

# The historiography of nationalism and national identity in Latin America

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**ABSTRACT.** This article surveys the current state of research on nationalism in Latin America, focusing on the large body of work produced from the 1990s onwards in a wide variety of disciplines (history, the social sciences and cultural studies). Covering work on both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, it takes as a starting point the impact of Benedict Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities*, on Latin Americanists. It discusses the ways in which Latin Americanists have applied his ideas, and their critiques of many of his claims about Latin American nationalism. It goes on to outline major recent developments across the field, within the context of an argument that it is important for all scholars of nationalism to incorporate Latin American experiences into their debates on the history and theory of nationalism. The references have been selected to guide readers to key relevant works; regrettably, the article cannot, for reasons of space, offer a fully comprehensive bibliography.

Latin America has always been an anomaly in the history of nationalism. Lacking the linguistic and ethnic distinctions commonly associated with national identities in Europe or Asia, lacking a secure process of state consolidation, and lacking, too, the economic success of the United States and Canada, the former American colonies of Spain and Portugal have usually been regarded as incomplete nations at best. Until well into the 1980s, it was widely assumed – among both Latin Americanists and scholars of comparative nationalism – that state came before nation in the region; that widespread national consciousness did not even begin to emerge until the 1950s; and that nationalism was not a key to understanding Latin American societies. Yet it is worth noting that, despite some major territorial losses by a few Latin American nations during the nineteenth century (Mexico is the famous example, ceding over a third of its land to the United States), the region's nation-states remained remarkably intact throughout the twentieth century. Separatist movements have been virtually absent in the region. What seems surprising about Latin America in the first decade of the 2000s is not that many competing types of identity can be found there – that is only to be expected in an increasingly globalised world – but, rather, that some form of *national* identity manifestly continues to be a significant factor in the lives of many Latin Americans. The persistence of national identity may be attributable in part to the cumulative historical weight of attempts to promote

nationalism, but it is also perhaps indicative of some features of Latin American nationalism that are worth thinking about in a comparative context.

Although Latin American countries have been engaged in a process of nation-state formation since independence, it was not until the 1960s that Latin Americanists began to address the issue of nationalism directly. They were partly inspired by Kedourie's work on nationalism in newly decolonised countries (1960 and 1971), but the main stimulus was the Cuban Revolution and its alliance with the Soviet bloc. US-based social scientists turned their attention to Latin American examples of nationalism, stimulated by the Cold War aim of identifying any potential threat to US interests (Whitaker 1962; Whitaker and Jordan 1966; Masur 1966; Baily 1970; Swansborough 1976). During the 1970s, other scholars – most of whom were more sympathetic to the Latin American viewpoint and influenced by dependency theory – chronicled several instances of just such defiance of Washington. Most of these works focused on economic nationalism, especially contemporary nationalisations in Peru, Chile and Venezuela, returning also to the historical example of Mexican oil in 1938 (Quijano 1971; Freeman Smith 1972; Tancer 1976; Sigmund 1980). But later in the decade, when Latin American nationalism assumed a predominantly right-wing hue with the spread of repressive military regimes, interest in nationalism faded again as historians and social scientists turned their attention to other analytical frameworks to understand Latin American politics. Although all of these regimes promoted strongly and explicitly nationalist projects, nationalism was eclipsed by the themes of authoritarianism, civil – military relations and human rights.

This neglect of nationalism was dramatically remedied in the 1990s, which saw a wide range of work across the disciplines – history, political science, anthropology, geography and cultural studies – published on Latin American collective identities, in which national identity, if not necessarily the main focus, was always a touchstone. Much of this renewed interest can be attributed to changes on the ground: to the processes of transition from authoritarian rule and redemocratisation, in which social movements played an important role, thereby drawing hitherto excluded groups into the national political arena; to the debates about citizenship and rights generated by a revival of a rhetorically inclusive liberal democratic process alongside implementation of neo-liberal economic policy that forced many people onto the margins; to the new salience of questions of legitimacy, especially in the context of a redefinition of the role of the state in national development; and to the need to come to terms with the past (an issue even in those countries that had not experienced military authoritarianism, precisely because of the restructuring of the state). This in turn highlighted the importance of memory, history and – Renan really did have a point – forgetting in relation to nation-building.

At the same time, of course, the oft-invoked process of globalisation brought into question the viability and significance of the nation-state.

Indigenous movements in Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia and elsewhere, their confidence boosted by international contacts, began to challenge the authority of the central state and its claim to be coterminous with the national community. Significantly, however, such movements mostly wanted to renegotiate, rather than reject, a role in the existing nation-states. There remains a widespread tendency for many sectors of Latin American society to regard nationalism as a crucial defence against the encroachments of international capital and its avatars. Such a view has been echoed in academic attempts, both within the region and outside it, to reconceptualise nationalism and national identity in more flexible ways than had been allowed by earlier monolithic interpretations. These initiatives were aided and inspired by developments in the theory of nationalism, above all Benedict Anderson's ubiquitously cited *Imagined Communities* (1983, rev. edn. 1991). Anderson's emphasis on the extent to which all nations were imagined – i.e. not necessarily tied to the supposedly standard – because European – defining features of race, ethnicity and language – paved the way for incorporating Latin American experiences into broader comparative and theoretical frameworks. Postcolonial studies were an important influence in this respect, even though Latin Americanists tend to be chary both of the concept of postcolonialism itself, identifying a universalising impulse in it, and of its application to Latin America. Nevertheless many Latin Americanists have been receptive to the kinds of approach advocated by the various schools of postcolonial, subaltern and cultural studies – particularly theories of narration and discourse analysis. All this has helped to shape an exciting body of revisionist work, which has taken thinking about Latin American nationalism and national identity in many new directions. It is an opportune moment to review the field and to identify areas for future research.

Few of the major theorists and comparative historians of nationalism have said much about Latin America. Leaders in the field such as Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, John Breuilly and John Hutchinson have either ignored Latin America altogether, or relegated it to an uneasy footnote, acknowledging that it does not really 'fit' any of their schemas, but not modifying their frameworks to accommodate the region's experiences in any significant way. The real difficulty posed by Latin America is not that it is wholly different from the implied norm but that everything *partly* applies. The conventional identifiers of nationalism are all present, but in complicated ways. Language, for example, certainly cannot be upheld as causative in the development of Latin American nations, but starting in the late nineteenth century intellectuals in most of these countries started differentiating Spanish into 'Chilean', 'Peruvian', 'Mexican' and so forth. In Brazil, the Portuguese language, Brazilian-style, has played a key part in defining Brazilianness. In most countries of the region, the incorporation of vocabulary, inflections and rhythms from indigenous languages – a process dating back to the conquest – or from immigrant languages, such as Italian in Buenos Aires – has also been significant in developing a sense of national distinctiveness. Thus, language is

certainly not an irrelevant factor in Latin American nationalisms (Morse 1989), even if it does not follow the 'one (hegemonic) language, one nation-state' model.

One leading exception to the general comparativist neglect of Latin America is Eric Hobsbawm, who produced a short but substantial analysis of Latin American nationalism which, regrettably, is not widely available (Hobsbawm 1995). Hobsbawm focused very much on the state and capitalism, in a standard modernist interpretation, and drew upon Latin American experience to support his general case that nations are politically constructed, and therefore capable of sustaining themselves notwithstanding the malleability and changeability of ethnic identities. However, his claim that Latin America had 'remained largely immune to modern ethnic-cultural nationalism to this day' (p. 313) seems over-stated to anyone who knows the histories of Latin America's indigenous peoples. Two instances stand out from the nineteenth century: Chile's 'pacification' process of the 1860s, when the Mapuche lost large amounts of land in a series of official military campaigns that forced them into the far south of the country, and Argentina's War of the Desert (1879–80), when most of the country's remaining indigenous people were killed to open up the pampas for agriculture. In the twentieth century virtually genocidal policies were followed in Guatemala during the late 1960s, and there has been persistent failure to respect the lives of Amazonian indigenous peoples. All these experiences, together with those of black people and other immigrant groups, have led to severe questioning of the official claim that Latin American nations are racial democracies. The meanings of the ubiquitous term for racial mixing, *mestizaje*, range from Hispanicisation to a degree of inclusion of the indigenous, but they all carry an implication of assimilation (as one Mexican critic put it, 'You're different, but we forgive you'). Most Latin Americanists would now emphasise the extent to which ideologies of racial mixing were based on racialised state structures and official national iconographies that excluded black and/or indigenous people (Appelbaum et al. 2003). Nevertheless, Hobsbawm's broad point remains valid: that from the early twentieth century onwards Latin American nationalisms have drawn upon a rhetoric of inclusion, which may in some cases have opened up possibilities for the marginalised to renegotiate their position.

Despite all the complexities of the relationship between race and nation in Latin America, then, it is still the case that the sustained post-World War II European critique of nationalism as a vehicle for racism did not take place in Latin America, where nationalism continued to be – and still is – conceived primarily in emancipatory terms. The region's experience of neo-imperialism meant that even internationalist Marxists tended to emphasise the importance of the nation as the arena for the revindication of the masses: the people, who constituted the nation, were deemed to have been deprived of their entitlement to sovereignty by the elites selling out their country in order to collaborate with the imperialists (Castañeda 1993). As Hobsbawm (1995) put it, at least

from the Mexican Revolution (1910–20) onwards, nationalism in Latin America often assumed a left-leaning, ‘developmentalist, anti-imperialist and popular’ emphasis. It did not always do so, of course, and Hobsbawm, like so many left-wing historians who have studied Latin America, underestimated the influence of conservative, authoritarian versions of nationalism that drew upon concepts of the organic state. But his point about revolutions with popular legitimacy encouraging attachment to the nation was a good one, although its implications – valid for at least Mexico, Cuba and Nicaragua – have only recently begun to be explored by Latin Americanists. In terms of agents of nationalism, Hobsbawm emphasised the importance of ‘modern mass culture, especially as reinforced by technology’ (p. 320), i.e. football, radio and television. Clearly these media were vital to the dissemination of nationalism, but rarely during their early stages did they operate independently of the state, as case studies have shown (Britton 1994; Mason 1995). Hobsbawm’s wider analysis of the mechanisms of state-invented traditions still influences a lot of the work done today on commemoration and civic ritual in Latin America, although such studies also draw on other conceptual frameworks such as Pierre Nora’s and Jacques Le Goff’s work on history and memory, and many scholars now would seek to modify Hobsbawm’s top-down perspective.

As for Benedict Anderson, it took some time for his ideas to be picked up by Latin Americanists, but it would be hard to overstate his influence on the work of the 1990s. Many Latin Americanists found his idea of the nation as a cultural rather than an ideological or bureaucratic construct highly suggestive in relation to the societies they studied, where states were historically weak. In terms of the specifics of his account, Latin Americanists have criticised Anderson, but most of them have also adopted, adapted and extended his ideas, as was confirmed in the findings of a conference of historians and cultural critics convened in 2000 to debate the relevance of Anderson’s work to the region (Castro-Klarén and Chasteen 2003). Ironically, they reject Anderson’s big claim about Latin America, namely that the wars of independence were nationalist undertakings that resulted in models for the development of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere. There are probably no historians of the independence wars who would accept Anderson’s version of them, which was, as has often been pointed out, based on a limited range of secondary sources. His suggestion that the career pathways of creole bureaucrats played an important role in generating elite consciousness of difference both from Spain and within the Americas has been met with scepticism, partly because he provided no specific evidence in support. There is room for more research into this issue, although François-Xavier Guerra’s recent work found evidence against Anderson’s claim rather than in favour of it (Guerra 2003; see also Uribe-Urán 2001). The other plank of Anderson’s argument – namely the significance of print capitalism – has received far more attention. His claim about the effects of late colonial newspapers in creating proto-national consciousness also seems to be based on a very limited evidence base. In

trying to illustrate his idea about the role of novels in creating consciousness of homogeneous empty time, he clearly tried to hang rather too much on the perch of Mexico's *Itching Parrot* (a novel of 1816 satirising colonial manners and mores, written by journalist José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi). As a causative explanation, Anderson's argument does not withstand close examination.

Nevertheless, when considered as factors in a process rather than as causes of a set of events, his ideas have been applied very productively. The emphasis on imagining rather than realisation has prompted some historians to reconsider the significance of the idea of nation during the process of independence. Just because the independence movements cannot plausibly be seen as movements of national emancipation in the style of post-World War II decolonisation, it does not follow that the concept of nation was irrelevant or meaningless. Some still maintain that it was a republic rather than a nation that was being imagined, but increasingly evidence is being uncovered that suggests that the two ideas were both present, and that they evolved – not in tandem, which would be an oversimplifying metaphor – but in complex relation to one another (McFarlane and Posada-Carbó 1998). After the American, French and Haitian Revolutions, it was possible to imagine a nation separate and on a different scale from a republic, but harder to envisage a republic that was not based on conceptions of popular sovereignty and bounded territory. Historians have recently sought to identify the range of meanings attached to terms such as 'nación' and 'patria' during and after the Wars of Independence (Guerra 1992; Brown in this special issue). There is still scope for further research into the relationship of the states that issued from the defeat of colonial power with both the preceding communities and the nation-states that subsequently developed. Moreover, the discourse of the constitutions of these republics would be worthy of more attention than it has received. Even if constitutions were frequently ignored, they were – as Alan Knight has pointed out – just as frequently returned to as touchstones of the ideal (Knight 2001).

Anderson's famous emphasis on print capitalism has been applied effectively to later periods in Latin American history. Doris Sommer (1991) pioneered this approach, with highly perceptive readings of nineteenth-century Romantic novels, in which the national drama of marrying creole to indigenous was acted out through the telling of an individual love affair. Those who argue that novels had only very limited significance in the process of creating the imagined community in Latin America because they were only read by a small minority tend to ignore the fact that these elites in themselves were highly variegated by region, economic sector and political allegiance. There were considerable obstacles to the elites imagining themselves as part of the same community, even before they set about trying to incorporate the masses. Novels may well have played a constructive part here, even if it is harder to sustain claims that the novels of, say, the Latin American literary 'boom' of the 1960s contributed to specifically national identities. Other

narratives of nation – essays, short stories, journalistic articles and poetry – have also been analysed, although there is still plenty of scope for more work on the reception history of this material, particularly poetry. The role of the press is beginning to be explored (Jaksic 2002). The textual emphasis generated by Anderson's focus on print capitalism has also been refocused by adopting an anthropological concern with social life interpreted as a text (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996), adding the questions of how the nation is embodied and lived in everyday life to the issue of how it might be imagined. Thus, Anderson's ideas have had an impact across the disciplines of Latin American studies.

The US-based Mexican historian and anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz recently published a perceptive critique of Anderson in relation to Latin America, which is now cited by Latin Americanists almost as frequently as is Anderson himself. Lomnitz made three main points. First, he argued that Anderson's conception of the nation as a political community imagined as inherently limited and sovereign did not reflect the shifting historical usage of the term 'nación' in the period preceding the independence movements in Spanish America. A creole (Spanish-descended inhabitant) from New Spain (now Mexico) might have invoked 'nación' in at least three ways: (i) to identify himself with Spain; (ii) to differentiate himself from Spain; (iii) to distinguish his territorial space in New Mexico from that of the indigenous communities, which were designated a separate 'nación', with distinctive legal privileges, i.e. sovereignty rights (Lomnitz 2000: 333–4). Perhaps closer to what is now conventionally understood by the term 'nation-state' was the idea of 'patria' (fatherland), which implied allegiance to a territory but not necessarily to all the people within it, so that several 'naciones' could coexist within one 'patria'. This situation persisted well into the nineteenth century in Latin America, where – unsurprisingly – the elites preferred to use the term 'patria' rather than 'nación', precisely because it enabled them to evade the tricky issue of how to incorporate all of the population into a united nation. Increasingly, however, the term 'nación' gained currency, because one strategy for legitimating a claim to control the central state, and mobilising popular support for it, was to advocate extending the benefits of republican government to broader sections of the population. Such measures, which, as Lomnitz outlined for Mexico (2000: 352), included the abolition of tribute and Church tithes, the distribution of lands and spoils from the Spaniards, and the spread of goods and new technologies, were always implemented unevenly, which was in itself symptomatic of the difficulties of bringing together several 'naciones' into one modernising nation-state.

Lomnitz's second argument challenged Anderson's idea that nationalism entailed a 'deep horizontal comradeship'. Taking as his starting point nineteenth-century Latin America's history of power struggles between the republican states resulting from the wars of independence and the corporate institutions remaining from the colonial period (indigenous communities, large landed estates, guilds, the Catholic Church), Lomnitz argued that nationalism, not only in Latin America but in general, inherently entailed

'bonds of dependence' between full and part citizens (men and women or children; creoles and indigenous peoples; property-owners and their labourers). In other words, although nationalism always invokes fraternity, or horizontal bonds, it is in practice built upon hierarchical relations of paternalism and clientelism.

Third, Lomnitz argued, surely correctly, that Anderson had made a fundamental error in associating nationalism with secularisation. In Spain, Lomnitz emphasised, national consciousness was stimulated at least in part by religious expansionism in the New World and the sense that to be 'Spanish' was to enjoy a privileged connection to the Catholic Church. In independent Mexico, freemasonry played a crucial role in converting regional leaders into national ones. Lomnitz argued, further, that much of the early history of the Mexican republic could be understood in terms of the struggles to control the state apparatus between the two secret societies of the Scottish and the Yorkish Masons, a rivalry aggravated by support from Britain and the United States, respectively (Lomnitz 2000: 352). Nationalism did not necessarily displace religious allegiance, then, but could in some circumstances be compatible with it. In Spain, Lomnitz noted, the idea of a national economy, dependent upon the concept of 'homogeneous empty time' that Anderson attributed to the rise of print capitalism, could be dated back to the sixteenth century (Lomnitz 2000: 352).

Building on Lomnitz's arguments, which focused mainly on the early nineteenth century, it is worth emphasising that the almost certainly crucial role of religion in the development of Latin American nationalisms remains underexplored by academics, who tend to be secular in outlook. When religion is discussed, it is usually under the guise of popular culture – for example, the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico. Moreover, the religious subtext of much Latin American nationalist discourse has often been remarked upon, but that would also be true of many other parts of the world. But the long history of Catholic nationalism in the region is yet to be fully addressed, as is the broader relationship between religion, religiosity and nationalism in Latin America. A useful start has been made by Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister (2004), but their pioneering collection, questioning the separation of race, religion and nation as bounded primary analytical categories and arguing that it is the intersections between them that need attention, still tells us rather more about religion and racial identity than about religion and national identity. In the latter relationship, race may not always be a factor. For example, interview evidence from Venezuelan evangelical Protestants participating in a demonstration of 1996, mobilised by their church against corrupt government, suggested that an idea of personal redemption had been projected onto the nation (Smilde 1999). As Lomnitz argued, Anderson's claim that nationalism replaced religious feeling is hard to sustain on the basis of Latin American evidence.

Finally, from a Latin Americanist's point of view, the Achilles heel of Anderson's argument lay not so much in 'imagined' as in 'sovereign'. Lomnitz



raised the problem of the divided sovereignties that had existed under colonial rule and which took some time to translate into the idea of absolute popular sovereignty that came to dominate after the Mexican Revolution of 1910–20. Building on Lomnitz's discussion, it is worth adding that the ideal of popular sovereignty cannot be seen uncritically at any point in Latin American history, in view of the limited effectiveness of mechanisms of representation. Coming back to Hobsbawm's argument about legitimacy, for much of the twentieth century sovereignty was often effectively deemed to be located either in a single role – the presidency – or even in a single person (many Argentines continued to regard Perón as the sovereign leader of the nation throughout his 17 years in exile). The list of issues around sovereignty in Latin American nations is lengthy.

Apart from the obvious issue of economic threats to sovereignty in developing nation-states that are dependent on international markets and capital, there is also the question of the effects of war and militarism on Latin American nation-building, a theme which has attracted some attention recently. It has often been observed that Latin America has had relatively few inter-state wars, certainly fewer than Africa or Asia. Only Brazil played a role in the two World Wars. Miguel Angel Centeno has argued that Charles Tilly's model of war as an engine of state-building in Europe has little correspondence to Latin America, where, he claimed, the main imperative for state-building in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was economic (Centeno 2002). But, as argued below, nation-formation cannot be reduced to state-building. In any case, there is some evidence that despite all the limitations on state power, one thing states could and did do was to enforce conscription, which, even when resisted, still played its part in raising popular awareness of something called the nation (Deas 2002). It has increasingly been argued that war and militarism did play a significant role in at least some Latin American nationalisms, especially during the nineteenth century. The case is easiest to make for Mexico, which had two well-known foreign interventions in the Mexican – American War of 1846–8 and the Franco – Mexican War of 1862–7. Other key examples were the War of the Triple Alliance (1864–70), involving Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru and Bolivia from 1879 to 1883 (see Mallon 1995). It is also often forgotten that Spain invaded Bolivia, Chile and Peru in 1865–6. In the twentieth century, there was the Chaco War (1932–5) between Bolivia and Paraguay; a running border dispute between Peru and Ecuador that erupted into war in 1941, 1981 and 1995; and the so-called 'soccer war' between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969 (triggered by a football match, but really about refugees), not to mention the Malvinas/Falklands War of 1982. Moreover, US military action, direct or indirect, was carried out in Cuba (1898–1902, 1906–9, 1912, 1917, 1961), the Dominican Republic (1905, 1916–24, 1965), Guatemala (1954), Honduras (6 times between 1911 and 1925), Mexico (1914, 1916–17), Nicaragua (1912–25, 1927–33, 1981–90), Panama (1903, 1989) and Haiti (1915–34, 1994).

If we include civil war, let alone social revolution, then clearly the role of military conflict in Latin American nation-building has to be accorded far greater significance than Centeno implied. To take the post-1945 period alone, social revolutions took place in Bolivia (1952), Cuba (1959) and Nicaragua (1979), and civil wars, with or without a revolutionary aspect, took place in Paraguay (1947), Colombia (1948–62, 1984 to date), Costa Rica (1948), El Salvador (1979–92), Guatemala (1966–72, 1978–84) and Peru (1982–92). Arguably, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina were also effectively in a state of civil war in the period leading up to the respective coups of 1973 (both Chile and Uruguay) and 1976. More recently, the socially disruptive effects of organised crime, primarily relating to drugs trafficking, and the state's compromised attempts to control it, mean that many Latin Americans, particularly the poorest, live in the midst of what is effectively a state of war. If we expand the notion still further to include political violence, then we will uncover a whole history of popular rebellions, particularly in rural areas, many of which, it has been argued, exhibited at least a proto-nationalist dimension even as early as the wars of independence. All of these factors meant that the sovereignty of Latin American nation-states was often highly compromised.

Probably the most telling general critique of Anderson is that he over-emphasised the role of elites in the creation of national identities. Almost inevitably, as a consequence, he said little about race and nothing about gender. Over the last fifteen years or so Latin Americanists have produced work that acts as a powerful corrective not only to the top-down approach but also to an exclusively bottom-up approach that can be just as restrictive. Florencia Mallon's work on the emergence of peasant nationalisms in Mexico and Peru was an influential pioneer here (1995). In their studies of popular actors in nation-building, scholars of Latin America have integrated class, race and gender analysis highly effectively. While earlier work tended to focus on rural areas and indigenous peoples, the range has now been extended to include black people and other immigrant communities. Recently, the focus has switched to the organised industrial labour force, particularly in provincial towns and cities (Klubock 1998).

The introduction of a gender perspective into analysis of nationalism has not only uncovered much fascinating material about the roles of women of all social classes in nation-building, but has also brought out the importance of concepts such as honour in the national imaginary (Caulfield 2000; Chambers 1999). A promising new line of interest is the role of inter-generational transmission of ideas about national identities within families. There has also been a shift from thinking almost exclusively at the level of representation to thinking about how national identities are embodied in the practices of daily life, for example, Peter Wade's work on popular music in Colombia (2000), or Rick López's analysis of a Mexican beauty contest (2002).

There is now also a vast body of work on manifestations of popular culture and mass culture in Latin America, and on how each has intersected with the

state, the market and the national imaginary (Rowe and Schelling 1991; Bueno and Caesar 1998). Some of the earlier work in this field was criticised for positing 'the popular' as a semi-autonomous world, but most of it has now moved on to develop sophisticated models for understanding connections between the global, the national and the local. Strategies of appropriation by states – the 'nationalising' of cultural practices deemed to be 'popular', such as certain types of music and carnival – and strategies of resistance have been analysed over a wide range of media including comic books, soap operas, popular icons, sport (which, to date, has mostly meant football, although there is now material on baseball and basketball) and – still a very new topic – food (Arbena and LaFrance 2002; Archetti 2003; González 2003).

Cumulatively, such research has shown that a greater awareness of the national state had penetrated both vertically and horizontally far earlier than had hitherto been supposed. Nineteenth-century elites may have intended to be exclusionary in their nationalisms, but they were not always allowed to get away with it. For the twentieth century, the oft-rehearsed argument about the rhetoric of inclusion and the reality of exclusion, while still retaining significant force, may need to be made more nuanced (Appelbaum et al., 2003). Equally, subalterns did not always fulfil romantic expectations that they should resist the encroachments of the nation-state. Often they demonstrated a readiness to engage with it to secure rights, e.g. through use of the courts in relation to land ownership, labour rights, the right to preserve their own cultural practices, protection from physical or psychological abuse from bosses. They bargained, negotiated, compromised and – sometimes – protested or resisted. But they clearly engaged with nation-building projects.

As one outcome of all this work, certain ground-rules for the study of Latin American nationalisms have been established. A primarily modernist emphasis on the inventedness of nations prevails, although increasingly some of the perennialist concerns have been taken on board, especially in relation to continuities between colonial and post-independence collective identities (Roniger and Sznajder 1998; Roniger and Herzog 2000). Even if all nations are constructed, some have firmer foundations in existing cultural practice and shared history than others; some are less reliant on conscious and continuous agency. Imaginings can produce creative visions, implausible illusions or destructive delusions. It was easier to create consensus around a useable past in Chile, which could distinguish itself from its neighbours by a history of far greater stability dating back to the 1830s, than in, say, Argentina, which did not consolidate a centralised state until the 1880s. National identities are no longer seen as necessarily primary or all-absorbing. The emphasis now falls on the importance of tracing historical development of constructions of selfhood and otherness, looking not so much at who engages in certain practices or who produces certain images as at how such practices and images are endlessly created and recreated. Through incorporating into the analysis not just cultural factors such as religion, music and language, but also social factors such as labour patterns, personal relations

and domestic arrangements, it became possible to reunite the cultural with the economic, so that identities can be analysed in the context of exchange relations. For all the potential insights to be gleaned from close scrutiny of representation and discourse, it is important to take full account of the material basis of cultural practice and of the material forces influencing national circumstances (Appelbaum et al. 2003). This argument, recently reclaimed in the Anglo-American academic community in reaction against postmodernist influences, is one that scholars from Latin America have long upheld and demonstrated (García Canclini 1995 and 2001; Ramos 2001).

This leads me on to a striking feature of the literature on Latin American nationalism, which is the *de facto* division of labour between those who have studied nationalism as a manifestation of political power, focusing on the state, and those who have worked on national identity as a cultural community, focusing on society. For all the value of the individual works of scholarship produced, there are problems arising from this split focus, which is partly determined by disciplinary boundaries. Even in the 1990s, social scientists were publishing prescriptions for institution-building and reshaping of the state that mentioned only in passing the need for such processes to be related to a 'national strategy', as if such a term could be simply taken for granted with no further need for discussion (Bresser Pereira and Spink 1999: 173; Vellinga 1998). At the other extreme, there are discussions of identity politics framed as if the state, in any form, never touched the lives of the people concerned, which – as some of the research mentioned above has shown – was rarely the case. Even during the nineteenth century, when Latin American states were notoriously weak, they were a presence in the lives of most of their populations through either military conscription or taxation. In any case, their very weakness often meant that social forces fought through the institutions of the states as well as around them, and control of the state was seen as a prize that could be easily won. Contested ideas of the state – republican, revolutionary, authoritarian – were closely related to competing visions of the nation; at times, and for some nationalists, the state became an 'other' in itself. Thus the old debate about whether state came before nation in Latin America has largely been superseded by an analytical framework that shows the extent to which state-building and nation-creation were related processes, operating in parallel, sometimes reinforcing each other but sometimes undermining each other. Tulio Halperín Donghi's work (1980) on Argentina after independence and Mary Kay Vaughan's research into the implementation of education policy in Mexico during the 1930s both illustrate how illuminating it can be to analyse state-building and national identity-formation together (Vaughan 1997).

I suggest that the place of the state in constructing Latin American national identities is likely to continue to be important, despite what Anderson has called 'the crisis of the hyphen', namely the increasing tendency over the last three decades or so for the nation-state to separate out into nation and state. As Michael Mann has argued, however, this tendency may well be exaggerated,

especially outside of Western Europe (Mann 1996). Migration, diaspora and new conceptions of territoriality notwithstanding, the nation-state remains a highly significant factor in the lives of most people (law and order; education; the language of public business; political rights; healthcare; transport and communications; regulation of the life cycle and the family), and the experience of common government – good or bad – a significant source of shared references, complaints, jokes and a sense of history. In the Latin American context, at least, the state is likely to remain a key focus of analysis, but on the basis of the new understanding that state formation is more complex than hitherto thought (Joseph and Nugent 1994).

One illustration of the consequences of separating culture and politics is that for a long time intellectuals (creative writers and artists) were deemed by Latin Americanists, who were partly drawing on Kedourie's work on post-colonial states in Africa and Asia, to have played a highly significant role in Latin American nationalisms. It was certainly true that a few key intellectual figures who were significant in the political histories of their nations, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (President of Argentina from 1868 to 1874) or José Martí, the Cuban independence leader who was martyred at the start of Cuba's second war against Spanish colonial rule (1895–8), acquired iconic status as founding fathers. It was also the case that many Latin American intellectuals, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century, specifically set out to address questions of national identity in their works. In creating fiction, poetry, art, architecture, film and music, and also in developing ideas about race and culture, these intellectuals undeniably made important contributions to the national imaginary, at least of the elites. But the widespread idea that Latin American national identities have been created either by generals or by intellectuals cannot be sustained unless a very wide definition of intellectual (anyone who has received higher education) is intended. Evidence from Latin America supports John Breuilly's general argument that nationalist politics have frequently been dominated by other interest groups or institutions (Breuilly 1985). The involvement of new social sectors (professional politicians, for example) was particularly evident from the late nineteenth century onwards, as modernisation created a partial separation of the previously overlapping spheres of high culture and politics. I have argued elsewhere that the influence of twentieth-century Latin American intellectuals was constrained by their problematic relationship with the state (Miller 1999): where the state encouraged and sponsored their work, as in Mexico or Brazil, they enjoyed significant influence; where the state ignored and repressed it, as in Argentina, they had far less impact. Within Latin America itself, the idea of the politically committed, left-wing intellectual as the voice of the voiceless, articulating identity, has increasingly been seen as linked in with what has become known as the 'national-popular myth', according to which the 'popular' functioned as a reserve of nostalgia or romantic heroism in nation-formation (Brunner 1992). There is still relatively little work on a category of intellectuals that I suspect were crucial to nation-

building projects, viz. local intellectuals, whose activities are of course hard to document. But combing the local archives can yield rich results, as shown by Florencia Mallon's work, mentioned above, Guy Thomson (1999) in his study of local patriotism in nineteenth-century Mexico and Natividad Gutiérrez (1999) in her research into twentieth-century indigenous intellectuals in Mexico. In general, the role in nationalism of the amorphous middle sectors of Latin American society has not attracted much attention, although Patrick Barr Melej's book on Chile (2001) suggests that it would amply repay the work involved.

Recent research has adopted three main approaches towards exploring the relationship between state- and nation-formation in Latin America. First, there is a burgeoning literature on history, memory and commemoration. Historiographies are increasingly being analysed as important spheres of contestation: how is it possible to write histories after colonialism (Thurner 2003)? How can the histories of highly divisive 'national' experiences be written and remembered? This is especially pertinent currently in countries (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala) trying to come to terms with the experience of widespread human rights violations committed by military regimes. What has been the official – state-sanctioned – version of national history? Thus, research has focused on the role of national rituals, ceremonies and civic myths, flags, anthems, coins, stamps, statues, museums, exhibitions, monuments and public architecture (Beezley et al. 1994; Beezley and Lorey 2001; Duncan 1998; Earle 2002; Tenorio Trillo 1996). The role of material culture is attracting increasing attention: the construction of identity through consumption and display. Most of this work tries to investigate the difficult question of the broader social impact of nationalism, looking beyond the elites. Increasing attention is focused on icons of nationalism, both 'popular' figures such as the Virgin of Guadalupe (Brading 2001), and intellectuals-who-became-icons, such as Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral (Fiol-Matta 2002). All of this work builds on Hobsbawm and Ranger's idea of the invented tradition.

Secondly – and here Latin American scholars have made an outstanding contribution to international debates – the role of civil society in relationship to both the state and the market has come under renewed examination, above all in the context of Latin America's redemocratisation of the 1980s, which accompanied neo-liberal economic policies and attempts to reduce the economic role of the state. There is a vast literature on this topic; I will draw attention to just one key writer, whose work I see as particularly relevant to thinking about nationalism. In his famous *Hybrid Cultures*, Néstor García Canclini sought to make people think beyond the dividing lines of popular/mass/high culture to analyse the varieties of ways in which people at all levels of society mediated the pressures of modernisation. García Canclini's work has not directly focused on nationalism, but it nevertheless provides a potentially fruitful and widely influential new model for thinking about the relationships between local, national and transnational forces. Latin

American societies are amalgamations, he argued, of different historical temporalities, of different relations to the process of modernisation. Identities straddle borders; cultures are hybrid. The imported is grafted onto the local, transforming both. Rather than looking either at the elites' penchant for developing ideologies, such as nationalism, that served as a rationale for their own ends, or at ordinary people's capacity for resisting these strategies, it was more important, suggested Canclini, to examine the institutions through which all social sectors negotiated modernity: religious beliefs and organisations, state agencies, markets, the media and tourism. In a later work, *Consumers and Citizens* (2001), García Canclini proposed a rethinking of the concept of consumption to include 'goods' such as healthcare, welfare and education, arguing that consumption should not necessarily be dismissed as a site of irrationality, wastefulness and the potential manipulation of individuals, but rather seen as a process involving possibilities for thinking creatively about a new relationship between public and private spheres. Despite the decline of traditional rights, such as welfare from the state, there were emerging, he argued, new possibilities for citizenship, which opened up the prospect of creating a Latin American cultural space to resist Americanisation. Such claims have attracted controversy, both intellectual and political, but García Canclini's work should be read by anyone interested in the place of the nation-state in the contemporary world.

Thirdly, new attention is being paid to geographies of nationhood, building on Benedict Anderson's thoughtful pioneering discussion (1991). The idea of the bounded territory provides the point at which nation and state coincide, although it is increasingly being argued that this operates at a symbolic level, especially in the context of globalisation. Analysts of globalisation who do not see it as an entirely negative process identify an opportunity to abandon chronological thinking (such as the stages of nationalism model that sees nationalism as first an idea, then a political movement, then a social consensus) in favour of spatial thinking, which opens up the possibility of acknowledging the existence of different conceptions of time without judging them as backward or underdeveloped (Mignolo 1998). This is proving particularly fruitful in relation to Latin America, where the importance of mapping territory, both literally and figuratively, is now widely discussed (Craib 2002; Qayum 2002).

Studies of sub-national regionalisms (especially in Europe) were initially a reaction against national historiographies that represented regionalism as an anachronistic obstacle to the creation of viable modern nation-states. However, more recent research has developed new ways of thinking about the configuration of the nation, focusing on interactions between the regional and the national, and the extent to which the two could reinforce each other (Anna 1998). There remains a tendency to focus on rural areas and their relationship, or lack of one, to the central state – there is plenty of scope for work on regional rivalries and on provincial cities. Scholars are beginning to think about urban landscapes, concepts of marginality, borders and regions both

local and international. Borders, both real and symbolic, certainly affect the meanings of national identities, but they do not seem to diminish their relevance. It has been argued, for example, that both *mexicanidad* and WASP hegemony in the United States have been strengthened by the consolidation of a distinctive border society (Pastor and Castañeda 1988; *Journal of American History* 1999; Spener and Staudt 1998). By all accounts, Cubans in Miami have as strong an idea of *cubanidad* as their counterparts on 'the island', even if they attach different meanings to it (Behar 1995).

A growing emphasis has developed on the complexities of representations of the other, as well as of the self. Historically, Latin American nations have sought to distinguish themselves from – or, in some periods, make themselves like – various European countries (Spain, France, Britain), the United States and other – usually neighbouring – Latin American countries. We need to know far more about the international context in which national identities evolved, about the transfer of people, ideas and images in both directions – both across the Atlantic and between the Americas. In order to answer all these questions effectively, an interdisciplinary focus is crucial. Moreover, throughout Spanish America – the case of Brazil is different – national identities have also developed in complex relationship with a transnational regional identity – *Hispanoamericanismo* – that has acted as a crucial reference of both sameness and difference, and that has functioned as more of a complement to national identities than as a competitor to them. Factors such as race, ethnicity, language, religion and political values contribute to a common reservoir of identity to be drawn upon from across Spanish America. Each individual Spanish American nation has developed its own variant on the supra-national vision, which has then been mixed in with each particular nation-state history to produce distinctive national identities, constituted in all cases of *both* cultural *and* political practices and ideals.

Thus, various oppositions that anyone familiar with the history of Europe tend to take for granted, such as nationalism/internationalism, nationalism/sub-state regionalism and nationalism/supra-national regionalism never fully took hold in Latin America, leading us at least to question the extent to which they have been applied to the study of nationalism elsewhere. Recent scholarship has already questioned the opposition of local regionalism and nationalism in Europe, for example, arguing that regional interests, particularly of second cities, have often dovetailed effectively with nationalist projects (Confino 1997). The significance of supra-national regionalisms is also attracting a good deal of attention in current scholarship on Europe. The idea that the nation is in competition with other collective identities (local, regional, supra-national) and may therefore lose out if they become stronger is not necessarily so. Such identities may work to reduce the significance of the national, but they may also work to increase it. It has been argued in Mexico, for example, that the national identity is strong enough to withstand the supposed threat of Americanisation, that Mexico's identity has long not been based on consumption patterns, so that the greater prevalence of US products



after NAFTA makes little difference, and that Mexico's own identity in fact depended on economic success, which could only be achieved by integrating further into a globalised world (Morris 1999: 377).

Latin American evidence shows the extent to which the term identity – so often taken as a given – is in itself problematic. Even within the homogenising projects of nationalists, let alone outside, there was resistance and debate about socio-cultural difference. The dominant trend in Latin American debates about identity has been to incorporate at least a degree of emphasis on heterogeneity and plasticity (a term that recurs frequently in Latin American writings about national identity). As García Canclini put it, in Latin America 'heterogeneity is conceived as part of the nation' (García Canclini 2001: 10). At least during the first half of the twentieth century, intellectuals used the term 'authenticity' (which keeps open the possibility of cultural mixing) far more than 'identity', which has implications of homogeneity and may well turn out to be another of the imported terms that proved not to fit. In this respect, there may be value for Latin Americanists in making more analytical use of the term 'nationhood', which avoids both the homogenising cultural emphasis of national identity and the implications of conscious political commitment of nationalism. Increasingly in the globalised world, there is one identity that is marketed and packaged for foreign consumption, especially for tourists, and there is another identity, marked as 'real' and authentic, and lived out in a domain to which the foreigner is rarely privy. Often the components of these two identities will be the same, but they will be marked in different ways and discussed in different registers.

It is easy to forget that Anderson's main argument about Latin American nationalism has been virtually ignored, as he himself lamented in the preface to the second edition of *Imagined Communities* in 1991. Even if his own claim that 'modal nations' were founded in the Americas is exaggerated (or, at least, is over-reliant on the case of the United States), the key point that the whole region's experiences are crucial to an understanding of the history of nationalism in general has still not received the attention it deserved. To dismiss them as derivative nationalisms is to assume that Latin Americans were only consumers and never creators. Latin American experiences were neither models nor imitations, but that does not make them any the less crucial to the comparative history of nationalism. Latin America's experiences of colonialism, neo-colonialism and internal colonialism mean that its national 'identities' have always been multifold, created and re-created in a continuous process of negotiation and renegotiation with both the others without and the others within. The contemporary emergence (in Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela) of multi-class, multi-ethnic coalitions of those excluded from neo-liberalism, movements which have also revived the significance of economic nationalism, provides ample illustration of Latin America's recurring capacity to make us challenge the categories we use to think about collective identities.

In a world where most nation-states are under increasing pressure to accommodate difference, Latin America's diverse history of nationalism is all the more worthy of attention.

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