism view territory dif-

A purely liberal state is not feasible. Liberalism requires “the non-liberal underbelly of national community.”⁷⁷

Stephen Holmes captures this point when he writes: “Liberals have succeeded in realizing some of their ideals ... only because they have compromised with the realities of national sovereignty erected on a preliberal basis. Liberal rights are meaningful only within the confines of pre-existing, territorially-bounded states, and only where there exists a rights-enforcing power.”⁷⁸ To quote

“There is abundant evidence that these two isms can coexist inside a country. It is important to emphasize, however, that liberalism always operates within the context of a nation-state. Liberalism without nationalism is impossible.”

ferently. Nationalists tend to think of the land they live on, or aspire to live on, as sacred. It is their fatherland or motherland, and so worth making great sacrifices to defend. Where the land’s borders are located matters greatly. Liberalism has no room for hallowed territory; it pays little attention to where countries draw their borders, which squares with the emphasis liberals place on universal rights. In the liberal story, land is most important as private property that individuals have an inalienable right to own and sell as they see fit.

The Potential for Coexistence

Despite these differences, there is abundant evidence that these two isms can coexist inside a country. It is important to emphasize, however, that liberalism always operates within the context of a nation-state. Liberalism without nationalism is impossible. We live in a world of nation-states—a world of omnipresent nationalism. Liberalism, of course, is not omnipresent.

The international system contained few liberal democracies until after World War II.⁷⁵ Although their numbers have grown substantially since then, they have never accounted for even half the countries in the world. Freedom House, for example, reports that they represented 34 percent of the total in 1986 and 45 percent in 2017, but that the trend line is moving downward.⁷⁶ The key point, however, is that all of them are not simply liberal democracies but liberal nation-states.

another political theorist, Will Kymlicka: “The freedom which liberals demand for individuals is not primarily the freedom to go beyond one’s language and history, but rather the freedom to move around within one’s societal culture, to distance oneself from particular cultural roles, to choose which features of the culture are most worth developing, and which are without value.”⁷⁹

We can get a good sense of how liberalism relates to nationalism from the literature on American national identity. It was once commonplace for scholars to argue that the United States is a deeply liberal country while paying little attention to American nationalism. This perspective is reflected in Louis Hartz’s classic 1955 book *The Liberal Tradition in America*. He maintains that the United States was born a liberal country and never had a feudal tradition, unlike its European counterparts. Lacking a significant political right or left, it has instead veered toward an illiberal liberalism. But Hartz says little about American nationalism. In this he follows in the footsteps of Alexis de Tocqueville and Gunnar Myrdal, who also wrote important books on American identity that largely ignore nationalism.⁸⁰

This was a “misleading orthodoxy,” as Rogers Smith points out in his important book *Civic Ideals*.⁸¹ American identity does not revolve only around liberalism, as Hartz seemed to think, but is inextricably bound up with nationalism. Political elites in the United States, Smith argues, “require a population to

lead that imagines itself to be a ‘people,’” which is another way of saying a nation.⁸² He emphasizes that conceptions of peoplehood, which are particularist at their core, are at odds with liberalism’s emphasis on “universal equal human rights.”⁸³ Moreover, Smith notes that it is impossible to have a purely liberal state.⁸⁴

Among modern scholars, it appears that Smith’s view of the importance of “peoplehood” has won the day. For example, the importance of nationalism in American political life is clearly reflected in Anatol Lieven’s *American Nationalism* and Samuel Huntington’s last book, *Who Are We?* Huntington’s great concern was that America’s national identity is withering away and that eventually it will be left with only its liberal creed, which by itself cannot sustain the United States for long.⁸⁵

Finally, as David Armitage reminds us, the American Declaration of Independence did not just emphasize the universality of individual rights. It also paid much attention to the idea of “one people” establishing sovereignty, which, of course, is what the colonists were doing at the time. He calls the Declaration “the birth certificate of the American nation.” (I would modify this slightly and call it the birth certificate of the American nation-state.) Between these “two distinct elements,” Armitage maintains, the founders and their successors paid more attention to “the assertion of popular sovereignty to create a new state” than to “ideas of individual rights.” He argues that the Declaration’s substantial universal appeal is based more on the sovereignty dimension than the rights one.⁸⁶

On a related matter, some scholars make a distinction between civic nationalism and cultural or ethnic nationalism. For them, the word civic is a euphemism for liberal, which essentially means they are talking about fashioning a nation based almost exclusively on liberal values. In other words, they are asserting that one may have a nation without a culture based on a widely accepted package of distinct practices and beliefs. Liberalism alone can do the job. Scholars who make this argument usually hold up the United States and the countries of Western Europe as successful examples of this phenomenon.⁸⁷ The notion of civic nationalism captures Hartz’s description of the United States.

Civic nationalism is not a useful concept. While liberal values can be a component of a nation’s culture, they cannot be the sole basis of national identity. Civic

nationalism is not a meaningful notion in good part because social groups like nations invariably have a variety of deeply rooted practices and beliefs that matter greatly in their members’ daily lives. It is virtually impossible for a nation to function effectively without a multifaceted culture.⁸⁸ This is why most scholars who write about American culture today emphasize nationalism as well as liberalism. The American nation, like all nations, has a rich culture, which includes a variety of practices and beliefs. This makes Americans not simply liberals but liberal nationalists. When someone self-identifies as an American, she is effectively saying she is an American nationalist.

Why Nationalism Dominates

It should be clear by now that nationalism is a more powerful force than liberalism. Nationalism is pervasive, while liberalism is not. Liberalism always has to operate in the context of a nationalist state. Still, it would be wrong to think that liberalism matters for little. Even though it almost always loses in a direct conflict with nationalism, liberalism is a powerful ideology.

The two isms are not always at loggerheads. There should be little conflict between them in a society that largely comprises one nation and has a thick culture. In such cases, which include the United States, nationalism should not get in the way of creating a vibrant civil society with considerable room for individual rights and freedom from state interference. The same logic should apply in multinational states where the core nation and the minority nations respect each other’s rights and are tolerant of each other’s differences. Present-day Canada and India, with their thin national cultures, fit in this category.

Liberalism and nationalism conflict when there is deep hostility between the different groups in a multinational country. In those circumstances, it is almost impossible for liberalism to take hold in the face of national animosities. When relations between groups are filled with anger and hatred, tolerance and equal rights are extremely difficult to promote. Usually in such instances, the most powerful national group discriminates against the weaker group in an illiberal way. Israel’s behavior toward the Palestinians is a good example, and with the rise of Hindu extremism, India is in danger of becoming an illiberal democracy.⁸⁹

These circumstances favor nationalism for two reasons. First, liberals oversell the importance of individual rights, which is at the heart of their theory. Most people care about rights, but it is not a burning issue for them, and its influence in daily political life is much more limited than liberals recognize. It is especially limited when the rights conflict with the passions aroused by nationalist animosities. Second and more importantly, nationalism is more in sync

everyone is encouraged to pursue his own self-interest, based on the assumption that the sum of all individuals' selfish behavior will be the common good. This self-regarding behavior is somewhat countered by contemporary liberalism's emphasis on ensuring equal opportunity for everyone, although not all liberals support that goal. In brief, liberalism not only contributes little to building societies but also has features that undermine social cohesion.

“ Liberalism and nationalism conflict when there is deep hostility between the different groups in a multinational country. In those circumstances, it is almost impossible for liberalism to take hold in the face of national animosities. ”

with human nature than liberalism, which mistakenly treats individuals as utility maximizers who worry only about their own welfare, rather than as intensely social beings.⁹⁰ Nationalism, which is predicated on the correct belief that individuals invariably have a strong sense of loyalty toward their own group, is better at addressing several critically important human needs.⁹¹ This is why it is a ubiquitous force in the modern world and liberalism is not.⁹²

It is because liberalism fails to provide individuals with a sense of community that it cannot provide the glue to hold a society together. It does not make them feel they are part of a large and vibrant group that is special and worthy of esteem, which is important to people psychologically as well as for keeping a society intact. This problem derives partly from liberalism's particularist strand—that it rivets on atomistic individuals who have rights but few duties and obligations—and partly from its universalist strand: its emphasis on inalienable rights, which apply to all people, not just the members of a particular group.

In fact, liberalism does not simply fail to provide the bonds to keep a society intact; it also has the potential to eat away at those bonds and ultimately damage the society's foundations. The taproot of the problem is liberalism's radical individualism and its emphasis on utility maximization. It places virtually no emphasis on the importance of fostering a sense of community and caring about fellow citizens. Instead,

Nationalism, in contrast, is all about community and members' responsibilities to the collectivity. Unlike liberalism, it works toward creating a sense of belonging. It satisfies individuals' emotional need to be part of a large group with a rich tradition and a bright future. Moreover, nationalism is well suited to holding a society together, except in multinational states where the constituent nations are hostile to each other.

Liberalism also does a poor job of tying the individual to the state. In the liberal story, the state is the product of a social contract among individuals, and its main task is to protect them from each other and allow each to pursue her own notion of the good life. Although the state works to promote equal opportunity for its citizens, some liberals contest that mission, and the liberal state, by definition, has limited capacity to interfere in its citizens' lives. Individuals in the liberal story are not expected to have a deep emotional attachment to their state, and it is hard to imagine them putting their lives on the line for it.⁹³ Nationalism, on the other hand, creates strong bonds between individuals and their state. Many people are strongly inclined to fight and die, if necessary, for their nation-state.

Finally, the vast majority of people in the modern world care greatly about territory. Their identity is bound up in land they consider sacred. This perspective, of course, is central to nationalism and accounts for much of its appeal. Liberalism ignores the link between identity and territory. Uday Mehta maintains

that “political theorists in the Anglo-American liberal tradition have, for the most part, not only ignored the links between political identity and territory, but have also conceptualized the former in terms that at least implicitly deny any significance to the latter and the links between the two.”⁹⁴ Land is important to liberalism as private property, but that is a different matter.

All of this is to say that liberalism can have an important role in shaping daily life, but it almost always plays second fiddle to nationalism.

Overselling Individual Rights

The liberal case for rights rests on two claims. First, the overwhelming majority of people around the world recognize what those rights are and think they are universal and inalienable, meaning they apply equally to everyone in the world and cannot be given or taken away. Second, people across the board believe individual rights are truly important and should be privileged in the political arena. There are good reasons to doubt both of these suppositions. Rights are not insignificant, one can certainly argue that they should be universal and inalienable, and even if that is visibly not true everywhere, they are still of great importance in particular countries, where they form part of a well-established tradition. The 1689 English Bill of Rights, for example, which arose mainly out of the politics of the Glorious Revolution, gained legitimacy by invoking “ancient rights and liberties.”⁹⁵

Privileging the concept of inalienable rights creates theoretical as well as evidentiary problems. When you look carefully at the underlying logic, there are three reasons to be skeptical that any widely agreed-upon body of rights can exist; and when you look closely at the historical record, it provides considerable evidence to back up that skepticism.

False Universalism

For starters, liberalism assumes there is no possibility of a worldwide consensus on what constitutes the good life. Particular societies may reach substantial agreement on first principles, but they will never achieve universal agreement, save for the belief that everyone has a basic right to survival. At the same time, however, liberals maintain that there is some objectively correct set of individual rights, and that it is possible to discern what those rights

are, how they relate to each other, and that they are inalienable.

How can this be, since individual rights are all about first principles? They are profoundly important for defining how people think about and act toward their fellow humans. Thus it is hard to believe, given the limits of our critical faculties, that there can be anything close to universal agreement on whether rights are inalienable, what they should be, and which ones should take precedence. There is a fundamental disagreement between *modus vivendi* and progressive liberals over whether individuals have a right to equal opportunity, and over positive rights more generally. Well-informed, well-meaning citizens disagree profoundly over whether there is a right to abortion or to affirmative action. These are matters that deal with the good life, and they show that we should not expect reason to provide collective truths.

To take this a step further, placing rights at the core of any political system is tantamount to saying that the best political order is a liberal one. It is difficult to imagine how it is possible to privilege rights in the absence of a liberal or at least quasi-liberal state. Political liberals are sometimes surprisingly intolerant toward illiberal groups or states, thinking that the only legitimate political order is a liberal one. This belief has long been widespread in the United States, as Louis Hartz makes clear in *The Liberal Tradition in America*. It is also on display in John Rawls’s *The Law of Peoples*, where he makes it clear that the best world is one populated solely with liberal democracies.⁹⁶ John Locke also emphasized that liberal societies cannot tolerate groups that do not play by liberal rules.

Thus when liberals talk about inalienable rights, they are effectively defining the good life. They make no meaningful distinction between these two subjects. But if it is an axiom of liberalism (backed up by observation) that you cannot get universal agreement on first principles, then it follows that you cannot get a planetary consensus on individual rights.

I noted in the previous chapter that there is a paradox in political liberalism, which stems from the fact that its core holds a particularist as well as a universalist strand. The particularism, of course, comes from the liberal belief that there is no truth regarding the good life, while the universalism is tied to the concept of inalienable rights. These two dimensions, I emphasized,

are in tension with each other. But under my analysis here, that paradox disappears, because liberalism properly understood is particularist all the way down. There can be no universal agreement about individual rights, just as there is no universal agreement about the good life, because there is no meaningful difference between those two realms.

Trumping Rights

There is a second theoretical problem with liberal thinking about rights: other considerations sometimes push them into the background. People will usually privilege political stability, which involves their personal security and welfare, over rights when the two come into conflict. For example, if rights, and liberal democracy generally, lead to disorder, which might mean privation or death, individual rights are unlikely to matter much in practice, even among a public that in principle genuinely favors them.

This logic is likely to apply in multinational states where there are deep-seated animosities among the rival groups. In such instances, many people will prefer an authoritarian leader who can keep the other factions at bay. There will also be cases, however, where a country is in turmoil for some reason and adopting a liberal democratic system would only make the problem worse. Finally, individual rights sometimes take a backseat to concerns about an external threat.

Countries facing existential threats over long periods tend to become garrison states—also known as national security states—that often trample on individual rights.⁹⁷

The final theoretical problem regarding rights concerns nationalism. According to the liberal story, rights apply equally to everyone, everywhere. But this flies in the face of nationalism, in which the concept of sovereignty means that each state is free to determine for itself which rights matter and how much they matter. Nation-states are likely to be jealous defenders of their self-determination, and it is hard to imagine them reaching a universal consensus on the correct package of rights.

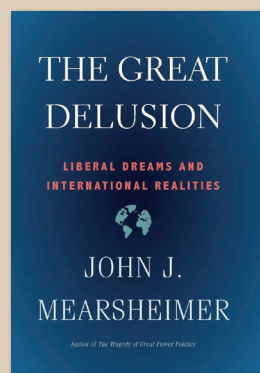
Furthermore, nationalism is all about privileging one's own group over others. In an international system composed almost wholly of nation-states, most people will favor their fellow nationals over outsiders. In practice, countries are unlikely to accord the "other" the same rights given to their own people, and where nationalism turns ugly, they will have little difficulty trampling on the rights of foreigners they dislike or hate. In brief, nationalism, which is particularist to the core, presents a serious threat to the notion of inalienable rights.

One can make the case that it is dangerous to think in terms of universal rights in a world of nation-states. Doing so risks giving people the impression that there is some higher authority—maybe some international institution—empowered to protect their rights. In fact,

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John Joseph Mearsheimer, PhD, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, dissects what he regards as the adverse influence of traditional liberalism on the formation of U.S. government policy foreign and domestic since the Cold War, especially highlighting what he describes as the influence of fallacious assumptions about universal agreement among nation-states on the existence of the "unalienable rights" stemming from liberal ideology. He details how policies based on such assumptions have resulted in numerous failed attempts to impose liberal hegemony on the world order since the end of the Cold War ended, sometimes with catastrophic effects, and that will continue to fail in the future because of a lack of appreciation among policy makers for the greater influence of nationalism on international relations.



there is no such entity; states protect an individual's rights, not some superior authority. Hannah Arendt saw the problem: "The Rights of Man ... had been defined as 'inalienable' because they were supposed to be independent of all governments; but it turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them."⁹⁸ She maintained that stateless people and unwanted minorities residing inside nation-states live in grave danger, because there is no enforcement mechanism to defend their rights, including the right to life, if they come under attack. "The abstract nakedness of being nothing but human," she argued, "was their greatest danger."⁹⁹

Arendt's solution was to eschew talk of universal rights and instead emphasize "nationally guaranteed rights." In this she aligned herself with Edmund Burke, who "opposed the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man" and instead made the case that rights "spring 'from within the nation.'" For Arendt, as for Burke, "It was much wiser to rely on an 'entailed inheritance' of rights which one transmits to one's children like life itself, and to claim one's rights to be the 'rights of an Englishman' rather than the inalienable rights of man."¹⁰⁰ Her opposition to this universalist strand of liberalism was driven in good part by concerns about survival.

Natural Rights and History

If reason tells us that everyone possesses a set of inalienable rights, as liberals claim, then it seems reasonable to expect that at least some important pre-modern thinkers would have understood this basic fact of life. That is not the case. Aristotle and Plato, as well as Machiavelli, apparently had no concept of natural rights. Hobbes and Locke did not begin developing the foundations of liberalism until the seventeenth century. Others, such as Benjamin Constant, Kant, and Montesquieu, followed in their footsteps, but many other political philosophers paid little attention to the liberal story about individual rights, and some, such as Burke and Bentham, explicitly challenged it. Thus it is not even possible to make the less sweeping claim that once the leading thinkers recognized the importance of natural rights, a solid consensus emerged. There has never been universal agreement that rights are inalienable or that they are fundamental to political life.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, liberals themselves disagree about which rights matter most and how to weigh them when they come into conflict. The problem is especially complicated when promoting equality is thrown into the mix.¹⁰² John Rawls maintains that "applying liberal principles has a certain simplicity," but this is only sometimes true.¹⁰³ Think about hate speech. Liberals who are absolutists regarding free speech believe it should be tolerated even if they find it abhorrent. Other liberals, however, want to ban it because it can seriously hurt those who are targeted, who have the right to be protected from verbal abuse just as they have a right to be protected from physical abuse.¹⁰⁴ There is no indisputable way to determine how to rank these different rights. As John Gray notes, "All regimes embody particular settlements among rival liberties."¹⁰⁵

Hobbes's and Locke's thinking about individual rights was significantly shaped by contingency and history. The hate-filled conflict between Catholics and Protestants that raged in their day, coupled with the deep socioeconomic changes taking place in Britain, deeply influenced the foundational ideas of liberalism. In short, political ideologies are not created by reason alone. They tend to develop at critical points in history, and liberalism is no exception.

Even the staunchest advocates of individual rights are usually willing to limit, even disregard, rights in a supreme emergency. When an individual's or a country's survival is at stake, rights cannot be allowed to get in the way of doing whatever is necessary to endure. John Stuart Mill, for example, maintains that "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection."¹⁰⁶ Michael Walzer, who argues that countries should fight wars under a strict moral code of conduct, follows in Mill's footsteps. At the end of his famous tract on just war theory, he writes that all the rules go out the window "when we are face-to-face not merely with defeat but with a defeat likely to bring disaster to a political community."¹⁰⁷ John Rawls too maintains that "political liberalism allows the supreme emergency exemption."¹⁰⁸

Countries or regions that have experienced great upheaval usually show a yearning for political stability that trumps any desire to create a liberal democracy. For example, a recent survey of Arab youth in the Middle East found that 53 percent of the respondents

believe that “promoting stability in the region is more important than promoting democracy.” Only 28 percent disagreed.¹⁰⁹ Consider too the case of President Paul Kagame, an authoritarian leader who seriously limits free speech in Rwanda, which experienced genocide in 1994. His main aim is to limit hostilities between the Hutus, who perpetrated the genocide, and the Tutsis, who were its principal victims. Kagame has enjoyed great success, and not surpris-

Even within the West, however, the commitment to individual rights is softer than most people realize. In the United States, leaders have violated individual rights when they thought the country was facing an extreme emergency. Probably the best-known example of this phenomenon is Abraham Lincoln’s actions during the Civil War (1861-65), when, among other things, he suspended habeas corpus, censored the mail, instituted military tribunals, and arrested individuals “who were

“ People are easily persuaded to respect their own rights, but convincing them that others’ rights are equally important is a difficult task. It is much easier to advance a bare-bones version of democracy that demands nothing more than free and fair elections in which the winners take office. ”

ingly he has been elected to three terms as president despite his illiberal policies.¹¹⁰

Russia’s strong preference for order over rights and democracy today is hardly surprising given what happened there in the 1990s, when its attempt to embrace Western-style democracy failed miserably, creating corruption and disorder on a grand scale. Since the early 2000s, Russia has become steadily more authoritarian, largely restoring order in the process. A March 2014 poll conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Center showed that “seventy-one percent of Russians say they are ready to sacrifice civil freedoms to maintain stability, order and personal well-being.”¹¹¹

Finally, if individual rights are recognized and highly regarded by almost everyone, it should be reasonably easy to spread liberalism to other countries. But it is not. People are easily persuaded to respect their own rights, but convincing them that others’ rights are equally important is a difficult task. It is much easier to advance a bare-bones version of democracy that demands nothing more than free and fair elections in which the winners take office. It took a long time for liberalism to take root throughout the West, which is where it got started and has had the greatest impact.¹¹² Of course, this is why the United States and its European allies are committed to spreading its values beyond the West.¹¹³

represented to him as being or about to engage in disloyal and treasonable practices.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, as Clinton Rossiter makes clear in *Constitutional Dictatorship*, the Civil War is not the only time America’s political leaders seriously limited rights in circumstances they felt were highly dangerous. One might expect there was a huge outcry, or at least significant protests, from the American people when their rights were curtailed. But they did not protest, mainly because the public’s support for individual rights in the United States is sometimes surprisingly soft.

The best evidence of the American people’s flexible commitment to liberalism is that they tolerated slavery until the Civil War, and then tolerated blatant racism in both the North and the South until the mid-1960s. Racism today is less socially acceptable but has hardly vanished. There was widespread discrimination against immigrants throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. This too rests a few inches underground today. Aristide Zolberg describes U.S. policy toward Chinese immigrants in the latter half of the nineteenth century as the “only successful instance of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the history of American immigration.”¹¹⁵ The Europeans who began moving to the United States in large numbers in the 1830s also faced marked discrimination well into the twentieth

century.¹¹⁶ Probably no group had it worse than the Irish, who were despised by the ruling WASP elites. And there is no greater instance of discrimination against a European ethnic group than what happened to German Americans during World War I.¹¹⁷ Although America was a thoroughly liberal country in principle from its inception, for most of its history it has hardly been a paragon of liberal virtue in practice.

Fortunately, this illiberal behavior toward African

universal rights. If that is true, it is hard to imagine that a passionate commitment to inalienable rights exists elsewhere, since no country has as rich a liberal tradition as the United States.

The bottom line is that the universal strand of liberalism is nowhere near as powerful as liberals believe. Liberal claims about the importance of individual rights are much less compelling than liberals seem to believe, and might even be dead wrong. This

“Although America was a thoroughly liberal country in principle from its inception, for most of its history it has hardly been a paragon of liberal virtue in practice.”

Americans and immigrants has mostly disappeared from public view, and the United States now strives to be a liberal country in practice as well as in theory. But the American public's support for individual rights is not especially deep. While the discourse about rights is pervasive in contemporary America, that has been the case only since the 1950s. Before then, Americans did not pay much attention to individual rights.¹¹⁸

The present interest in rights notwithstanding, according to the political scientist Gerald Rosenberg, many Americans understand little about the real meaning of inalienable rights, including that they are supposed to apply universally.¹¹⁹ Rosenberg shows that most equate rights with their own preferences. They tend to make rights claims that support their own interests but pay little attention to claims that do not. Thus it is unsurprising that Americans are willing to curtail important rights when it suits them. Rosenberg concludes, after examining a variety of public opinion surveys, that “Americans view the right to a free press as meaning only the ability to publish what people prefer to read. If the American public does not like the content, then the press should not be able to publish it.” Regarding free speech, he finds that “Americans are both deeply committed to free speech in the abstract and strongly opposed to free speech for unpopular groups.” Both cases, he emphasizes, provide “a good deal of empirical support for the notion of rights as preferences.”¹²⁰ It seems clear that many Americans are not deeply committed to the principle of

circumscribed view of rights has direct implications for toleration and the state, the other two mechanisms that foster peace and prosperity in a liberal society. The more that citizens respect individual rights, the easier it is to promote tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution, and thus reduce the work the state has to perform to keep order. But if respect for rights is thin, it will be more difficult to promote tolerance, and the state's role in maintaining peace at home will loom larger.

The Authoritarian Temptation

There is a potentially devastating argument against liberalism that needs to be addressed. James Madison identified it long ago, in *Federalist No. 10*.¹²¹ I do not think this argument ultimately reveals a fatal flaw in the theory, but it surely explains why it is often difficult to establish and maintain a liberal political order.

The taproot of the problem is that because there are always some sharp differences over first principles in every country, there will always be factions competing for power. As we saw, it matters greatly who governs the state because the faction in charge gets to write the rules, and in any society, whoever writes the rules gets to determine in part what constitutes the good life. There is no such thing as a neutral state that merely acts as an umpire among rival factions. One faction, or some combination of factions, has to run the government, and in the process it will shape society in important ways.

Thus each faction in a liberal democracy has a strong incentive to take over the state and not relinquish power to a rival faction. In the Middle East, this phenomenon is commonly referred to as “one man, one vote, one time.”¹²² Two motivating logics are at play here. Obviously, the faction that seized control would get to write the rules and not have to worry about losing a future election to a rival faction that might rewrite the rules. Additionally, each faction has good reason to think that every other faction understands this logic, and thus any faction that trusts another faction risks being played for a sucker. It is better to move first and capture the state for the long term before another faction beats you to the punch. This kind of behavior, which might seem unavoidable, would destroy a liberal democracy, even if the rival factions have no animus toward liberalism per se.

Still, liberal democracy is not doomed to fail because of this incentive structure. A well-ordered liberal state has specific features that help insulate it from collapse, although it may remain an uneasy standoff between factions. Five key considerations work together to attenuate the problem.

The first feature is balance-of-power behavior among various factions. If no single faction is especially powerful, it makes little sense for any faction to try to capture the state, because that move would almost certainly lead to a civil war. And if one faction is especially powerful, it can afford to play by the rules, get elected, and run the state over the long term in ways that it sees fit. It has no need to take control permanently. The one potentially dangerous situation is where there is an especially powerful faction that thinks it will lose its power over time. This creates incentives to undermine liberal democracy before the decline happens. The logic of this situation resembles that of preventive war. But even in this case, the rival factions will surely balance against the powerful, albeit declining, faction.

The second consideration is the presence of cross-cutting cleavages, which are common in liberal states. Most people have multiple interests that contribute to their political views. At the same time, there is a diverse array of issues that can motivate a faction, which means that not every faction in a society is concerned with the same issue.¹²³ These two facts, when put together, mean that different individuals will sometimes find themselves in competing factions on one issue but on the same side on another. This outcome complicates the

problem for any faction that might try to capture the state and put an end to liberal democracy.

The third factor is organic solidarity, to borrow Durkheim’s term.¹²⁴ The divisions of labor within a liberal society create extensive economic interdependence. People are intertwined at the economic level in profound ways. They depend on their fellow citizens in order to make a living and prosper, and most importantly, to survive. A civil war, which might ensue if one faction tried to conquer the state, would undermine that solidarity and gravely harm the entire society.

The fourth consideration is nationalism. Liberal democracies are ultimately nation-states with deeply rooted cultures. Their citizens share certain practices and beliefs, and this works to ameliorate differences among them. One of those key beliefs, at least for most people, is sure to be a deep-seated faith in the virtues of liberal democracy in general and their own liberal democratic state in particular. Being liberal, in other words, is part of one’s national identity. Citizens will still have fundamental differences over first principles, which means there will always be factions. Still, the *fact* of liberal democracy as an element of national identity can serve as a kind of glue, even if the theory cannot provide this glue.

The fifth feature is the deep state.¹²⁵ A liberal democracy, like any modern state, is highly bureaucratized, meaning it contains a good number of large institutions populated by career civil servants. Some of those bureaucracies are principally concerned with protecting the nation and the state against threats from within and without, which invariably means they have significant power to safeguard the existing political order. These institutions tend to operate autonomously, largely insulated from politics, which means that they usually do not identify with any particular faction. British civil servants, for example, devotedly serve both Conservative and Labor governments. Sometimes, however, a faction can capture a bureaucratic state, as the Nazis did in Germany during the 1930s.

Finally, at least three of these attenuating factors generally get stronger with time, which suggests that mature liberal democracies should be more resilient than fledgling ones. The more time passes, the more interdependent a society’s members become; the more they will be exposed to nationbuilding; and the stronger the deep state will become. In sum, the presence of

competing internal factions does not mean that liberal states are doomed to fall apart.

On the international stage, however, things may be quite different. ■

Notes

1. Communitarians have been arch critics of liberalism's assumption that humans are naturally "unencumbered" individuals, to use Michael Sandel's wording. For a sampling of the debate between communitarians and liberals on this and other matters, see Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 20n). The Sandel quote is from p. 18.

2. A *nation* is an abstract concept and cannot act, but I use the term as a shorthand reference for its members, especially its elites, who do have agency and are capable of acting to advance their political goals, such as statehood. The same logic applies when I use the term *state*, in which case it is the political leaders who have agency.

3. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 1. My definition of nationalism is similar to that of many scholars. See, for example, John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 1–3; Ernst B. Haas, "What Is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It?," *International Organization* 40, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 726; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 9; Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 55, 150.

4. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1990); David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); William H. Sewall Jr., "The French Revolution and the Emergence of the Nation Form," in *Revolutionary Currents: Nation Building in the Transatlantic World*, ed. Michael A. Morrison and Melinda Zook (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp. 91–125.

5. Some of the large groups that preceded the nation were rather well defined and quite easily morphed into nations. For example, the Dutch, the English, the French, the Poles, and the Russians had developed a distinct identity before each group became a nation, which made the transition to nationhood relatively straightforward. To put the matter in Ronald Suny's language, they went from "cultural or ethnic awareness" to "full-blown political nationalism—that is, an active commitment to realizing a national agenda." Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 48. There are other cases, however, where the links between the nations that eventually emerged and their predecessors are more tenuous. Examples include Azerbaijanis, Belorussians, Italians, and Lithuanians, who did not have that particular identity before they became nations. Other local and social identities were key for them, which invariably meant that the state had to go to great lengths to fashion them into nations. Some key works dealing with the links between nations and their predecessors include John Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Patrick J. Gearty, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Philip S. Gorski, "The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 5 (March 2000): 1428–68; Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York:

Oxford University Press, 2003); Miroslav Hroch, *European Nations: Explaining Their Formation*, trans. Karolina Graham (New York: Verso, 2015), chap. 3; Philip G. Roeder, *Where Nation-States Come From: Institutional Change in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

6. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

7. On how boundaries between social groups have become less fluid and harder to penetrate with the coming of nationalism, see Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1998). James Scott writes about the "utter plasticity of social structure" outside nation-states. In that world, "group boundaries are porous and identities are flexible." James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 219, 249.

8. For a discussion of the close links between nationalism and "claims for the equality and liberty of all citizens," see Dominique Schnapper, "Citizenship and National Identity in Europe," *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 1 (January 2002): 1–14. The quote is from p. 2.

9. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 16.

10. Gearty, *The Myth of Nations*, p. 118. He also writes: "With the constant shifting of allegiances, intermarriages, transformations, and appropriations, it appears that all that remained constant were names, and these were vessels that could hold different contents at different times" (*ibid.*). Also see Norman Davies, *Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of States and Nations* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), especially chaps. 1–6.

11. One might think the Roman Empire contradicts my claim, but this would be wrong. The Roman Empire was a sprawling political entity that was home to numerous social groups. It was hardly a unified culture. "Roman," as Gearty notes, was not a "primary self-identifier for the millions of people who inhabited, permanently or temporarily, the Roman Empire. Rather than sharing a national or ethnic identity, individuals were more likely to feel a primary attachment to class, occupation, or city." Indeed, "in the pluralistic religious and cultural tradition of Rome, the central state had never demanded exclusive adherence to Roman values." Gearty, *The Myth of Nations*, pp. 64, 67. The primary loyalty of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire was to their particular social group, which invariably occupied a particular slice of territory within the empire. Thus, it is no surprise that the concept of "Roman identity" virtually disappeared from Europe in the Middle Ages, save for the inhabitants of the city of Rome. Of course, there was a Holy Roman Empire from 962 to 1806, but like its predecessor, it comprised numerous social groups, and hardly any of the people who came under its sway identified themselves as Romans. It is worth noting that nationalism played the key role in destroying what remained of that loosely knit empire in the early nineteenth century.

12. Patrick Gearty writes, for example, "Among the free citizens of the [Roman] Empire, the gulfs separating the elite and the masses of the population were enormous," a situation that did not change after the collapse of the empire. Gearty, *The Myth of Nations*, p. 66. In addition to the two dominant classes in pre-nationalist Europe—the

aristocracy and the peasantry—there was a small bourgeoisie and a small working class, although they were largely concentrated in England and France. Neither the peasantry nor the aristocracy had a powerful sense it was part of a large social group, much less a distinct nation. Peasants tended to think in local terms and not conceive of themselves as part of an extended family that spread across a large expanse of territory. They usually spoke in local dialects and knew little about other peasants who lived a few days' travel from them. A peasant living in Prussia, for example, was not likely to think of himself as a Prussian peasant and compare himself with French or Polish peasants. His identity was more likely to be wrapped up in comparisons with his immediate neighbors. Aristocrats were remarkably cosmopolitan and had nothing like a national identity. This point is illustrated by looking at marriages among the European nobility, which were often between individuals from different countries. And consider that Frederick the Great of Prussia greatly admired French culture and preferred speaking French rather than German. Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp. 3421–46, 352–53, 357–61, 444. In short, "the idea that the aristocracy belonged to the same culture as the peasants must have seemed abominable to the former and incomprehensible to the latter before nationalism." Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 3rd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2010), p. 123.

13. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, p. 6.

14. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Ticker (New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 331–62. Marx and Engels write, "working men have no country," that industrialization and the attendant exploitation of the average worker "has stripped him of every trace of national character," and thus workers "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole" (pp. 344–45, 350).

15. Michael Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 110.

16. The terms *core nation* and *minority nation* are from Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

17. There is always the danger with multinational states that one or more of the minor nations will be committed to breaking away and forming their own nation-states. In such unstable states, it makes little sense to talk about a common national identity at the level of the state.

18. Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), p. 38. Stepan, Linz, and Yadav do not employ the terms thick and thin cultures, but instead use the terms *state-nation* and *nation-state*, respectively. Also see Sener Akturk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

19. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), p. 61.

20. Quoted in Roeder, *Where Nation-States Come From*, p. 29.

21. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 389.

22. Walker Connor, "A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group Is a. . . ." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1, no. 4 (October 1978): 379.

23. Hobsbawrn writes, "Any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a 'nation,' will be treated as such." Hobsbawrn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 8. Hugh Seton-Watson writes, "A nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or

behave as if they formed one." Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), p. 5.

24. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 227. Also see Keith A. Darden, *Resisting Occupation in Eurasia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

25. This chauvinism is in good part a consequence of the sense of oneness that characterizes nations. In particular, the tight bonds among nationals and the firm boundaries between nations promote narrow-mindedness. Chauvinism is less likely in a world where identities are more flexible and people can envision themselves moving rather easily across the boundaries that separate social groups. Greater social fluidity, in short, tends to enhance tolerance. This is not to say, however, that the large social groups that existed before the coming of nations were paragons of tolerance, because they were not. But they were more tolerant and less chauvinistic than nations, where the bonds among members are tight and identities are difficult to change, considerations that lend themselves to seeing the "other" as alien and inferior, and even evil. Polish-Jewish relations provide a good example of this phenomenon at work. Poland, which was a tolerant place by European standards before the rise of nationalism, was a haven for Jews during the Middle Ages. Some estimate that roughly 80 percent of world Jewry lived in Poland by the middle of the sixteenth century, and those Jews did well for themselves by the standards of the time. This situation changed dramatically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as nationalism swept across Europe, and Poland became one of the most anti-Semitic countries in that region. See Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). This general pattern was not restricted to Poland. See Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism and Antisemitism in Modern Europe, 1815–1945* (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1990); Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

26. Quoted in Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 34.

27. Quoted in Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1993), p. 89.

28. Quoted in Joan Beaumont and Matthew Jordan, *Australia and the World: A Festschrift for Neville Meaney* (Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press, 2013), p. 276.

29. Albright made this statement on NBC's *Today* show on February 19, 1998.

30. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 71.

31. This is surely why the political philosopher John Dunn described nationalism as "the starkest political shame of the twentieth century, the deepest, most intractable and yet most unanticipated blot on the history of the world since the year 1900." John Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 59.

32. Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1994): 27.

33. Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, p. 15. Two other useful sources on this phenomenon are Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book:*

Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich (New York: Norton, 2011); and Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, trans. Yael Lotan (London: Verso, 2009).

34. Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?," in *On the Nation and the "Jewish People,"* ed. Shlomo Sand, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2010), p. 45.

35. C. Burak Kadercan, "Politics of Survival, Nationalism, and War for Territory: 1648–2003" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 20n); Tamar Meisels, *Territorial Rights*, 2nd ed. (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2009); David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005); Margaret Moore, *The Ethics of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Peter Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

36. During the 2017 dispute between China and India over thirty-four square miles of land in the Himalayan Mountains, China's president, Xi Jinping, said: "We will never permit anybody, any organization, any political party to split off any piece of Chinese territory from China at any time or in any form. . . . Nobody should nurse any hope that we will swallow the bitter fruit of harm to our national sovereignty, security and development interests." Quoted in Chris Buckley and Ellen Barry, "China Tells India That It Won't Back Down in Border Dispute," *New York Times*, August 4, 2017. This is not to say that all the territory a nation occupies or seeks to conquer is holy land. There are exceptions. China, for example, has settled a number of territorial disputes with its neighbors, and in each case China made compromises that involved surrendering territory to other countries. See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). There are large swaths of territory, however, that China would never surrender willingly, because they are considered sacred lands that rightfully belong to the Chinese nation.

37. Kadercan, "Politics of Survival, Nationalism, and War for Territory." Of course, nations still care about territory for practical reasons, although controlling territory is not as important today for economic and security reasons as it was before the coming of the Industrial Revolution and nuclear weapons. But ironically, people in the age of nationalism appear to care more about territory than did their predecessors, because they care greatly about their homeland at a deep emotional level (p. 21).

38. As Mariya Grinberg notes, although the concept of sovereignty is invariably linked with the state, it can be applied to other political forms as well. The key is that it can be applied only to the highest-level forms of political organization in the international system, be they empires, city-states, or whatever. The discussion here, however, is limited to states, because the focus is on nationalism, which is identified with nation-states. Grinberg, "Indivisible Sovereignty: Delegation of Authority and Exit Option" (unpublished paper, University of Chicago, April 24, 2017).

39. Robert Jackson, *Sovereignty: Evolution of an Idea* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), p. 6.

40. Jackson, *Sovereignty*, p. 93.

41. Quoted in Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, p. 59.

42. Jackson, *Sovereignty*, p. 104.

43. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 5–15.

44. Bernard Yack, "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism," *Political Theory* 29, no. 4 (August 2001): 518.

45. This democratic impulse built into nationalism is reflected in Renan's famous comment: "The existence of a nation is, if you will pardon me the metaphor, a daily plebiscite." Renan, "What Is a Nation?," p. 64. Also see Schnapper, "Citizenship and National Identity in Europe"; Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Yack, "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism." Greenfield writes on p. 10: "The location of sovereignty within the people and the recognition of the fundamental equality among its various strata, which constitute the essence of the modern national idea, are at the same time the basic tenets of democracy. Democracy was born with the sense of nationality. The two are inherently linked, and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection. Nationalism was the form in which democracy appeared in the world, contained in the idea of the nation as a butterfly in a cocoon. Originally, nationalism developed as democracy; where the conditions of such original development persisted, the identity between the two was maintained."

46. Maximilien Robespierre, "Report on the Principles of Political Morality," *French Revolution and Napoleon*, <http://www.indiana.edu/~b356/texts/polit-moral.html>.

47. Russell Hardin, *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Mark Pagel, *Wired for Culture: Origins of the Human Social Mind* (New York: Norton, 2012).

48. Bernard Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

49. Renan, "What Is a Nation?," p. 63.

50. Nationalism is sometimes said to be a substitute for religion, which began losing influence in Europe after the Thirty Years' War ended in 1648. This process has accelerated over the ensuing centuries. This perspective is wrong, however. Although religion's influence has waned over this long period, it certainly has not disappeared. More importantly, religion is effectively an element of national culture, where it has the potential to act as a powerful unifying force for group members. Ernest Barker, *Christianity and Nationality: Being the Burge Memorial Lecture for the Year 1927* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 31. Other works that show how religion can act as a force multiplier for nationalism include Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to American National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005); and Marx, *Faith in Nation*.

51. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 1.

52. Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1980), p. 20.

53. Andreas Osiander, *Before the State: Systemic Political Change in the West from the Greeks to the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 5.

54. Sewell, "The French Revolution and the Emergence of the Nation Form," p. 98.

55. Jackson, *Sovereignty*, p. 32.

56. Joseph R. Strayer and Dana C. Munro, *The Middle Ages: 395–1500* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1942), pp. 113, 270.

57. On the limits of power projection over long distances, see Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, chaps. 1–2; and David Stasavage, "When Distance Mattered: Geographic Scale and the Development of European Representative Assemblies," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 4 (November 2010): 625–43.

58. Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. xiv, 74.

59. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

60. Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?," *World Politics* 24, no. 3 (April 1972): 319–55.

61. It is clear from Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed* that a similar logic applies to groups that live outside states and are trying to avoid being incorporated into them. He writes: "Where they could ... all states in the region have tried to bring such peoples under their routine administration, to encourage and, more rarely, to insist upon linguistic, cultural, and religious alignment with the majority population at the state core" (p. 12). The state's reach is so great today that very few groups continue to live outside a state.

62. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 157–66.

63. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

64. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 34.

65. The economic logic described in the previous paragraph has important military consequences. Since wealth is one of the two main building blocks of military power, any measures taken to grow the economy contribute to building a more powerful military. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, updated ed. (New York: Norton, 2014), chap. 3.

66. Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 85.

67. The negative consequences that flow from having a multinational state in which the constituent groups are poorly integrated are reflected in the performance of the Austro-Hungarian military in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1998), p. 108; Spencer C. Tucker, *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), p. 86. Also see Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power."

68. David Bell explains how nationalism made it much easier for French leaders to mobilize their populations during the Seven Years' War (1756–63) and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815) than was the case in wars fought during the pre-national era. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, chap. 3; David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Knew It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), chaps. 4, 6, 7. Also see Michael Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), chap. 6.

69. Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770–1870* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1982), p. 30.

70. Quoted in J. F. C. Fuller, *Conduct of War: 1789–1961* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 46. Also see Peter Paret, "Nationalism and the Sense of Military Obligation," in *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 39–52.

71. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 592.

72. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power."

73. Marx, *Faith in Nation*, p. 9.

74. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 72, 78.

75. Judith N. Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 4. Also see Markus Fischer, "The Liberal Peace: Ethical, Historical, and Philosophical Aspects" (BCSIA Discussion Paper 2000-07, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, April 2000), pp. 22–27, 56.

76. Arch Puddington and Tyler Roylance, "Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy," in *Freedom in the World, 2017* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2017), p. 4.

77. Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 208.

78. Stephen Holmes, *Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 39.

79. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 90–91.

80. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955); Gunner Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, 2 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995, 1996); Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*, ed. Isaac Kramnick, trans. Gerald Bevan (New York: Penguin, 2003). For a discussion of the parallels between these two books and Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*, see Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), introduction and chap. 1.

81. Smith, *Civic Ideals*, p. 14.

82. Smith, *Civic Ideals*, p. 6.

83. Smith, *Civic Ideals*, p. 9.

84. Smith, *Civic Ideals*, pp. 9–12, 38–39.

85. Huntington, *Who Are We?*; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*.

86. All the quotes in this paragraph are from David Armitage, "The Declaration of Independence: The Words Heard around the World," *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 2014. For an elaboration on these points, see David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

87. This perspective is captured in Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1945); and John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism," in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), pp. 22–36.

88. See Gregory Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 5; Taras Kuzio, "The Myth of the Civic State: A Critical Survey of Hans Kohn's Framework for Understanding Nationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 2002): 20–39; Marx, *Faith in Nation*, pp. 113–17; Smith, *Civic Ideals*; Ken Wolf, "Hans Kahn's Liberal Nationalism: The Historian as Prophet," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 4 (October–December 1976): 651–72; Bernard Yack, "The Myth of the Civic Nation," *Critical Review* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 193–211.

89. On Israel, see Richard Falk and Virginia Tilley, "Israeli Practices toward the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid," *Palestine and the Israeli Occupation*, Issue No. 1 (Beirut: United Nations, 2017); Yitzhak Laor, *The Myths of Liberal Zionism* (New York: Verso, 2009); Gideon Levy, "Israel's Minister of Truth," *Haaretz*, September 2, 2017; Yakov M. Rabkin, *What Is Modern Israel?*, trans. Fred A. Reed (London: Pluto Press, 2016). Regarding India, see Sumit Ganguly and Rajan Menon, "Democracy a la Modi," *National Interest*, no. 153 (January/February 2018), pp. 12–24; Christopher Jaffrelot, *The Hindu*

Nationalist Movement in India (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Pankaj Mishra, "Narendra Modi and the New Face of India," *Guardian*, May 16, 2014; Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Clash Within: Democracy, Violence, and India's Future* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

90. For a good example of the extent to which liberalism treats individuals as utility maximizers, see S. M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

91. Although they are not concerned with nationalism per se, Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels make an argument about the workings of American politics that dovetails with my claims about the relationship between liberalism and nationalism. Specifically, they argue in *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016) that the voting behavior of Americans can best be explained by their social and group identities, not by how each individual assesses a politician's position on the issues he cares about most.

92. Most liberal theorists acknowledge that individuals have important social ties. John Rawls, for example, writes: "Each person finds himself placed at birth in some particular position in some particular society, and the nature of his position materially affects his life prospects." John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 13. Moreover, in *The Law of Peoples: With "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Rawls focuses directly on peoples, which is a synonym for nations. Still, much of the analysis in *The Law of Peoples* focuses on the individual, which is certainly the focus of attention in his other two seminal books, *A Theory of Justice and Political Liberalism*, expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). Nevertheless, a theory based on individualism cannot at the same time emphasize that people are profoundly social, because the two perspectives are at odds with each other. In fact, Rawls has been criticized on this point. For example, see Andrew Kuper, "Rawlsian Global Justice: Beyond the Law of Peoples to a Cosmopolitan Law of Persons," *Political Theory* 28, no. 5 (October 2000): 640–74; Thomas W. Pogge, "The Incoherence between Rawls's Theories of Justice," *Fordham Law Review* 72, no. 5 (April 2004): 1739–59. For an overview of the debate between Rawls's critics and defenders, see Gillian Brock, *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), chap. 2.

93. See Paul W. Kahn, *Putting Liberalism in Its Place* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

94. Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 117–18.

95. It reads: "The rights and liberties asserted and claimed in the said declaration are the true, ancient and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this kingdom." "English Bill of Rights 1689," The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/england.asp.

96. Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*; Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*.

97. See Otto Hintze, "The Formation of States and Constitutional Development: A Study in History and Politics," and "Military Organization and the Organization of the State," in *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, ed. Felix Gilbert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 157–215; Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *American Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (January 1941): 455–68.

98. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1973), pp. 291–92.

99. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 300.

100. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 269, 299.

101. Lynn Hunt calls this "the Paradox of Self-Evidence." She writes, "If equality of rights is so self-evident, then why did this assertion have to [be] made and why was it only made in specific times and places? How can human rights be universal if they are not universally recognized?" Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007), pp. 19–20.

102. H. L.A. Hart, "Rawls on Liberty and Its Priority," in *Essays in Jurisprudence and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 223–47.

103. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 162.

104. Contrast the views of Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012) with Michael W. McConnell's review of that book: "You Can't Say That: A Legal Philosopher Urges Americans to Punish Hate Speech," *New York Times*, June 24, 2012; and John Paul Stevens's review of the book: "Should Hate Speech Be Outlawed?," *New York Review of Books*, June 7, 2012, pp. 18–22.

105. John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism* (New York: New Press, 2000), p. 82.

106. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), p. 13.

107. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), p. 268.

108. Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, p. 105. Also see Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Carl J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy: Theory and Practice in Europe and America* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1946), chap. 13; Clinton L. Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in the Modern Democracies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948); Fredrick M. Watkins, "The Problem of Constitutional Dictatorship," in *Public Policy: A Yearbook of the Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University*, ed. C. J. Friedrich and Edward S. Mason (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940).

109. "Inside the Hearts and Minds of Arab Youth," 8th Annual ASDA/A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, 2016, p. 26.

110. Stephen Kinzer, "Rwanda and the Dangers of Democracy," *Boston Globe*, July 22, 2017. Also see Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

111. "Stability and Comfort over Democracy: Russians Share Preferences in Poll," *RT News*, April 3, 2014.

112. The difficulty of spreading liberal rights in the West is a central theme in two recent books dealing with the history of human rights: Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*; and Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). Both authors make it clear that the concept of inalienable rights first gained widespread attention in the latter part of the eighteenth century with the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789). But for roughly the next 150 years, individual rights were not paid great attention within the West. Hunt argues they once again became a subject of marked importance in 1948, while Moyn maintains that this did not happen until 1977. Also see Markus Fischer, "The Liberal Peace: Ethical, Historical, and Philosophical Aspects" (BCSIA Discussion Paper 2000-07, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, April 2000), pp. 20–22. It is worth noting that contingency is at the core of both Hunt's and Moyn's stories. Hunt writes, for example: "Yet even naturalness,

equality, and universality are not quite enough. Human rights only become meaningful when they gain political content. They are not the rights of humans in a state of nature; they are the rights of humans in society" (p. 21). In other words, she is arguing against natural rights. For Moyn, human rights were "only one appealing ideology among others" (p. 5).

113. An indication of how difficult it is to spread liberalism is the trouble Britain had exporting that ideology to its colonial empire, especially India. See Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*.

114. Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, p. 228. For a more detailed discussion of Lincoln's actions, see pp. 223–39.

115. Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 192.

116. This discrimination against European immigrants is reflected in the titles of these three books: Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 2008); David R. Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

117. David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), chap. 1; Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War* (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936).

118. Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence*, p. 18; Gerald N. Rosenberg, "Much Ado about Nothing? The Emptiness of Rights' Claims in the Twenty-First Century United States," in "Revisiting Rights,"

ed. Austin Sarat, special issue, *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group, 2009), pp. 1–41.

119. Rosenberg, "Much Ado about Nothing?," pp. 20, 23–28. Also see George Klosko, "Rawls's 'Political' Philosophy and American Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (June 1993): 348–59; George Klosko, *Democratic Procedures and Liberal Consensus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. vii; Shaun P. Young, "Rawlsian Reasonableness: A Problematic Presumption?," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1 (March 2006): 159–80.

120. All three quotes are from Rosenberg, "Much Ado about Nothing?," p. 33.

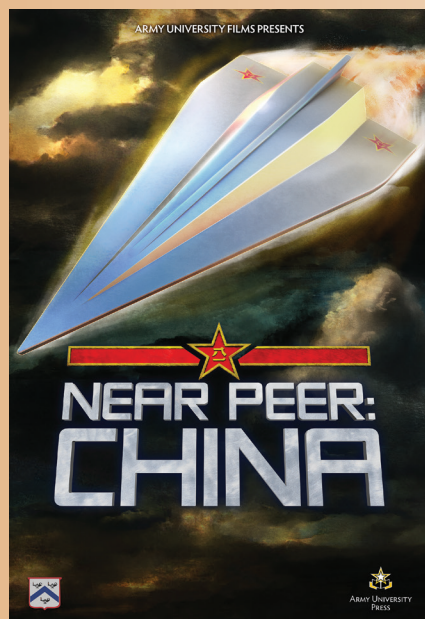
121. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin, 1987), pp. 122–28.

122. Lisa Blaydes and James Lo, "One Man, One Vote, One Time? A Model of Democratization in the Middle East," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 24, no. 1 (January 2012): 110–46; Paul Pillar, "One Person, One Vote, One Time," *National Interest Blog*, October 3, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/one-person-one-vote-one-time-22583>.

123. There is worrisome evidence that the various cleavages in the American public are beginning to line up. Alan Abramowitz, *The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation and the Rise of Donald Trump* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018). Not surprisingly, there is good reason to worry about the authoritarian temptation in the United States today. See Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Crown, 2018).

124. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

125. Michael J. Glennon, *National Security and Double Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Also see Michael Lofgren, *The Fall of the Constitution and the Rise of a Shadow Government* (New York: Penguin, 2016).



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