DRAFT: Not for Quotation or Citation

Remarks for Presentation at
the NORFACE Conference on
"The Transatlantic Relationship and the Struggle for Europe,"
University College, Dublin,
August 31, 2007

Beyond Red and Blue: Melting Pots, Rainbows, Civic Nationalism, and the Problem of Identity in 21st Century America

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Myths of some golden age of transatlantic relations notwithstanding, the transatlantic relationship has never been an easy or entirely harmonious one. Part of the tension has always stemmed from diverging interests: however wide and deep the shared interests, for example on security matters and on economic recovery and development, even on the best of days there were real differences on questions of burden sharing. More interestingly, (Western) Europe and America have, throughout the post-World War II period, been simultaneously "us" and "other" to each other – sharing important common values and cultures, and participating in common political institutions, but at the same time representing a contrast that helped each to define what was unique in itself.

During the Cold War the magnitude of the Soviet threat and the salience of the East-West divide meant that neither (Western) Europe nor America ultimately had much freedom of action. Whatever frictions there might be in the relationship, the relationship was essential. The post-Cold War world offers more freedom, however, both politically and intellectually. It is possible, on both sides of the Atlantic, to think more openly and critically about the partnership and about the nature of the partner (Donald Rumsfeld's musings about an "Old Europe" offer an unfortunate illustration). This process is complicated, though, by the fact that both America and Europe are undergoing rapid cultural and political change.

What follows are some argumentative musings on the nature of the change underway on the western side of the Atlantic and what this may mean for American foreign policy broadly, and transatlantic relations more specifically.

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Perhaps the most obvious political feature of 21st century American politics is the "red/blue" cleavage in American society – the division between a culturally conservative, even arguably reactionary, often religiously observant section of the population, politically dominant across much of the south, parts of the midwest, Great Plains, and Rocky Mountain region, and a culturally liberal, often secular section of the population, politically dominant in the northeast, in parts of the midwest, and the Pacific coast. Although the cleavage lines vary somewhat, these groups tend to divide from each other on issues such as abortion, school prayer, same-sex marriage, the death

penalty, affirmative action, and drug legalization. While partisan affiliation and political alignment and mobilization are sufficiently complex phenomena that one hesitates to make any generalizations whatsoever, it is safe to note that the Republican Party has effectively tapped (or, depending on one's conception of party politics and democracy, been tapped by) the cultural conservatives, and the Democratic Party, the cultural liberals. The red/blue divide is thus politically salient in America at the present time: a sufficient number of individuals choose between political parties on this basis that it is an important, if not *the* important reality in American political life today.

The red/blue division in American society and its partisan political consequences are clear, and have been much commented upon. This paper does not propose to contribute to that particular discussion. Rather this paper starts from the observation that, from the perspective of foreign policy, awareness of this red/blue divide provides little predictive insight. *A priori,* knowing where an individual, party, or administration falls on the red/blue divide tells us precious little about its foreign policy beliefs or preferences, apart from a handful of issues such as support for effective AIDS prevention programs.

Surely not, one might protest! The war in Iraq – "the" dominant foreign policy issue in America -- is a "red" war: conceived and launched by President George W. Bush, the personification of a "red" president; supported in Congress and in partisan political campaigning, to the extent it is supported at all, by "red" politicians from the Republican party and opposed by "blue" politicians. Reflection and observation, however, suggest that there is no logical connection between the social and cultural values that define "red," on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the aggressive promotion of global democracy and messianic Wilsonianism that appear to have led to the war, much less the war itself. Indeed in his 2000 presidential campaign, carefully and successfully mapped to assemble a "red" majority in the Electoral College (if not in the general electorate), George W. Bush laid out a foreign policy platform that emphasized humility and restraint in the use of American power, explicitly criticized the Democratic Party for its willingness to undertake overseas "nation-building," and at least implicitly argued against a foreign policy program built on democratic ideology rather than on realpolitik interest. To the extent it was embracing any foreign policy program whatsoever, this – not a war to overthrow dictatorship in Iraq and (presumably) to trigger a domino-chain of democratic revolutions across the Middle East – was the foreign policy program the "red" electorate voted for in 2000.

Indeed, while the George W. Bush administration's arguably pathological fixation with Iraq has been *sui generis,* and the enormity of its disregard for other national opinions has arguably represented an important departure, what is striking is the degree to which his foreign policy has come to resembles that of his Democratic predecessor (and the degree to which it differed from the president's father's) in its assumptions about the American nation's inherent, inescapable duties and obligations in the world. Like Tony Lake – a quintessential "blue," in a quintessentially "blue" administration – the George W. Bush foreign policy team has come to see the use of American power to advance American values and to construct a world that shares these as an essential element, perhaps *the* essential element of American foreign policy. This is a vision that transcends, or at least cuts across, red and blue.

That "blue" politicians and politically active "blue" citizens are lining up to rail against Iraq and against the current foreign policy is hardly surprising: the Iraq war is a disaster, and it provides a wonderful opportunity to torpedo a "red" President and by doing so destroy his ability to pursue a "red" social agenda. Similarly, the relative reluctance of many "red" politicians and politically active citizens to abandon the war can be understood as reflecting their unwillingness to abandon a president and a presidency that they support for other reasons. It does not, however, suggest any deep or permanent opposition or attachment to this particular foreign policy conception – whether

this is defined as American triumphalism, American unilateralism, American support for global democratic revolution, or any other broad framework.

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One quick caveat is in order. Even if one accepts this argument that there is no clear logical connection between "red" social and cultural values and a particular foreign policy agenda, or between "blue" social and cultural values and some alternative foreign policy agenda, there may nonetheless be a non-causal but real correlation.. In other contexts, Peter Trubowitz has made a powerful case that there are significant differences in economic interests, and therefore in foreign policy preferences, between the various geographic regions – northeast, south, west -- within America. These differences are based on regional differences in factors of production and investment, not on culture or ideology. Accepting at least for the moment both the validity and the significance of this argument -- that is, accepting both that the different regions of America have different foreign policy preferences and that these differing preferences will result in significantly different "national" foreign policies being pursued, depending on which regions dominate national decision-making – this implies that the geographic concentration of "red" and "blue" voters, and the consequent existence of "red" and "blue" regions, may well imply that American governments that represent "red" or "blue" constituencies have different foreign policy priorities. Trubowitz, for example, has argued that the American south derives greater benefit from military spending. The midwest and Great Plains, of course, benefit from agricultural trade, while the northeast relies disproportionately on industrial production. This logic suggests that, for purely economic reasons, a south-Plains-Mountains "red" coalition will be more supportive of the military and of free trade. It is hard, however, to make a much more fine-tuned prediction.

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If the current red/blue political alignment in America offers little insight into the directions that American foreign policy will take – that is, if the debates between Republicans and Democrats offer few clear or coherent clues about the fundamental questions facing American policymakers and the American nation or about the competing conceptions and answers – then where do we turn to begin to understand the watershed at which America finds itself?

I argue that there is indeed a debate raging within the American polity whose outcome will determine the basic nature of American foreign policy. This debate is seldom – though sometimes – explicit. Positions in this debate cut across many of the most important political cleavages, including the red/blue one. This is a debate about American identity.

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Identity is a social construction that simultaneously performs multiple functions. It defines who "we" are – who is a member of a collectivity to whose members we owe special obligations and from whose members we expect to receive special consideration. It defines who is "they" – who is "not-we" and to whom we do not owe special obligations and from whom we do not expect to receive special consideration. It defines the nature of the special obligations and special considerations. It defines what might threaten "us" – that is, what actions by some conceivable "they" would interfere with "our" ability not only to survive but to survive as "us" (a collectivity). (In other words, inherent in any construction of identity is not only a recognition of the physical threat to the individuals who are included in "us" but an implicit definition of the actions that others might take that would weaken or eliminate our ability to continue to define ourselves and our ability to continue to function as a collectivity.) And it defines the types of measures that are necessary and justified to protect "our" survival. It should be clear that these multiple functions of identity are

simultaneously performed: these definitional processes are simultaneously constructed. Change any one of them, and the others will need to be changed as well. To change the definition of who "they" are is to change the definition of who "we" are, the nature of the obligations and considerations, the nature of the threat, and so forth; to change the definition of the threat is to change the definition of who "we" are, etc.

As a social construct, identity requires self-awareness and communication. It requires that individuals be able to conceive of a "we" and be able to convince themselves that the others whom they define as part of this "we" also conceive of themselves in these terms – that is, share this conception of "we." Identity is therefore very much dependent on technology, both because it influences how many people can "talk" to each other (or who can talk to each other) and because it determines whether or not they can do so directly or whether this communication is intermediated by particular elites: the kinds of identities that are possible to construct, or that are likely to prove powerful or salient, change, for example, with the development of the printing press, the railroad, the telegraph, radio, and the internet.

Individuals, of course, simultaneously possess multiple identities. Identities are not exclusive. One can simultaneously identify as an American, as part of the West, as a Christian, as born-again Christian, as a Texan, as a Yale alumnus, as a man, as a capitalist, as a businessman, as a Republican, as a recovering alcoholic, and as a member of the Bush family. The multiple identities may conflict in any given situation, implying different special obligations/considerations, different perceptions of threat, and different appropriate behaviors. Without additional information, it is impossible to know which of these identities will prove most important in any given context. Presumably priming will be important: the ordering or structure of information or of stimuli may prompt individuals to see particular identities as immediately relevant, salient, or important, and others as less so. Policy entrepreneurs may deliberately engage in priming; other elites may do so without conscious intent. In either case, the consequences may be unforeseen or inadvertent.

All this acknowledged, one politically important identity since at least the early nineteenth century (in Western Europe), the late nineteenth century (in Eastern and Southern Europe), or the mid-twentieth century (across much of the rest of the world) has been *national* identity. Arguably, the creation of *national* identity (for it makes more sense to talk of "creation" than of "rise," "emergence," "awakening," or "discovery" of national identity, as if this were something that pre-existed, just waiting for human beings to notice it) was intimately linked to the industrialization and urbanization process, with its impact on the pre-existing social order and on the identity tools used by the elite of that order to maintain their authority. Because of its tendency to define the "other" as another nation, national identity tended to seek to impose national identities on others, encouraging the construction of new national identities. In any case, whatever the causes and whatever the mechanisms, the power of national identity in the modern age was clearly manifested. Most importantly it was manifested in the strange symbiotic relationship that emerged between states – the most important and powerful political institution in the modern period – and national identity. One can argue whether – or in what cases – the state encouraged the growth of national identity and manipulated it to strengthen the state or whether national identity groups seized or created states in an effort to protect and advance "their" interests. Almost certainly, both the push and the pull toward national states were important. States enhanced their power – their ability to demand the loyalty and resources of their subjects -- by harnessing national sentiment; national "we"s enhanced their ability to protect their survival by somehow acquiring states.

The net consequence, however, was the development of a number of powerful political units that (depending on how cynical one chooses to be) either defined their goals in terms of the "national interest" or that had to justify their policies in terms of "national interest." Obviously, not all states are to the same degree constrained in this fashion. But by the twentieth century, many of

the largest and most powerful states were to some significant degree identifiable as "national" states, and the interaction of these states reflected the clash or harmony of "national interests" as self-understood. It would be difficult to make much sense out of twentieth century history without understanding this.

There are reasons to believe that the relative importance of national identity may decline as the twenty-first century progresses. The technologies of the post-modern world and the individual empowerment associated both with these technologies and with global improvements in education – what James Rosenau has referred to as the parametric change in world politics – encourage the development of a wide range of alternative identities and reduce the symbiotic power of the state-and-nation to manipulate identity formation and priming.

This said, there still appears to be plenty of life left in the nation-state. Indeed much of the change and turmoil in the last two decades has been directed at the creation of more nation-states, not at movement beyond them. (In this regard it may be interesting to note that if the nation-state is a form of political organization well-suited for the "modern," industrial world [as distinct from "pre-modern" agricultural societies or "post-modern" information-based ones], there remains much of the world for which the nation-state is either well-suited or an appropriate aspiration.)

It may be the case, as Samuel Huntington would have it, that "civilizational" identity is of increasing importance and "national" identity is of decreasing importance. We have not, however, witnessed the development of political institutions comparable to the state that are able to harness such civilizational identities. To whatever degree civilizational awareness is indeed important it is, at present, of secondary importance: it is important because nations, through their political institutions (states), see that their *national* interest aligns with that of other nations that share their "civilizations" and these national states act on this awareness.

The European Union, of course, represent the interesting test-case of some sort of alternative to the national state. As remarkable as the European Union is, what is equally remarkable is that it remains unique. Elsewhere in the world, rather than trying to find some new political paradigm that accepts the weakening power of national identity and the weakening ability of the state and political elites to manipulate identity, states seem by-and-large to be continuing to struggle to preserve national identity as a pre-eminent one, and to find ways to re-cement this identity to the state.

Which brings us back to America.

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The legitimacy of the authority the American state vis a vis the American people, rests (as with other democratic national states) on its ability to claim to represent the national interest. Indeed the deliberate constitutional weakness of the American state makes the preservation of this legitimacy of extraordinary importance. But who is the "we" that the American state is protecting, and from whom?

One can think of – and observe – any number of "markers" by which national identity might be defined. In many cases, these markers are overlapping and reinforcing. Without suggesting such a list is exclusive, it is, however, possible to think of five archetypal "markers": blood (or myth of common descent); religion; language; culture; and citizenship (or political allegiance).

In America today, it is not simply who "we" are that is in question, but which "markers" are the relevant ones.

What difference does this make?*

Perhaps most obviously, the different types of markers create very different barriers to inclusion – some thick or hard, some thin or permeable. Blood is difficult to change, except by redefining myths of origin to widen or narrow inclusiveness. Language, by contrast, is relatively easy to acquire. Culture can be acquired but with more difficulty. Religion not only can be acquired but, significantly, it can be falsely claimed or shammed. Citizenship can be granted or withheld (and even revoked) arbitrarily.

More profoundly, however, identity politics itself is played in very different ways, by very different rules, depending on how identity is defined. These differences in the nature of identity politics are not only real but *a priori* predictable. After all, each of the different "markers" implies a different sense of who the "other" is, what kind of threat the "other" poses, and what the appropriate response is.

Consider blood. For such nations, there will be a tendency – admittedly, only a tendency -- to approach global politics in zero-sum, Social Darwinian terms. The nation can survive only by biological reproduction, and can grow only by reproduction at a rate higher than mere replacement. For the nation to survive and grow, and to be successful in the competition with other bloodlines for the resources required for this, it must be biologically more fit than the "other." The external "other" must be subjugated or eradicated so that it can not bar access to these resources.

For blood nations, "internal" others pose an insidious threat. Strangers may exist in our midst, but even if they are given legal rights and acquire our language and customs, they will never become "us." (By contrast, those of our blood who have been separated for hundreds of years – for example, the Volga Germans – and who have acquired at least marginally different customs and behaviors are nonetheless "us.") The danger posed by this "other" among us is not simply that it will steal the resources necessary for our children (economically successful strangers among us are thus an inherent threat) but that it will intermingle with us, polluting us, threatening the very essence of "us" which is our bloodline. The danger is primordial: indeed it is sexual. By force or by guile, the "other" male may rape or take advantage of "our" women; the "other's" women may seduce "our" men. Either way, "we" are destroyed. Rhetoric and logic like that of the Nazi movement, with its paranoia about Jews, flows naturally and logically from the concept of a blood nation.

For an American analogy, consider race-based (a form of blood-based) identity in the American South in an earlier era. The politics of this community – with its tendency to see its dealings with the "other" in zero-based, Social Darwinian terms, and its concerns about sexual congress and intermingling – are in many respects not so dissimilar from the politics of Germany in the 1930s. Despite all the economic, social, and ideological differences, what these communities shared was an identity constructed on the notion of blood. In the racist American community, "uppity" Blacks (who threatened to successfully wrest economic resources and therefore opportunities from "us") were put down, and Blacks were physically segregated (reducing the danger of sexual intercourse). Rumors of Black-against-White rape would cause murderous rampage, and even the hint of sexual advance could provoke lynching. In this context, as with the Nazi

* The section that follows draws heavily and directly upon: Edward Rhodes and Richard W. Mansbach, "Blood, Tongue, Culture, Confession, and Citizenship: National 'Markers,' Identity, and Violence," in Konstantin Khuodely, ed., *title to be determined*, St. Petersburg State University Press, 2007, and Richard W. Mansbach and Edward Rhodes, "The National State and Identity Politics: State Institutionalization and 'Markers' of National Identity," *Geopolitics*, July 2007.

Nuremburg decrees, explicit genealogical rules were established to determine who was the "other" (one drop of Black blood, one Jewish grandparent).

Contrast the logic flowing from blood-based identity with that flowing from language-based identity. In terms of behavior toward both external and internal "others" what we logically expect – and in fact see – is quite different. Survival of a linguistic nation means no more and no less than survival of the language. A linguistic nation can grow if "others" become "us" by acquiring the language. It shrinks or dies if children or newcomers cease to learn the language. Who sleeps with "our" daughters does not matter so long as the children born of this congress speak "our" language. Where our neighbors came from, who their parents were, what church they go to, and what cultural differences they display do not matter, so long as (minimally) they allow "us" to teach and use "our" language or (maximally) they adopt "our" language. Control of education, of the media, and of regulations regarding the language of official and unofficial business is the key to national survival. If schools teach in a different language, if we are forbidden to exchange news and ideas in "our" tongue, and if it is required that daily commerce and political activity be conducted in some other language, then "we" cannot survive. Thus sovereignty becomes key: "we" must control the state in order to control education and the regulation of language. "Others" may live among "us," intermingle with us in every way, enjoy prosperity and even differential economic success, and even have political rights – so long as "we" are able to dominate the political system to ensure that laws detrimental to our language are not passed. Repression, if it occurs, is likely to take the form of insisting the "other" *become* "us" if he is to have political rights – that is, that the "other" learn our language and conduct all public and private business in our language – rather than to take the form of driving out or killing the "other." Given the instrumental centrality of the state, such nation-states are likely to be extremely sensitive about state symbols and affronts to them: flags, state holidays, civic rituals, are likely to be taken seriously, and affronts to these not be regarded as trivial matters. In terms of external relations, a linguistically-based nation-state is likely to be extremely prickly about its sovereignty and tend to be latently hostile to transnational or super-sovereign authorities. That is, one would expect such states to be extremely sensitive to perceived violations of their sovereignty, to tend not to be enthusiastic "joiners" in international undertakings, and to be defensive rather than aggressive toward their neighbors (since conquering "others" only creates a political headache).

Now contrast this to the logic of survival for culturally-based nations. The danger posed to a culturally-based nation is that other cultures will come to appear more attractive. To survive, culturally-based nations must engage in a constant struggle to demonstrate the superiority, or in any case superior attractiveness, of "our" culture over the "other's" culture. "We" cease to exist if we ourselves or our children choose to behave like the "other." "We" grow by assimilating "others" – by convincing them to behave like "us." Culturally-based nations welcome outsiders – but only if they promise to assimilate. If "they" remain "them" – that is, if they retain their old customs – they pose a threat. Not only are they a daily rebuke, a source of daily doubt about our own superiority (and this poses a mortal danger, since if "we" doubt our cultural superiority and begin to explore other cultures, "we" begin the slide into our own oblivion), they are also a temptation to our children and our weaker members. Like an easily available drug, "other" cultures in our midst may undermine us, unless they can be painted as obviously primative or inferior. Toward internal "others," then, culturally-based nations exhibit a strange Jekyll-and-Hyde quality: welcoming strangers but unforgiving of difference. Representatives of other powerful cultures are thus particularly suspect, and their activities may have to be limited lest they pollute us, not by contaminating our bloodline but by contaminating our culture. The spread of English words or of American cultural institutions (McDonald's! – the horror!) thus poses a fundamental threat to a French nation.

Externally, culturally-based nations are natural empire-builders, though the empire may involve Gramscian hegemony rather than *de jure* or even *de facto* political authority. Driven constantly to prove the superiority of their culture over others, culturally-based nations are inherently expansive

in a way that linguistically-based nations are not. It should be obvious, however, that the form this expansionism takes is fundamentally different from that of blood-based nations. Were it economically expedient, blood-based nations would logically have no problem with physically eliminating "others" – indeed this would be their ideal solution. In any case, blood-based nations need to weaken or disarm these "others," so that these "others" can pose no physical threat to the national bloodline. By contrast, far from seeking *physical* extermination of the "other," culturally-based nations need for living individuals to voluntarily choose to cease being "them" and to become "us" – to acknowledge the superiority of "our" culture and to adopt it. Note: these new members of "us" can be free to retain their existing political structures and sovereignty, so long as they either acquire "our" culture (and become us) or seek to acquire "our" culture (thus acknowledging our cultural superiority and thereby ceasing to pose a threat to "our" survival). French policies to maintain the west African *chasse gardee* after the granting of *de jure* independence to French colonies offers a nice illustration of this behavior.

Religiously-based nations of course share this constant need to prove the superiority of their truth (religious, in this case, rather than cultural), lest "we" adopt the "other's" ways and thus cease to exist. Religion unlike culture, however, can be acquired overnight and it can be pretended. Further, while not all religions insist on exclusivity (at least nominally, one can practice both Shinto and Buddhism, for example, without too much difficulty), religion also tends to be much more either/or than culture, offering less grey area. Thus, on the one hand, religiously-based nations exhibit something behaviorally akin to paranoia and live in constant doubt – any member of the nation not only might desert at any time but might in fact be a false member even at this very moment. On the other hand, they also have hard, if fragile, edges. "Others" in the midst can not be regarded as members-in-transition and are a constant danger: the ideas they spread, the other religion they explicitly preach or implicitly demonstrate, can destroy "us."

Indeed, for a religiously-based nation the "other" need not even be a practitioner of another religion. He may simply be an atheist or a secularist – the equivalent, in this sort of nation-state, of an anarchist. Further, the "other" need not come from abroad. He may be one's own brother or son (common blood), or classmate (common language), or drinking partner (common culture). Despite all of these ties, if he is openly "other" his presence is a constant rebuke and invitation to other members of the nation to defect. Even if he shows no sign of unfaithfulness to the nation, he may have treachery in his heart, only going through the ritualistic motions that would *appear* to make him a faithful member of the community. Internally, such a nation is thus likely to be hostile and violent toward "others" and to tend to engage in extremism (to prove faithfulness and membership in the religion/nation) and purges, consequences of its own recurring doubts about the true faithfulness of its own members.

This sort of paranoia is likely to carry over into external relations, as other nations are seen as purveyors of other religions, atheism, or secularism. Like linguistically-based nations, religiously-based ones are likely to be prickly about sovereignty (since control of the state could determine support for the church and tolerance of other religions, and is thus essential for the preservation of the nation) but because of their internal paranoia to be more likely to see the need for preemptive or preventive aggression.

For nations whose membership is defined by citizenship, the "other" is a "foreigner" – someone who may share my blood, religion, language, culture, and class, but who does not faithfully serve "our" state. "They" may serve another state or they may serve (that is, ascribe primary loyalty) to some non-state or transnational institution. Note that while the state may be an important *tool* for nations based on other markers, for "civic" or citizenship-based nations the state represents *the defining essence* of the nation. Without the state, the nation ceases to exist. Threats to the state are not simply instrumentally dangerous to the nation, they are essentially dangerous. A citizenship-based

nation by definition *requires* a nation-state. But note also the strangely legalistic quality of national identity and the process by which membership is granted: "we" are members of the nation if and only if the state says we are. The state thus becomes instrumentally as well as essentially important: were the government of the state to fall into the wrong hands, the wrong people might be included (or excluded) from membership in the nation. Civil rights laws as well as immigration/citizenship laws speak fundamentally to the composition, as well as behavior, of the nation. Because the right to vote is an ultimate proof of citizenship (and thus of membership in the nation), voting rights laws become crucial; more intriguingly, because military service is also proof of loyalty to the state who can serve the state in the military also becomes a critical bone of contention (if racial or ethnic minorities, or women, or homosexuals are excluded from the *right* to serve in the military, they are also excluded from being able to *prove* they are loyal servants of the state and hence rightful members of the nation).

Note, too, the potential for paranoia inherent in citizenship-based nations similar to that in religion-based ones. Loyalty to the state, like religious belief, can be feigned, and fears of "dual" loyalties can result in harsh actions against portions of the nation whose loyalty is for some reason in doubt. For examples, consider American suspicions about German-Americans during World War I, the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, concerns about Islamic Americans today, and periodic worries about the Israeli or Jewish lobby.

Indeed, as we will discuss below, the post-1890 American case is a useful one for exploring some of the complicated dynamics associated with citizenship-markers of national identity, and what this implies for the internal treatment of "others" as well as for foreign policy. As one would anticipate, any transnational movement, institutions, or ideology that is perceived as having sufficient appeal as to become a primary locus of identity is viewed as profoundly dangerous. Those individuals living among us, perhaps even holding U.S. citizenship and thus professing to be members of the American community, who are more loyal to a transnational movement than they are to the American state are the insidious danger within. Communism is thus in a real as well as rhetorical sense "un-American." Communism, by denying the significance of national identity, is a more dangerous threat than fascism, with its glorification of the nation. Fascist nation-states are a danger of course, and fascist ideology is loathsome; but fascism as an ideology is less dangerous than communism. Similarly *some* religions, if they have an explicit transnational institutional base, are dangerous. The American nation's peculiar concern with Catholics in higher office and the widespread fear of "Romanism," dispelled only in the 1960s, makes perfect sense if one realizes that fealty to the Roman pope is un-American for reasons that have nothing at all to do with religion or with religious difference. (Protestant churches, unlike the Catholic church, were either localistic, with local congregations choosing their preachers and controlling their finances, or, if hierarchically controlled, answering to a national body. Only in the 1960s were the bulk of Americans convinced that the pull of the Catholic church was sufficiently weak that loyalty to the American state was clearly primary for American Catholics.) And the reaction among Americans today to militant, *transnational* Islam, and the hypersensitive concern about Islamic terrorists in their midst, again reflects the fundamental nature of a "nation" defined by citizenship. The vulnerability of the American body politic to "red scares" and anti-Communist witch-hunts throughout the 20th century is a natural consequence of how "Americanness" is defined. The peculiar American paranoia about the United Nations also makes sense in this context: while the American elite may understand that the United Nations poses no threat to the nation-state, ordinary Americans are less sure and thus are extremely sensitive to anything that might cede to the United Nations even the hint of U.S. sovereignty – for example, having American servicemen answer to UN officers.

Internally, a citizenship-based nation-state welcomes newcomers, so long as they arrive in a legally sanctioned manner and pursue the legal process for acquiring citizenship/membership. It allows its members wide freedom in language, religion, and culture – so long as none of these

activities are regarded as posing a threat to the *primary* loyalty to the state. Thus, for example, American state schools have taught in languages other than English and the American army has chaplains of every faith – but school children must all say the pledge of allegiance and in times of national crisis when the draft is imposed, all must serve in the military.

The external policies of such nation-states are also quite intriguing. Externally, while of course capable of the same sorts of myopic, self-serving actions as any other polity, a nation-state constructed on the basis of citizenship will not be driven to expand territorially, nor will it feel threatened by other similarly-constituted nation-states. Conquest of other nations poses a fundamental problem for citizenship-based nation-states, since if individuals do not willingly enter into a social contract with the state they are not members of the nation, and providing voting rights to such individuals risks handing control of the state to individuals who are not members of the nation. To the degree they assume that all democratic nation-states are, like themselves, based on nations defined in terms of citizenship, these sorts of civic nation-states are likely to conclude that a world composed of democratic nation-states will be a peaceful, safe one. They will, therefore, be motivated "to make the world safe for democracy" (or at least for democratic nation-states), since a world of similarly defined nation-states will in fact tend to be unthreatening, at least in terms of identity politics. Such states may therefore engage in crusades to spread democracy and to create nation-states. To the degree they recognize that other nation-states are based on other principles of national composition, they will regard this with suspicion and worry.

One final, intriguing aspect of reliance on citizenship-based markers of national identity deserves to be mentioned. Because of the centrality of the state, the state and its institutions become a peculiar source of pride. They must be worthy of veneration. They must embody those attributes the nation believes are most important – such as strength, modernity, physical beauty. In the same way that a culturally demarcated nation might introspectively appraise its own worthiness by examining the quality of its music, poetry, art, literature, cuisine, or attire, a nation marked by citizenship is likely to examine its most *externally* visible public institutions – navies, armies, air forces, public monuments – to see if they are worthy and demand other nations' respect.

Whether identities based one of these markers – blood, language, culture, religion, or citizenship – is inherently "better" or "worse" than those based on other markers is, of course, a debatable normative question. What is clear, however, is that *it makes a difference*. Polities behave differently depending on how they define "we" and "they." Nation-states are not all the same when it comes to how they play identity politics – even nation-states that are comparable in terms of liberal democracy and the historical timing of state-building and nation-building.

This suggests two further observations. The first is that misperception, including misperception based on mirror-imaging, is likely to be a serious problem as nations interact with nations. The markers that "we" think make us "us" and we believe differentiate "us" from "them" may be different from the markers that "they" think make them "them" and differentiate "them" from "us." There is, as a consequence, no reason to think that when two nations (or nation-states) play identity politics with each they will be playing the same game, correctly understand why the "other" does or does not perceive "us" as a threat, and correctly predict the kind of behavior the "other" sees as appropriate given its conception of the relationship. For example, Americans, because they define themselves in terms of citizenship, are routinely and profoundly baffled that citizenship does not convey national membership in other societies. They thus misunderstand the steps that these other nations or nation-states take to protect themselves, concluding that the behavior of these "others" is either irrational or evil.

The second observation is that it must be remembered that because national identity is socially constructed, it is constantly being made and remade. The markers that are used are themselves

unfixed: not only does identity change over time but so too do the *bases* on which identity is then constructed. We need not accept as fixed, therefore, the blood-, or linguistic-, or cultural-, or religious-, or civic-basis for identity in any particular nation. This is something that can be manipulated through conscious actions by elites, or may evolve or change suddenly in response to social, economic, or cultural upheaval.

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American history provides interesting illustrations of the shifting bases of national identity, and of the consequences for foreign policy. Until the 1890s, the principal markers of American national identity were cultural. Obviously, in the form of race, "blood" was also a significant marker, but apart from setting an outer limit on who could be a member of the nation (no Africans or Asians allowed), it did not serve as a critical bar: early intermingling of English, Scots, Dutch, French, and German communities took place with remarkably little problem, and for its first century the nation was relatively open to any white immigration. Religion and language played an even smaller role in marking "Americanness." While always highly religious, the nation was explicitly religiously *diverse*: the "republican" model of the American national community envisioned distinct and different religious communities tolerating each others existence and recognizing common membership in the larger national community. Similarly, while English was the *lingua franca* of the nation, the use of other languages was tolerated, and language did not serve as a critical marker separating the American nation from its most important "other" – Britain. Nor was citizenship a critical marker for the first century of the American republic: "state" loyalties and a relatively weak federal system made the "American" state a distant and weak symbol. The critical marker of Americanness was a cultural way-of-life, either achieved or aspired to: an independent freeholder, participating by choice in small republican communities. Initially, the exact nature of these republican communities was subject to considerable debate: Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian visions of the American nation suggested different "others" (Britain and France), different state institutions, and different foreign policies. But this construction of the American nation proved remarkably durable. Protestations of America's superior political culture – a city on a hill – and its attractiveness to immigrants were critical elements in this construction of the nation.

This politico-cultural construction of the nation became increasingly untenable in the late 1800s, however. Industrialization and urbanization, coupled with massive immigration, meant that America was increasingly populated by individuals who did not and presumably would never satisfy the old marker of American identity. The challenge was profound. Not surprisingly, there were attempts to create a "blood" myth: families who could trace their roots back to the colonial settlements or to the Revolution suddenly chose to do so, in an effort to prove their true Americanness (in contrast to the "immigrant" other). Indeed it is from this period that a first interest in genealogical research in America can be dated, as well as the development of organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution. The social upheaval of the 1880s and 1890s and the disintegration of American society was addressed in another fashion, however, and Americanness was reconstructed on a very different foundation.

The Progressive movement placed the state at the center of national identity – that is, it made citizenship the key marker. The new immigrant communities, and the urban proletariat, could be Americans. They simply had to serve the state. New national myths and symbols were constructed around the state. The Spanish-American War provided a wonderful opportunity for new immigrants to prove their Americanness by enlisting and serving in the military. Rigorous regulation of immigration by the state served to control what newcomers would be allowed to become Americans and to exclude those deemed "unfit" for membership in the nation.

The new centrality of the state had interesting consequences. If the state were to serve as a suitable symbol of the American nation, it needed to possess qualities that evoked admiration. It needed, for example, to be technologically modern, and it needed to be able to compete honorably with other states. Hardly surprisingly, it was at this juncture that America began to begin a modern navy, able to match those of the imperial European powers.

In this new post-1890 world, culture was not an unimportant marker of American identity. It was, however, a secondary marker. The assumption was that the state would be able to create a common American culture, one that blended together the various cultural traditions of its immigrant populations, creating something better and stronger than any one of them alone. The image – a vivid one – was of a "melting pot." The state would provide the heat (in the form of education and civic institutions) that would melt the various base metals together into a new American alloy. This implied not merely integration but assimilation. The American state's success was in creating a cultural melting pot was real, but limited: race remained a significant barrier to inclusion in the American nation. The denial of full citizenship rights to blacks in much of the country, and limits on their military service, placed their membership in the nation in real doubt.

Beginning in the 1960s, both the intractable race issue and technological and demographic change increasingly called into question the state's ability to maintain a myth of a cultural melting pot. The "modern" smokestack economy began to move into decline, replaced by a postmodern, information- and service-based one. The cultural differences of immigrants expanded, as immigration of non-European peoples increased, and simultaneously the ability of the state to dominate information and education declined, as information technology and a postmodern economy emerged.

The solution to this challenge to national cohesion was to remove culture from even its secondary position. Instead of a "melting pot" nation, America would be a "rainbow" nation: instead of a single culture that blended the raw materials of its people into an indistinguishable mass, it would be composed of multiple cultures that existed side by side. The beauty of America would be its diversity, preserved intact. The power of the state would be used for the more limited aim of integration, not assimilation.

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At issue today is whether this citizenship-centric, multicultural, "rainbow" vision of American identity is workable – whether it can serve the cultural and cognitive functions necessary, creating the bonds of "we"ness that effectively shape behavior. The most eloquent critic of this vision may well be Samuel Huntington. Huntington argues that America's cultural diversity, specifically embodied in its Hispanic population, will tear the nation apart – that Hispanics can not be good citizens. He contends that the Hispanic community's very different political culture, and its retention of that political culture, undermines a citizenship-based notion of nation. (Presumably the smaller Islamic community poses an even more intense threat in this regard, made manageable only by the small size of that community.) Huntington's argument is that for the American nation to survive as an identity-community – that is, for it to survive as a community that defines special obligations and expectations – its members need to do more than profess loyalty to the American state. They need to share a common politico-cultural heritage.

This is a polarizing argument, one that many Americans find offensive. It is also one that needs to be taken seriously, not simply because of its potential intellectual significance but because of its resonance within the American body-politic.

As we have observed, because profession of loyalty to the state can be feigned (and, indeed, because even if truly professed, it may, given the right priming, assume secondary importance to some other identity), citizenship-based nations will always suffer from self-doubt. Are all of "us" really, reliably "us"? Improvements in information technology, a deepening and expanding network of transnational institutional ties, and the globalization of activities heighten such concerns. The inability of the state to reliably control immigration, coupled with a moral necessity to provide education and health benefits to all in our communities, whether they are "legal" or not, further increases doubts about a citizenship-based understanding of our community. And terrorist activities of course drive home the point.

If citizenship is not a reliable marker of Americanness, then what can be? How else might the American nation socially construct its "we"? Blood seems an unlikely possibility: the nation is too ethnically and racially diverse, and the liberal tradition, now even extended to include voting rights and affirmative action for minority populations, too deeply entrenched. Similarly, religious diversity is too great and the tradition of religious toleration too deeply entrenched to make this an acceptable marker. Language may serve as necessary condition – English speakers only, please! – but in today's world can not serve as a sufficient condition. In the end, cultural markers of some sort appear to be the only viable alternative.

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If America does indeed back away from a citizenship-based, multicultural, "rainbow" image of American national identity, toward some culturally based vision, the consequences will be enormous, both domestically and in terms of foreign policy. Ironically, one of the domestic consequences is likely to be a significant ratcheting up of state power, exerting greater control over education, over immigration, and conceivably over surveillance. The state will need to build its power to effectively heat the "melting pot" and to keep out immigrants that it believes will not melt.

The external implications are more complicated, and much would depend on the nuances of the particular cultural markers. I've argued above that culturally defined nations tend to pursue empire, even if only in the Gramscian sense. Certainly the most threatening "them" will be other cultures that seem to have powerful abilities to attract adherents and to provide attractive, alternative cultural models – the fundamentalist religions seem most likely to be cast in this role. What this would imply for the transatlantic relationship is less clear. Arguably, Europe would be regarded as the most sympathetic, most benign, least dangerous "other." (Certainly this is Huntington's view.) Whether Europe would tolerate this definition of itself, however, is less clear. This sort of construction of American identity might, as well, create frictions on a variety of other fronts: it is easy to imagine such an America pulling back from its commitments, for example, to global free trade.

In any case, I think it is this divide – between definitions of American identity that are principally based on citizenship, and those that are principally based on some common American cultural markers – rather than the red/blue divide that is likely to prove critical in determining the general shape of American foreign policy in the coming decades. This is the debate to watch.