VIRTUE NATIONALISM: 
AN ARISTOTELIAN DEFENSE OF THE NATION 

DISSERTATION 

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for 
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate 
School of The Ohio State University 

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The Ohio State University 
2007 

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism, it is argued, is a bad ideology, responsible for much of the political problems of the modern world. The primary proofs offered to support this claim are empirical, in the myriad reprehensible acts of actual nations. Yet in this approach critics of nationalism fail to take into account the many benefits that arise from nationalism. Moreover, the criticism neglects the possibility that nations may produce, overall, more benefits than harm.

A stronger argument against nationalism is theoretical, which claims that all nations are necessarily either amoral or immoral and cannot be otherwise. This argument relies on the set of inherent components (such as national sovereignty and self-determination) that all nations have in common, and makes the case that these components must combine to create a problematic ideology. This is largely because such components always lead to a political structure that allows both unacceptable inequalities and unjustifiable partiality.

A common response to this claim is to distinguish between good and bad forms of the nation, and then show that while the theoretical criticism applies to the bad forms it does not apply to the good. Although most of these distinctions fail to work against the theoretical criticism, one distinction seems promising:
liberal nationalism. This version of nationalism includes the values that modern liberal readers would want in any acceptable political theory, and tries to show how these values are, in fact, compatible with nationalism.

Yet I argue that liberal nationalism also comes up short as a response to the theoretical anti-nationalist position. In its place I offer a new version of nationalism, a model that starts with some of the values of the liberal nation, but which is expanded by using some of the key ideas found in Aristotle’s ethical and political writings. I call this model the ‘Virtuous Nation,’ and argue that it serves as an example of a nation that is not immoral. If I am correct, the general rejection of nationalism that the anti-nationalist critics seek is mistaken.

But I aim to go further than merely answering the critics. I believe that Aristotle’s writings offer ideas that can be useful today and that these ideas would help make the Virtuous Nation the best version of nationalism currently available. As a practical tool, I propose that this ideal nation be used as a guide for improving actual nation-states. Although the Virtuous Nation is an ideal and is not found anywhere (and would be difficult to instantiate), it can serve the practical function of providing a standard for what is considered ‘good,’ and by serving as a measure of how far existing nations fall short. Indeed, I believe that without having some standard to use, it is impossible to meaningfully aim at improving at any existing system, since there would be no clear idea of what the goal is. This is the primary value of this Aristotelian Virtuous Nation for the nationalist ideology that is the political foundation in today’s world.
Dedicated to my husband, Michael
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Daniel Farrell, for his support and guidance throughout my time at Ohio State: no one in the department taught me more or had more influence on me philosophically.

I would also like to thank David Hahm, from whom I took exceptional classes and with whom I had especially valuable conversations about ancient philosophy and the ancient world in general over the course of many years.

I am grateful to Gregory Jusdanis, whose book *The Necessary Nation* is a good example of how to argue against the empirical critics of nationalism.

I wish to thank Jane McIntyre, Jan Van der Muellen, and James and Jane Barthelmess for their guidance and advice.

I am indebted to Martha Nussbaum, whose work provides clarity and practical uses for Aristotle’s ethical and political writings; this includes her latest book, *Frontiers of Justice*, although it takes a different path with Aristotle than what I take here.

Finally, I thank my family for all of their patience and encouragement, especially my husband, Michael, for without his support when I needed it most, it is possible I would not have been able to finish this journey.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century was a period of spectacular achievement in many fields of human endeavor. Discoveries regarding the structure of matter and the universe, inventions in the areas of information and communication technology, and advances in the understanding of genetics and biology caused upheaval in social structures, attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, each of these discoveries (and countless others) has been used for harm and for benefit, often at the same time.

Communication technology has had a unifying effect and has made people come together, even across national borders. For example, the simultaneous radio and television broadcasting of the Live Aid concerts by scores of contemporary singers in 1985 was done for the purpose of raising money for famine relief in Africa. The two concerts – one in the United States and the other in England – brought together young people from around the world, with the effect of encouraging charity and tolerance toward people in distant lands. More recently, similar concerts were held to bring awareness to global environmental issues; audiences around the world gathered at arenas to listen to music as well as hear about how to live environmentally better. And information
technology – the Internet – has had the effect of shrinking the world and bringing a newfound appreciation for different people and places, a result that began with international air travel.

Yet not all of the innovations of the century were beneficial. Genocide and oppression, which were evils that existed previously, were exacerbated by new technology that made them easier to carry out and more widespread in scope. That technology included gas chambers invented for genocide, as well as new forms of warfare (aerial bombardment as well as atomic, biological and chemical weapons) that could strike more people than guns on a battlefield could. Such evils seemed to dominate the century and to overshadow any benefits brought about, but that appearance is also a function of technology: new communications media (radio, film, television) exposed events to more people, in more places, and as the century progressed, more quickly (even to the point of being seen live) and more graphically.

A feature of the century that is seen by many as a contributing factor in these ills is nationalism. It is also regarded by some people as an obstacle to removing such ills from humanity. In fact, critics of nationalism write as if its elimination would mean the total or near total elimination of the evils mentioned above. Thus, many assume that nationalism as a whole ought to be discouraged and eventually eliminated in favor of a new political ideology that neither causes nor exacerbates such evils.

Yet critics invariably assume the worst concerning nationalism, including its role in the harms brought about, and this is due to mischaracterizations of it or
assumptions made about it that have no basis. While some forms of nationalism may be a factor in causing some of the harms noted, my aim is to attempt to give nationalism a fair hearing, in order to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms. To do this I will present serious criticisms of nationalism and then respond to them with a presentation and defense of what I call the ‘Virtuous Nation,’ which is based on both liberal nationalism and the ethical and political writings of Aristotle.
1.1 Relevant Terms Defined

Before I can discuss mischaracterizations or criticisms of nationalism and responses to those criticisms, I will attempt to provide definitions for the terms that are at the heart of the topic. These definitions may not be ones that every critic and proponent will think best, but they will be ones everyone can accept as accurate, especially since they will impart consistency of terminology throughout the discussion. A brief survey of the relevant literature and its terminology is, therefore, in order.

At the core of nationalism is the ‘nation,’ which is not the same as a ‘state’ (Miller 18-19). David Miller defines a ‘state’ as a group of political institutions that is desired by a group of people to bring about their desired political self-determination. Or, as Ernest Gellner writes,

[t]he state is the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The ‘state’ is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order … The state exists where specialized order – enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They are the state (4, original emphasis).

A ‘nation,’ by contrast, is a group of people who aspire to be politically self-determining (Miller 18-19), and this group is often defined by the ethnic composition of its members (or ‘nationals’). There may be times when this group does not require actual political independence but merely wants to be seen as a
separate (perhaps ethnic) group within a larger state; but Miller’s definition is true for the most part, and will allow us to have a terminology that captures a consistent pattern.

Michael Mann gives a definition of ‘nation’ that is based entirely on ethnicity: “A nation is a community affirming a distinct ethnic identity, history and destiny, and claiming its own state” (44). But for Stephen Nathanson, the nation is essentially a cultural entity, and may be an appropriate object of loyalty even when the state commits inexcusable acts and thus does not deserve loyalty (1993, 125). Ethnicity should be understood as a genetically similar group, while culture concerns how people live in common, for example, as concerns their arts, language(s), religion(s). The difference between them is that one is born to an ethnicity but can be born to or choose to be a part of a culture; one’s ethnicity would not change, but one can choose to change the cultural aspects of one’s life (by living in a new community, for example).

Between culture and ethnicity, Ernest Gellner writes that culture is more important than ethnicity, especially in the form of a homogeneous culture that acts as a shared medium in a national society (37-38). Moreover, I would point out that since culture can include ethnicity and especially because it can bring together people of different ethnicities, culture is a better and stronger unifying force to use as the defining basis of a nation. Thus, I will use ‘nation’ to refer to a group with a common culture that has or wants its own state (or wants to be seen as a separate group within a state, in those instances where that is all to which
the group aspires).^1 And this group with a common culture can have one ethnicity or more than one; the number of ethnicities does not matter, since it is the one overarching culture that unifies the group.

The members of a nation determine its size—there is no set minimum or maximum size to nations. Indeed, Elie Kedourie points out that a nation, in theory, could even comprise the entire world, should all the people of the world decide on a “common government” which would then “form one nation”;^2 he admits, though, that this is improbable (and so an academic matter) (7). And Kedourie thinks it would also be possible to imagine a nation comprised of just a handful of people, but this possibility is also unlikely, since it would be difficult to provide for the survival of its few members.

Jonathan Glover provides a traditional model of what ‘nation’ refers to (13). This model of a “pure” or “ideal” case has the following qualities: the people involved inhabit a single unified territory whose boundaries are clear and indisputable, with no minorities outside of the border; and the ‘people’ comprise a single ethnic group with a common language, history and culture (including religious beliefs), all of which are unified by education and the media.

^1 Yet throughout I will sometimes use the term ‘nation-state,’ since it best captures both national groups and the governments that represent them, both of which are under scrutiny. I will use ‘nation’ when I refer to the national group alone (that may or may not have a state), and ‘state’ when I refer strictly to the government and its structure and institutions (with no reference to a national group). Although it would be better if I could use only one term (‘nation’, since my primary concern is with nationalism), there are clearly times (perhaps even most of the time) when both the nation and the state are being referred to. Also, because it is difficult plausibly to conceive of a nation without also thinking about the structure (state) that would carry out its needed functions, ‘nation-state’ is a terminological necessity.

^2 ‘Government’ is Kedourie’s word; I read him here to mean that everyone would have to decide not just to form one state, but one nation-state with one national identity and one common culture (so that it has the national components and not just the functional components of a state).
Although such a model is useful because it provides an ideal image of what a nation is generally conceived as and would provide us with a clearly distinct group to examine, in actuality a nation need not look exactly like this model. For example, on my definition a nation may not focus on a single ethnicity, but instead emphasize a common culture as the qualification for citizenship. This is seen, for example, in the United States and in Canada, both of which are nations comprised of many ethnicities due to immigration. In fact, given the ease with which people can presently move around and live in places other than their birthplace, Glover's ideal image is less likely to occur than in past years when travel, and so immigration, was more difficult, dangerous and time consuming. And this trend away from Glover's ideal is likely to continue and even increase in years to come. My definition of nation is meant to explicitly capture this trend and the present and future reality of nations.

‘Nationalism’ is the political ideology concerning the nation. In fact, according to Charles Kupchan it

is an ideology that calls for the merging of the sentimental nation with the functional state. The state is purely administrative; it provides goods and services to its citizens. The nation is purely emotive; it provides a sense of belonging and community to its members. Nationalism thus engenders among a specified population a common political identity (2).

The common identity that nationalism provides is rooted in a shared ethnicity, lineage, language, culture, religion or citizenship (depending on how a given nation defines its members). But Kupchan is wrong, I think, to claim the nation is
purely emotive;\textsuperscript{3} rather, nationalism does not just provide an identity, but is concerned with what to do for these people when that identity is formed. I agree with him that the term ‘state’ should refer to the actual structures, institutions and governments. But I will use ‘nationalism’ in a broader sense than Kupchan, so that it is an ideology that is focused on the people involved, in particular on their well-being and how to achieve it. ‘Nationalism,’ as I will use the term, then, is an ideology about the unifying (cultural) factor in any given community within a state (that is, a subset of the state) or a state itself that chooses to unite a given group of people in relation to other nations and states. So a state need not be a nation, but nationalism is the ideology focused on the desire to associate a nation – that is, a group of people with a shared identity – with a given state (real or imagined).

There are several components of nationalism that are common to all nation-states. First, each nation-state possesses ‘national sovereignty,’ which is its physical, as well as its conceptual, boundary. In other words, there are physical borders to the nation-state that demarcate it from neighboring nation-states, and that are inviolable except under specific conditions. For example, no other nation-state may invade except in times of justified war (as in self-defense). This inviolability is conceptual as well: within its borders, the nation-state has its own structure of government, which ought to be free from control by other nation-

\textsuperscript{3} His use would define out of possibility, for example, ‘liberal nationalism’ (see chapter 3, sections 2 and 3), which is meant to be an entirely non-emotional form of nationalism based on a rational (and non-emotional) identity. At the very least, in order to have a fair discussion of nationalism we should allow for such a form to be possible (especially since its advocates believe it is a good form of nationalism, and this possibility enhances the debate).
states (again, except in certain circumstances that cause a nation-state to forfeit its sovereignty, such as when it violates the sovereignty of another nation-state first, without provocation).

National sovereignty includes ‘national self-determination,’ whereby a nation-state sets its own policies. These policies include setting up a particular form of government, defining who counts as a ‘citizen,’ distribution of wealth and resources, and even its attitude toward other nation-states. Such policy freedom does not mean that a nation-state can behave however it wants within its borders without any criticism from others. It is, rather, a presumption of non-interference that prevents other nation-states from using coercion to change strictly internal affairs,\(^4\) while still allowing other nation-states to voice concern over policies, or even cut off diplomatic and/or economic relations in order to persuade that nation-state to change.

Another component common to all nations is ‘national identity.’ Each nation can determine who qualifies as a member (a ‘national’) in its group. This is also true of a state: each state can determine who qualifies as a member (‘citizen’). When the entity is a nation-state, with one national identity, a national will also be a citizen. Although most people think national identity must be ethnic or religious, that is not so: the identity may be any common feature that a given nation believes best captures its essence. Sometimes this will be ethnic or

\(^4\) That is, affairs that have no bearing at all on other nations. Internal policies that have external ramifications (for example, building weapons or moving troops to the border) would not be protected from interference, since they are policies that have bearing on other nations (that is, they determine another nation’s policies, and so do not respect mutual self-determination between nations).
religious, while other times it may be based on political ideas, such as a common commitment to a belief that democracy is a good form of government to live under (and a commitment to putting that belief into practice). These people may be related ethnically or have a given religion in common, but they need not be so related and may be related only by allegiance to certain political ideas.

A component that follows from national identity is ‘national loyalty.’ Members who identify with one another and who agree to form a collective group together (as in a nation-state) will demand that members display some level of loyalty to that group. This does not mean that co-nationals must agree on every issue. Rather, co-nationals must agree to work together to maintain the cohesion of the nation-state, and to defend it against outsiders, even though they may disagree on how these are best done. This is where an identity based on a common commitment to democratic beliefs and practices will be important: it will provide a framework to work within on such issues as well as an identity to be loyal to in spite of any disagreements.

The concept that best captures what co-nationals work together for is ‘national self-interest.’ This is the perceived common good that sustains the nation-state and maintains its long-term survival and stability. Its specific content will differ among nation-states and over time within a single nation-state, and it will be the focus of disagreement among co-nationals. But the goal of working toward national self-interests is what co-nationals will discuss, debate, and work
toward in order to work at strengthening their nation-state, and it will include all aspects of a nation-state’s health: physical, material, emotional, educational and spiritual well-being.

National self-interest includes the idea of ‘national self-defense.’ Maintaining the physical existence of the nation-state is integral to its survival, since without a physical existence the other parts of a nation-state’s health cannot come to be. There may be much debate over exactly what actions self-defense can justify, but clearly it must at least include the ability to strike back at a nation-state that has unjustifiably violated its national sovereignty.

These key elements of nationalism lead to a degree of partiality and inequality in the dealings of the nation-state with individuals. Partiality is the tendency to favor some individuals over others; with nationalism, co-nationals are favored or preferred over non-nationals. Indeed, partiality is essential in a nation-state, in order to support the national identity of its citizens and to promote national self-interest. Naturally enough partiality, even if it is limited, will then lead to inequality among persons: at certain times, some will be treated differently than others, and it will usually be the case that co-nationals are treated more favorably than non-nationals (although there may be an equality found between co-nationals). Partiality is an attitudinal component, while inequality is behavioral (based on those attitudes).

Each of these components is a necessary part of nationalism and will be found in all nation-states. The degrees to which they are instantiated may differ between nation-states, and may vary over time, but they will all be found at least
minimally in each. This includes actual and merely theoretical nation-states, acceptable and unacceptable ones, and whatever other type there may be (based on whatever other distinctions people may come up with).
1.2 Naïve Criticisms: The Problem of Nationalism

There is a view common in the popular media and in some academic writings on nationalism that nationalism is necessarily an undesirable political ideology and is a problem that is clearly in need of a solution. Some critics merely assert that nationalism is ‘undesirable,’ or ‘bad’ or a ‘problem,’ and many even claim that such an assertion is ‘clear’ or ‘obvious.’ Others claim that nationalism is dying away on its own, so is a worthless and powerless theory. Still others give a simple reason why such an assertion is justified: there are plenty of examples of nationalist states that have committed injustices, and so nationalism as a whole is undesirable. In this section I present some examples from academic works on nationalism that illustrate each of these criticisms.

Elie Kedourie points out that conflicts in regions of the world that were communist “have brought once more to the fore the issue of nationalism and its associated problems – in a sharp and acute form, and in a manner unknown in the last few decades” (xi, my emphasis).\(^5\) Scholarly interest has turned toward solving the ‘problem’ of nationalism (Ishay 16), but solutions have thus far proven elusive. In his conclusion to a collection of essays dealing with nationalism, Sukumar Periwal writes that “[n]one of the contributors to this book claims to have any easy answers to the problem of nationalism. While agreeing that

\(^5\) See also Micheline Ishay 1.
nationalism is a problem, … all of the distinguished academics who have contributed to the book would agree that there is a need for an even greater range of thought on nationalism” (240, original emphasis).

But some critics think there may not be a need for such further thinking. According to David Calleo, many enlightened analysts of international affairs find nation-states “obsolescent, less and less able to perform their traditional functions. Nation-states cannot defend their security in the nuclear age, it is said, and are economic anachronisms in our interdependent global economy. And they sustain archaic cultural barriers and conflicts in our global village” (15). In fact, according to David Miller, some critics make a stronger claim “for the purpose of undercutting arguments in defense of nationality … that the era of nations and nation-states is drawing to its close: perhaps not everywhere, but at least so far as the populations of Western liberal societies are concerned” (155). Yet Miller sees the belief that nationalism is dying as a dangerous one, since, while it may be true that nationalism is becoming less relevant in places that support democracy and social justice, “in places where nationalism remains strong it is likely to be used to prop up authoritarian and repressive regimes” (155). However, Miller himself does not conclude that because some nationalist states hide authoritarian or repressive regimes, nationalism should be rejected entirely.

Other critics, though, do draw such a conclusion from observations, perceptions or stereotypes of nationalist states. Some of these critics rely on history to show that nationalism is an unacceptable political ideology. According to John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, it is the case that
[f]or several historians and political scientists, the injection of racism brought nationalism to its mid-twentieth-century apogee. They have tended to see in fascism and especially in Nazism the logical culmination of nationalist ideas and practices; common to both were a belief in heroic struggle, the idea of the Volk, racial imperialism and agrarian settlement, the appeal to collective will and brutal instincts, and obedience to charismatic leaders (9).

Certainly in Europe Nazis caused nationalism to fall into disfavor. George Schöpflin points out that

[b]ecause the devastation caused by Nazism was widely attributed to nationalism, the entire school of thought concerning nationhood, national identities, and nationalism was swept under the carpet and regarded as something that no longer concerned Europe – which had embarked on a different project, that of integration ... Understandably, the end of the Cold War has left Europe, the front line in the confrontation, unprepared intellectually or politically for what followed (38).

But Europe’s past is not the only cause for nationalism’s bad reputation. In fact, according to Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, in many places in the world today, “[p]eople are increasingly conscious of their national identities; they are rediscovering their national histories, pressing for recognition of their distinctness, and making various demands under the banner of national self-determination” (3). This occurs in some of the following ways: “demands for the preservation of their cultures and languages, for the right to educate their children in the ways of their ancestors, and often for independent statehood, sometimes with the accompanying demands for the expulsion of outsiders from what is regarded as the national homeland” (3). But the frightening consequence, “as everyone who can read a newspaper knows, has been a series of struggles – some merely for recognition or enhanced autonomy, others for political
dominance, and others still for political separation – that have regularly exploded into violence and atrocious brutality, as, for example, in Bosnia and Chechnya” (3).

And so the modern era is seen as different from earlier ones, notable in its repeated attempts at “cultural assimilation and ethnic cleansing” in various places, where these attempts are “driven by the demand that every state have its own homogeneous culture and every culture its own state” (Tambini 251). And since nationalism is seen as the relevant difference between the modern era and earlier ones, it is held accountable as the cause of the twentieth century’s evils. Because it is to blame, it is considered by such people to be unacceptable as a whole.

But the reputation of nationalism also suffers due to common stereotypes about its core beliefs or its effects. Kai Nielsen points out that some – he names Judith Shklar and Brian Barry as examples – see nationalism as necessarily illiberal, and they despise it since it is at best a form of ethnocentrism, atavistic, backward-looking, exclusivist, and very often, even worse than that, a form of authoritarianism, even something that either is, or not infrequently tends toward, a fascist authoritarianism. In its very nature, the claim goes, nationalism cannot but be xenophobic, authoritarian, exclusivist and, where it has the opportunity, often expansionist as well (1996-97, 42-43).

It is seen as chauvinistic and violent (Lichtenberg 1996-97, 53), even “inherently racist and xenophobic,” so that the concept of a ‘liberal nationalism’ is not possible (Lind 262). And there are some who hold these stereotypes and who

6 See also Friedman 155, Van Amersfoort 165, and Reé 177.
condemn nationalism without sufficient reason. Susan Reynolds claims that most “medieval historians would deny that they are nationalists, but that is because, like many historians of the phenomenon of nationalism, they see it as something aggressive, xenophobic, and deplorable, but do not look hard at the ideas which underlie it. Nationalist ideas, however, are more widespread than the unpleasant manifestations of nationalist emotions” (137). Unless one examines nationalism, though, it would be difficult to acknowledge that nationalism need not always co-exist with bad consequences and destructive emotions.\(^7\)

Yet it is often the perception of an emotional component of nationalism that leads to such stereotypes. Eugen Weber claims that emotion is what makes nationalism different, and worse in character, than national patriotism (292). Martin Tyrrell adds that it is also worse in comparison with other ideologies; “[i]f nationalism starts out as politics, then it soon becomes something else. Nationalism is politics with passion, a passion that other political creeds – communism, feminism, internationalism, liberalism – do not consistently possess to anything like the same extent” (236). Whereas other political affiliations with an emotional component are seen as acceptable, the same component is seen as unacceptable when combined with nationalism, presumably because such critics see the emotional component as necessarily excessive, without restraint and out of control when coupled with nationalism.

\(^7\) Or that nationalism need not have a dominant emotional component at all, as liberal nationalists think (see chapter 3, sections 2 and 3).
In addition, other critics look beyond the inherent beliefs and passions of nationalism to some of its effects. Then they use these effects to discard nationalism as a whole. Stephen Van Evera points out that critics are selective in the consequences they examine:

[s]cholars have written widely on the causes of nationalism but they say little about its effects, especially its effects on international politics. Most striking, the impact of nationalism on the risk of war has barely been explored. Most authors take the war-causing character of nationalism for granted, assuming it without proof or explanation. Factors that govern the magnitude of the dangers posed by nationalism are generally unidentified. What types of nationalism are most likely to cause war? What background conditions catalyze or dampen this causal process? These questions are generally undiscussed, hence the causal nexus between nationalism and war presents an important unsolved riddle (136).

This tendency of some scholars to assume that nationalism is the source of serious problems creates a need to explore nationalism in greater detail, both critically and in its defense. Otherwise, rejection of nationalism will rest only on assumptions and hasty generalizations.
1.3 Beyond the Naïve Criticisms

Although the examples of criticisms given above occur quite often, both in scholarly literature and in the popular media, the fact is that they are all overly simplistic. Whether such writers rely on history, on beliefs inherent to nationalism, on enflamed passions in national states, or even on the bellicose effects of nationalism, they provide no argument for the rejection of nationalism as a whole (instead of the rejection of particular nations that cause problems). The criticisms are merely opinions (as opposed to arguments) of writers, each of whom makes certain assumptions (some of which are dubious at best) and then generalizes to conclude that nationalism, as an ideology and in its entirety, is unacceptable.

But nationalism is not necessarily as these writers have made it out to be. Indeed, as a response to such oversimplification, some writers make distinctions between two types of nationalism, usually between a ‘good’ form and a ‘bad’ form. One way to make this distinction follows Hans Kohn: ‘Western’ forms are rational, liberal and forward-looking while ‘Eastern’ forms are backward-looking, mystical and based on an exclusive, quasi-tribal notion of nationality (Miller 8).

A more recent distinction in the literature is between ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ forms.8 Civic nationalism is based on territory and common laws, as well as participation in a common civic culture (Miller 9), and is seen as a good or benign

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8 John Hutchinson also distinguishes between ‘cultural’ and ‘political’ nationalisms (122–123), which are similar to ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic.’
form that is open to anyone, so that at least in principle there is for everyone equal access to the cultural goods of the nation (Nielsen 1996-97, 45). Examples of this form include the United States, Canada, Denmark, Australia, Sweden and France (Nielsen 1996-97, 45; Yack 1996, 194).

Ethnic nationalism, in contrast, defines membership in the nation by descent and inherited cultural identity: it is an exclusionary nationalism, exemplified by Germany, Japan and many of the Eastern European countries (Nielsen 1996-97, 44; Yack 1996, 194). The examples of actual states show that the contrast between cultural and ethnic nationalisms holds the latter to be the undesirable form.

Notice, though, that making the distinction is itself an answer to the naïve criticisms: now it is not enough merely to state a problem with nationalism, especially with selected examples of nationalist states, and then conclude that it is unacceptable as a whole. There are plenty of people who need actual arguments, and not hasty generalizations based on skewed evidence, in order to be convinced that nationalism as a whole may be undesirable, since they see that there are differences between nations, and they want to know why these differences are irrelevant.  

In fact, there are scholars who point out that it is possible to find good consequences resulting from nationalism, most likely, from one of the acceptable forms. One possible consequence is a stabilizing effect, in particular in regions of the world that are prone to violence or conflict. As Charles Kupchan writes,

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9 These distinctions will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 3, section 2.
[c]ontrary to conventional wisdom in the United States, nationalism has stabilizing as well as destabilizing effects on the international system. In the wake of so much bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia, the U.S. foreign policy community now tends to portray nationalism entirely as a pernicious force that breeds fragmentation and ethnic violence. To be sure, nationalism played a central role in the breakup of Yugoslavia and, earlier this century, was a principal cause of World Wars I and II. Yet nationalism also has, and continues to be, a key ingredient of both domestic order and international cooperation. Nationhood legitimates the administrative and extractive powers of the state. Stable state structures and the transference of political loyalties from the local to the national level in turn provide fertile ground for mass political participation and the growth of liberal democracy. In this sense, the cultivation of nationalist sentiment and loyalties will facilitate peaceful change in Europe’s east (3).

Kupchan’s comment shows that instead of discouraging nationalism in all cases, the forms of nationalism that bring stability (and other benefits) ought to be encouraged.

Another possible benefit of nationalism is the component of culture and the positive feelings it can inspire (such as a sense of community). Benedict Anderson makes this very point in *Imagined Communities*:

>[j]n an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find analogous nationalist products expressing fear and loathing (141-142, original emphasis).

Anderson’s last point, concerning the relative rarity of nationalist products expressing ill will, shows that nationalism as a whole should not be rejected merely because it can be, and at times has been, the locus of undesirable
actions. To reject nationalism as a whole, a critic would have to argue that just one ethnic nationalist state makes nationalism undesirable, or that it actually is undesirable more often than not (and those who say otherwise – like Anderson – are wrong), or even that whatever benefits it may appear to bring (including a love for a larger community than just one’s own family and friends), it is inherently undesirable nonetheless.  

One writer who is noticeably different than the others on the issue of nationalism is Gertrude Himmelfarb. In her essay “The Dark and Bloody Crossroads Where Nationalism and Religion Meet,” she points out that there are obstacles facing critics of nationalism. Often, these obstacles are self-inflicted by the critics due to disposition or assumptions that they make. For example, she notes that most ‘enlightened intellectuals,’ including most historians, “had consigned to the ash can of history” nationalism and the ‘national question,’ and had been dismissive of nationalism (as much so as they are of religion) (112). This is because “historians, sociologists, political scientists, even journalists, have not been properly appreciative of” the fact that religion is a prime mover of nationalism, “partly because of their ideological predisposition against religion (their inability to take it seriously as a force in modernity), partly because of their professional blinders (their commitment to “scientific” explanations of “unscientific” phenomena)” (115). In fact, for such people, “nationalism, insofar as it persists contrary to all rational explanations, does so as the by-product of modernization. And religion, insofar as it plays a part in nationalism, does so as a

10 The use of benefits as a defense of nationalism will be discussed further in Chapter 2.
stratagem of social and political elites who are themselves secularists but use the rhetoric of religion to mobilize the populace and assure their allegiance” (115).

The failure on the part of those who dislike nationalism to take it seriously occurs not just for the stated reasons. Often, these critics just assume that it is an unworthy ideology because it conflicts with their own, which is presumed to be correct. In fact, the presumption of truth was given to their own “most cherished assumptions: that people are rational individuals with universal interests and aspirations; that nations are nothing more than an aggregate of individuals; and that nationalism is irrational, parochial, and retrograde” (110-111).

This presumption of truth, notes Himmelfarb, includes a narrow view of human nature that convinced many in the 1930’s and 1940’s (such as Lionel Trilling) that Nazism was an evil because it was a form of nationalism (117-118, my emphasis). Also, she writes that many intellectuals of the time, in the words of George Orwell, were “ashamed of their own nationality” (120-121). This view then “makes it difficult to distinguish the various degrees and forms of nationalism and to pass judgment upon them,” since all nationalist states are presumed to be variants of Nazism. And this difficulty persists today, well beyond the specter of Nazism.

Indeed, Himmelfarb notes that this difficulty appears when intellectuals of today “denigrate their own nationalities as “Eurocentric,” xenophobic, even racist, while at the same time giving legitimacy to nationalities in the Third World and elsewhere which are notably illiberal, inhumane, and, not infrequently, racist” (121). But this is not new either: Woodrow Wilson’s unqualified “right” of self-
determination led to the inability or the unwillingness to pass judgment about other peoples and their nations (119). As heirs to his policy, “[w]e cannot say what has become so painfully obvious: Not all countries are disposed or committed to free institutions. Not all nationalities are worthy of respect and recognition. Not all peoples have a “right” to independence and self-determination” (119).

The result is “one of the bitter ironies of history”: because intellectuals are dismissive of nationalism and do not distinguish between forms of nationalism, “now, when the newer nationalities are becoming more aggressive and brutal, the older ones are becoming more diffident and passive, reluctant to affirm the legitimacy of their own civic, pacific mode of nationalism, let alone to impugn the legitimacy of the despotic, tribal mode that is now emerging” (120). I believe this failure to distinguish between types of nationalism and to judge nations has brought long-term harm to the world as a whole: by treating all nations the same (as equally being the source of problems), critics have allowed those nations that did cause problems to escape the particular scrutiny that may have prompted change. And in this way, the international community suffered the problems caused by such nations (up to and including war) longer than perhaps it otherwise would have.

Yet Himmelfarb finds that the reaction of scholars in current literature is to try to deny the importance of nationalism. Some scholars not only deny “the future of nationalism and nationality … but their past as well” (108). In this way such people can deny that nationalism ever had any force or influence on world
events; this process is the “demystification” and “demythicization” of nationalism, even of the nation (108; 109). This is done with the hope of being able “to belittle nationalism and belie nationality” (110).

This attempt to reduce the role of nationalism in world history and in the current and future world has only meant that most people misunderstand nationalism, especially intellectuals and government leaders. Hence, those who could be helping to reduce the ill effects of some nationalist states are rather spending their time in a futile effort to deny that nationalism is involved. The effect is that in our time there exists a paradoxical reality: in an international world, nationalism is rife (and in a secular world, religion – also ignored by critics – is alive and well) (119).

Himmelfarb’s recommendation is to admit these facts, not deny them, so that we may be realistic about meliorating and conciliating them “in the interests of a humane, pacific, civil order;” this requires that we respect “the power and passion of nationalism even as we try to mitigate its excesses” (120).

To do as Himmelfarb suggests, we need to deal with the abuses of nationalism. These will help us to make “the kinds of distinctions and judgments that are congruent with” the reality of nationalism; further, looking toward the abuses, they “may teach us to appreciate nationalism at its best, a nationalism tempered and elevated by religion as well as by all the other resources of civilization” (121). Finally, she recommends that to achieve our aim
we should be inspired to seek a nationalist remedy for the diseases most incident to nationalism – not the denial of nationalism in the name of a synthetic internationalism, but the affirmation of nationalism “rightly understood,” … : a Western-type, civic-minded nationalism, complete with checks and balances, representative government, civic liberties, the rule of law (120).

Many critics will not be convinced by Himmelfarb’s advice. These critics present more than just naïve criticisms: they provide deeper criticisms that must be addressed before her suggestions of how to proceed can be attempted or taken seriously. My primary aim in the two chapters that follow is to present these criticisms in their strongest forms, and then to refute them in turn. I will then present a defensible, theoretical form of the nation – as part of an “affirmation of nationalism ‘rightly understood’” – which I call the ‘Virtuous Nation.’ The Virtuous Nation is, at present, an ideal and is meant to show that while critics have correctly noted the deficiencies of many existing nations, they are wrong to generalize about all possible nations. Indeed, the positive features of some existing (and historical) nations give us confidence that good nations, strengthened by the virtues, may provide an example for the improvement of bad nations. And this ideal will serve as standard with which we can evaluate all actual nations, determine which are acceptable and which are not, and look for specific ways to improve those that are not. So although the Virtuous Nation is an ideal, I intend it to be useful in discussions of nationalism.
CHAPTER 2

WHAT HISTORY DOES AND DOES NOT TELL US: THE EMPIRICAL CRITICISM OF NATIONALISM AND A RESPONSE TO THAT CRITICISM

Nationalism is the predominant political ideology in the world today, which means that most states are nation-states that view their identities in terms of their nation or composite national groups. It has such a strong hold over other competing ideologies (e.g., globalism, tribalism) that it appears firmly entrenched in international politics, as evidenced by the world’s pre-eminent international political body: the United Nations. Yet there are critics of this ideology who believe that a better ideological framework can and should be achieved. For such critics, it seems to be the case that just as nationalism rose to become dominant, so some other ideology will inevitably rise to replace nationalism. This possibility motivates them to criticize nationalism in the hope that their criticisms will hasten the appearance of a more enlightened ideology in which national identity and the attendant nationalist components are gone. ¹¹

But other writers believe that nationalism is the best possible ideology yet articulated and that nation-states are desirable structures that ought to be

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¹¹ The argument presented in this chapter is not drawn from any one writer, but is one that I have put together on behalf of critics based on their complaints about nationalism. This argument is a strong one that I believe critics would agree reflects their critical comments. It is important to note, as well, that critics do not present a clear alternative to nationalism; it seems they believe that globalism would be better and should (or will) replace nationalism, though few explicitly write this or specify what this would amount to.
perfected, not replaced. Such people – defenders of nationalism – often do not justify their view since they are appealing to what exists, which for them is sufficient justification. Those who do try to justify their view fall short of providing a convincing argument, which is not even possible according to critics of nationalism. Indeed, for critics the ideology is indefensible and is fraught with so many problems it is not worth salvaging.

What follows in this chapter and the next are two different arguments against nationalism, each argument having two perspectives – inward-looking (intra-national) and outward-looking (international). The first is an empirical argument, which will be presented in this chapter, while the second is a theoretical argument, given in the next chapter. Each of these arguments has an intra-national and an international component since these are the two realms of politics for which a given ideology must account: a nation-state must first concern itself with its own internal elements, then turn its concern toward neighboring nation-states and its relations with them.

I will present the strongest critical arguments against nationalism on behalf of its critics of nationalism. Most of them voice problems and concerns, usually concerning a select sample of nation-states, and then generalize to the conclusion that nationalism itself is problematic. This tactic does not contribute to reasoned debate, since what is needed is argumentation. So on behalf of the critics, I will formulate the strongest arguments possible, ones that present their side in the most favorable light.

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12 Some of these were discussed in Chapter 1.
2.1. The Empirical Criticism of Nationalism

The primary source of the empirical criticism is the historical record and the examples it provides of how nationalism produces unacceptable results. There are a few examples, in particular, that highlight the worst that nationalism has to offer. Yet critics believe that all nation-states show certain specific flaws, albeit to varying degrees (both in terms of the flaws themselves and in terms of how visible those flaws are). On the basis of such observations critics conclude that nationalism as a whole is unacceptable, even if not all nation-states are as blatantly flawed as those that serve as the obvious and extreme examples.

The foremost example of an unacceptable nation-state is Nazi Germany, although the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge and Uganda under Idi Amin follow closely behind as obvious examples to cite. In each case, the most extreme abuse of humans – the murder of innocents – occurred and was a fundamental component of their activities. Also, these nation-states allow for examples of both perspectives of the empirical criticism, since abuses occurred both within the nation-states’ borders (the intra-national component) and between nation-states (the international component).
2.1.1 The Empirical Criticism: The Intra-national Perspective

Regarding the intra-national perspective, the primary claim against nationalism is that it is the source of many problems within a nation-state, ranging from the (relatively) mild use of verbal insults to the extremes of murder, ethnic cleansing and genocide. One factor in nationalism that is a source of such problems is the fact that many nation-states are comprised of a number of discrete national groups. These groups can be identified by the specifics of ethnicity or religious affiliation or culture more generally. However these groups are identified, there is an attendant sense of pride for those who belong to the identified group, though this pride is of varying degrees for different groups and for different people within these groups.

Within a given nation-state one national group is often the dominant majority. The problems that are attributed to nationalism typically occur at the expense of minority groups within the state. These problems range from non-violent discrimination to violence by majority members against minority citizens: second-class status, denial of civic rights and economic opportunities, unlawful imprisonment, murder, and even violent conflict between these groups in the form of civil war or genocide. Such examples show that there is a possibility of widespread death and destruction within the nation-state; these are seen in
nation-states in which one group strives to match its national borders to those of the entire state and so to create a homogeneous society (such as what was seen in the former Yugoslavia).

The empirical intra-national argument against nationalism holds that any instantiated political ideology that causes substantial harm – either in a comparative or an absolute sense – to individuals or groups of individuals within its borders is politically indefensible. Critics believe the evidence clearly shows that nationalism causes substantial harm. Therefore, nationalism is politically indefensible. To justify this argument, however, a clarification of what is meant by ‘substantial harm’ is needed.

‘Substantial harm’ can be viewed in one of two ways. On one hand, it can be seen as comparative, that is, it produces more harm than benefits. This standard only requires that we look at the amount of harm and the amount of benefits, and see which is greater. On the other hand, substantial harm can be understood in an absolute sense, whereby harms are produced that override any benefit that is produced. If certain fundamental goods (e.g., life, liberty), to which all members of a nation-state are entitled, are arbitrarily denied to some group(s) within a nation-state, critics claim that this constitutes such a category of harm as to make meaningless any benefits which might arise from the nation. Often such denials of goods are done out of a desire by the majority for homogeneity within the society, especially in the ruling group. An example of such harm is slavery, which, whatever benefit it may produce for the majority in a nation-state,

\[13\] Obviously slavery is not found only in nations – it existed long before nations did – but it provides a good example of harm one national group could inflict on another.
produces a society divided into at least two groups – slaveholders and permanent slaves – which brings an unacceptable type of harm to the minority, as well as (one may justifiably argue) to the entire nation-state.

Due to the lack of adequate or accurate statistics for many nation-states concerning the treatment of people within their borders, the relevant harms and benefits brought about by nationalism are very difficult to quantify and thus to compare. Some statistics may appear to be helpful here: the levels of poverty, disease, birth rates, infant mortality, illiteracy, etc. But the problem with using such statistics is that they cannot always be independently verified. Leaders of those nation-states that are most likely to have bad results in a statistical survey are also those who are most likely to restrict access to such statistics or to create better ones that do not reflect reality. This problem would arise with closed societies such as Communist China, Cuba, North Korea, etc. Moreover, even if the statistics are accurate, it is difficult to compare them to those that are positive. In other words, it is difficult to compare high GDP with low birth rate in the same nation. As a result, the comparative standard of ‘substantial harm’ will not be helpful for anti-nationalists hoping to show that nationalism is more harmful than it is beneficial (nor for nationalists to show that it produces more benefits than harms), and so the debate will remain forever unsettled.

But all that is required for the second standard – the absolute sense of ‘substantial harm’ – is that data exists for various nation-states that documents the deprivation of a specific fundamental good, relative to people within those nation-states. Once the data shows that such deprivation has occurred in a
nation-state, any other harm is irrelevant and all benefits, while a result of nationalism, cannot change the fact that nationalism has caused ‘substantial harm.’ Thus, no level of GNP can justify, for example, human slavery.

As for the empirical evidence to meet this criterion, one need not look far. The experiences of African-Americans in the United States (at least) prior to the Civil War or Cossacks in the Soviet Union are sufficient to demonstrate the standard of substantial harm. It is even easier to focus only on the murder rates of non-nationals in just one nation-state to provide the necessary proof. The millions of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, the handicapped and others who were enslaved and ultimately murdered in Nazi Germany stand as a clear indictment of nationalism, insofar as they provide chilling evidence of substantial harm. But Germany is hardly the last site of such reprehensible actions: Cambodia, Palestine and Israel, and the former Yugoslavia quickly come to mind. On the basis of these (and other) examples, critics argue that no goods provided by nationalism can outweigh the ‘substantial harm’ produced by nation-states.

Yet their argument must account for the objection that these states may be rare relative to the whole of nationalist states in history. Critics will maintain that this fact is irrelevant, given that nationalism, taken as a whole, must include these nation-states, and that they alone are sufficient to meet the standard set for empirically declaring a political ideology to be indefensible. That is, because of the harms that occur – both in terms of category and quantity – these states alone meet the threshold for political indefensibility of the entire nation-state.

And this even omits states that came before nationalism obviously emerged, even though including them would add to the comparative rarity of harmful states.
system, and the evidence provided by other nation-states is irrelevant, even if that evidence concerns benefits that are produced, perhaps even if all other nation-states produced only benefits. Once the standard is met, no evidence can serve as mitigating against it.

A useful analogy is to one-man rule. Such a government is considered by most people with knowledge of history to be unacceptable for the modern world despite the relatively low number of such states where there are widespread and systematic deprivations of fundamental goods, simply because of the potential for such harm and because of the evidence of substantial harm that exists for a given number of states ruled by one man, specifically in the bad form of one-man rule, tyranny.¹⁵ Because one-man rule is more likely to present a pattern of harm in the form of tyrannies, whatever benefits it may bring and whatever exceptions may be found (of benign examples, such as monarchies), it still remains the case that it causes substantial harm – in terms of the categories of harms and it terms of quantity – often enough to make it indefensible. The example of one-man rule also shows that it is likely that experience will continue to show that nationalism is flawed. As long as nation-states exist, the evidence of substantial harm in an absolute sense, however infrequent, will continue to mount in the critics’ favor as it continues to do with one-man rule (due to the overwhelming evidence presented by tyrannies), so that any benefits pointed out by defenders would be deemed by critics to be irrelevant, since the threshold of what constitutes absolute harm has already been met.

¹⁵ This is reflected in Lord Acton’s saying “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Corruption is not inevitable, but it does occur.
2.1.2 The Empirical Criticism: The International Perspective

Moving to the international perspective, critics of nationalism first claim that it is unacceptable because it is the source of hostility between nation-states. This hostility takes many forms, from verbal squabbles between nation-states to minor skirmishes such as border disputes, all too often leading to full-blown war.

The argument regarding international relations is similar to that concerning intra-national relations. Any political ideology that encourages, sanctions or tolerates actions that cause substantial harm between nation-states is unacceptable, and so politically indefensible. Nationalism encourages, sanctions and tolerates such actions; so it is politically indefensible and unacceptable.

As with substantial harm within a nation-state, the substantial harm that international actions sanction can be seen as evidence against nationalism in either a comparative sense or an absolute sense (by showing that there are certain harms that are routinely brought about by nationalists that always outweigh any amount of benefits). The comparative sense of substantial harm – in which nationalism is shown to cause more harm than benefit – will lead to an endless debate, as nationalists emphasize the benefits produced by nationalism, while critics focus on the harms. Accurate numbers are likely to prove elusive, so again the comparative standard is not helpful for rejecting or for rehabilitating nationalism in international relations.
But by looking at the actions that nation-states take in the international arena, critics can easily show that nationalism brings harm in an absolute sense. This harm derives from two key components of nationalism: national self-determination and national sovereignty. Both of these components require impartiality among nation-states, since all nation-states must be treated equally by other nation-states and must in turn treat all others equally. That is, each nation-state must be granted an equal amount of leeway to decide its own affairs, and no nation-state should be put at a disadvantage to so decide its affairs (which would be negative partial treatment). This leads to three potential problems, depending on the circumstances.

First, if this reciprocity were not respected (even though it is acknowledged by international bodies), nation-states would not be sure that others will not interfere in their affairs; this lack of certainty will lead to pre-emptive actions as nation-states try to ensure their own self-interest before other nation-states can interfere or use up resources, etc. The obvious examples are, in fact, resources, since each nation-state will have a motivation to take as much as it can get before others take all that is available. Without protection in the form of such reciprocity, each nation-state will have to assume that if it does not protect its own interests as soon as possible, it will lose all opportunities to do so. Such pre-emptive actions would lead to reactions by other nation-states, leading to a continuous cycle of actions that are ruinous to international relations and to individual nation-states. So for critics, a lack of reciprocity in national self-determination and sovereignty results in meeting the standard of absolute harm.
Second, a lack of demand for reciprocity between nation-states would be treated by nation-states with unethical leaders as license to treat other nation-states however they please, secure in the knowledge that there is no threat of punishment. Certainly there would not be a threat from the international arena or international organizations, which neglected to put forth this reciprocity as a requirement for recognition of membership in the international community. This failure to include a requirement of reciprocity concerning impartiality (and respect for self-determination and sovereignty) means that unethical leaders of perhaps even a few nation-states would set the tone for all international relations, and that other nation-states would merely be reacting to such actions with no recourse except to try to stop such nation-states or to prevent future actions. This also leads to the absolute harm that critics would use against nationalism.

Third, a reciprocity concerning impartiality also means that the fundamental goods of life and liberty extend to members of other nation-states that are a part of the other nation’s sovereignty. Yet if there is no such reciprocity in the international arena, citizens will not travel outside of their own nation-state’s borders, since there would be no guarantee of safety beyond those borders. And this would have serious negative economic consequences, since it would preclude any sort of trade between different nation-states. And given that each nation-state typically has a surplus of certain goods and resources as well as a shortfall of others (so that no nation-states can be entirely self-sufficient),
international trade is a healthy component of modern life. But it requires that nation-states respect each others’ self-determination and sovereignty, and that there is an equal footing for each nation-state to carry out its business.

Should nationalism be shown to involve the neglect or even abuse of these components (national self-determination and national sovereignty) and goods in the international world on a regular basis and exhibit a pattern of abuse, critics will conclude that nationalism brings harm in an absolute sense and so is politically indefensible and unacceptable.

An examination of the first half of the twentieth-century alone provides adequate empirical evidence of such harm for critics of nationalism. World War I erupted due to alliances of nation-states that obligated war once violence began in one part of Europe. The legacy of this war – “the war to end all wars” – was to plant the seeds of discontent later exploited by Hitler to justify to his own people the invasion of other countries. While Nazi Germany took citizens (including civilians) of other nations captive, enslaved them, and even killed them, Japan engaged in atrocities against citizens (including civilians) on Mainland Asia. To end such a war, the Allies also used warfare aimed at civilians in the aggressor nation-states; the use of nuclear bombs was the most extreme case, yet the firebombing of Dresden, which happened before Hiroshima, also had a significant impact on civilian populations. In other words, I use the example of World War II to show that citizens of other nations were used as targets by nation-states on all sides and fronts of the war, an example of absolute harm.
Yet evidence continued to mount after World War II was long over. The wars for independence and for subsequent power in the colonies of Africa were bloody, many being territorial or tribal disputes, some of which continue to this day. Various groups across that continent have kept alive ancient hatreds for the sake of taking power or resources, and resist as imperialist any efforts from the outside to bring peace to these lands. These national disputes in Africa, as well as other examples from the former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe, only add to the evidence of absolute harm caused by nationalism.

Thus, there seems to be sufficient evidence to show that nationalist states routinely violate the life and liberty of members of other nation-states. In addition, unprovoked invasions of other nation-states are clear violations of national self-determination and sovereignty, which are fundamental to nationalism. For nation-states, which exist within the framework of nationalism, to violate the sovereignty and self-determination of others is to undermine that very framework.

Even with such instances, a critic may acknowledge that relative to the total number of nation-states and the length of time nation-states have existed, full-blown war is rare. But this caveat does not undermine the thrust of the argument: the criterion of unacceptability (that is, of substantial harm in an absolute sense) is clearly met by wars started by nation-states alone and justifies viewing nationalism as a whole as unacceptable and indefensible. In fact, one need only consider the large number of people killed in the wars of the twentieth century to conclude that nationalism is unacceptable, especially given the targeting and treatment of non-nationals. For critics, this added feature of modern
war makes it different from wars fought in previous eras between other (non-nationalist) states: there is an added dimension that makes war more dangerous to non-combatants and also makes it more likely to erupt between nations that sustain hatreds and animosities and that never forget grievances. And this does not include evidence of lesser examples of discord or aggression that did not escalate to full-blown war.

Examples of discord can be found at the United Nations. On many issues that come up for discussion, nation-states ally themselves in various ways: developed nation-states vs. underdeveloped ones; superpowers vs. lesser powers; democracies vs. non-democracies; pro-American nation-states vs. anti-American ones; etc. One example is with some of the various resolutions passed, as well as in resolutions not passed: a common target for resolutions is Israel, including one that equated Zionism with racism in 1975, yet there is often a failure to pass resolutions against blatant violations of the United Nations’ explicit principles, such as when terrorists target innocent civilians (especially if they are Israeli). Another example is the ability of known human rights abusing nations to get elected onto the United Nations’ Human Rights Commission, usually with the support of other human rights abusing nations. The only commonality is that each nation-state will make decisions and alliances based on partiality toward its own interests in given situations. For critics of nationalism, this signals a willingness by nation-states to put national self-interest ahead of the interests and well-being of persons outside of their borders, that is, of all
humans in the international community as a whole. And critics think this is a reason to question the ability of nationalism to provide a stable foundation for international relations.

For the result of such a nation-centric position is that people all around the world suffer because nations will look out for themselves first and the international community second (if at all), due to nationalism and the partiality each nation-state shows toward itself, its citizens and its allies. The failure to account for general human well-being (favoring instead the more particular national well-being) is an unacceptable consequence and is a form of hostility in international relations that makes nationalism unacceptable. This is especially true since, over time, such hostility has had long-term negative affects on the world by fostering distrust among nation-states and a willingness to settle differences violently rather than by peaceful compromise. This small-scale, incremental hostility is a pernicious and corrosive element of nationalism, which leads, inexorably, to full-scale nationalist wars. For critics, then, the fact that history shows that nationalism’s partiality leads to hostility, then aggression, then war is enough to show that nationalism itself causes substantial harm. The partiality cannot be removed from nationalism, so it can never be acceptable.

Given the preponderance of empirical evidence, critics conclude that nationalism violates both standards of substantial harm, in particular the more serious second, absolute one that relies on evidence that egregious harm has resulted from nationalism, both within nation-states and between them. Hence,
nationalism is politically indefensible. And if it is indefensible, it ought to be replaced as soon as possible in order to prevent further harms, preferably by an ideology that causes little or no harm (or at least, less harm than nationalism).
2.2 A Response to the Empirical Criticism of Nationalism

In this section I will deal with both components of the empirical criticism – intra-national and international – at once. This is because it is the type of argument itself, and not the details of the separate components, that is problematic. Besides, it would be time-consuming to deal with all of the details and historical examples, especially since some of the evidence is clearly troublesome. Instead, I will deal with the empirical nature of the criticism, including the limitations of such an argument in general.

Along with most readers – including nationalists – I concede the empirical evidence presented by the critics of nationalism. It would be absurd, for example, to deny that nations have started wars, or that nations have had slavery within their borders. I even concede that nationalist leaders in nation-states brought about some of these events. To deny such evidence would be mere foolishness.

Indeed, an examination of current literature on the issue of nationalism, as well as of the history of actual events in the last couple of centuries, reveals the consensus that there are some nationalist states that should cause us to critically examine the issue closely. Clearly there are some nationalist leaders who cause their nation-states to behave unacceptably (relying on oppression, aggression, etc.), and such behavior and the underlying cause of it should be rejected. The possibility that anti-nationalist critics are right has to be taken seriously. Yet if
there is evidence that not all nations are bad, and some are actually good, the critical position itself must be critically examined as well, given the possibility that the conclusion is too strong.

In fact, Benedict Anderson points out that while critics focus on the fear and hatred associated with nationalism,

> it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find analogous nationalist products expressing fear and loathing (141-142, original emphasis).

In addition, Charles Kupchan writes that nationalism has been and will be “a key ingredient of both domestic order and international cooperation” and can be used to bring about peaceful change in parts of the world that are changing, for example, from communism to democracy (3).

But in spite of such benefits, anti-nationalists critics conclude from the evidence they present that nationalism as a whole should be rejected, based on enough examples of harm in an absolute sense (where no benefits can ever balance out such harms). However, I dispute this conclusion, since in order to reach such a conclusion critics use a hasty and unjustified generalization. When discussing instantiated political ideologies, I believe the focus should be on the norms, not on ‘perversions’ or ‘deviations.’ Such problem examples should not

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16 I borrow these terms from Aristotle; his standard for good vs. bad constitutions will be presented in detail in chapter 4.
represent all political examples, however they may be divided. Yet by focusing exclusively on deviations to find examples of absolute harm, critics imply that such nations are representative of all nations.

But this is plainly the fallacy of hasty generalization: because all examples used are unacceptable, all nations are unacceptable. The result is that this political ideology is rejected based on a bad sample of nation-states: the examples given are all similar in one way (e.g. based on national identity) yet different in some relevant way (e.g. the aims of and means used by the nations’ leaders). This relevant difference is not taken into account, which means the examples given are not representative of all nation-states and should not lead to the rejection of nationalism without further argumentation. The mistake of hasty generalization would be obvious with other claims; e.g., if one claimed that all nations are beneficial based on a select set of nations that have freed their nationals from colonial oppressors and provided a good life for those nationals. So rather than focus on select examples to criticize all nations, the totality of evidence should be examined to see if all nations truly are at risk of causing harm (as the bad examples indicate). For if there is a relevant difference between examples, this would make the absolute standard of harm merely a reflection of critics’ chosen examples.

Indeed, I could provide an empirical defense of nationalism based on benefit to address this empirical criticism. Such an argument would be based on the comparative standard of harm and would be based on the overall evidence of nation-states. And such evidence shows that nationalism, as an ideology, has
provided on balance more benefits to more people than harm. The harm gets more attention, though, because it is usually graphic and shocking when a nation-state takes aggressive action; but the benefits conferred, while silent, subtle and often overlooked, could outweigh such harms and show that the standard of ‘absolute harm’ that was used to provide evidence of substantial harm relied on an incomplete look at the evidence on nation-state and so was a flawed standard.

A good example of an empirical argument in defense of nationalism is provided by Gregory Jusdanis in *The Necessary Nation*. His argument holds that nationalism traditionally played a beneficial role for many nations: it allows a national group to achieve political autonomy (from an invading army or from colonizers), and to bring about progress (economic, technological) for that group, while maintaining the distinct, unique culture of that group. Specifically, he writes that the nation has been a positive aid in helping peoples around the world in the noble task of throwing out foreign occupiers (4). The end of colonialism around the world, whereby large powers occupy and use smaller, less advanced countries, came about precisely because nationalist sentiments were tapped and used to question the legitimacy of such occupation, and to create conditions where these less advanced countries could modernize, but only on their terms (viz., by retaining their own unique cultural traditions) (5, 7ff.). That colonialism is out of favor, and now widely seen as illegitimate, is due to nationalism;

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17 See also 41-43, 46, 59-60, 61, chapter 3, and 188-192.

18 See also 60, and chapters 3 and 4.
Jusdanis thinks this is unequivocally a positive development. And this benefit alone earns the nation the praise and the label 'necessary' that Jusdanis gives it.

In the postcolonial world, many critics claim that nationalism no longer can provide such a benefit, since the circumstances in the world have changed away from threats like Napoleon’s invading army and from colonizing countries. But Jusdanis convincingly argues that current trends of globalization pose as great a threat as those two hundred years ago: the globalization of culture threatens the cultural uniqueness of nations affected by global trends. And so the nationalist reaction and attempt to preserve a culture (against the influence of McDonald’s, MTV, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, etc.) is as beneficial to a nationalist group now as it was two centuries ago.

Critics are likely to object to an argument such as Jusdanis’ that uses the comparative standard of harm and benefit on the grounds that whatever benefits may appear to follow from nationalism, the past harms still outweigh any benefits in an absolute sense. But this exposes the problem with an empirical argument based on the absolute standard of harm: this argument must always rely on the past and may not account for the present or for the future. If the trend were to become one of more benefit than harm, then the empirical argument based on absolute harm would fail to account for the possibility that in the future nation-states could all be benign and not the source of substantial harm. And if this were the case, nationalists could legitimately claim that the argument against nationalism is dated and no longer applicable to it. For an empirical argument of any kind should be based on what the facts are, not what they were or may
potentially be, and this means that an empirical argument is always contingent upon the circumstances and on the overall evidence. If these circumstances change and the evidence indicates a new trend, so should the conclusion based upon them. In this case, if there is a trend toward benefits, then nationalism should be seen as beneficial.\footnote{To be fair to the critics, if the trend were toward harm, then the critics would be justified in criticizing nationalism, albeit using the comparative standard of harm.} And Jusdanis makes a compelling case for such a trend when he argues that nationalism continues to help preserve unique cultures from the current threat of globalization.

However, critics may further point out that Jusdanis assumes that preserving unique cultures is beneficial; globalist critics, for example, would see this preservation as an impediment to actualizing universal values (such as equality, impartiality, justice). Were I to rely on Jusdanis’ argument or even to provide another empirical argument, I would be talking past these critics, who already look at the same evidence and interpret it differently when they argue that it clearly reveals harm, not benefit.

More importantly, though, the absolute standard involves necessity since critics believe that some select evidence makes all nation-states necessarily suspect. Yet this is a weaker form of the theoretical argument I present in the next chapter since it involves necessity yet purports to rely on empirical evidence only. But this stronger theoretical criticism of nationalism of the following chapter presents problems – serious ones – that an empirical defense cannot address. It is based on a rejection of the consequentialism implicit in an empirical argument. In this case, critics will claim that the ends do not justify the means, so that
whatever benefits nationalism may confer on people, the means used to bring them about – inequality, partiality – are unjustifiable. Yet these means are fundamental components of nationalism, so cannot be left aside in order to salvage this ideology. For critics these theoretical flaws alone are enough to warrant a rejection of nationalism, no matter what benefits its defenders point to as proof of its acceptability.

Given the serious nature of this problem posed by the theoretical criticism and since an empirical argument (whether a criticism or a defense) is always contingent upon circumstances, I will not give any further empirical defense beyond the one provided by Jusdanis. Instead I will turn to the theoretical criticism of nationalism and will offer some common replies to that criticism.
CHAPTER 3

AN EXAMINATION OF THE INHERENT PROPERTIES OF NATIONALISM: THE THEORETICAL CRITICISM OF NATIONALISM AND A COMMON RESPONSE

Critics do not merely rely on empirical evidence to make the case that nationalism should be rejected. They also use an argument I shall call ‘theoretical’ – an argument that makes the strong claim that nationalism is inherently flawed, no matter how it is applied in practice. This second, theoretical argument is stronger than the empirical argument: it is entirely possible that, the critics’ claims notwithstanding, the co-existence of nationalism and its associated historical problems is coincidental, and the empirical conclusion is only contingent. It is, after all, hypothetically possible to imagine a world in which the problems of the previous chapter did not occur or a future which is significantly different than the past. But the conclusion of the theoretical argument is not contingent, based on history, but a nontemporal, necessary claim that nationalism is intrinsically flawed and unacceptable, and is consequently an indefensible political ideology. In the first section I present this argument, then in the following section I present common responses to that argument – including the one that seems best, liberal nationalism.
3.1 The Theoretical Criticism of Nationalism

The argument that I present on behalf of the critics will contain both perspectives, international and intra-national, that appeared in the empirical argument of Chapter 2. This argument is not one that critics themselves actually give – no single argument appears to be this complete – but in it I try to capture the primary concerns of the critics and articulate those concerns in the strongest coherent argument possible. Thus, even if this argument is not held by any particular critic of nationalism, my aim is to give the critics’ concerns the best chance possible. In this way, the theoretical criticism of nationalism has a fair chance of working against it.

The theoretical argument is simple, based on the fact that nationalism relies on inequality and partiality (which are seen as the opposite of what should be valued, as will be shown below). Any political ideology that is predicated on a violation of the principles of impartiality and equality within its borders or between states is unacceptable and indefensible due to this moral defect. Nationalism is an ideology that necessarily contains the violation of these two core moral principles of impartiality and equality, both within and between nation-states, no matter how a given nation-state seems to behave in practice. In other words, nationalism theoretically contains these violations no matter what the empirical evidence may look like at any given time. Therefore, nationalism is an unacceptable and indefensible ideology.
Rather than show that these principles are routinely violated in practice by providing yet another empirical argument (with a contingent conclusion), a critic of nationalism must provide an argument with a necessary conclusion. To do this, his argument must show that, in theory, nationalism would have this moral defect – that is, it will always violate these principles (within its borders or between nation-states) – whether or not nationalism were ever instantiated, and it will do so necessarily. Although this may be a more difficult argument to present, the benefit to critics is that such an argument is also a stronger one than an empirical argument, so that it is more likely to be persuasive.
3.1.1. The Theoretical Criticism: Equality and Impartiality

For critics, nationalism can only be bad and cannot be rationally defended. The criticism that nationalism, from both the international and intra-national perspectives, violates the values of equality and impartiality amounts to a condemnation of the key components of nationalism: national sovereignty and national self-determination, national identity and national loyalty, national self-interest and national self-defense. These components necessarily appear in every nationalist state (real or theoretical) since they are integral to what constitutes ‘nationalism,’ no matter what particular governmental structure (democracy, dictatorship, etc.) a nationalist state has at any given time.

Critics assume that all political ideologies must respect and promote two key values to be considered ‘good’: equality and impartiality. In Aristotelian terms, these values together constitute the telos of modern states, that is, the common good that these states strive for is the implementation of structures that ensure these values appear and remain in a state. Critics believe that impartiality and equality have value because they are seen as key requirements for any good political ideology (and they believe that nationalism cannot include these values). Equality has been a core principle of modern political life and a part of the Western political tradition since the time of the Enlightenment, which held that all men are created equal. This belief constitutes an equality that man cannot override, and for some people this is because God was the one that created man.
with such intrinsic equality. In other words, political equality is the only way to satisfactorily instantiate the equality that God created between humans. Any political structure that does not respect God’s creation and the natural equality among humans that was a part of that creation is not a just structure. Even if God were not used, there is still a case to be made (in a Kantian fashion) that humans just are equal by virtue of being human: we are all born fundamentally the same, as beings with the capacity to be rational, so it is part of human nature that we are all morally equal. And this creates a basis for treating humans as political equals as well. But this explanation may only satisfy some people, namely, those for whom tradition (especially that of the Enlightenment) is politically meaningful, so the appeal to tradition alone – even without the controversial religious aspect – would be insufficient justification for such an important and fundamental value of modern life. Clearly some other factor is at work.

A justification more likely to be given is that equality is a key requirement for a just political theory, a belief that is held for any of a number of reasons. One reason is a belief that categorizations of people based on non-chosen traits (race, ethnicity) are not relevant to the treatment that they should receive, especially by the state. Rather, only relevant determinants should be cited as justification for violating an otherwise inviolable principle.\(^{20}\) Thus, the promotion of equality prevents the injustice that would necessarily occur when non-relevant,\(^{20}\)

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\(^{20}\) An example is the denial of liberty to a citizen convicted of committing a crime (such as arson). This denial – and so, the unequal treatment of him relative to non-criminals – is seen as justified since it punishes the agent for choosing to break the law.
non-chosen, and arbitrary characteristics are used to determine who receives certain advantages over others, whatever those advantages may be (distribution of resources and goods, eligibility for offices, voting, etc.).

This belief is applicable not just to intra-national affairs, but also to international relations. No nation-state in the world has a monopoly on a given trait (e.g. intelligence, benevolence) that would make it intrinsically better than others, which means that no nation-state has an inherent claim to be treated more favorably than others. Only relevant factors should determine the distribution of goods among nation-states as well as any disadvantages that may be justified (for example, punishment for violation of international law). This intrinsic equality between nation-states is the best way to avoid injustice at the international level.

A second reason to justify equality as a theoretical requirement for justice is because it is the only way to achieve a well-ordered society, which is a society, for example, where justice is well-distributed (and is not ordered in such a way simply to prevent injustices such as crime). This well-ordered society is able to provide a life for its citizens that includes equal opportunities to benefits as well as equal burdens and responsibilities (such as taxes or military conscription) that all citizens bear alike. On this view equality must be a central part of any system that aims to produce a just society. Even the nationalist, whether out of self-interest or out of concern for his nation-state, should agree that a just society is desirable, one in which order is present and well-being is achieved; after all, a justification that may be given on behalf of nationalism is that it creates just and
well-ordered societies that bring about better lives for their nationals. So if equality is a part of a just society, it is a prerequisite for a just political system.

In order to fully bring about equality within a state, impartiality is essential. At a scale smaller than the state, most social systems are forms of organized partiality; examples include the family, schools, churches and synagogues, charitable organizations, and Boards of Trustees. All of these groups structure themselves in terms of status differences among members, which is sometimes based not on merit but on non-chosen categories (age, family affiliation) or on what seem to be non-relevant categories (educational institution, connections to other people).

Though this is true of most social systems, the state is seen as different because all people in a state should be presumed equal before the law, without degree or hierarchy. Any differences within the state should be due to position and merit, not non-relevant categories that separate the dominant group from minorities (whether they are religious, ethnic, racial or sexual). Any state that desires equality among its citizens can only achieve that equality by treating alike all of its citizens who are relevantly similar, that is, by treating them impartially. A state that does not do this (and so violates the principle of impartiality) effectively has a policy of discrimination based on categories irrelevant to the state’s well-being, and so it also violates the principle of equality. Yet a policy of impartiality

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21 See, e.g., Thomas Nagel, Equality and Partiality (60). He claims that humans have an attitude of impartiality (that is strongly egalitarian), based on our capacity to think impartially about other peoples’ lives, and that it “is the motive of impartiality which gives us a reason for wanting more equality than we have” (63-64; 64-65).
would call for avoiding any sort of official partiality within the state based on non-meritorious categories (such as nationality), a partiality which is seen as both discriminatory and unequal.\textsuperscript{22}

In the international arena, what is desired is stability between most (if not all) states. Such stability would confer on members of the international community whatever advantages they merit, and subject them to whatever disadvantages they earn. This requires an equal opportunity to the benefits as well as to the burdens and responsibilities of living in this community. No member state should be at an undeserved disadvantage relative to other members. This means that an international community needs order and justice between states; not simply laws or oratory promising these, but also an enforcement mechanism of some sort to retain order and justice and to punish members that choose to disrupt the international order and system of justice.

This equality of treatment, though, requires impartiality between states from the standpoint of the international community. As with intra-national relations, relations between states should in theory be based on merit and not on any sort of favoritism. Rather, the actions, intentions or characters of a state’s leaders are what matter. So impartiality is the only way to guarantee that states are treated equally within the international community and is the only way to avoid discrimination, whether that discrimination is by one nation-state or a group

\textsuperscript{22} Unless, some may argue, it involves a redress of historical grievances.
of nation-states toward one or more others. Impartiality demands that any
differences in treatment be justifiable and commensurate with treatment of other
states in previous, similar circumstances and precedent setting for the future.
3.1.2 The Theoretical Criticism: Nationalism’s Inequality and Partiality

Yet both equality and impartiality are values that critics claim are necessarily violated by any theory of nationalism, since they note that this ideology presupposes and reinforces inequality and partiality. That is, nationalism presupposes the correctness of partiality (and inequality), and critics believe that when this belief is combined with various nationalist components, (partiality and) inequality would inevitably be acted upon whenever a nation-state comes into being. Critics then conclude that because violations of equality and impartiality would necessarily occur, nationalism is fundamentally flawed, even if it appears to provide benefits of some sort. Thus, even when an empirical argument (such as that of Jusdanis) seems to show that nationalism can be beneficial to its citizens (and others), critics maintain that this is only a contingent fact and the reality is that nationalism is essentially immoral and unjust (and can never be otherwise). Indeed, the inequality and partiality that form the basis of nationalism will always override morally any benefits that may occur. More importantly, critics think that, due to its fundamental inclusion of and reliance on inequality and partiality, nationalism inherently lacks a mechanism to prevent harm or to guarantee benefits, which, slight as they are, would be temporary as well.

As we have seen, nationalism includes, by definition, such fundamental components as national sovereignty and national self-determination, national identity and national loyalty, as well as national self-interest and national self-
defense. These components are essential to nationalism, such that without them there would be no nationalism (in other words, without any one of them it would be some other ideology). Also, these components themselves depend on partiality, which is, at least in a limited amount, seen by nationalists as necessary to nationalism. National self-determination and sovereignty rely upon partiality because they both set the standard for preference: a nation is required to care primarily about its own well-being, which may occur (at least to some degree) at the expense of others. Others may have problems, but there is no justification for (unsolicited) interference since a sovereign nation-state has the right to determine its own solution. Moreover, since a nation-state will know when it has problems and will presumably care more than other nations do for its own people, it must give preference to its own members in its solutions. This may include asking for aid from other nation-states (as in natural disasters); hence, others cannot interfere without permission, but may do so when asked.

More importantly, there is the concern that separately the fundamental components of nationalism may be innocuous, but when combined they lead to partiality within a state (toward co-nationals and against non-nationals) and between nation-states (by one nation-state against another or in favor of an ally). National identity draws distinctions between people based on non-chosen characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, and location of birth, as well as chosen characteristics such as culture or religion. Once these distinctions are drawn, they are used as the basis for including like people for certain advantages or benefits, which means that others who do not qualify are excluded. If distinctions
were not to be used in this way, they would not be drawn at all. Of course, the state does make some distinctions that serve not to distribute resources but only to identify people (for example, indication of hair color on driver’s licenses). Other distinctions are used to divide resources that include anything from school scholarships in the United States to farmland in Africa.

Notice that I am not making an empirical argument here. I am pointing out that any theoretical construct of a state will include only identifications that are useful to the state in some way. Every state – including theoretical ones – will make distinctions between persons, if only to determine who is a citizen and who is not.23 But there are many ways to make such distinctions; nationalism bases national identity at the very least on an accident of birth, that is, on an arbitrary concept of ‘nationality’ that depends upon how a nation defines itself at any given time. For critics this means two things; first, that distinctions based on nationality are inevitably used to distribute scarce resources at some point in a nation-state’s history, and not merely for identification. That is, even though national identity may be introduced for benign reasons, eventually its use must turn into a system of distributions. This use of national identity also means that people are either included or excluded permanently (since non-chosen characteristics cannot be overcome) unless there is some mechanism for naturalization. But a nation-state cannot be required to take in new citizens, so for all intents and

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23 Even globalists would do this, since they need to justify why humans are citizens of the world, why persons with mental retardation are either included in or excluded from full citizenship, and why other creatures (at least ‘higher’ animals, if not also ‘lower’ ones) are excluded entirely or included as citizens.
purposes, nationality is a permanent impediment for minority nationals. For critics, this permanent state of uncertainty for national minorities would necessarily occur in a nationalist state.

National self-determination is the belief that a nation-state may decide for itself what policies and actions are appropriate. The object of concern is the nation-state alone, unless perhaps an ally is affected by a decision and the leadership opts to take the ally into consideration (but is not required to do so). What this means is that a nation-state need not consider others when deciding what it will do within its own borders. So if a nation-state decides to implement a policy of partiality toward some group within its borders at the expense of some other group (in or out of its borders), it is free to do so. For critics, this unjustified and unjustifyable partiality must occur in nation-states, since nationalism, however constructed, lacks the theoretical tools (impartiality and a commitment to the equality of all humans) to justify forsaking a policy merely because it will bring harm to others. In fact, critics believe that nationalists will use the justification of national self-determination to hide policies from criticism of outsiders that are intended to harm non-nationals (who will receive little or no benefit) and that there is nothing in nationalism to prevent this from happening.

24 Although it is possible that some nation-states could institute naturalization policies, they may vary from time to time or they may be rescinded; in the case of South Africa, the national identity was changed to include as full citizens all people born in South Africa (regardless of race). But it is possible the national identity could be changed again so that some who are now citizens would then be excluded. For critics, since there is no mechanism to guarantee that nation-states will not exclude people (at least at various times), nationality may as well be considered a permanent impediment to people who live within a non-homogeneous nation-state.

25 Examples of being partial to one’s own nation at the expense of other nation-states “down-stream” or “down-wind” could be river pollution or acid rain.
In addition, national sovereignty is supposed to guarantee that if a nation-state makes such a decision, it may not be interfered with by other nation-states. Its sovereignty ensures that its borders (and the decisions affecting affairs only within those borders) are treated as inviolable by other nation-states. This includes states that feel some obligation to members of a sovereign nation-state’s community. For example, if country A mistreats some people who happen to be of the same ethnicity (nationality) as those in country B, the latter country is not entitled to interfere in the affairs of the former to aid their co-ethnics. But this means that nation-states may implement whatever policies they deem fit and do whatever they want with natural resources, as long as it all takes place within their own borders, no matter what the impact on others.

Another component that reinforces the previous two is national self-interest. This component is concerned with the well-being of the nation-state, where this includes its physical survival, as well as the physical and non-physical needs (e.g., emotional, spiritual) of its citizens. For critics, national self-interest provides the justification for implementing policies against other nation-states or even resident non-nationals. This justification need not be an appeal to protection, but it could be an appeal to the well-being of the nation-state instead that is used to justify questionable acts. Critics claim the problem is that national self-interest allows any policy whatsoever that benefits the dominant national group, even if that benefit at times comes at the expense of harm to others. The

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26 Country B may ask for there to be a different policy, and it may even try to induce a change (it may institute trade incentives perhaps); but it cannot interfere in or even threaten to interfere in the interests of country A to force a change – that would be a blantant violation of national sovereignty.
only reason for a nation-state to act is to further its national self-interest, which may include aiding allies but it may also mean the harm of non-allies, and such a reason, critics will claim, is portrayed by nationalists as beyond the criticism of outsiders due to its own interests and the need to meet them.

Similarly, national self-defense guarantees that other states do not interfere with decision-making, nor invade or otherwise violate sovereign borders. Critics may think that the problem with this, though, is that it may be used to justify treating other nation-states, or even non-nationals within its borders, however it pleases. For example, it may be claimed to be a matter of national self-defense to invade a neighboring country if the leadership believes its own nation-state would have been invaded first – in other words, it launches a pre-emptive strike – or to punish non-nationals who may be “spying” for an enemy or planning an act of terrorism. In either case, there may be actions taken that are objectionable to critics – such as pre-emptive strikes against a neighboring country or punishment of non-national individuals – that the leadership feels are justified merely by voicing a concern for the protection of the nation-state. That is, as it will seem to critics, nationalists believe that an appeal to national self-defense alone is sufficient justification for any action whatsoever, while critics would think this appeal is wrong when it is used to justify actions that are not clear instances of self-defense (to anyone other than the acting nation-state under consideration and perhaps the one that brought about the initial threat).

27 However, it is unlikely that nationalists would believe this very strong claim: although it may give nation-state A certain latitude to act against other nation-states, it would also give those other nation-states the capacity to act against nation-state A, something clearly not in its interests, its defense or its stability.
The result is that nationalism and its fundamental components both presuppose the existence of partiality and lead to even further partiality among members of national groups in an unsuitable feedback loop. Although in some nation-states this partiality may be minimal, critics will point out that it is always there, and that partiality at the state level is necessarily wrong (since it creates inequality among a state’s residents). This does not simply include official state policy, but it includes the unofficial but tolerated private practices that appear – that is, co-nationals who in their personal lives and businesses exclude non-nationals. For even in this latter case, not directly attributable to the state, the effect is the same: within a population of ostensibly equal citizens are tolerated patterns and practices of partiality that are unjustified since they are based on non-relevant categories. Thus, nation-states that allow this will be justifiably criticized, since they have an obligation to make sure that their citizens are treated impartially in dealings with one another, even when such dealings occur out of the public realm.

For critics, then, one problem with nationalism’s components will be that together they both presuppose and lead to unwarranted partiality. And such partiality necessarily leads to another problem: inequality. By definition, partiality is the giving of preference to certain people or groups for who they are, not for what they deserve or have earned. Thus, some people who deserve goods fail to receive them – the goods go to preferred people instead, even if they do not need them, do not need them as much, or just do not deserve them. Yet equality would mandate that everyone, of every national group, should have the same
opportunity for such goods.\footnote{This equal opportunity does not necessarily mean that there will be an absolutely equal distribution of these goods. The distribution could be done by need, by merit, or by leaving it up to individuals to take advantage of the opportunities. Each of these possibilities is likely to have a different result in terms of the actual distribution among citizens, while also being a way of having equal opportunity among citizens.} The criticism is that because nationalism both presupposes and necessarily leads to partiality and inequality, it is flawed in theory no matter what benefits it may seem to confer on nationals.

It may appear that there is a further problem here of a possible circularity, since these nationalist components lead to partiality and inequality, yet partiality and inequality are in some sense presupposed by them. It is true that these components require partiality in order to work, since they cannot be brought about except by people willing to be partial to certain others (in this case, to co-nationals) or to treat unequally some who are equals except for the fact of nationality. But partiality and inequality do not in turn require these components, since one can be partial toward others who are not co-nationals (some other criterion is used) or treat others who are equals unequally on grounds other than nationality. What is interesting to note, however, is that partiality is presupposed by these components in the sense that partiality must be the motive to instantiate the different components of nationalism. That is, one must desire to be partial toward co-nationals in order to want to instantiate a political ideology that advances national self-interests and the other components of nationalism. And for critics, the belief that precedes nationalism (\textit{viz.}, the belief that partiality and inequality are in some instances good) is not the main problem; rather, it is the fact that nationalism necessarily involves acting on that belief that is problematic.
3.1.3 The Theoretical Criticism: Undeserved Loyalty and Bad Goals

There is a final component of nationalism that does not depend on relations between nation-states but is entirely dependent on the attitudes of nationals themselves: national loyalty. This attitudinal component is as essential as the others, perhaps more so, since without the support of its nationals a nation-state is not likely to be able to do much of anything, let alone serve its national interests. But the need for some degree of popular support does not mean democracy is a necessary feature only of nationalism: all forms of government need the support of their citizens (or at least minimal opposition) to remain in power. Clearly, though, the more support a nation-state has from its citizens, whatever the form of government, the more successfully it will be able to carry out its policies, even if other nation-states or groups within the nation-state find them objectionable. For critics the problem is that some nation-states receive loyalty from nationals even when they may not deserve it.

The loyalty must be mutual, however, so that citizens receive some benefit from the nation-state in return for their loyalty, including benefits such as meeting the psychological need to identify with a larger group. These benefits will not only strengthen the nationals' support of the leadership and allow the nation-state to do as it thinks best with regard to non-nationals, but without loyalty the nationalism espoused would be hollow. For a ‘nationalist’ state that does not support its nationals or provide them with a sense of being important to that state
is not really ‘nationalist’ at all, since it would only exist to allow the leadership to be in power as an oligarchy (with nationalism as a pretext for its existence). It is not likely that such a nation-state could last for very long (at least not without outside aid or the use of force).

The critics’ position includes two assumptions about national identity and national loyalty that, if true, would seem to indicate that nationalist states could not exist for very long. These assumptions are that co-nationals will be preferred to all others and that a nation-state that does this receives the full loyalty of its nationals no matter what the cost. That is, nationalist leaders will behave in ways that give preference to nationals even when doing so is detrimental to the nation-state as a whole and (by extension) to the national group. This assumption may apply to some nationalists who carry it so far that they even destroy their nation-state in the process – Hitler’s Third Reich comes to mind – but most nationalist leaders are not (intentionally) self-destructive.

In fact, instead of self-destruction, most nationalist leaders will, out of self-interest, want their nation-state to flourish. Although most defenders do not explicitly provide an end or goal for nationalism, the components of nationalism taken together imply that the end of nationalism is to provide a way for a nation-state to flourish. There are two sets of needs, fulfillment of which for most citizens will lead to national flourishing: physical needs and psychic (spiritual and emotional) needs. Components such as national self-interest and national self-defense, along with national self-determination and national sovereignty, all serve to meet these basic physical needs. National self-defense, for example,
calls for defending the nation-state’s citizens, guaranteeing their survival at least, their prosperity and flourishing when possible. Clearly, the principle of acting out of national self-interest would indicate that nationalist leaders want to do what is best for the nation-state, and this would preclude – for most nationalists – those policies or actions that are detrimental to the nation-state or its nationals. National self-determination and sovereignty are components that allow the two previous components to be acted upon without interference from other nation-states, so a nation-state may direct its own course and even decide what best constitutes flourishing for its members.

National self-determination and national sovereignty also work in conjunction with national loyalty and national identity to meet citizens’ psychic needs. National identity is a sense of cultural belonging with other humans who have some important areas of life in common.\textsuperscript{29} For some, it is strictly ethnicity that matters, for others it is religion or other common values, and for some it is a combination of factors. For nationalists the commonality of merely being biologically ‘human’ is not sufficient to meet the psychological need of belonging with others, since aside from that identity there is nothing on which to grasp and for which to have certain feelings; the best example of such a feeling is national pride. These feelings, especially pride, are so strong that some nationalists may be willing to sacrifice physical flourishing in order to achieve the non-physical, psychic flourishing. National loyalty maintains this underlying identity and its

\textsuperscript{29} This is a basic need that even some (globalist) critics acknowledge, since they hope to promote identification with all humans.
attendant feelings, while national self-determination and national sovereignty allow a nation-state to act in ways to promote psychic flourishing as it sees fit.

Critics maintain that there are some nationalists who act in ways that are contrary to the goal of flourishing, and in pointing this out the critics are right about the evidence concerning *some* nationalist leaders who act against this goal. But they are wrong to generalize this as a theoretical claim to *all* nationalist leaders, since it is possible for some to act in accordance with this goal, or to neglect physical flourishing in order to promote psychic flourishing, or to act out of a misguided idea of flourishing. A nationalist leader that did not have the goal of national flourishing or who acted against this goal would not last very long as a national leader (except by force over his nationals). Yet if *all* nationalist leaders stunted their leadership in this way, there would be no nationalism left for critics to criticize: not only would nation-states lose support from their nationals, but the self-destructive actions would destroy those states, and the ideology would lose its support as a theoretical position. Critics may maintain that part of the danger of nationalism is the tendency of nationals to be duped by a leader into believing that he does have flourishing as a goal (no matter what his actions betray) or that flourishing comes only by harming others. But not all citizens of nation-states are as gullible as critics assume, and duplicity and harm are not necessary parts of nationalism; in fact, they work contrary to nationalists’ aims and would be avoided in an acceptable form of nationalism (as I will show later, when I present the Virtuous Nation).
As for the implied end of national flourishing itself, critics believe that national flourishing can only be bad, since it can only be achieved via unjust means. Not only do the theoretical components of nationalism lead to unjustifiably partial actions and unequal outcomes (and hence to violations of key modern principles), but those components also point to an end that critics find objectionable. For critics, the end of being concerned for the well-being or flourishing of only one national group, and not for the whole world, would be arbitrary and unfair since it is based on a non-chosen and irrelevant characteristic, namely, having been born to a certain national group.30

Throughout this section I have written that the critics’ position on the theory of nationalism is that nationalism is necessarily bad because it inevitably leads to violations of certain modern values, and the theory is not equipped to prevent such violations. This means that nation-states that do not seem to lead to such violations only do so temporarily: at some point all nation-states will violate them to some degree – nation-states cannot do otherwise over the full course of their existences.

There may be some critics who object to my characterization of their position by saying that it is too strong. But some critics write as if this is their position; perhaps such an implicit conclusion is only rhetorical – their position may really be that nationalism is immoral for the most part. That is, perhaps some of them believe that there is a tendency on the part of nation-states to be unjust. This tendency implies that the elimination of nationalism would lead to a

30 I contend, however, that the critics are mistaken, and I will show why this is so in the following chapters.
greater good: greater prosperity for a greater number of people, based on merit and equality of resource distribution, not on non-chosen, irrelevant factors like ethnicity. And not just greater prosperity, but also less harm due to a diminished occurrence of war, since there would be no need to contend with those of different ethnicities or religions, so clearly there would be no reason to kill them. But a reliance on ‘tendency’ and the implied evidence to show such a tendency seems like the empirical argument already rejected.

In addition, why would critics make a stronger rhetorical claim for their conclusion than their own arguments warrant? That would lead rational readers who notice a gap between the argument and its conclusion to view the critics’ position with suspicion, and so work against the critics’ aim of convincing influential (and presumably rational) people to reject nationalism. Therefore, I assume that the claim that nationalism is necessarily immoral due to partiality and inequality and should be rejected is what critics intend, and accordingly it is this claim at which I aim my defense of the Virtuous Nation in the next chapter.
3.2 Response to the Theoretical Criticism

Before I present the Virtuous Nation, it will be useful to describe some other defenses of nationalism and show why I think they are insufficient to meet the theoretical criticisms of anti-nationalists. Each defense depends upon making a distinction between defensible and indefensible nationalism, which is meant to show that critics are wrong to claim that the entire nationalist system is inherently flawed. There will be several distinctions made, but one of these – liberal nationalism – will be the emphasis of this section (in 3.2.2) because it seems to have the most promise as a defense of nationalism and the most contemporary adherents among defenders.
3.2.1 Response to the Theoretical Criticism: Alternative Distinctions

Some writers distinguish ‘Western’ from ‘Eastern’ nationalism (Miller 8-9; Yack 1999, 104). The latter is an extreme, intolerable version of nationalism, one that is best exemplified by any of the common examples of nationalism that people find intuitively objectionable (for example, Bosnia, Rwanda). ‘Western’ nationalism, though, is the sort that is tolerant and peaceful, best exemplified by the United States, Canada and the countries of Western Europe.

One problem with this distinction is pointed out by Gregory Jusdanis: it seems racist or Eurocentric to imply that only Western countries are peaceful and acceptable while other countries are not (10). It implies that there are characteristics inherent to the people of the different categories (West, East) that mean that the people of these two groups cannot but behave in their respective ways. And Jusdanis finds this sort of characterization offensive, especially since nation-states often considered acceptable have themselves committed atrocities (the best examples being American slavery and British imperialism) (163-164).31

More importantly, this distinction relies on empirical data for its justification, and this makes such a distinction itself empirical. As such, although it may appear to be a theoretical distinction, it is not, and being empirical it falls prey to the criticism I raised in the previous chapter against all empirical

31 And the example of Nazi Germany undermines this assumption that Western nations are better than those of the East.
arguments concerning nationalism (concerning the contingency of such evidence). Thus, this distinction is of little use overall, and certainly of no use here where nationalism is being considered theoretically.\footnote{If one views Western vs. Eastern nationalism as ‘advanced’ (or ‘mature’) vs. ‘primitive’ (or ‘immature’) nationalism, including a definition of each, that may be a different story. But this distinction would then merely seem to be the ‘civic’ vs. ‘ethnic’ that follows.}

Many defenders make another theoretical distinction in order to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable nationalism (Yack 1999, 104; Nielsen 1999, 121; Hutchinson 122-123). Versions of nationalism that are acceptable are ‘civic’ or ‘political’: national identity centers on the choice that citizens have made to live in a nation-state with certain political values (equality, liberty) and a certain political structure (democracy) (Nielsen 1999, 122). All citizens choose to live with these values, and the values and structure involved are all ones that modern critics of nationalism find agreeable. In such a circumstance, the national identity is more like a political identity, and it is a general identity that all citizens agree upon and choose. This is the case even though there may be disagreements over specific policies, such that citizens have secondary political identities (for example, ‘liberal,’ ‘conservative,’ ‘Democrat,’ ‘Republican,’ ‘Labour’ or ‘Tory’) that are subordinate to the general identity. Moreover, such a nation is assimilationist in that it leaves its membership open (Lichtenberg 1999, 169-170) and in principle at least it allows for equal access to its cultural goods (Nielsen 1996-97, 45).

The contrast with ‘political’ or ‘civic’ nationalism is ‘ethnic’ or ‘cultural’ nationalism. This version is unacceptable (or ‘illiberal’): national identity is not chosen, but is entirely dependent on where one was born and to which parents
within that place (Lichtenberg 1999, 169-170; Barry 257; Nielsen 1996-97, 44). Or, as Yack states, the ethnic idea of nation celebrates an inherited cultural identity while the civic idea captures the supposedly freely chosen and purely political identity of its participants (1999, 103; see also 104-105). This non-chosen element is the primary reason this sort of nationalism is unacceptable for anti-nationalist critics and nationalist defenders alike, since the non-chosen aspect is an arbitrary and troubling basis for community affiliation.  

There are several problems, though, with the distinction between ‘civic’ (or ‘political’) nationalism and ‘ethnic’ (or ‘cultural’) nationalism. First, all nations have a cultural component, or “inherited cultural baggage,” even those which appear to be founded on political ideals or values rather than on ethnicity (Yack 1999, 106). In fact, culture includes political (or civic) values (Lichtenberg 1999, 170). So the assumption that ‘ethnic’ and ‘cultural’ are synonymous is a mistake (since culture can be multiethnic, or neutral on ethnicity), as is the assumption that ‘civic’ (or ‘political’) nationalism lacks a cultural component, even if, as in this case, culture is more inclusive and cumulative, formed from several subcultures.

Second, there is no guarantee that a ‘civic’ nation-state will behave any better than an ‘ethnic’ one, unless one loads into the definition of each that good or bad behavior is a component. Rather, experience shows, as it did with the ‘Western’ vs. ‘Eastern’ distinction, that those countries usually considered good

33 But this non-chosen aspect is not the only reason. For example, John Hutchinson claims that cultural nationalism has conflict built into its conception as an essential component of social development that allows a nation to periodically regenerate itself (123, 129).

34 See also Nielsen 1999, 124, 125-126; Kymlicka 1999, 133, 140; and Jusdanis 11, 134, 162-163, and 198-199.
('civic') have committed unacceptable acts: again, American slavery and British imperialism are Jusdanis' examples (200-201). Hence, the contention that one is acceptable and the other is not does not stand up to scrutiny.

Third, the contention that 'civic' or 'political' nationalism involves a fully chosen identity is erroneous, even 'mythical' (Yack 1999, 107, 111, 115; my emphasis). It may be true for the founding members of such a state – those who drafted and ratified a binding document capturing the relevant political ideals. But once those founding members set up such a system, by choice, they then provide a mechanism whereby their children and all successive generations are given citizenship by birth (that is, in a non-chosen fashion) (Nielsen 1999, 124-125; Kymlicka 1999, 133; my emphasis). Theoretically, there could be a mechanism for choice; for example, at the age of adulthood each potential citizen (whose parents are citizens) must go through a process to acquire citizenship by choice (apply, pass relevant exams, take a loyalty oath). Although this is theoretically possible, it is unrealistic to expect all nation-states, especially large ones, to carry this out, since it would consume resources (time, energy, money) that would be better spent on matters other than making sure all citizens believe the same thing.35 So characterizing a 'civic' nation “as a rational and freely chosen allegiance to a set of political principles” is untenable, “a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking” (Yack 1999, 105). Instead of pursuing this

35 In fact, such a system would likely have to include periodic checks on citizens, since it is possible (even likely) for individuals to change their beliefs over time. A nation-state that tests the beliefs of its new members would likely want continuous testing (so that no one belongs who should not belong, that is, who no longer believe whatever is required to belong), yet this would only increase the cost of such a system exponentially.
absolute choice for identity, we should acknowledge that even in nation-states that seem political rather than ethnic there would be a non-chosen aspect to citizenship.

Finally, there is an additional problem for nation-states that have as a core belief the claim that there is absolute equality among humans. For the claim that membership only involves political beliefs implies that such nation-states must accept into its ranks anyone who professes such beliefs and who wants to join. Otherwise, humans would not be treated as equals, based solely on their beliefs, which is the relevant criterion of such a nation-state. But this means a loss of control over its membership (perhaps even its borders), since it would not be able to determine who are ‘citizens’ – it would be determined instead by those who want to become citizens – and this is an unacceptable requirement for any theory of nationalism. Although it may be desirable for such a nation-state to have lenient immigration policies, it should not have to cede control of immigration policy to outsiders or to theory. Such a system would cease to be ‘nationalist,’ since it would fail to provide national sovereignty or national self-determination to its member states.

Conversely, to claim that membership depends upon political beliefs could also mandate the exclusion of those who are born to a nation-state but who come to disagree with its political ideals. This means exclusion and suspicion are possible under ‘political’ nationalism, which would lead to paranoia and
intolerance (Yack 1999, 115, 116). Kai Nielsen points out that it need not be democratic ideals that are valued in a civic nation: examples of civic and multi-ethnic nations that are anti-democratic include Brazil, Argentina and Chile (1999, 125; see also Kymlicka 1999, 135). So there may be exclusion within a democratic but ‘political’ nation-state, just as there may be inclusion in a non-democratic one, hardly the result at which defenders of nationalism aim.

\[36\] Nielsen, however, denies that ‘civic’ nationalism could strip its nationals of citizenship (1999, 125).
3.2.2 Response to the Theoretical Criticism: Liberal Nationalism

Even though each of the terms for acceptable and unacceptable nationalism thus far has not proven fruitful, there is one common distinction that seems to hold promise. Defenders of ‘liberal nationalism’ aim to show that, in theory at least, nationalism can be compatible with the various values prized by Enlightenment liberals. Yet critics of nationalism doubt the compatibility of liberalism and nationalism. For instance, some critics doubt this compatibility because they see ‘liberal nationalism’ as an oxymoron; but this wrongly assumes that ‘liberal’ is equivalent to ‘cosmopolitan’ (Norman 59). Some critics (such as Tyrrell 236) put forth a dichotomy between reason (with universalist principles) and passion (unrestrained emotions of nationalism), yet this wrongly implies that nationalism cannot be rationally discussed (Tamir 1999, 70). Some critics just find journalistic accounts of the horrors of nationalism more captivating and moving than theories (Tamir 1999, 84). The role of examples is a sore question among writers, but Yael Tamir claims that we need fewer examples and more argumentation, since contingent facts and particular narratives are irrelevant, even disruptive to the discussion (1999, 86-87).

Some critics (Judith Shklar, Brian Barry) believe that nationalism is necessarily illiberal by its very nature, since in their view it cannot but be “a form of ethnocentrism, atavistic, backward-looking, exclusivist, and very often, even

37 See also Yack 1999, 106; Himmelfarb 110-111; Jusdanis 17; and Taylor 1999, 232.
worse than that, a form of authoritarianism, even something that either is, or not infrequently tends toward, a fascist authoritarianism" (Nielsen 1999, 119-120; my emphasis). Indeed, critics claim that even some of the defenses of nationalism are illiberal. Will Kymlicka gives the examples of Tamir’s effort, which claims the state must have an expressive role in the public expression of a particular culture, since being able to express culture is important to humans and there is a need for state involvement for political affirmation and a sense of ownership of a government through the nation. Yet Kymlicka writes that such a state can only alienate minority groups and this affects decisions concerning immigration and naturalization (1999, 138-139). This criticism seems to return us to the empirical observation already discussed that, while some nation-states fit this description, not all of them have such problems. In other words, this may be a hasty generalization to which many critics seem to fall prey.

The compatibility of liberalism and nationalism will still be questionable for critics if only because it seems impossible to have a system based on partiality (toward co-nationals) and inequality (of non-nationals) that is also compatible with the values of equality and impartiality (Ignatieff 100-101; Lichtenberg 1999, 182-183). Bhikhu Parekh goes even further: even liberal nationalists cannot escape the corrupting and pernicious logic of nationalism (324), since nationalism is necessarily averse to outsiders while privileging the moral claims of co-nationals, which makes it “difficult to see how a strong sense of nationhood
sits easily with a concern for global justice” (316-317). In other words, critics believe that trying to find liberal values in a theory of nationalism is like trying to square a circle – an impossibility not worth trying.

Despite this pessimism, which some defenders share insofar as they fear the critics may be right, many yet try to argue for the compatibility of liberalism and nationalism. The values defenders aim to show are compatible with nationalism include individualism (Barry 249); individual rights and diversity (Yack 1999, 104); and protection of minority and civil rights (Nielsen 1999, 125-126, 128). There is also a need for social unity, according to Judith Lichtenberg (1999, 182). There are the beliefs that individuals are bearers of moral value and of moral and legal rights, that in a good society individuals should be taken seriously, and that each citizen should have the opportunity of material well-being and civil liberties essential to the flourishing of each one’s individuality (MacCormick 189). And finally, there is a claimed equality of humans and an emphasis on individual freedom or autonomy (where both of the latter imply tolerance, respect for individual rights and pluralism) (Lichtenberg 1999, 168). Thus, liberals aim to defend the legacy of Enlightenment liberalism against the dangers seen in the growth of nationalist political passions (Yack 1999, 107), and to provide this defense within the nationalist framework (115).

In addition, Yael Tamir points out that defenders of nationalism must accept certain claims that apply to all nationalist theories. She claims that every theory of nationalism must start with two descriptive claims: first, “[h]umanity is divided into nations,” and second, “[t]here are criteria for identifying a nation and
its members” (1999, 82). These claims will then be followed by normative claims that favor the national world structure and also by prescriptive claims that concern “the means necessary to ensure the preservation of a national world order, as well as the welfare and prosperity of each particular nation” (83, 84). She identifies as the most important means those that are “necessary for expressing and cultivating a shared national identity in the public space” (83). Finally, the general commitment to “the preservation and development of national frameworks” in general and subsequently to the “existence of all national groups,” along with “a particularistic commitment to the survival and flourishing of each nation,” leads to a “universal notion of national rights” (84). In other words, there is a rational universality within nationalism, such that if one nation has certain rights, all other nations have it, too (Lichtenberg 1999, 168-169).

To be ‘liberal,’ though, this nationalist theory has to go beyond such basic claims. The impulse at work here is similar to that of contemporary liberals who distinguish civic from ethnic nationalism – they aim “to channel national sentiments in a direction … that seems consistent with the commitment to individual rights and diversity that they associate with a decent political order” (Yack 1999, 104). Accordingly, for Kai Nielsen the aim of liberal nationalism is to protect and “to insure the flourishing of the culture of the nation that that nationalist movement represents,” but to do so only “in ways that protect the rights of its minorities” (1999, 125-126).

As for education, Kai Nielsen claims that children will be educated “in the language of that culture and in its history and customs” and that language will be
insisted upon “in the public domain,” but unlike nationalism in general, “it will not forbid in private domains the use of other languages or the adherence to other cultures” (1999, 126). Nielsen also claims that the culture that is promoted could be a liberal democratic one, as is found in the West (125), which would obviously be the sort of culture that liberal nationalists would want to have flourish. And, according to Nielsen, evidence shows that when a culture starts out as a liberal democracy and then becomes nationalist, “it usually goes and remains liberal nationalist” and civil liberties will be “firmly adhered to” (128). Ideally, then, the right values should be in place in a society before nationalist feelings are aroused; and although it may seem prima facie illiberal to encourage a particular culture, it actually fits with liberal nationalism to encourage a particular culture that respects liberal values.

There is need for caution, however. The particular culture to be encouraged is a liberal democratic culture that could be found anywhere, not some specific culture currently found in some given location. Indeed, Yael Tamir advises that scholars should structure nationalism “independently of all contingencies” found in specific nations (1999, 82). This will allow them to avoid the common scholarly mistake of structuring a theory to fit some particular situation or policy that a given scholar wants to defend, and in the process “imposing the contingent limitations of a specific case on a general theoretical structure.” The example she gives of this mistake is the view of Will Kymlicka, whom she claims twists his theory to endorse the cause of French Canadians (1999, 78ff.). Again, particularism plays a role, but not the role scholars
sometimes claim. It is true that the commonality of being ‘human’ will not unify us; humans instead have as a commonality particularism and the need to belong to particular groups (Walzer 1999, 216). To have success, theorists should accept this fact and work with it. But this does not mean they should presuppose some particular culture found in a given location is the particular culture to work with. It would be best, instead, to figure out theoretically what culture is valuable – liberal democratic nationalism – and figure out what it involves, and only after that whether it is found anywhere. In this way, scholars can avoid any charges of conflict of interest that would appear should any particular national identity and its attendant national culture be endorsed.

Liberal nationalism retains the various components of nationalism, and so can still be labeled ‘nationalism.’ But liberal nationalists pay particular attention to national identity, since it is the component that critics focus on as the source of many problems for nationalism, in particular, the belief among critics that national identity alone leads to exclusion, partiality and inequality. In liberal nationalism, the focus of national identity should be on “(a) what kinds of national identities, values, shared ‘memories,’ and the like can legitimately be forged by institutions, (b) what political and institutional ‘methods’ are permissible, and (c) how such decisions should be debated and decided in a democratic society” (Norman 60). It is important to remember that national identity is not the only loyalty any of us have, nor should it be the deepest; also, we must recognize that sometimes
loyalty to a nation is wrong (Nielsen 1999, 121). Also, liberal nationalism must sever the connection between statehood and nationalism, since all territory is accounted for and since all states are multinational (Lichtenberg 1999, 174). This means that ‘nation’ should not be seen as synonymous with ‘state’ and that national identity should not necessarily be a criterion for citizenship in a given state that contains a certain national majority.

Lest liberal nationalism appear exclusionary for maintaining national groups from which some people are left out (since not everyone can belong – otherwise it would be a ‘global’ identity), it is useful to keep in mind that nationalisms are not always intolerant or exclusionary. This is why ‘liberal nationalism’ is not an oxymoron for Nielsen (1999, 121). And for most liberal nationalists, although people are divided into nations, it does not signal exclusionism because the national groups at issue are consensual and somewhat fluid, not fixed and based on non-chosen characteristics like ethnicity.

As for the fact that there are small groups into which humans are divided, even if this fact alone means, for critics, that liberal nationalism is exclusionary, this does not mean liberal nationalism is unacceptable. For, although some say that exclusionary sentiments are necessarily unacceptable, this is not so: according to Neil MacCormick, humans could not love other humans universally if they did not first learn to love a narrower range of people (194). This narrower

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38 Yet some critics of nationalism believe that nationalism must be this shallow toward identity. For example, in “The Limits of National Partiality,” Jeff McMahan is at pains to criticize nationalism for having a view of identity such that it is a citizen’s primary identity and the overriding one when there are conflicts between a citizen’s various identities; he puts forth ‘complex identification’ as an alternative to national identity and its attendant attitudes he believes are necessary.
range is merely a fact of life, since we cannot be equally committed to all humans due to our first commitments to family and to friends (Lichtenberg 1999, 183).

In fact, liberal nationalists believe that they have an additional concept in their nationalism that balances the exclusionary tendency of national identity. The primary addition made to the nationalist theory by liberal nationalists is the concept of ‘consent,’ which they believe will liberalize nationalism and make ‘liberal nationalism’ a viable theory. The consensual aspect of democracy implies that members should not be forced to live under a system not of their own choosing. Likewise, nationalism would work best if it were based on consent. In other words, according to Michael Walzer, where there is conflict between two national groups, it would be best not to support existing unions of those groups into one state, but rather to allow separation where demanded by popular will. And if the separation is seen by the groups as politically or economically disadvantageous, “they will find a way to re-establish connections” between them (1999, 213). Clearly, if this were to occur, the two groups would be more inclined to avoid conflict and to live together as they were unable to do prior to their separation, since the groups would have chosen to live together now, and will have a greater incentive to make it work (as opposed to a situation where they feel forced to live together and make it work).

Moreover, liberal nationalism reconciles consent and national identity by combining the two. For liberal nationalists, it is possible to join a different national group, depending on how membership is determined in any given national group. The presence of choice, though, does not mean that everyone will choose
differently from what they inherited. Given the emphasis by most defenders on the need for 'liberal' nationalism to include protection of minority rights, some may think that being a member of a minority group within a nation-state might be reason to choose a new national identity. Yet for Judith Lichtenberg, minority status is not a factor to be overcome (1999, 175). In fact, at times being a minority can be good for a culture that lives in a state that is prosperous (for everyone) – the minority culture would benefit from living in such a state. The minority status can even become central to an identity, and the unity within the minority culture that may result can actually strengthen that culture; her example is that of Jews living outside of Israel and New York (1999, 175).

There are legitimate reasons to choose a new identity, however. Lichtenberg claims that the desire to join a national community different from an inherited one “derives largely from maldistribution of ‘primary goods’” (1999, 183; see also Parekh 306-307). Where there seems to be an equitable distribution of goods, people will not want to leave a national group. But when their lives will be made better by choosing to live in a different nation-state, many (though not all) people will make that choice and will choose the corresponding identity for themselves and their children.

Yet it is unrealistic to encourage such movement for everyone in a bad situation, since that would mean a total collapse of many governments, abandonment of a large amount of territory and a massive influx of people into a
much smaller area. The result would overwhelm the nation-states on the receiving end of such relocation, and negate whatever benefits they could previously offer (less prosperity to go around, for example).

Conversely, it is illiberal to force people to stay where they are if they are not being provided for in their own nation and if such movement is possible under liberal nationalism. According to Bhikhu Parekh, though, even with the ‘right to exit,’ this is “morally and emotionally too costly to be exercised by most” of a nation’s members (307). One way to avoid this problem while also avoiding the charge of illiberalism (from forcing people to stay where they do not want to be) is to persuade nation-states that are better off to assist those less well off. Parekh points to Yael Tamir’s insistence “that every nation has a duty to ensure that other nations too enjoy cultural autonomy and flourish. It should therefore offer them such political and economic help as they need and it can provide.” This would mean that a nation “may restrict immigration from poorer countries ‘only if it has fulfilled its global obligation to assure equality among nations’” (Parekh 307, citing Tamir 1993, 161).

So while some nationalisms are fanatical, anti-democratic and illiberal in practice, it is not necessarily the case that all nationalisms are only concerned with their own interests and that they advance them by running roughshod over the interests of others. In fact, this should not be the case, since a commitment to a given nation-state cannot rightly override all other commitments at all times (Nielsen 1999, 120). Liberal nationalism appears to be both possible and desirable: possible because, although perhaps difficult, nothing articulated here
is beyond reach, especially since the primary addition is a value that is definitely attainable (consent); and desirable because it would avoid the pitfalls of ‘illiberal’ forms of nationalism. This may be why Judith Lichtenberg claims that when nationalism is allied with forces of good, it is then called ‘liberal’ nationalism (1999, 167). Of course, there may still be some people who live within a liberal nationalist state who do not want to be nationalists at all, or who do not feel any attachment to their nation. In this vein, Brian Barry claims that for those who may not care about issues like passing their culture on to future generations, it is not wrong not to care (270-271, original emphasis). We may try to persuade them otherwise, but we should not force everyone to care about a culture and to pass along a national identity (just as we should not forbid such concerns and behavior). And this is surely consistent with the emphasis liberal nationalists place on consent in their revised nationalism.
3.3 An Evaluation of Liberal Nationalism

But to judge fully whether liberal nationalism is truly possible and desirable, Roger Scruton advises readers to ask about the benefits of such a view (281). The questions he lists include: what benefits does it confer? Moral? Political? Social? Do members need these benefits? Can these come from any other source? Can nationalism truly exist without violence, hatred and suspicion, or if not, can these “be gradually moderated and subjected to some legal or administrative cure”? Each of these questions will be addressed presently, specific to the theory of liberal nationalism.
3.3.1 An Evaluation of Liberal Nationalism: The Positives

Certainly liberal nationalism has some attraction. As for the questions of what benefits it brings and whether those benefits are needed, Judith Lichtenberg provides an answer for what she believes only liberal nationalism can provide. For her, liberal nationalism has two central appeals: it satisfies “the need for some kind of communal belonging to individual well-being,” and it has an “implicit commitment to pluralism” (1999, 173). Furthermore, these aspects can capture the appeal usually given for a cosmopolitan alternative that wants to experience different cultures (as put forth, for example, by Jeremy Waldron). As Lichtenberg points out, this desire presupposes existing distinct cultures that remain separate, so as to be experienced in the way the cosmopolitan wants (172). In this way, liberal nationalism maintains a plurality of cultures (172-173), and so it provides social benefits.

According to Bhikhu Parekh, other writers claim that liberal nationalism has intrinsic as well as instrumental value (308). He claims that writers such as Brian Barry and David Miller think it has instrumental value for two reasons (303). First, it “facilitates deliberative democracy,” which “requires solidarity, mutual trust, a willingness to compromise and to look for areas of agreement,” and these are possible only “by a shared sense of nationality.” Second, it “facilitates economic distribution and underpins the welfare state” because “nationhood creates fellow feeling and sense of mutual concern,” without which the only
reason for acting together in a state would be strict reciprocity (which is morally shallow). This is so, for Barry, because a ‘nation’ is “a group of people bound by the ties of fellow feeling, mutual loyalty, solidarity, a sense of common belonging and a common history, and the wish to live together as a separate community;” a nation “can welcome and integrate outsiders into its way of life,” which “gives the state a moral and emotional basis in the life of its citizens and deepens their commitment to it” and “generates mutual trust and the concomitant confidence that others will reciprocate one’s sacrifices” (Parekh 301). In other words, liberal nationalism provides political benefits through a strengthened, democratic political unit.

All of this also means that nationalism is not necessarily violent, or full of hatred and suspicion, since a liberal nation is capable of generating trust among a group of people who are not necessarily connected by a non-chosen factor (like race or ethnicity). And if trust can be raised, violence, hatred and suspicion are diminished or eliminated among those people, no matter what (non-chosen) differences remain among them. The importance rests with the chosen similarities and the unity these generate, and it is unlikely that people who consent to live together at the start will choose to stay together if conditions arise that could lead to violence, hatred or suspicion. Rather, they will likely consent to go separate ways, and to consent to live with a new group that does not have such issues, since it would be irrational to consent to living with violence and hatred.
In addition, by providing social and political benefits, liberal nationalists put forth a form of nationalism that provides needed benefits. These benefits are the sort that all humans desire: social unity and a solid political structure. But the question remains as to whether these benefits could come from some other source. The liberal nationalist believes they cannot, since one would have to endorse one of these alternatives: anarchy, smaller units than the nation (tribalism), a larger unit (globalism), or nationalism without the liberalization this theory provides. Anarchy cannot provide the political benefits, since there is no political unit at all. Smaller units cannot provide the economic benefits such as a solid welfare state, since they are not likely to be self-sufficient, and if they are not self-sufficient, they are not likely to flourish. The larger, global unit cannot provide the social benefits, especially that of a sense of belonging, since it desires to use ‘human’ as the common identity and to wean people from their cultural differences (since these are believed to separate and exclude people, which goes against the spirit of globalism), yet these desires go against human behavior. And obviously nationalism without liberalism explicitly included cannot provide any of these benefits, as the anti-nationalist critics would point out (and with which liberal nationalists would agree).
3.3.2 An Evaluation of Liberal Nationalism: The Negatives

Yet there is another possibility: a different nationalist system, based on liberal nationalism, which could provide the benefits of liberal nationalism as well as ones that it lacks. To start with, liberal nationalists do not adequately answer the question raised by Roger Scruton concerning moral benefits, and this is problematic because the moral component is necessary for living well (political and social benefits alone cannot achieve this). Liberal nationalists write as if liberal nationalism cannot but be a moral theory, yet there is no justification for this. Judith Lichtenberg, for example, had claimed that once nationalism is again allied “with the forces of good, it is now called liberal nationalism” (1999, 167). But this seems to be a mere stipulation that liberal nationalism is good, or it makes liberal nationalism trivially good by definition, with no account of why this is the case. For there is no explicit discussion of moral values in the writings of liberal nationalists, including which moral theory would be best, or which one(s) would be compatible with liberal nationalism and from which citizens could choose. And without such discussion, liberal nationalism is no better than the forms of nationalism that bother critics because they leave morality out.

Having liberal democracy in place is not enough, since there are liberal democracies that nonetheless have behaved immorally. Examples just from the history of the United States include the internment of Japanese-American citizens during World War II and the legal segregation of free black citizens in the
South prior to the Civil Rights Era. And certainly anti-nationalist critics (or even skeptics) will be concerned that even liberal nationalism could fall prey to the commonly discussed problems with nationalism: it leads to intolerance, inequality, war, etc. In other words, critics wonder why the ‘nationalist’ component can be expected not to overpower the ‘liberalism’ over time, as they believe it could (and would). Liberal nationalists do nothing to assuage such concerns, since they do not give an explanation of why or how liberal nationalism is moral, given that there is no discussion of morality or incorporation of moral principles. So even to those inclined to think that liberal nationalism is better than any nationalism articulated to date, there is still an important element that is lacking, and this is troubling.

But there are two additional explanations missing with liberal nationalism. So even though it appears possible as well as desirable, especially in relation to the usual alternatives, this view is still problematic, and lacking in details that are necessary to satisfy critics and skeptics. The first additional missing explanation is that there is no account by liberal nationalists of why there is, or should be, an emotional attachment to a national identity, especially a liberal nationalist one. There is discussion about the emotional difficulty in leaving one’s inherited identity in addition to the sense of belonging that comes from membership in a nation. But there is no explicit justification for why an inherited identity is

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39 Of course, these examples could also serve to show that liberal democracies are capable of correcting whatever wrongs exist quicker than other types of governments, since Japanese-Americans were paid reparations for their wrongful internment and segregation was made illegal. But the point still stands that even a liberal democracy is not immune from committing moral wrongs at some points in its history, and few would claim that the United States (or any other liberal democracy) can guarantee that it will commit no wrongs in the future.
emotional, nor for whether or not this is justified. Likewise, it is implied that there is a human need for belonging that a liberal national identity fulfills, but no explicit explanation of why or how this occurs, nor of whether or not a liberal national identity should fill this need.

Such an account is needed for two reasons. One is that critics who believe that the identity ‘human’ can and should satisfy any human need to belong to a group are going to view the liberal nationalist identity not only as insufficient but also as an undesirable concession to nationalists. They believe it is insufficient because it is too narrow an identity when compared with the one they advocate (‘human’) and it is undesirable because, when viewed in terms of the emotional response it elicits, it only brings out unacceptable feelings (especially hatred for non-nationals) and actions (violence toward non-nationals), while ‘human’ does not. And since critics think that the emotions of nationalism necessarily become unacceptable at some point, this must include liberal nationalism and its identity. In other words, anti-nationalists would demand some explanation to justify an emotional attachment to any nationalist identity, including a liberal nationalist one. Yet liberal nationalists have yet to provide an explanation for their particular identity.\textsuperscript{40}

The other reason an account of this emotional aspect is needed is to differentiate the emotions supporting liberal nationalism from those supporting

\textsuperscript{40} This demand also applies to those anti-nationalist critics who want ‘human’ to be the only identity to which humans feel the most, or all of their, allegiance: they need to provide some explanation for how this identity can serve to satisfy the human need for an emotional attachment to a community, let alone how this identity could be cultivated as the one to which people feel a primary allegiance.
illiberal nationalisms. Presumably, liberal nationalists believe that critics are wrong: there is a difference in the emotions underlying their view from those underlying other views. Yet they give no account of such a difference between the emotions associated with different forms of nationalism (which leaves the impression they are all the same). Or, if the emotions are the same, the difference in resulting behavior must come from how the emotions are cultivated and sustained in citizens, and how they are kept positive, so that they do not lead to the bad actions associated by the critics with nationalism in general. Yet there is no account of this, either, so critics are left to assert their assumptions and problems without any response.

The second additional explanation missing from liberal nationalism regards the proper balance between the 'liberal' and the 'nationalist' components. It seems that the liberal nationalists have tried to do too much and tried to satisfy everyone. They make it rational to choose their view, since there is a commitment to liberal values like equality that are rationally desirable. Yet as Parekh’s reading of Tamir indicates, this equality will only be achieved if liberal nationalism and its benefits are occurring simultaneously around the world for everyone. Otherwise, there would be a disruptive migration from many nations to a few successful liberal ones. To avoid this migration, richer nations should aid poorer ones so as to equalize their respective resources, and to provide the citizens in the poorer nation-states reason to stay where they are.

However, the requirement that a nation that has reached a certain level of prosperity must put welfare of other nations ahead of its own continuing interests
dilutes the ‘nationalist’ aspect. Just as nations count on no unwanted interference from others, so, too, they rely on the fact that the only aid they give to other nation-states will be given by them voluntarily (and not forcibly taken from them or somehow required of them). For if they are forced or required to help others (against their wills), they lose some of their national sovereignty and national self-determination over their national self-interest. These three components are fundamental to nationalism; any watering down of its fundamental components constitutes a watering down of nationalism itself.

So this view implies that liberals should downplay the nationalist part of the view (at least the components national self-determination, sovereignty and self-interest) if an equality of riches between nation-states is not achieved or is not possible with these components. But then it is no longer ‘liberal nationalism,’ and nationalists will not accept the liberal nationalist view.

At the same time, if this requirement of aiding poorer nations were left out entirely, or even just weakened (to satisfy nationalists) so that a nation-state could choose to help others but is not required to do so, the ‘liberal’ aspect is diluted. The dilution occurs because, for defenders of liberal nationalism, liberal values like justice and equality mean that there is an obligation between states to aid those less fortunate. Justice requires that all states be given an opportunity to flourish, and equality requires that this apply to all states in need (in an impartial manner). But allowing states to choose (and not obligating them) to help other
states waters down this liberal aspect. It seems liberals would not accept this, since it would no longer be ‘liberal nationalism,’ and, worse, this nationalism would then look like the same old nationalism they criticized and rejected.

Perhaps the fact that both sides – liberal nationalists and nationalists in general – would reject it indicates that liberal nationalism actually is the best theory possible, since it is unrealistic to satisfy everyone, especially from what are assumed to be otherwise opposite positions (liberalism and nationalism).\footnote{And anti-nationalist critics probably would not be satisfied, since necessary details are still missing.} But it is more likely that these three deficiencies – the moral dimension, addressing the emotional attachment, the appropriate balance of its parts – are not only not addressed by liberal nationalists but cannot be addressed by them. Rather than spend time trying to figure out if this latter possibility is the case, I think it would be better to ask instead if there is an alternate theory of nationalism that offers something better. In the following chapters I will present, using Aristotle’s writings, an alternative that builds on liberal nationalism and fills in what is missing. And without these deficiencies, yet with the strengths of the liberal nationalist view, I believe it is a better nationalist view.
CHAPTER 4

AN ARISTOTELIAN FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER RESPONSE TO THE
THEORETICAL CRITICISM: THE VIRTUOUS NATION, PART I

In this chapter I will present the first part of a defense of nationalism that is
based on Aristotle’s political and ethical writings. Just as no critic gives the actual
arguments I provided in Chapters 2 and 3, neither does Aristotle give the defense
contained in this chapter and the next. Indeed, although the critics give lesser
arguments,\textsuperscript{42} Aristotle does not even address the issue of nationalism as it is
discussed now (since it did not exist in his time).\textsuperscript{43}

The defense I present is Aristotelian, since it is based in large part on
Aristotle’s text and ideas; I will make use of some of his concepts but at places I
will go beyond his texts. Because Aristotle took some issues further than many
contemporary writers have, using his texts and ideas will allow me to try to meet
the theoretical challenges of anti-nationalist critics as well as to address the
deficiencies of the best alternative to date, liberal nationalism. The result will be
the Virtuous Nation, which is similar to Aristotle’s ideal state in his \textit{Politics}, now

\textsuperscript{42} In some cases ‘argument’ applies loosely to what the critics provided: in such cases I
took their complaints or comments about nationalism and used them to construct the larger
arguments I gave.

\textsuperscript{43} A case could be made, though, that Aristotle does address the issue in a different form,
since he was concerned about the Greek \textit{polis} that had a sentimental component and a functional
one (analogous to the national aspect and the state; cf. Kupchan’s definition in chapter 1).
modified and adapted to the modern nation-state system. I believe that this modified ideal is the best answer to the anti-nationalist critics, and will try to show why this is so.
4.1 The Aristotelian Framework: The Polis

I believe Aristotle’s writings (when combined with liberal nationalism) provide a solid foundation for a defensible nation, given that for the debate of his time, Aristotle presents in his *Politics* a general defense of the *polis* against the trend of global imperialism (for example, the mission of Alexander the Great) that was occurring. Likewise, the trend now is toward globalization – not just economic, but also political – and I contend that Aristotle’s concepts provide a good foundation to reject the dominance of large, supranational governments and organizations in favor of smaller, national political units.

In fact, my use of Aristotle in this context should not seem out of place, since the debate today between nationalists and globalists mirrors one that Aristotle himself took part in with Plato. Anti-nationalist globalists today are taking a position similar to the one that Plato took in the *Republic*: emotional ties to a small group lead to moral abuses. Replacing these ties with a rational allegiance to a larger group will eliminate such abuses. The small group to which Plato objects is the family unit, whereas the group targeted by globalists is the nation. Even though the target unit is different, the motive in each case is the same: eliminate what is, for some humans, a negative influence on their behavior and attitude (emotional attachment to a smaller unit) in order to make human society better.
Just as Aristotle defended the family against Plato’s attack – in fact he made it the foundation of his ideal state – so I will defend the nation against anti-nationalist critics’ attacks and make it the foundation of this modern political structure, using Aristotle’s ideas and insights. To begin with, there are two problems with the position held by both Plato and the modern critics of nationalism. First, it is an unrealistic position because it treats emotional ties to particulars – such as family or nation – as malleable, learned, and so not natural to humans (that is, not a part of human nature). Yet if these types of emotional ties are natural, and there is reason to think that they are, to eliminate them (and require that humans have no such attachments) would be very difficult if not impossible. This claim about human ties being natural is empirical, of course, based on the fact that recorded human history reveals that humans associate together in small groups.

A defender of the naturalness of small groups among humans is James Q. Wilson. He discusses universalism and the human tendency toward the particular in *The Moral Sense* in a chapter entitled, “The Universal Aspiration.” He writes that it is remarkable that there has been an upward trend in recent history among humans to believe that “all people, and not just one’s own kind, are entitled to fair treatment,” as exemplified by the American Declaration of Independence. Yet “actions often speak louder than their words. For Americans, as for peoples everywhere, morality governs our actions toward others in much the same way that gravity governs the motions of the planets: its strength is in inverse proportion to the square of the distance between them” (191). In fact, he claims
that “mankind is not devoid of moral sense if most of its members treat villagers better than strangers and family better than nonkin. On the contrary; unless people are disposed to favor the familiar face to the strange one, their natural sociability would not become a moral sense at all” (193). Why is this so? Because the experiences and proclivities that lead to our moral sense make that sense operate in smaller groups, so that our “natural sociability is reinforced by attachment to familiar others, and so we tend to value the familiar over the strange, the immediate over the distant; in common with most species, we are by nature locals, not cosmopolitans” (192).⁴⁴

Accordingly, I contend that the nation strikes a good balance between the local (which is not self-sufficient) and the global (which fails to evoke emotional attachment). The nation is the largest group of people who are familiar (or “related”) in some way to one another, so that they may use this natural emotional attachment to achieve a self-sufficient state, and then they can work at also achieving a flourishing state. After all, a self-sufficient state may exist, but a self-sufficient state that flourishes exists well; and flourishing is the goal at which all states seem to aim.

The second problem with Plato’s position and that of anti-nationalist critics is that their solution is simplistic insofar as they do not show how the elimination of such ties (even if possible) would guarantee that humans would suddenly be exemplary moral beings (however they conceive of morality). In fact, the

⁴⁴ See also Wilson’s On Character, especially Chapter 14, “The Moral Sense,” where he discusses sympathy and fairness, and to show that they are natural he relies on the attachment humans have to small groups and human sociability.
biological identity ‘human’ is an empty shell that carries no meaning and inspires no passion; Aristotle calls such an identity ‘watery’ because it has no substance to it and there is nothing that evokes emotion for humans. For Aristotle, the evidence indicates that people love and care for and have feelings toward a thing they believe is all theirs and which is the only one they have (Pol. II.1262b22-23).\footnote{Also, see Martha Nussbaum on this passage in ‘Compassion and Terror,’ 20.} Obviously nationals think the nation is theirs, and it is the only one they have, while this is not so of the generic identity ‘human’ that no one truly thinks is all his.

An example of this is provided by Martha Nussbaum in her article ‘Compassion and Terror’ (2003, 11-12, 13). After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, many Americans became aware of suffering that was occurring in other parts of the world that they had previously ignored, for example, the suffering of women in Afghanistan. Yet ultimately, Americans cared most about what happened to Americans. As Nussbaum writes, after the attacks we saw “a lot of ‘humane sentiments’ around us, and extensions of sympathy beyond people’s usual sphere of concern. But more often than not, those sentiments stop short at the national boundary.” Her explanation for this is that Americans saw the attacks as “bad because they involved us and our nation. Not just human lives, but American lives” (13, original emphasis; see also 16-17). She uses the case of Rwanda as the contrast: because American lives were not at stake, Americans did not care to the same degree (many of them did not even
know what was happening in Rwanda). There was a subsequent lack of support for humanitarian intervention, which resulted in a humanitarian disaster there.

One example that fits her concern for sympathy across borders, though, that she does not discuss is the general American attitude toward Israel: public opinion since the terrorist attacks in the United States has increased in support for Israel (and had a corresponding decrease in sympathy toward the Palestinian leadership), presumably because Americans now have greater sympathy for victims of terrorist attacks (especially in another democracy), even when Americans are not those victims. Yet another example is Darfur: a situation in Africa similar to that of Rwanda is occurring and getting more attention than Rwanda got (as it was happening), perhaps because Americans are more aware of and sympathetic toward such suffering in far away places (and perhaps precisely due to the failure that occurred with Rwanda). What examples such as these show is that it is possible for there to be sympathy for non-nationals who suffer at the hands of others, including in a place that has little in common with the nation where there is sympathy; for it is unlikely that many Americans see themselves as potential victims in the way that those in Darfur are victims.

46 We may also say that many Americans did not know what was happening because distance at times makes knowledge difficult to acquire, to process or to act upon. It could also be a failure of the media to make this knowledge accessible to most Americans (although then we would ask why the media fails to do this).

47 It may also have to do with the pictures on television of ordinary Palestinians cheering in the streets after the murder of so many Americans; but this is not enough to account for the shift in sentiment, since Americans did not need to become sympathetic to Israel at this sight, merely unsympathetic toward the Palestinians.
In addition, her view helps explain why so many other nations seemed to abandon America on the issue of Iraq within two years of avowed support and offers of aid for and alliance with America. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, many other nations expressed grief and sympathy with Americans, including some nations that do not usually seem to care whether Americans die or that in the past might have been gleeful at Americans’ deaths – e.g. Russia. Yet this sympathy around the world was short-lived. Some critics of the American administration claimed that the president had squandered that good will; yet I would point out that that good will was never, under any circumstances, going to last very long, since those nations and their nationals would, in short time, turn their focus back to their own national concerns. The observations of Aristotle and Nussbaum should not apply only to Americans, but to members of all nations.

The primary point here is that ‘human’ is an identity with no substance to it, for it is based upon the lowest common denominator – biological classification. While it is useful for differentiating humans from other animals, it is insufficient for critics’ implied meritocracy and for whatever flourishing they may think would come from their view. Its insufficiency is clear from the fact that critics must work hard to convince people to give up their usual identities and to adopt the identity ‘human’ as the only politically meaningful category.48

48 This is so even if ‘human’ is meant as more than mere biology. It is possible to see ‘human’ as referring to some commonality all humans have above and beyond mere genetics: for example, one could focus on the fact that humans (and no other animals) have the capacity to reason or the capacity to deliberate morally. While these are important capacities, especially for Aristotelians, they are important because they can lead us to discover how humans live and what
Yet local ties, whether they are based on family or on nation, bring certain benefits, chief among them are an emotional bond, which can lead to a better chance of individual flourishing and a better chance of having a moral education. This is not to say that only benefits accrue from such ties: defenders of both families and nations are aware that harms can result from people who are blindly loyal to family or to nation. In the case of families, even in Aristotle’s time, disputes between family clans were sometimes violent, while disputes between nations have already been discussed and acknowledged as sometimes violent. Yet this simply means that the nation is like other things – wealth, intelligence, etc. – that can be beneficial or harmful, depending on the aims involved as well as the use of these things.

In the next chapter, I argue on behalf of a unit that is a mean between two extremes. The smallest extreme would be a state made up entirely of the family unit or clan, which, while important, is not the limit to political communities since it cannot be self-sufficient. The largest extreme would be a global state, comprising the whole world, which will not work as a good political unit, if only because it is too large to be administered well. It is appropriate that in good Aristotelian fashion I have chosen to defend the mean between these extremes.49

constitutes a human life as well as a good human life (as I will use them later). It is hard to see how these alone could give rise to a sustainable emotional attachment to others, especially when there are cultural differences between them: one can acknowledge that humans from a different nation are rational, for example, without feeling any sympathy or empathy toward them, especially over a long period of time.

49 This is not to say that ‘humanity’ itself could not become the mean: the science fiction scenario of an alien threat to the whole planet would make the group consisting of aliens plus
One potential problem with using Aristotle’s concepts, though, is that they may seem inapplicable to the modern political world, and in particular, to the nation-state as a political unit. Specifically, some may think that this use is inappropriate due to the size difference between Aristotle’s ideal *polis* and the modern nation. In the *Politics*, Aristotle specifies the proper size of a state, defining it as a self-sufficient entity, which means there is a minimum size required for a political entity to be considered a ‘state’ (I.ii.1252b27-1253a1). A group of households and villages achieves the minimum “when the population first becomes large enough to be *sufficient for itself* in all that is needed for living the good life after the manner of an association which is a state, then that must be a state of a primitive kind” (VII.iv.1326b7-9, my emphasis). Anything less than this level of self-sufficiency does not qualify as a ‘state’ at all.

Aristotle also believes that self-sufficiency sets a maximum size on the state and its population, as when he claims that the capacity and the maintenance of a state depend on its size being neither too small nor too large (VII.iv.1326b2-5). But he does not provide an exact number for the state’s maximum.50 Rather, he deals with the issue of being *well-governed*, and he clearly believes that a state that is too large in area or in population cannot be well-governed. He claims that it is impossible for a state with a large population humans a new (larger) extreme, while all humans could be the new mean. But such a threat is not imminent and such a case is only theoretical, so it need not be addressed here. Besides, this possibility does not help globalists: the logical consequence of their position may be that the group made up of aliens plus humans (that is, the group of all rational beings) would be the proper identity to promote, since anything less would be seen as “discriminatory.”

50 This is in contrast to Plato’s suggestion that a suitable number of households in a state is 5,040 (*Laws* 737e). Interestingly, Aristotle rejects this number as *too large* (*Pol*. II.vi.1265a10-17).
to be well-governed, since it would lack order (VII.1326a30-31 Kraut), and it would be difficult to sustain a political system, even if it provides all of life’s necessities (VII.1326b2-6). The maximum size that he has in mind is much smaller in size than most modern states. In fact, Richard Kraut argues, it is smaller even than the largest of the ancient Greek poleis: “[o]bviously, Aristotle thought that Athens was much too large, and would regard political communities of the modern age as monstrous” (79-80).

Athens was the largest of Greek poleis, although giving precise numbers for its population is difficult. Kraut discusses two population estimates for Athens in his commentary on Politics VII, 4 (1997, 79). For 431 B.C., estimates are the following: 50,000 adult male citizens and 25,000 metoikoi (resident aliens), with 100,000 slaves. The population a century later, based on a census of 317 B.C. – just a few years after Aristotle lived there – put Athens at 21,000 adult male citizens, 10,000 metoikoi, plus an undetermined number of free adult females and children; the slaves have been estimated to number anywhere from 50,000 to 400,000 (although this latter number “is generally assumed to be greatly inflated”) (Kraut 1997, 79). Even with the lower estimate of slaves, and assuming that most of the male citizens were married with two children, this puts Athens at a minimum of 140,000 people. Clearly, if Aristotle thought the Athens of his time was too large, with a population of at least 140,000 people, he would be shocked to learn about the size of modern states.51

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51 For example, the latest census for the United States (Census 2000) – by no means the largest modern state – counts over 280,000,000 residents.
Aristotle distinguishes between two categories of people in a society (as reflected in the census numbers above) – citizens and inhabitants in general – and he wants limits on both. Citizens are comprised of those “who are parts of the city” (VII.1326a16-24 Kraut), that is, those who perform tasks essential to a state’s survival and flourishing. Such people participate in the government, so that they determine a state’s aim as well as the means to achieve that aim.

The number of citizens ought to be large enough that there is a good talent pool from which to pick officeholders. At the same time, there should be a small enough number of citizens who know each other well, so that leaders can guarantee that no foreigners or resident aliens escape notice and begin to participate illegitimately in government affairs (VII.iv.1326b20-24). Such illegitimate participation can be found in large states where citizens are less, or not at all, familiar with all other citizens. In addition, a familiarity with each other allows the distribution of offices to be made by merit, rather than in an offhand manner; a large state makes the distribution of offices by merit an impossibility to accomplish (VII.iv.1326b14-20). According to Kraut, though, Aristotle believes that a state is best when it comes as close as it can to the upper limit allowed by citizen familiarity, presumably for it to achieve self-sufficiency.

Citizens are a subset of the larger category of people found in a state: inhabitants. Aristotle thinks limits should be placed on this group as well, which includes citizens, the wives and children of citizens, resident aliens, and slaves. The limit for this all-inclusive group is based primarily on the state’s ability to live

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52 Kraut cites as evidence Pol. 1326b23-24; and 1326a33-35, cf. b9-10.
and, most importantly, on its ability to live well. The population cannot exceed the state’s ability to produce food and other resources. If there are more people than can be supported by the state alone, either the state will fail to provide for everyone and some people will suffer, or the state will provide for everyone through trade with other states. In either case, the state’s necessary actions undermine its self-sufficiency, and so, its ability to live well (or flourish). Keep in mind that Aristotle was also concerned about monitoring the influx of foreigners, which is difficult in a state with a large population (VII.iv.1326b20-22). Finally, land and population must be easily surveyed (1326b22-24) and the land must be near the sea and must be easily defensible (VII.v1326b39-1327a10). Each of these restrictions serves to limit the overall population in a given territory.

But one factor makes the difference in size between the modern state and Aristotle’s ideal state irrelevant: modern technology (such as farming equipment, transportation vehicles, computers), which makes self-sufficiency possible and maintainable over a larger area and with a larger population than would have been possible in the ancient world. Many of Aristotle’s concerns can be addressed, so I believe that even Aristotle would agree, were he to witness modern technology, that self-sufficiency is not as easily undermined today as it would have been in his time.

One example of this technological factor has to do with Aristotle’s most obvious concern for the well-being of a state, namely, the acquisition of food. A state that cannot produce enough food on its own and that turns to trade to support its population is not self-sufficient. Modern agricultural methods address
this Aristotelian concern: agricultural equipment alone allows for greater productivity with the same amount of land. Moreover, new irrigation methods, ones that are continually refined, modern fertilization techniques and even bio-engineering also make greater productivity a normal state of agricultural affairs, even in arid climates with a low level of annual rainfall or other adverse conditions. And modern transportation allows for food grown in one area of a large nation to be moved to the population center, and makes it easier to support a large population than was possible in Aristotle’s time.

Another of Aristotle’s concerns is the presence of foreigners in the state. He believes that if a state is too large, and its population too diverse, foreigners would be able to reside in the state without being detected by the government, at least in the short run. The government would not be able to keep track of all its citizens and of foreign residents due to the large number of people, and possibly due to the large amount of territory to cover. Yet modern bureaucracies, modern technology, modern communications and modern transportation methods help to shrink the size of the state and to aid in issues such as immigration and keeping track of citizens.53 Each of these modern institutions and inventions can play a positive role in the state: modern communications in the form of radio and television can alert citizens to issues of importance, including alerts to illegal immigration, so that citizens can alert the government should anyone fitting the

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53 These methods are not perfect, but they can always be made better when flaws are discovered; perfection is not required to meet Aristotle’s concern, so long as the situation is better than it would be without the technology and as long as this technology has an adequate level of success (determined by the citizens for whom this would be a concern).
profile appear in the neighborhood. Computers can be used to keep track of who is a citizen (through the assignment of unique alpha-numeric identifiers), and who is a legal immigrant. Finally, modern transportation methods – automobiles, trains, helicopters and airplanes – provide a means for government agents to patrol larger borders and areas than was possible in Aristotle’s time. It is true that transportation also allows foreigners a greater chance at mobility and entering a new land, but government agents know this and can plan for it in their patrols.

Finally, Aristotle would have been concerned that a large state would outgrow its capacity for self-defense. But modern transportation and modern weaponry can provide defense over a much larger territory with a larger, even scattered, population. Helicopters and airplanes provide quick long-distance transportation of equipment and personnel, while trains, tanks, trucks and other transport vehicles can carry large amounts of equipment and personnel over great distances. Modern ships also provide greater defense capacities on the waters in and around modern states than Aristotle would have imagined.

Clearly modern weaponry can protect a greater area than ancient weapons could, although there is a greater offensive capacity as well. This offensive component, which allows weapons to be sent from a safe distance into enemy territory, brings a capacity for greater damage, and must be seen as a mixed blessing: while defensive capacities are increased, which is good for a state, both the burden on citizens to deal with ethical questions surrounding such

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54 These need not be racial profiles; for example, (presumptively) foreign-born people of any ethnic or racial category who are visiting family, yet never leave but remain and work the family business would likely be known by neighbors as foreigners.
weapons and the increased offensive capacities of aggressor nations cannot be ignored. Because they were not invented yet, though, Aristotle did not encounter this added weapons issue.\textsuperscript{55}

Thus, although Aristotle points out that the greatness of a state is not determined by a large population (VII.iv.1326a8-15, esp. 24-25), I believe that these examples of modern technology mean that a large population does not necessarily undermine self-sufficiency, as Aristotle thought. In fact, modern technology, properly used, actually aids in a state's self-sufficiency rather than hinders it. And this allows for a larger state to be 'well-governed' than was possible in Aristotle's time.

In the following two sections I describe and explain some of Aristotle's concepts to create a framework that expands our discussion in a way that allows me to present a possible defense of the nation, properly understood. Ultimately, in the following chapter, I aim to show that some states that are nationalist are defensible, while others are indefensible. To do this I will present a description and defense of what I mean by the 'Virtuous Nation.'

\textsuperscript{55} He did, however, deal with the purpose of war. He thought that "there must be war for the sake of peace" (Pol. VII.1333a35 Sinclair) and that no one chooses or provokes war "for the sake of being at war" without seeming "absolutely murderous" for making his friends into enemies "in order to bring about battle and slaughter" (NE X.1177b6-12 Thomson). Aristotle also gives advice on what an orator should know about war and peace; for example, he should know the military strength of his own country and of neighboring countries (Rhetoric I.1359b33-1360a12).
4.2 The Aristotelian Framework: Political Concepts

The way that I will provide a defense of the nation in the next chapter is to present an ideal government as a standard against which all other governments are judged. In this, I follow Aristotle’s strategy in his Politics: he presents an ideal state to serve as a standard to evaluate existing states and as an end at which states may aim. His ideal state is theoretical, since it was not implemented in his time nor has it been established since. Yet it is a possible state, since Aristotle clearly wanted an achievable state; as he writes, we “can in our speculations postulate any ideal conditions we like, but they should at least be within the limits of possibility” (Pol. II.vi.1265a17 Sinclair). This section presents some of the political concepts that Aristotle used for his ideal state.
4.2.1 The Aristotelian Framework: Political Concepts (Ruling and Being Ruled)

Aristotle’s ideal state has a rotating democracy, where free and equal men take turns ruling and being ruled. He puts forth this government in his *Politics* in some detail (especially in Books VII and VIII), including its educational system and marriage regulations. He first writes that as for the type of government that is absolutely best, if there were one man superior in terms of virtue and action to all others in the state, it would be best if everyone else served and obeyed him (VII.iii.1325b10-14; see also III.xiv.1332b16-23 and VII.xiii.1284a3-15).

Yet such individuals are extremely rare, which means we must look to a greater number of people to participate in the state’s leadership. So the more practical form (the one that can actually be attained) for most states is that of a rotating democracy, since “between similar people, the fine and just thing is to take turns, which satisfies the demands of equality and similarity” (VII.iii.1325b7-8 Sinclair; see also III.vi.1279a8-15 and VII.xiv.1332b25-29). In fact, in terms of fairness, if each member of a state holds office for a year at a time (or whatever time is appropriate for a particular constitution), more individuals will get a chance at ruling (II.ii.1261a38-b6).

In accordance with this rotating democracy, where members take turns, he defines ‘citizen’ as one who participates “in giving judgement and in holding
office” (III.i.1275a22-23 Sinclair). That is, “he is a man who is able and who chooses to rule and to be ruled with a view to a life that is in accordance with virtue” (III.xiii.1283b42-84a3 Sinclair). In fact, the virtue of a citizen consists in being able “to rule and be ruled well” (III.iv.1277a25-27 Sinclair). And a member of society becomes a citizen when he qualifies for participation in offices, whether they are deliberative or judicial offices (III.i.1275b17-21). Finally, citizens of different ages play different roles; younger ones are more suited for being ruled, while older ones for ruling (VII.xiv.1332b32-33a2). Thus, each qualified man rules and is ruled in turn over the course of his adult life.56

What will be done when a citizen is not participating? Aristotle thinks that what is proper to engage in when not taking part in the state’s functioning is contemplation, which he says, in the Ethics, is the highest of all activities; indeed, he claims that “the best and most pleasant life is the life of the intellect” (X.vii.1178a4-8 Thomson). This is an activity that requires leisure time, which cannot be found when one is engaged in politics (or in war; X.vii.1177b4-15). But in the Politics he writes that one cannot live a life of contemplation alone, if only because man is a political animal (I.ii.1253a1-2) that needs to live in a well-functioning polis to have a chance at a good life. In fact, he claims that the life of participation (that of the statesman) and the life of contemplation (that of the philosopher) are both necessary parts of a good life (VII.iii.1325a16-24, 1325b14-

56 Aristotle even believes that when a citizen becomes too old to rule well, he should become a religious figure so that he still has a function in and contributes to the state (over his entire adult life).
So a citizen in this rotating democracy will serve in office (deliberative or judicial) and be a good ruler for a while, and when not serving will be left to contemplate and be a good man and citizen while being ruled by others.

The people that Aristotle thinks should comprise the foundation of the state are what, in *Politics IV*, he calls the ‘middle people’ (xi.1295a34-39, 1295b34-38). According to Aristotle, middle people have a middling amount of goods (between the very well-off and the very badly off) (xi.1295b1-12). These people do not mind taking part in government, but they are not too ambitious either, while the other citizens possess the opposite qualities – either political apathy or overambitiousness – that are detrimental to the state. The middle people also exercise reason, which the other citizens tend to neglect (since their desires get in the way). This middle group is free from factions (xi.1296a7-9), it produces some of the greatest statesmen (his examples are Solon, Lycurgus and Charondus; xi.1296a18-21), and the middle people are the most secure ones.

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57 There is much debate about this, though. For example, Martha Nussbaum in *The Fragility of Goodness* reads Aristotle as claiming that the only activity with intrinsic value is contemplation (375-376); and John Cooper has a similar interpretation in *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (155-180), especially when he writes that Aristotle treated all goods other than contemplation as “alien” (163). Richard Kraut comes closer to my reading in *Aristotle on the Human Good*, but he thinks that Aristotle says the life of the philosopher is the best option, and the life of the politician is second best (5, 7). And in *The Desire to Understand*, Jonathan Lear also writes that the ethical life is second best to that of contemplation (318), but then he seems to point out that this may not be obvious: although the contemplative life makes “a human contribution,” it is “socially parasitic” because it requires leisure, and this can only be achieved for people who can withdraw from society while others maintain society (313-314). This makes the contemplative life look “unlovely” and “by its nature unethical” (315). However, I think my interpretation is justified, given that the philosopher (who contemplates) needs to live in a political community that is well-ordered and this requires his (occasional) participation; also, this is a balanced life that seems to capture the spirit of Aristotle’s rotating democracy. This interpretation requires reading the *Ethics* and *Politics* as necessarily conjoined and inseparable, which I do, while Kraut (e.g.) is primarily concerned in his book with a consistent reading of *NE I* and *NE X*, as is Lear in his section (6.8) dealing with the potential conflict between the contemplative and political lives, although Lear does write that “the *Politics* follows almost inevitably from the *Ethics*” when discussing how man is a political animal (202).
found in a state, since they neither covet the possessions of others nor have their possessions coveted by others. Moreover, they neither scheme against others nor are they schemed against (xi.1295b28-33).

Lastly, Aristotle tells us that for the most part, middle people are alike and equal (xi.1295b25-27), a condition that creates a friendship or a partnership among those running the state. When middle people participate in the running of a government, there is a good chance that permanence, or stability, will come to the constitution (xii.1296b34-40). This is because they participate in affairs of state, but not to a degree that excludes other concerns of life – they do not strive for any more than to do their part, and they do not desire inordinate power – and they have enough for their own lives that they do not covet the possessions of others, so they cannot be bribed nor will they use their offices for personal gain. It may also be the case, although Aristotle does not indicate this, that if middle people are each asked to do their part for the state – but no more than that – they will do so without complaint and resentment, and without asking for or taking more than they are set to receive, so long as they believe others are similarly situated. In other words, if there is a fair distribution of the burdens of taking part in the state, such people will not mind taking their turn at participation. Including the middle people in the affairs of state can only aid the state and allow it to maintain its stability.

This means that, for Aristotle, it is not hard to judge between two constitutions. The one that comes closest to a ‘middle constitution’ in which the middle people rule is better than one that is further away from such a constitution.
(xi.1296b2-12). And the further away a constitution moves from the middle constitution, the worse it is, while the closer it moves toward such a constitution, the better it is. Thus, a constitution of any sort becomes more stable the more it includes the middle people within a state. In Aristotle’s terms, such a constitution becomes ‘mixed’; for example, a tyranny ‘mixed’ with middle people, or an oligarchy ‘mixed’ with middle people. The more extensively mixed a state is, the longer it will last (xii.1297a6-7).
4.2.2 The Aristotelian Framework: Political Concepts (The Common Good)

Aristotle's ideal view also contains a way to distinguish between good and bad states, so we know not only what is best, but also specifically what it takes to be considered ‘good.’ In his Politics, Aristotle defines a ‘constitution’ as an arrangement that a state adopts for distributing its offices and for determining both the leadership of the state and the end at which the state aims (IV.i.1289a15-20). The different constitutions he identifies are based on two factors: the number of rulers and the aim (telos) of the state. As for the latter,

[i]t is clear then that those constitutions which aim at the common good are right, as being in accord with absolute justice; while those which aim only at the good of the rulers are wrong. They are all deviations from the right constitutions (III.vi.1279a16-21, Sinclair; see also III.vii.1279a25-32).

In each of the constitutions, “sovereignty necessarily resides either in one man, or in a few, or in the many” (III.vii.1279a25-28). If rule is for the common good and one man rules, it is a ‘monarchy’; if a few rule for the common good, an ‘aristocracy’; and if the many rule for the common good, a ‘polity’ (III.vii.1279a32-39). The corresponding deviant constitutions are ‘tyranny’ (rule of one over the many for his own gain), ‘oligarchy’ (rule of the few with means who rule for their own gain), and ‘democracy’ (rule of the many who are without means who rule for their own short term gain) (III.vii.1279b4-10). Although any of the ‘right’
constitutions would be acceptable, his ideal is a standard by which to measure even these states, as well as the deviant ones (since the further away they are, the worse they will be).

What is relevant here is the difference based on the aim of the government’s leader(s), since the aim of those in charge is always relevant to how a government behaves. This aim is the ‘common good,’ a concept which needs elucidation, especially since many modern writers think that including such a concept is a way of imposing one view on everyone. Although this is an appropriate concern, I believe it is not pertinent here, as I will try to show.

The conception I will present is objective, but not in a way that imposes particular values. Because Aristotle himself did not clearly define ‘common good,’ it must be pieced together from his texts to determine what he meant. To do this, I follow Martha Nussbaum’s reading of this aspect of Aristotle, and will present what she calls a “thick-vague” conception of the good, by which she means that Aristotle “provides a (nearly) comprehensive conception of good human functioning..., but at a high level of generality, admitting of multiple specifications.” In other words, it is “an ethical-political account given at a very basic and general level, and one that can be expected to be broadly shared across cultures, providing focus for an intercultural ethical-political inquiry” (1998, 138). Specifically, she uses ‘thick’ because this conception deals with human ends in all areas of life, and ‘vague’ because it allows many specifications, and so is an outline (with the details to be filled in as circumstances allow) (1998, 144). And so, contrary to what some may believe about a concept like ‘common
good,’ namely, that it is best left as relativist (so as to not impose a view on all),
this conception provides guidelines for all humans, across time and cultures.

One reason to do this, as Nussbaum points out, is that a guideline may be vague, but does not lead astray. She believes that “it is better to be vaguely right than precisely wrong and that, without the guidance of the thick vague theory, what we often get in public policy is precise wrongness” (1998, 144). This fits in well with what Aristotle himself explicitly advised: in general, exactness cannot be achieved in studies of human behavior; the best we can achieve are statements or prescriptions that are true ‘for the most part’ and constitute a ‘sketch’ of what should be the case (I.vii.1098a20-29, iii.1094b11-25, i.1094a24-26. See also Nussbaum 1995, 123; 1993, 267; 1998, 203-204, 202). Stronger claims than this where humans are concerned are liable to be shown wrong at some point by even just a small number of examples, representing perhaps a small percentage of humans. In addition, an outline has the benefit of being open-ended and flexible, so that it can be revised and filled in later, as new evidence and circumstances emerge (Ethics I.1098a20-26; Nussbaum 1993, 267).

Nussbaum points out that Aristotle’s writings are meant as instruction to legislators, albeit in this “thick vague” way. What legislators ought to aim at providing the polity are the conditions that are necessary for choosing a good human life (1995, 118; 1998, 135). Notice that the legislator is not supposed to force citizens to make certain decisions about how to live; rather, he is to create conditions in the polity that allow citizens to choose to live well, so that he
enables them to live and do well (1992, 186). He must have as a goal the task of creating in the citizenry the capability to function well, and leave it to the citizens as to whether they so choose to exercise that capability.

In practical terms, this goal is achieved by having an educational system in place that can develop in future citizens the traits (of intellect, character and body) that place one “in a position to choose well and act well” (1992, 187, 186). Then the legislator must work on the external circumstances, so that the conditions allow for this morally developed person to be able to exercise this capacity for choosing well (1992, 188; also 1998, 151). An excellent state, then, is one that has enabled its people to choose to function well (at least as much as the circumstances permit) (1998, 138). The burden on the legislator is to develop these capacities in the young and to maintain them in the adults, as well as “simultaneously to create and preserve” the conditions “in which those developed capabilities can become active” (1992, 189). This may be difficult to fulfill, but the stakes are too high to cede; and making the task more difficult yet is the fact that Aristotle purposely does not give exact details on how to carry this out.

Aristotle does give guidance, however, on who in the polity is to benefit from this institutional structure. In short, the task of the polity is to give all the people who are capable of developing such capabilities “the conditions of fully human living – living in which the essential functioning according to reason will be available” (1992, 204). Citizenship is defined in terms of capability, and participation – both judicial and deliberative – should be open to all citizens (1992, 188). But citizenship in this sense is based not on categories like wealth,
birth, or being the child of citizens, but on the potential that an individual has for being able to develop the capability of choosing and acting well (1992, 190). Anyone who will be able to develop, given the proper circumstances, should be given the resources (such as education) to so develop; and once developed, that person should be provided with the resources to apply that learned capability (1992, 191). Conversely, anyone who will never be able to achieve this development and its application should never have resources given to him (1992, 191, 192). For such people, the resources would be wasted, since they can never be used in the actual development that such resources are meant for.

Explicitly, Nussbaum reads Aristotle as claiming there are some identifiable groups that should be denied most of these resources. Left out would be women and those he calls ‘natural slaves,’ both groups of whom lack the rational potential to use these resources and to develop fully, and so on whom resources would be wasted.58 This is not to say that the polity should give them nothing at all: because free women make up half of the free adult population and they will raise the future citizens (their sons), Aristotle does allow for women to receive some education, “with an eye to the constitution,” in the same way that children are educated (Pol. I.xiii.1260b13-20). But this education would not be the same as that given to boys and young men (a much longer process), which he describes in some detail later in the Politics (VII.xiv.1332b12ff.).

58 I will deal with these two groups in Chapter 5, and argue that an Aristotelian nationalist need not be saddled with this view. In fact, I will argue for the inclusion of both of these groups in the Virtuous Nation, but this requires modifying some aspects of Aristotle’s original view in order to make it compatible with modern nationalism – specifically in what I think is its best form, the Virtuous Nation.
But Aristotle also excludes from educational resources farmers and craftsmen because their lives do not allow for the leisure that is necessary for participation and development (1992, 183-184, 195-196). Nussbaum is troubled by this exclusion, since these are people who do have the potential to develop and then participate like other citizens, yet Aristotle denies them the resources that he mandates for others strictly on the basis of their jobs (and not due to a lack of potential). At the very least, Aristotle should give these resources to their children, since the children should not be treated unfairly because of their fathers’ professions (while the fathers themselves may be beyond the age for development, and so the resources will not be enough and would be wasted) (1992, 195). Nussbaum concedes, though, that Aristotle’s point might really be that knowing “what capabilities need for their development, then, given the city’s need for labor and trade, the city cannot do its job for all the people who are” capable of developing (1992, 195-196, original emphasis). Yet she is still concerned, at bottom, with how the decision is made to include or exclude some in the polity or why exceptions (to the potential requirement) will sometimes be made, especially given the potential for abuse (and the example of Aristotle’s own exclusions) (1992, 196-197).

Nussbaum’s recommended solution to this problem of certain groups being excluded is to moderate Aristotle’s leisure requirement, although this may not be enough for full inclusion, since circumstances may arise where “citizens are unable to take advantage of all the education available to them because of a need to work” (1992, 196). But I would point out that while this will allow laborers
and craftsmen to take part, it only increases the burden on the resources of the polity, which now has to create possible flourishing conditions – including a good education that prepares citizens for participation – for an even greater number of people than on Aristotle’s original view. And since Nussbaum believes that Aristotle is wrong to categorically exclude women (she writes that “Aristotle is wrong because he makes silly and unfounded judgments about … women” [1995, 122]), she mandates an even greater burden of resources on the polity.\footnote{This further burden is even greater for those who think there are no natural slaves; I will deal with this issue of having more participants in more detail in Chapter 5, Section 2.}

Although I agree that Aristotle was too restrictive, especially for the modern world, and that anyone who is capable ought to be given the opportunity to flourish if he or she so chooses (especially given the potential of technology to allow people without much leisure time to participate), I need to explain the burden that this now involves, and will do so in Chapter 5.

Aristotle also gives guidance on what functions are important to being human, and so guidance on what conditions a legislator should work at creating. For Nussbaum, the key to discovering the functions essential to humanness is to look at what is common to all humans, across time and culture (1992, 200). In other words, to identify what the things are that humans characteristically do, such that lacking these things or failing to do them would leave a human less than fully human (1995, 113; 1998, 151; 1993, 243). The discovery of these functions is non-detached, in that it will be done from inside the human
perspective (1995, 121; 1992, 198) and will result in an objective list of functions (1992, 198-199); yet this list is still an outline, with the details left to be filled in by legislators who know their states’ particular situations and resources.

According to Nussbaum, the list of common functions has two parts, the constitutive circumstances of the human being (or, the shape of the human form of life), and basic human functional capabilities. The first list is a starting point for discovering what the good life involves, but it is an open-ended list, subject to revision (1998, 146, 150). Nussbaum enumerates the following common aspects of human life: mortality; the needs of the human body (food and drink, shelter, sexual desire, mobility); a capacity for pleasure and pain; cognitive capacity (perceiving, thinking, imagining); early infant development; the use of practical reason; a need to affiliate with other humans; a relation to other species and nature; humor and play; separateness (or individuality); and strong separateness (or recognition of others’ individuality) (1998, 146-150; see also 1992, 200 and 1993, 263-265). These are features of human life that are common to all humans, across time and culture; the list may be revised as new evidence arises, but revisions should be done only with a view to commonalities for all humans (and not for particular features of some group or another).

The second list Nussbaum gives is of ten basic functional capabilities in human life, and she enumerates these as being able to: live to the end of a complete human life; have good health (including adequate nourishment and shelter); avoid unnecessary pain and have pleasure; use the five senses and the reasoning faculty; have attachments to other persons and things; form a
conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about one’s life; live for and with others; live with concern for nature (including animals and plants); laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities; and live one’s own life, including in one’s own surroundings and context (1998, 150-151). Notice that she provides a list of capabilities, not actual functionings, in accordance with Aristotle’s emphasis on having capacities that we can then choose to act on.60

This conception of the common good, of creating circumstances whereby citizens have the capability and the opportunity to choose to live a good life, is both broad and deep. In other words, it “takes cognizance of every important human function, with respect to each and every citizen” (1998, 143). It is broad in the sense that “it is concerned with the good living not of an elite few but of each and every member of the polity” and it “aims to bring every member across a threshold into conditions and circumstances in which a good human life may be chosen and lived” (1998, 139; 1992, 178. See also 1998, 152; 1992, 183-184). Nussbaum explains that it is deep in the sense that “it is concerned not simply

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60 Based on this list of basic capabilities, though, Nussbaum then imagines what this conception requires: “comprehensive health care; healthy air and water; arrangements for the security of life and property; ... sufficient nutrition and adequate housing; ... protection of the capability of citizens to regulate their own sexual activity by their own practical reason and choice ... protection from assaults and other preventable pains ... education and training of many kinds, aimed at the fostering of” the senses, imagination and thinking; “protection of the arts” and so on (1998, 152-153). But her list has elements in direct conflict with Aristotle’s explicit guidelines (for example, he does not think that sexual behavior should be left to an individual alone – see Pol. VII.1334b29ff., where he advises on matters like appropriate marriage ages), or that are controversial (for example, where she reads entitlements where non-interference claims could be equally coherently made, as with her requirement of comprehensive health care). Also, it seems odd that she follows Aristotle in qualifying her view of the legislator’s task with ‘as circumstances permit,’ yet this list is given as requirements – this seems to create a tension between what the legislator should aim at given his circumstances with what she thinks is required of him, yet she does not address this conflict. So, although it is possible to create an ‘Aristotelian’ society based on her imaginings, it is not necessary; accordingly, I am only mentioning this list but choose not to include it as part of the Aristotelian framework, since my aim in putting forth this framework is to capture the basic Aristotelian components that would go into all Aristotelian views.
with money, land, opportunities, and offices, the traditional political distributables, but with the totality of the functionings that constitute the good human life” (1998, 139; 1992, 178). And so this “conception does not aim directly at producing people who function in certain ways. It aims, instead, at producing people who are capable of functioning in these ways, who have both the training and the resources to function so, should they choose” (1998, 143).

Notice that what is emphasized in this Aristotelian framework is the element of choice. This is often given as a modern value, as evidenced, for example, from the role of consent in liberal nationalism. Yet Nussbaum points out that this Aristotelian thick-vague conception resembles ones articulated by some modern writers, since this conception allows for competing accounts of particular details while still discussing the same thing (her example is courage), and we can “discover that a particular good functioning has several different concrete cultural realizations, without concluding that there is not a single functioning here” (1992, 200). We then assess the different realizations to figure out which one we should implement in our own polity.

As a modern example Nussbaum uses to show how a thick-vague conception would work, in 1945 a committee at Harvard University wrote a report entitled *General Education in a Free Society*. This report argued “that a national plan for general education should specify in extremely general terms certain capabilities that we wish to develop in all citizens” but then leave it to local regions and institutions to specify a curriculum that best suits their particular students, based on evidence from their particular ways of life (1992, 201). As
another example, Nussbaum points out that according to Amartya Sen, we can have as fixed some general list of human functions (e.g., getting an education, avoiding shame) without denying that the particulars vary from culture to culture (1992, 200-201, 181).

The end result, for Aristotle and these modern writers, is that such a thick-vague conception has an advantage over the usual liberal emphasis on choice coupled with a thin conception of the good that holds that it is the choice itself that is good, with little or no evaluation possible of the object of choice. The advantage, according to Nussbaum, is that the Aristotelian will claim “that stopping with such a thin theory neither shows the point of” the chosen instrumental goods “nor gives sufficient guidance to promote their truly human use. And we can now add that such a thin theory may actually not show the legislator how to produce the capability of choosing, a human function that has institution and material conditions like any other” (1998, 143-144). Thus, Aristotle’s writings here go further than modern writers do, and can contribute meaningfully to our current debates (over choice as well as over nationalism).

Related to choice, however, is rationality (or, more precisely, practical reason). Nussbaum points out that for Aristotle, all the human functionings listed above have something in common, something that is an architectonic function that holds them together (1992, 204), and with which “the legislator should most centrally be concerned at developing”: the activity of practical reason and choice (1992, 201-202). This is because the activity of practical reason gives a human life as a whole “its distinctive shape and tone,” which means a life organized by
the activity of practical reasoning is the truly human life (1992, 203, citing 1098a3-4). In short, the ‘central task’ of the polity will be to give all of its people who are potentially capable of such a life “the conditions of fully human living – living in which the essential functioning according to reason will be available” (1992, 204). And since people who are capable of and have the opportunity for the exercise of practical reason will likely choose to function well, Aristotle gives the criterion for the best political arrangement as an arrangement in which “the people involved should function best – and best not absolutely, but best in so far as their circumstances permit” or as Nussbaum translates Aristotle, “unless something catastrophic happens” (1992, 177, citing 1323a17-19). This qualification allows Aristotle (and Aristotelians) to acknowledge that life is messy and does not always proceed smoothly: even under the best circumstances, unforeseen conditions can arise unexpectedly that prevent capable and functioning people from living a fully human life, and that the best a state can do is to mitigate such circumstances.

But there is also another important qualification for this framework, namely, that what is sought must be within the humanly possible (1995, 91; 1992, 177-178). This is a limit on any ethical-political view, not just an Aristotelian one; as Aristotle points out, we “can in our speculations postulate any ideal conditions we like, but they should at least be within the limits of possibility” (Pol. II.vi.1265a17, Sinclair; see also VII.iv.1325b38-39). I believe the thick-vague conception I have laid out, following Martha Nussbaum, meets this test: it is possible for us to require of political leaders that they create the conditions and
opportunities for citizens to choose to function well, whatever that may involve from culture to culture. This outline can guide such legislators, while the details are left to each particular circumstance, so that they can be revised as needed. Thus, this view provides enough guidance to be helpful, yet not so much detail as to risk being a hindrance, as when circumstances do not allow those details to be met. And so, Aristotle has provided a way to strike the perfect balance.

Yet how can we be sure that these political leaders will be able to create and sustain such a society? In other words, why should readers believe that there would be the types of people necessary to carry out such an ambitious framework? The answer is in Aristotle’s virtue theory, as important a piece of the framework as any other. His virtue theory mandates a limit not just on the ends chosen (viz., aiming at the ‘common good’) but also on the means used to achieve those ends. Thus, those in charge cannot behave in whatever ways they choose to meet their goal (for example, in whatever way is most expedient or is cheapest), but they must only use means that can be morally justified. To answer the question of how such leaders will know what is morally justified, I will provide a sketch of Aristotle’s virtue theory.
4.3 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts

Leaders are not necessarily going to be virtuous, as history has repeatedly shown. And that is why it is imperative that an ethical standard be included in a political view; certainly Aristotle thought so, especially if one reads his *Politics* and *Ethics* as necessarily conjoined as a theory (as I do). Each book is in some sense incomplete without the other, so that even though many people read each book as a separate text with its own ideas, I am here presenting a unified view of Aristotle’s political view – as the basis of the Virtuous Nation – that requires ethical concepts to be thorough. As I aim to show, the moral component of the Virtuous Nation is as important as any of its political ideas.
4.3.1 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Virtue)

Aristotle writes in the *Ethics* that there are actually six possible states of character, three positive and three negative (VII.i.1145a15-b20). On the negative side are vice, incontinence, or brutishness. Brutes are beyond hope, do not know how to behave, and (by nature) cannot but behave wrongly. Vicious people are those who are not raised to know how to behave and so they (consistently) behave wrongly (that is, they exhibit the vices). Incontinent people are those who have been raised to know how to behave, yet choose to behave wrongly. On the positive side are virtue, continence, or being godlike (or heroic). The godlike or heroic man is one who cannot, by nature, do anything but what is right. The virtuous man not only has been raised to know how to behave, but also knows why that behavior is good and acts (consistently) in accordance with his upbringing and knowledge. The continent man was raised properly, but lacks knowledge of why the behavior he was trained to do is right, so it is likely that he sometimes acts rightly, sometimes wrongly.

The two types that are desirable (from the viewpoint of this moral theory) are the ones that do the right thing in a consistent and predictable fashion. But since the godlike (or heroic) type is not a realistic one for most humans, Aristotle believes that the appropriate focus of morality should be on the type both desirable and attainable for humans: being virtuous.
Lifestyles that rival the virtuous life as the best life are lives focused solely on pleasure, honor, or wealth (I.v.1095b14-1096a10). Aristotle rejects each of these in turn, although this does not mean that he rejects pleasure, honor or wealth entirely, merely that he rejects each of these as the primary basis for a good life. In fact, pleasure is important, since happiness – which he calls the end of political science (I.iv.1095a14-20) – is the best, finest and most pleasurable thing of all (I.viii.1099a24-25). Happiness (eudaimonia, flourishing) is the highest of all practical goods (I.iv.1095a14-20), and for Aristotle this amounts to saying that happiness is the supreme (practical) good, that is, the only good chosen for its own sake (and not as a means to something else) (I.i.1094a18-22, vii.1097a22-24, 34-b1), it is precious and perfect (I.xii.1101b35-1102a4), and so it is also self-sufficient (in that it is in no way deficient) and the most desirable of all things (I.vii.1097b6-21). The happy man cannot be variable and inconstant (I.x.1101a8-13), and will be happy throughout his life (I.x.1100b18-22). He is a man who cannot become miserable, since he will never do mean or hateful acts; he will bear all of his fortunes – good and bad – with dignity, and he “always takes the most honourable course that circumstances permit” (I.x.1100b33-1101a3, 6-8, Thomson). Such a man would receive much pleasure from life.

Pleasure also plays a role in virtuous activity. Aristotle believes that virtuous actions are pleasurable in themselves (I.viii.1099a21), and that anyone who does not receive pleasure from performing fine actions is not to be considered a ‘good man’ – Aristotle claims that nobody would call a man ‘just’ (for example) unless he enjoys acting justly (I.viii.1099a17-20). And so Aristotle
tells us that the life of virtuous people is, in itself, pleasant: pleasure is an experience of the soul, and each man takes pleasure in those things of which he is fond; so just acts bring pleasure to one who loves justice, for example (I.viii.1099a7-11). Clearly, receiving pleasure for doing the right (virtuous) actions would reinforce the tendency to do such acts; this explains why Aristotle thought the happy man (one who is virtuous), once he became happy, would never become miserable, since that would not be pleasurable for him.

This is not to say that being virtuous is easy. On the contrary, Aristotle explicitly tells us that virtue is difficult, since there is only one way to be successful at virtue, while failure is possible in many ways (II.vi.1106b28-33; see also II.ix.1109a20-30). The analogy he uses to illustrate this is target shooting: to hit the target is difficult – there is only one way to do it – while missing the target is far easier to do. The target aimed at by the virtuous man is that of a mean (of feeling and action), and it is surrounded by an excess and a deficiency of feeling or action. His definition of ‘virtue’ is to have the appropriate feelings and do the appropriate action “at the right times on the right grounds towards the right people for the right motive and in the right way” (II.vi.1106b18-23 Thomson).

The mean in question here is not an absolute, mathematical midpoint between two extremes. In other words, it is not, as Aristotle calls it, a mean ‘in relation to a thing.’ Rather, it is a mean ‘in relation to us,’ which is determined by particular circumstances (II.vi.1106a26-32, b5-7 Thomson, original emphasis). The example he famously gives to illustrate this type of mean is the caloric needs of an athlete (a wrestler): his mean will not be determined arithmetically between
the extremes of too much and too little, but by his trainer’s knowledge of this particular athlete and his activities. In the same way, the mean in a particular circumstance is determined not by some mathematical formula, but by looking at the conditions that apply and determining what those conditions require at that time for that agent.

This should not be taken to suggest that Aristotle was a relativist, or that virtue theory must be relativist. In fact, as Martha Nussbaum shows, Aristotle’s view is objective; the objectivity here is similar to her reading of Aristotle’s ‘common good,’ in that Aristotle provides an open-ended and general picture of the virtues, one that allows for revision and contains a flexibility to local traditions, but without sacrificing objectivity (1993, 259-260). This open-endedness fits in with Aristotle’s overall aim of providing an outline or sketch that could be filled in later (1993, 267; see Ethics 1098a20-26). Also, Aristotle’s concern is to have a view that is practical for humans at all times and in all places, not one that would only fit the Athens in which he lived.

Nussbaum points out that Aristotle achieves objectivity in his virtue theory first by producing a ‘thin account’ of each virtue (the mean), then by producing a full or ‘thick’ definition of that virtue (1993, 245). The thin account starts “from a characterization of a sphere of universal experience and choice,” and then introduces “the virtue-name as the name (as yet undefined) of whatever it is to choose appropriately in that area of experience” (1993, 246-247). In other words, he isolates “a sphere of human experience that figures in more or less any human life, and in which more or less any human being will have to make some
choices rather than others, and act in *some* way rather than some other” (1993, 245, original emphasis). These spheres of human experience found in the *Ethics* (II.vii.1107a28-1108b10) are: fear and confidence, pleasure and pain, getting and spending, honour and dishonour, anger, self-expression, conversation, social conduct, shame, and indignation. For Nussbaum, the “thin or ‘nominal’ definition of the virtue will be, in each case, that it is whatever being disposed to choose and respond well consists in, in that sphere. The job of ethical theory will be to search for the best further specification corresponding to this nominal definition, and to produce a full definition” (1993, 247).

Relativists may argue that the thin account is not enough. For them, cultures have their own experiences, which one account cannot capture adequately. But the Aristotelian will reply, as Nussbaum does, that relativists “understate the amount of attunement, recognition, and overlap that actually obtains across cultures, particularly in the areas of the grounding experiences” and the Aristotelian should insist on the examination of evidence confirming this (1993, 261). This is why, for Nussbaum,

> it does not seem possible to say, as the relativist wishes to, that a given society does not contain anything that corresponds to a given virtue. Nor does it seem to be an open question, in the case of a particular agent, whether a certain virtue should or should not be included in his or her life – except in the sense that she can always choose to pursue the corresponding deficiency instead. The point is that everyone makes some choices and acts somehow or other in these spheres: if not properly, then improperly ... No matter where one lives one cannot escape these questions, so long as one is living a human life (1993, 247).

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61 See Sinclair 104 for a chart with these spheres as well as the corresponding virtues. There is also a chart in Nussbaum 1993, 246, although with slightly different wordings.
She concedes that people will “disagree about what the appropriate ways of acting and reacting in fact are” (*i.e.*, on the ‘thick’ definition of the virtue), but she points out that when this occurs, the debaters will be arguing about the same thing, and they are “advancing competing specifications of the same virtue” (1993, 247, original emphasis). And so the outline that Aristotle gives – the spheres of experience and the names of the corresponding virtue (mean) – is objective, yet the details of what the full definition of those virtues are can be filled in and revised as particular circumstances warrant. This approach provides the same guidance and flexibility that was found in Aristotle’s conception of the ‘common good.’

The mean, however, does not apply to all actions or feelings. According to Aristotle, there are some actions that are evil in themselves, and which it is impossible to perform rightly, no matter what the circumstances are (II.vi.1107a8-27, esp. 8-17 Thomson). The very names of some of these feelings and actions “directly connote depravity”: malice, adultery, theft and murder. There is no possible way, for example, to commit murder moderately; claiming to have stabbed someone to death with a moderate number of wounds (say, five and not 1 or 10) or with a moderate sized knife (say, a butcher knife as opposed to a steak knife or machete) does not change the fact that a murder has occurred.

Furthermore, Aristotle provides some guidance on how to go astray, if one must (due to the circumstances in which one finds himself). In some cases one should incline toward the deficiency, at other times toward the excess, “because in this way we shall most easily hit upon the mean” (II.ix.1109b23-26). Obviously
he would recommend the mean as appropriate, but sometimes this is just not possible, given difficulties in certain situations of hitting the mean. And when it is not possible to hit the mean, it may be less bad to go astray if one can do so as close to the mean as possible. To understand where this less-bad place may be, it is important to remember that in some cases the deficiency is more opposed to the mean, while in other cases it is the excess (II.viii.1108b35-1109a3). Someone who has been raised properly and has a set character in terms of virtuous behavior will be able to figure out exactly how to behave even under these difficult circumstances. And those who are not sure – that is, who have a less secure character – should follow the lead of a virtuous man and behave as he behaves. Given this advice, and the acknowledgement that the mean can be difficult to achieve, it is no wonder then that Aristotle reminds us that to do “things well is a rare, laudable and fine achievement” (II.ix.1109a29-30).

And so for Aristotle, anyone who aims at the mean has three things to do (II.ix.1109a30-b9). First, he should keep away from whichever extreme is more contrary to the mean, in other words, he should avoid the extreme that is further away from the mean. Second, he should also take note of whatever errors he is most prone to commit, and then drag himself in the contrary direction. All of us, according to Aristotle, have “different natural tendencies,” revealed to us by the pleasure or pain they give us; by using these as indicators of our errors, we can work to prevent such errors in the future. And finally, in every situation someone aiming at the mean should “guard especially against pleasure and pleasant

62 See Lear 171 for this advice.
things,” since he (just like all humans) is not an impartial judge of pleasure. And this means that pleasure will often lead us astray, and we may not even realize it when it happens. Aristotle believes that if we follow his advice, we can stay on the right path, if not all the time, at least most of the time.
4.3.2 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Habituation of Virtue)

Yet following Aristotle’s advice in the *Ethics* so far is not enough and will not provide a sound basis for virtuous behavior in a nation. To be virtuous (and not just perform virtuous actions), one must be the sort of person who will consistently do the virtuous act. First, one must have the disposition to perform virtuous actions. Then education (*paideia*) reinforces that disposition, by teaching one about the importance and correctness of those actions. So first one learns *how* to behave, then later he learns *why* one should behave that way. For Aristotle, the dispositions that are acquired in the first stage are “conditions in virtue of which we are well or ill disposed in respect of the feelings concerned” (II.v.1105b25-26, Thomson). And the disposition that concerns us here is the kind of excellence that renders a human *good*, and makes him perform his function *well* (II.vi.1106a15-17; original emphasis).

Aristotle provides insight on how such a disposition is acquired, namely, by actually performing the correct acts on a regular basis, that is, by habituating oneself to perform good acts, the sort that a virtuous man performs. We are, by nature, constituted in such a way as to be able to become virtuous, but the full development of the virtues is due to habit (II.i.1103a23-26; see also II.i.1103a17-20). In other words, we first have the potential to be virtuous, and only later effect the actualization of virtue (II.i.1103a26-28). Our first nature is only to have the possibility to be virtuous, should we act in ways that will bring about virtue. After
acting in this way, we create a ‘second nature,’ whereby doing such actions, after the appropriate training, is done without thinking, as if it were natural to so act (as if, in other words, it is ‘second nature’ for us). For Aristotle, then, “it is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earliest age – it makes a vast difference, or rather all the difference in the world” (II.i.1103b23-25 Thomson). Our upbringing forms our character, and sets the path our future will take as well as our chance for success in our community. As Jonathan Lear writes, “In an ideal case, a well-brought-up person will develop a character and self-conception which will embody to a significant degree the ethical values of the community” (187). Forming the correct habits from the earliest age possible is the key to being happy – or flourishing – later in life. Human happiness is brought about by having the right upbringing and then continuing to live consistently in accordance with that upbringing.

Such an upbringing involves actions, not just talk. To develop good habits, one must do the acts that one should do, not just be told that they are right or tell others that one would do them. In the acquisition of virtue, most people act seriously and say the right things, then think that in a given situation they will behave properly; but this is not so (II.iv.1105b11-18). Knowledge alone has little or no force on how one behaves when one is in the stage of acquiring the virtues (II.iv.1105a33-b5). As Jonathan Lear writes, by “being brought up from early youth to act bravely, considerately, temperately, we will grow to find pleasure in so acting. Thus a person’s entry into the ethical is inherently non-rational” (169). A person may be in a state of mind to commit good actions, yet this state may
not effect any good result (I.viii.1098b31-1099a3). This is due to the lack of practice and not having done these things for oneself (in other words, the act would feel strange when performed). Aristotle makes it clear to us that “it is not enough to know about goodness; we must endeavour to possess and use it, or adopt any other means to become good ourselves” (X.ix.1179b2-4 Thomson).

What matters in the acquisition of virtuous behavior is the actual performance of virtuous acts. That alone is sufficient when done on a regular basis to provide a disposition to perform the actions that a virtuous man would perform. It is not enough to make one ‘virtuous,’ but it is enough for the person to behave properly, in a consistent and predictable manner. As Aristotle writes, “like activities produce like dispositions” (II.i.1103b21-22). In other words, any action “we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it” (II.i.1103a32-33, Thomson). His examples of justice and temperance: we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts.

This is the same sort of training found in other fields, including non-moral areas of life (such as the military, police and firefighter training, and athletics). In the case of baseball, for example, a child only learns how to play baseball by actually going onto a baseball field and practicing the fundamentals of the game (hitting, running, fielding, throwing) on a regular basis. A child who studies the game but who never picks up the equipment (ball, bat, glove) may know the history of the game well, and he may intellectually understand the theory of the game, so that he may be able to explain it to someone else or guess what a manager will choose to do in a given situation. But that child will not be able, at
any point in his life, to perform the actions that constitute the game, let alone to perform such actions well. And it is the same with morality and the need to practice virtuous acts.

This habituation is not enough to know what various circumstances require, however. Jonathan Lear makes the case that after performing virtuous acts over and over, one has formed habits that “instill a sensitivity as to how to act in various situations” (166). This is a necessary byproduct of habituation, since there are no moral rules that can be established to cover every moral situation. We could, at best, have “mock rules” such as “Act courageously,” but these are useless to anyone who does not already know how to act (166-167). Such rules cannot provide insight to the non-virtuous and they are not needed by the virtuous, who have both the motivation to behave accordingly and the sensitivity to figure it out (167). Such a sensitivity, once developed, not only allows a virtuous man to determine a correct course of action, but also allows him to serve as a reliable example for the non-virtuous (or the not-yet-virtuous) who need guidance on how to behave well but who cannot just turn to moral rules for such guidance (since there cannot be rules articulated to fit this role).

An additional factor in acquiring virtue is living under a legal system that promotes goodness. In his Ethics, Aristotle writes that obtaining proper training in how to be good is difficult “unless one has been brought up under right laws” (X.ix.1179b31-32 Thomson). Being brought up under law as a “pronouncement of a kind of practical wisdom or intelligence” (in other words “under the guidance of some intelligence or right system”) with “the power of compulsion” can aid a
man who has been brought up properly, learned the right habits and spent his life “in reputable occupations” (X.ix.1180a14-22 Thomson). So the informal system of a proper upbringing and the formal system of a good set of laws work together to create future citizens or co-nationals who behave virtuously.

But even for Aristotle, the mere fact that an agent can perform certain actions, though laudable, does not alone warrant calling him ‘virtuous.’ This is a label earned only after the habituation has taken hold and after it has resulted in a certain kind of character. In other words, the agent, and not his actions alone, determines whether he is ‘virtuous’ or not. Aristotle writes that “virtuous acts are not done in a just or temperate way merely because they have a certain quality, but only if the agent also acts in a certain state, viz. (1) if he knows what he is doing, (2) if he chooses it, and chooses it for its own sake, and (3) if he does it from a fixed and permanent disposition” (II.iv.1105a28-33, Thomson, original emphasis). A virtuous man, then, is one who not only does the right action, but also does so consistently and for the right reasons (because it is the right thing to do, and not, for example, because he avoids guilt).

There is a potential problem here, one that Aristotle recognizes and tries to address. On his view, it is by refraining from pleasures that we become temperate, and it is when we have become temperate that we are most able to abstain from pleasures. Similarly with courage; it is by habituating ourselves to make light of alarming situations and to face them that we become brave, and it is when we have become brave that we shall be most able to face an alarming situation (II.ii.1104a33-b3, Thomson).
But this appears to mean that those who are most able to perform the actions necessary to *become* virtuous are those who *already are* virtuous. Aristotle explicitly acknowledges this possibility when he writes that a “difficulty, however, may be raised as to how we can say that people must perform just actions if they are to become just, and temperate ones if they are to become temperate; because if they do what is just and temperate, they are just and temperate already” (II.iv.1105a17-20, Thomson).

Aristotle thinks that this criticism is not quite on the mark. An agent *becomes* just or temperate by mimicking the actions of a just or temperate man, without yet having the understanding of *why* she does things this way. In other words, at first an agent does the right act for the wrong reason or for no reason at all. The acts themselves may be ‘just’ or ‘temperate’ acts, since they appear to be the same as ones performed by a just or temperate man. But the virtuous man does these actions based on his developed sensitivity of what is required of him and with a full understanding of why he does them, and so he always chooses them based on this understanding. Yet the person who acts as if he were virtuous is on the right path to becoming virtuous, since there is not “the smallest likelihood of any man’s becoming good by not” first doing these actions (II.iv.1105b5-12, Thomson); learning why he does them comes later, when he has a sensitivity to the mean, which is after he has shown he will consistently perform such actions.
4.3.3 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Paideia)

Once an agent has acquired the habit of behaving as he ought to, through repetition or training, he must then learn why such behavior is proper if he is to become ‘virtuous’ (and so be a good member of his nation). Aristotle describes this education (paideia) in Politics VII and VIII. He envisions, in Politics VIII, this educational system as one that teaches four areas to children – reading and writing, physical training, music, and drawing (iii.1337b23-25) – which would be directed by a state’s lawgivers. A lawgiver’s prime duty is “to arrange for the education of the young” since in “states where this is not done the quality of the constitution suffers” (i.1337a11-14; Sinclair). The education must not only concern training for future professions, but also training for virtuous activity (i.1337a18-21). The virtuous activity ought to be suited for the character appropriate to each constitution, and, as Aristotle claims, a better character causes a better constitution (i.1337a14-18), which provides an incentive for teaching children to be virtuous.

More importantly, though, is the fact that Aristotle believed that the education of future citizens must be public and must teach all of those who will share in a political system of ruling and being ruled (VII.xiv.1332b41-1333a3). Only if there were people so obviously superior to those around them that they
should always rule, would public education be unnecessary; but it is not easy to find such people, so public education is needed. As Aristotle states later,

since there is but one aim for the entire state, it follows that education must be one and the same for all, and that the responsibility for it must be a public one, not the private affair which it now is, each man looking after his own children and teaching them privately whatever private curriculum he thinks they ought to study. In matters that belong to the public, training for them must be the public’s concern (VIII.i.1337a21-27; Sinclair).

Such a system does not guarantee that all students grow up to be virtuous citizens; but it does ensure that all future citizens have the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to be productive citizens of their nation-state. This puts each future citizen on an equal footing with others who have been educated under the same system and sets them in the direction of growing up to be virtuous (so it is more likely that they will achieve this growth). Although such a system does not create perfect citizens and it cannot guarantee success, there is the guarantee that without such a system there would be no chance at having virtuous people, since people are not born that way and do not happen by luck or by buying it or by being good-looking, etc. Being morally good and flourishing are achieved only by work and then reinforcement with an understanding of why it is important.\(^6\)

\(^{6}\) This is not to say that Aristotle would reject private schools out of hand. As long as such schools teach future citizens the same general material as the public schools, they would be acceptable. What Aristotle is opposed to is the system of his time (“the private affair which it is now”), where children are educated at home, by tutors and with no state oversight, and not with a view to being future citizens but instead to being future adult members of a particular family. In fact, Aristotle provides an allowance for citizens to educate their children out of public schools if the circumstances require it. He writes that it is best if there is public supervision of educational matters, but “if they continue to be completely neglected by the state, it would seem to be right for each individual to help his own children and friends on the way to goodness, and that he should have the power or at least the choice of doing this,” although he would best be able to change things if he becomes a legislator (Ethics X.ix.1180a29-34 Thomson).
Citizens who do not complete this Aristotelian education and who lack an understanding of virtuous behavior run the risk of going astray, of not acting in a constant, virtuous manner, and so of not flourishing. And Aristotle is pessimistic about the ability of such people who do go astray to become good: “he who departs from the path of virtue will never be able to go sufficiently straight to make up entirely for his previous errors” (VII.iii.1325b5-7, Sinclair). For Aristotle, the formation of such a character is voluntary, which means that the unjust or licentious man is so because he wishes to be so; but it does not follow that if he changes what he wants – so that he now wants to be virtuous – that he can then stop being unjust or licentious. So while “it was at first open to the unjust and licentious persons not to become such, … now that they have become what they are, it is no longer open to them not to be such” (Ethics III.v.1114a11-16, 19-21, Thomson). The view that such behavior is nonetheless voluntary is supported, Aristotle claims, by the practice (in public and in private) of rewarding good behavior and punishing bad, which is done to encourage the former and restrain the latter (Ethics III.v.1113b21-26).

This means that a moral education (concerning why ethical behavior is good) would be wasted on those who did not have the appropriate upbringing. So Aristotle’s target audience for his works excluded these people: Jonathan Lear writes that “Aristotle’s Ethics are not designed to persuade anyone to become a good person. There is nothing in them designed to be compelling to someone who is not already living an ethical life.” Rather, the Ethics are meant “to reinforce reflectively the lives” virtuous men “are already inclined to lead” (159); in other
words, the purpose is “self-understanding, not persuasion or advice” (157). This is so because, “although being virtuous is in one’s best interest, one cannot ‘sell’ the virtuous life to a non-virtuous person: it does not constitute a non-ethical lure to the ethical point of view. It is only the person who is already inside the ethical point of view who can see that acting ethically is part of human flourishing” (170). But this cannot be understood by the non-virtuous, who will see ethical behavior as “onerous, painful or silly” and only superficially think that such behavior is actually “the way to be happy” (158). So the Ethics have little to offer a non-virtuous reader, yet much to give one who is already virtuous. The “reflective endorsement” the Ethics provides leads the virtuous “to see that there is good reason to live the ethical life” since it is “the good life,” and this means that “one’s understanding of the ethical life reinforces one’s motivation to live it” (160). The implication of Lear’s interpretation of Aristotle’s position, though, is that those without this motivation – the non-virtuous – will get little from Aristotle’s work, and Aristotle himself knew this (and so did not aim to reach the non-virtuous).

The blame for going astray, according to Aristotle, falls on pleasure (and pain); he writes that pleasure “induces us to behave badly, and pain to shrink from fine actions” (Ethics II.iii.1104b8-11, Thomson). How does this happen? Aristotle explains, concerning pleasures, that this happens “through seeking (or shunning) the wrong ones, or at the wrong time, or in the wrong way, or in any other manner in which such offenses are distinguished by principle” (Ethics II.iii.1104b21-24, Thomson). This is not to say that pleasure and pain cannot be useful, however. For Aristotle believes that the pleasure or pain an agent has
while acting is a sign of that man’s dispositions; for example, a “man who abstains from bodily pleasures and enjoys the very fact of so doing is temperate; if he finds it irksome he is licentious,” and this follows for the other virtues (like courage), too (Ethics II.iii.1104b3-8, Thomson).

This is why, for Aristotle, Plato was right in the Laws and the Republic when he wrote that true education is “having been trained in some way from infancy to feel joy and grief at the right things” (Ethics II.iii.1104b11-13, Thomson). If we can be habituated to feel pleasure at doing virtuous actions, we are obviously more likely to continue doing them. Some people may only do them because they feel good or (more likely) merely out of habit (from their upbringings), but without an understanding that they are virtuous. Having good behavior occur for whatever reason is better than allowing bad behavior, especially if that good behavior becomes constant, as a second nature, for those doing it. Still, having this good behavior occur with an understanding and out of a constant character is best.

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64 He is presumably referring to Laws 653A-C and Republic 401E-402A.
4.3.4 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Deliberation)

Aside from Aristotle’s outline in the *Politics* of what his *paideia* will look like, he informs us in the *Ethics* that there is a skill that would be learned that would aid citizens in the performance of virtuous actions: the ability to deliberate. The rational potential of man is a function unique to human beings (I.xiii.1102a13-28, esp. 14-16; and vii, esp. 1098a7-18). Fulfilling this function, and using deliberation, is the key to happiness. What we deliberate about are not ends, but rather about the means we should use to achieve our ends (III.iii.1112b11-15). Such means should always be something that is in our power to achieve (III.iii.1112a27, 30-31). With all of this in mind, he defines deliberation as “that which happens for the most part, when the result is obscure and the right course not clearly defined” (III.iii.1112b8-9 Thomson).

Deliberation involves choice, and having the option of at least two possible actions, where what we think about is the best of those possibilities in terms of our ability to achieve our ends. Aristotle writes that “since moral virtue is a state involving choice, and choice is deliberate appetition, it follows that if the choice is to be a good one, both reasoning must be true and the desire right; and the desire must pursue the same things that reasoning asserts” (VI.ii.1139a22-26 Thomson). In order to have the desire right, we need to understand that there are three factors that play a role in choice (and three that play a role in its opposite, avoidance): the fine, the advantageous, and the pleasant (and their opposites,
the base, the harmful, and the painful) (II.iii.1104b30-34). And he tells us that it is with regard to these factors (especially pleasure) that a bad man goes astray while a good man does not.

The word ‘choice’ implies that the option is voluntary, but Aristotle believes ‘choice’ and ‘voluntary’ are not equivalent terms. ‘Voluntary’ has a wider application, since it can be used in relation to children and animals, while ‘choice’ cannot (since they lack the rational, and so deliberative, function) (III.ii.1111b6-10). He adds that the Greek makes this distinction clear: proairesis seems to indicate that one thing is chosen before (pro-) others.

Yet the voluntary nature of ethical behavior matters. Aristotle describes a voluntary act as “one which the originating cause lies in the agent himself, who knows the particular circumstances of his action” (III.i.1111a22-24 Thomson). Voluntary acts are those for which we may receive praise or blame (III.i.1109b30-31). Such an evaluation (of praise or blame) comes only after determining all of the following: “(1) the agent, (2) the act, (3) the object or medium of the act, and sometimes also (4) the instrument (e.g. a tool), (5) the aim (e.g. saving life), and (6) the manner (e.g. gently or roughly)” (III.i.1111a3-6 Thomson). He follows by saying that although he does not believe that any sane person could be ignorant of all of these when acting, being ignorant of at least one is enough for an act to be considered ‘involuntary.’

As for virtue, it is then in our control. For Aristotle, the fact is that exercising moral virtue is a matter of the means that are used, and means are objects of deliberation and choice, so that moral virtues are performed with
choice, and so voluntarily (III.v.1113b3-21). Just as important is the fact that vice would then be in our power and voluntary. Accordingly, Aristotle reminds us that if we can do the right thing, we can also refrain from the wrong thing; but this means as well that if we can choose not to do the right thing, we can also choose to do the wrong thing.
4.3.5 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (The Good for Humans)

Based on all of these concepts, Aristotle provides a definition of what is ‘good’ for humans. In his *Ethics*, he writes that

if the function of man is an activity of the soul in accordance with, or implying, a rational principle; and if we hold that the function of an individual and of a good individual of the same kind...is generically the same, the latter’s distinctive excellence being attached to the name of the function...; and if we assume that the function of man is a kind of life, viz., an activity or series of actions of the soul, implying a rational principle; and if the function of a good man is to perform these well and rightly; and if every function is performed well when performed in accordance with its proper excellence: if all this is so, the conclusion is that the good for man is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind (I.vii.1098a7-18 Thomson).

Such a person, that is, a man of good character who acts in accordance with virtue, also judges every situation rightly (III.iv.1113a29-31). Aristotle adds that what probably makes a person of good character stand out from others is that he sees truth in every kind of situation, and so is a standard and yardstick of what is fine and pleasant (III.iv.1113a32-33). The character that he exhibits serves as an example for how all of us should order our internal lives as well as behave.

That is not to say that our external life and its external goods do not matter. In fact, Aristotle claims that the virtuous life leads to prosperity: “it is not by means of external goods that men acquire and keep the virtues, but the other way around” (*Pol.* VII.i.1323a40-41 Sinclair). Moreover, such prosperity is needed for happiness and virtue, since it would be difficult, even impossible, to
be virtuous without any (or enough) resources, as many virtues are done with aid from friends, wealth, and even political influence (Ethics I.viii.1099a31-b8). Not only does Aristotle write in the Ethics that happiness requires prosperity, but also in the Politics when he writes that this should be “our fundamental basis: the life which is best for men, both separately, as individuals, and in the mass, as states, is the life which has virtue sufficiently supported by material resources to facilitate participation in the actions that virtue calls for” (VII.i.1323b40-1324a2 Sinclair).

Yet we must not think that because some amount of external goods is necessary that they become the most important aspect of our lives. We must remember that external goods are instrumentally good, not intrinsically so; indeed, virtue is thought of as better than material goods. External goods have a limit on them, while goods of the soul (virtues) do not; too many external goods are of no benefit and may well be an injury to their possessors, while the more goods of the soul one has, the more useful each will be (Politics VII.i.1323b7-12, 16-21). So we want prosperity, both individually and as a society, but we should desire and work toward acquiring virtue first and foremost, so that our material prosperity supports, but does not overshadow, our ethical lives, and we should be ethical through our virtuous use of this material prosperity.

In light of this, let me now provide Aristotle’s definitions for ‘virtue’ and for a ‘happy man.’ His definition of virtue is that it is

a purposive disposition, lying in a mean that is relative to us and determined by a rational principle, and by that which a prudent man would use to determine it. It is a mean between two kinds of vice, one of excess and the other of deficiency; and also for this reason, that whereas these vices fall short of or exceed the right measure in both feelings and actions, virtue discovers the mean and chooses
it. Thus from the point of view of its essence and the definition of its real nature, virtue is a mean; but in respect of what is right and best, it is an extreme (\textit{Ethics} II.vi.1106b36-1107a8 Thomson).

Virtues enable agents who possess them to perform the sort of acts that brought about virtue in the first place, and they are voluntary and in our control (III.v.1114b26-30). The happy man is “one who is active in accordance with complete virtue, and who is adequately furnished with external goods, and that not for some unspecified period but throughout a complete life;” he adds that a happy man is “destined both to live in this way and to die accordingly” (I.x.1101a14-19 Thomson). In this way happiness demands not only complete goodness but also a complete life (I.ix.1100a4-5).
4.3.6 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Rhetoric)

It is unlikely, though, if not impossible, that every person in a state will achieve happiness. Yet a state can still take certain measures to guide those who are not happy, and so are not virtuous, to behave in ways that are beneficial for the state. A tool that virtuous men and legislators can use to encourage other citizens, especially younger ones, to stay on the path of virtuous conduct is rhetoric. At the very least, leaders can use rhetoric to encourage people to mimic the behavior of those who are already virtuous, and so to form good habits, even if not all – or even most – of them will go on to acquire the understanding of those habits that is necessary for virtue.

As critics may quickly point out, rhetoric can be, and is, used by some nationalist leaders to justify immoral acts or to encourage hatred and violence between national groups. How does Aristotle view rhetoric overall? I believe his stance on rhetoric is not a morally neutral one, and as I aim to show later, this has a larger significance than just in relation to morality.

Rhetoric itself can be seen as neither moral nor immoral. As Troels Engberg-Pedersen claims,

[r]hetoric is intrinsically morally neutral. It involves specific knowledge and the ability to find persuasive arguments on ethical-political issues. It does not presuppose any particular moral character or motivation (120).
Rhetoric itself should not be seen as having moral import; morality comes in when it is used to find proper means to some aim: “if the aim is morally good, [it] is praiseworthy, but if morally bad, [it] is villainy (see NE 6.12.1144a23-28)” (120). On this view, the end is what determines the morality of rhetoric, not the rhetoric itself.

C.D.C. Reeve seems to agree. He cites a passage from Aristotle (Pol. 1292a2-30) that assigns a different type of rhetoric to different forms of government. Tyranny has as its characteristic rhetoric flattery, while (extreme) democracy – another deviant form – has demagoguery (191). Again, the aim matters, since in deviant governments the aim is not good; so the rhetoric used to achieve the end in such governments would be suspect as well.

T.H. Irwin, though, adds the means used by a speaker as a relevant aspect of rhetoric. He cites Aristotle on the point that an orator, in deciding to orate, has already chosen the aim of persuading his audience (NE 1112b11-15), but Aristotle does not then mean

that once we have laid down this aim, the only question is about the most effective means of persuading this or that audience. The deliberator faced with several means that would apparently achieve the end must consider which means will achieve it “most easily and most finely (kallista)” (NE 1112b16-17) (145).

For Irwin, this makes clear for us the connection that Aristotle asserts between rhetoric and political science. While an orator need not be an expert in political science, the fact that he needs to consider the moral aspects of the means of
persuasion at his disposal shows that the orator must be familiar with ethics (and because ethics is a subset of political science, he also must be familiar with political science, too) (146).

I agree with Irwin’s reading of Aristotle’s rhetoric; not only does the aim of the speaker matter, so do the means he uses to achieve that aim. This position as a whole addresses the anti-nationalist critics’ concern that nationalist use of rhetoric is problematic, since (some) nationalist leaders use duplicitous rhetoric, loaded with emotion, to persuade nationals to support, or to actively perform, actions that are unjust toward non-nationals. An analogy that might be helpful here is with moving pictures and television. Both of these media have an ability to influence how people feel or think about an issue, and subsequently how they behave. There is a potential for abuse here, as the propaganda films of Nazi Germany (in particular of Leni Riefenstahl) so clearly illustrate. And as with rhetoric, anti-nationalist critics’ concerns about the use of movies and television by (some) nationalist leaders to bring about unjust results are justified. In all of these cases (rhetoric, movies, television), there is a potential for abuse when inappropriate means are used (such as appeals to emotion, lies) that needs to be acknowledged; yet this does not mean that we should ban or even disparage movies or television or even rhetoric merely because some people on some occasions abuse them.

Accordingly, Aristotle believes that rhetoric is a useful thing that should be treated like any other useful thing. And this means it should be seen as

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See also Rhetoric I.2.7.
something that can be used for good or for bad; it should not be assumed, as some critics imply, that it is always bad. He writes in his *Rhetoric* that

> if it is argued that great harm can be done by unjustly using such power of words, this objection applies to all good things except for virtue, and most of all to the most useful things, like strength, health, wealth, and military strategy; for by using these justly one would do the greatest good and unjustly, the greatest harm (I.1.13).

Thus, the difference for any useful thing (except virtue, which can only be good) is how it is used. And so rhetoric, if used by a virtuous man, will be used for good, and if used by a non-virtuous man, will be used for good or for harm, in unpredictable ways (given his unpredictable character). Clearly rhetoric itself is not the problem, but the particular rhetorician in a given situation, especially the aim of that speaker: a virtuous man has a proper aim in mind and will use proper means (including proper use of rhetoric) to achieve that aim, while a non-virtuous man might have a proper aim or not, and may use proper or improper means to achieve it. So it is not the tool (rhetoric) but the user of the tool (the rhetorician) that determines how it is used in a particular circumstance.

In addition, my position is supported by what could be taken as practical advice by Aristotle. Throughout the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle seems to provide reasons for wanting to use rhetoric justly, even if one is unjust.\(^6\) One reason to use rhetoric justly and to speak the truth is that, according to Aristotle, “rhetoric is useful [first] because the true and the just are by nature stronger than their opposites, so that if judgments are not made in the right way [the true and the just] are necessarily defeated [by their opposites].” In other words, between a

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\(^6\) This is similar to the practical advice he gives to deviant states in the *Politics*. 165
good and a bad argument, “the underlying facts are not equally good in each case; but true and better ones are by nature always more productive of good syllogisms and, in a word, more persuasive” (I.1.12; Kennedy).\(^6\)

Another reason even unjust leaders will want to seriously consider using rhetoric justly is because the knowledge of how to carry this out is more persuasive. Leaders need to have knowledge of the different types of constitutions and what is involved with each. Aristotle writes that the greatest and most important of all things in an ability to persuade and give good advice is to grasp an understanding of all forms of constitution [politeia] and to distinguish the customs and legal usages and advantages of each; for all people are persuaded by what is advantageous, and preserving the constitution is advantageous (I.8.1-2).

So just as an unjust leader will have an incentive (namely, stability) to include middle people in his government, and in the process make it closer to a just form of government, so too will he have an incentive (namely, persuasiveness) to find out what is advantageous to each form of government and to bring those advantages about and highlight them in his rhetoric. If an unjust leader were to take Aristotle’s advice in order to bring about the promised stability (something he clearly would desire out of self-interest), eventually the rhetoric and actions of his government would more likely be just than unjust, since it is to his personal advantage for this to actually be the case, and not merely appear to be the case.

A third reason for an unjust man to use rhetoric justly, related to that of a leader’s knowledge, is that of the leader’s character. Aristotle tells us that an orator of good character is more likely to persuade his audience (II.1.3, 4), which

\(^6\) See also I.7.36: “things related to truth [are greater] than things related to opinion.”
gives an unjust man reason to at least appear just, if not eventually to become so. Aristotle points out that “it is not enough to have a supply of things to say, but it is also necessary to say it in the right way, and this contributes much toward the speech seeming to have a certain quality” (III.1.2). One thing that aids in saying things the right way is to be honorable (I.9.1). Characteristics that are honorable include being good, being virtuous (e.g., having justice, courage, self-control), achieving victory and glory, as well as “things peculiar to each nation” (which are honorable among members of that nation) (I.9.3, 4-13, 25, 26).

Aristotle claims that

> [t]here are three reasons why speakers themselves are persuasive; for there are three things we trust other than logical demonstrations. These are practical wisdom [phronesis] and virtue [arête] and good will [eunoia]; ... a person seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to the hearers (II.1.5-6).

Aristotle advises leaders to cultivate good qualities for their self-interest: they will be more persuasive, and their government will be stable. The result, though, would also be a greater occurrence of virtuous actions, which is neither the stated aim nor the bait given to leaders, since neither of these would be motivating to unjust men, while an appeal to their self-interest is.
4.3.7 The Aristotelian Framework: Ethical Concepts (Friendship)

In addition to the importance of rhetoric, the prominent role of virtue within this Aristotelian framework has the side effect of introducing the concept of friendship, both within the nation-state and between nation-states. Aristotle’s concept of friendship, discussed in *Ethics* VIII and IX, is a full one, and for him it is an essential part of a good life. Although it applies primarily to relations between individuals, I believe it can be extrapolated upon to cover relations between nation-states as well, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Aristotle believes there are three bases for friendship – utility, pleasure and goodness – each of which involves a mutual affection between those who are friends (VIII.iii.1156a6-b32). The first two are accidental and contingent foundations, and they dissolve if the pleasure or utility disappears. ‘Perfect’ friendship (the ‘truest’ kind) is based on goodness, and it lasts as long as both parties are good (VIII.iii.1156b7-12, v.1157b25-28, iv.1157a30-32, iv.1157b1-4), which should be indefinitely, since a good person is unlikely to backslide. But because it is difficult to become good in the first place, it is also rare to have such friendships (VIII.iii.1156b24-25, vi.1158a10-18). Both parties wish the other well
for the sake of being well (not for some ulterior motive) (VIII.ii.1155b31, 1156a3-5); in this sense there is an equality between friends – they receive the same benefits while wishing each other the same good (VIII.vi.1158b1-3).

Good feelings toward the other ultimately derive from our feelings toward ourselves (IX.iv.1166a1-2ff., viii.1168b5-6). For a bad person, who has no lovable qualities, this means he has no amiable feelings for himself, and so no amiable feelings for others. Such an existence would be a miserable one, and this provides an incentive for him to try to be “a man of good character” so he can be a friend to himself and to others (IX.iv.1166b25-29). The difference between the good man and the bad one means, according to Aristotle, that self-love is appropriate only for a good man, whose self-love leads to good actions, and never for a bad man, whose self-love leads him to injure himself and his neighbors (IX.viii.1169a11-1170b18). The result is that only a good man can achieve happiness: only a good man can have perfect friendship, and virtuous friends are needed for happiness (IX.ix.1169b3-19, esp. 14-19). Also, the goodness of friends eliminates the needs for concepts like ‘justice’ (VIII.i.1155a26-28), since friends have no need for a moral restraint that compels others to behave properly who may not be so inclined. But friends do ‘just’ acts

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68 See also *Rhetoric* II.4, in which Aristotle lays out the different reasons people become friends, especially II.4.1: “Let *being friendly* be [defined as] wanting for someone what one thinks are good things for him, not what one thinks benefits oneself, and wanting what is potentially productive of these good things. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return, and people think they are friends when they think this relationship exists mutually.”
out of genuine concern, not compulsion and not out of self-interest; accordingly, friends have trust in each other's behavior (just as good men trust themselves to be virtuous).

Trust between friends has positive consequences for the nation-state, too. For example, a feeling similar to friendship is 'good will,' which is when the friendly feeling one has is not reciprocated (VII.i.1155b32-34). This feeling of good will can be felt toward people one does not even know, and this is the start of friendship (IX.v.1166b30-32, 1167a3-4, 8-14). Within a nation-state, good will toward other citizens allows a nation-state's interests to be taken seriously as common to all (and not just as competing individual interests). 'Concord' is the resultant feeling found in a nation-state between good men who agree on the nation-state's interests (IX.vi.1167a26-b4). And if these good men cultivate this good will and concord, perfect friendship can follow.

Notice that the friendship can only be between good men, and not by good men toward the state, since Aristotle believes that the object of friendship can only be animate, not an inanimate object (VIII.ii.1155b27-31) like a state or nation. So on Aristotle's view, nationals do not love the nation but their co-nationals (and the idea of the nation that they embody). Also, good men within a nation-state will trust other good men, and will be confident that each will behave virtuously. And this trust in each other will extend to the nation-state: good men will trust a society led by good men to pursue good ends through virtuous means. And such men will behave justly, so a nation-state led by good men is more likely to instantiate justice, and consequently more likely to be stable.
Aristotle discusses relations between states as well. For him, the relations between states are not that of perfect friendship; rather, they are attracted out of utility (VIII.iv.1157a25-28). In other words, for Aristotle, states form alliances for the advantages that they will receive, not for the sake of the goodness that will come to the partner states, as is the cases between friends.

Whether the nation-state structure must be based on the advantageous sort of alliance or not remains to be seen. In the next chapter I explicitly lay out what the Virtuous Nation is, including which of the above Aristotelian concepts apply specifically to the modern world and its nation-state structure and how they apply. This view blends some of the concepts of liberal nationalism and Aristotle, along with other concepts; this means that the Virtuous Nation uses the strengths of each view while addressing their flaws. By providing such an alternative, I aim to provide a defense of nationalism by presenting a defensible form of the nation that will allow evaluation of existing nations as well as show that a nation need not be the monstrous form that it has been portrayed as by anti-nationalist critics, since it has the potential to not only be not-immoral (as some modern nations may be), but to be moral (or ‘virtuous’).
CHAPTER 5

A DEFENSIBLE FORM OF THE NATION: THE VIRTUOUS NATION, PART II

The Virtuous Nation adds new ideas to nationalism that are of great significance, ideas that are neither included in traditional nationalism nor added by liberal nationalism. By including them I hope to address critics’ concerns about nationalism in general. In doing so, I aim to show that nationalism is not a fundamentally flawed ideology. This is not to say that some nation-states ought not to be criticized – clearly there are some that should be criticized by everyone. However, such criticism is not due to the fact that they are nationalist. Rather, criticism should focus on how and why particular nation-states are bad, and how, if possible, to make them good. The Virtuous Nation that I advocate here is an ideal, in the spirit of Aristotle’s ideal state in Politics VII and VIII, for use as a standard against which one can critically evaluate current nation-states.

In this chapter I will explicitly present what the Virtuous Nation looks like. So far I have discussed various Aristotelian concepts as well as those of liberal nationalism, but not yet how these concepts – along with some others – would work together in a single, new view. The Virtuous Nation represents a form of the nation that is rational, but with emotional attachments involved. Thus, it satisfies the human need to associate with others while also incorporating and making use of human reason. And it includes the modern values that are essential to a
successful modern political structure as well as the ancient values that have successfully formed the foundation of Western civilization. For these reasons, I argue that nationalism – in particular, virtue nationalism - is not only defensible, but also beneficial.69

In many respects, the Virtuous Nation represents a successful integration of a number of positions. For traditional nationalists, the aspects of nationalism that are essential to nationalism are retained and improved upon so that nationalism is transformed into an ideology that can be acceptable and justifiable to its critics. Moreover, the additions of liberal nationalism are retained and thus, the ideology can rightly be considered both rational and liberal. For Aristotelians, this view adheres to the spirit of Aristotle’s works and, more importantly, uses his texts in a new and fruitful way in a contemporary debate that shows Aristotle can still have relevance in the modern world. By contrast, anti-nationalist critics are answered insofar as their initial concerns about nationalism are addressed and there is finally a nationalism that takes these concerns seriously (rather than just dismisses or ignores them).

After I describe the Virtuous Nation, I will present some potential problems and criticisms that may remain, and will respond to each of them. Critics may be concerned, for example, with my use of Aristotle’s writings, since he clearly has views that are repugnant to modern readers, especially concerning ‘natural slavery’ and the status of women, as well as the explicit use of morality in politics.

69 I leave open the possibility that another form of nationalism could be defensible. I tried to show why the usual criticisms of other forms and of nationalism in general are wrong, but this was to immunize the Virtuous Nation from such criticisms. Other forms may have other problems that make them indefensible, but showing this is a task beyond my goals here.
The possibility that nationalism must contain slavery and a second-class status for women would seem to confirm critics’ suspicions that nationalism is inherently unequal and partial, and including morality raises concerns about the imposition of a particular moral viewpoint. I will try to show that these concerns are unfounded and unnecessary. In the final chapter I will argue for certain strengths of the Virtuous Nation, to try to show that it has features that make it an attractive and defensible version of the nation. In the end, I will argue that the Virtuous Nation is both defensible and the best version of the nation to advocate.
5.1 The Virtuous Nation

A Virtuous Nation-state would be different from any other nation-state seen so far. Indeed, this is a theoretical model that has no empirical example. Rather, this model serves as an ideal for existing nations and their political leaders to use as a standard of evaluation and improvement. This is not to say that it could not be instantiated and can only be a theoretical standard; I believe that it could be brought about, but the primary usefulness of this model lies in its status as a standard of evaluation and improvement for actual nation-states.

My use of an ideal runs contrary to Jusdanis' advice in The Necessary Nation to keep discussions of the nation in practical terms. For the most part, he dismisses discussions of nationalism that are largely theoretical. His main complaints with such discussions are that they ignore the history of nationalism, which he argues provides empirical evidence in nationalism's favor, and that they make good-bad distinctions in a simplistic way, one that only amounts to a “morality tale” or “a Manichean tale of good and evil” and so these distinctions “should be avoided” (10, 165, 134; see also 163-164).

I ignore this advice, but not lightly. I share his concern that some people who write theoretically about nationalism seem to assume that certain nations are good and others bad without providing a standard to justify their distinctions. But I will provide a standard to use to determine which nations are good and which are not, and I will justify my moral terminology. And as I will argue in the
final section of this chapter, Jusdanis takes his concern too far: not only can morality be included, I believe it must be included to show that the nation is a defensible structure while acknowledging that some nations are not defensible in practice (as the evidence clearly shows). Only a theoretical standard that uses moral terms can provide this strong defense, and in this way, answer the concerns of anti-nationalist critics who believe that nationalism, at best, is necessarily amoral or even immoral.

Liberal nationalism, which provided a starting point for this model, included a set of concepts that met some of the critical objections to nationalism and which must be included in any nationalist view that will be acceptable to modern (especially modern liberal) readers. These include concepts such as consent, deliberative democracy, trust, tolerance of other cultures, and the emphasis on a rational set of values on which to base a nation. Also, liberal nationalism addressed perhaps the biggest concern of critics, namely, the fundamental inequality and partiality of nationalism in general, by including equality and impartiality as goals and values of nationalism.

There is some overlap between some of liberal nationalists’ and Aristotle’s concepts, specifically, the need for deliberation and the importance of trust. Also, the liberal nationalist tolerance of other cultures is seen in the Aristotelian thick-vague conception of the good. In both cases, cultures are free to pursue their own values within a certain framework, namely, one that meets the conditions set by the other concepts (for example, respect for consent, deliberation, respect and tolerance for others from liberal nationalism; achievement of the good that
centers on human functioning and the development of capabilities related to that functioning from Aristotle’s works). Nationalist forms that do not meet these conditions would be unacceptable to both the liberal nationalist and the Aristotelian nationalist.

The concepts that I add from Aristotle, however, are also crucial to an expanded notion of nationalism, in particular, to one that is defensible. These include his concepts of a self-sufficient state, a distinction between good and bad states, the proper use of rhetoric, as well as the following from his non-relative morality: having a proper telos, acquiring virtue through habituation and education (that is, paideia), and moderation in all things (the mean).

I also add some new concepts and modify some of the concepts of the liberal nationalists and Aristotle. For example, I stress the need for a democratic representative government (not just democracy, whether liberal or rotating), as well as for an open society and a free press. I modify Aristotle’s ‘middle people’ to make it closer to the modern idea of the ‘middle class,’ and I include a strong view of private property that liberal nationalists leave out, one that is stronger than Aristotle’s. I also extrapolate from Aristotle’s view of friendship to a ‘friendship alliance’ between Virtuous Nations, and so modify one of his concepts that he explicitly meant to apply only within states to apply also between them. In addition, I discuss ways to limit inequality and partiality, neither of which can be eliminated entirely, as the liberal nationalists seem to think, but which cannot be allowed to be unlimited in scope (due to the immoral consequences which then
arise in bad nations). Finally, I make explicit the need for both emotion and reason in the Virtuous Nation, and provide a bridge between them (rhetoric).

Of all the concepts that I include, probably the one most striking, troubling and objectionable to modern readers is the inclusion of morality within a political view. Many may be skeptical about this feature, in part because moderns view morality and politics as two distinct spheres, but more importantly because it is possible (or even seen as likely) that this would bring about the imposition of definite moral requirements. Jusdanis, for one, had warned against such a move, but he overreacts: just because some theorists make mistakes when using moral terms does not necessarily mean that all use of such terms is a mistake. Rather, it indicates a need for caution and for recognition of the limits of our abilities in this area; we should not allow the inability to find a perfect view to be interpreted as reason to avoid such views altogether. Some critics may be concerned that caution is not enough, since there is the danger of having a political system (eventually) become overrun with moral mandates once morality is introduced. But I will try to show that it is possible to have a moral view that does not necessitate the imposition of particular moral requirements. And discussing moral terms in a political view certainly should not be surprising for anyone familiar with Aristotle’s writings: for him, discussions of politics just are discussions about morality writ large.\textsuperscript{70} I will argue that Aristotle was right about this, and that morality and politics are not, and cannot be, separate areas of study.

\textsuperscript{70} This is clear in the primary texts used here, namely the \textit{Ethics} and the \textit{Politics}. For example, in the first couple of pages of the \textit{Ethics}, Aristotle tells the reader that what we need is a
At this point, an obvious question to ask is what exactly a Virtuous Nation-state would look like. I can now describe this theoretical model based on the concepts in the previous chapter, albeit only as an outline and not as a strict prescription. This model is Aristotelian in spirit, in that Aristotle thinks political views can only be outlines or sketches that are true for the most part, and not exact guidelines or prescriptions for how to form a state (see *Ethics* I.iii.1094b11-14, 19-27; I.vii.1098a20-29; II.ii.1103b34-1104a11; and I.i.1094a18-22), and I agree with him that we cannot try to be too exact in all of our details without sacrificing usefulness.
5.1.1 The Virtuous Nation: Components and Size

A virtuous Nation-state will have components that concern the nation alone, including an identity and a need for loyalty to it, but also components that concern the state alone, including the governmental structure needed to support that nation and through which nationals would express their loyalty. Yet many components of the nation-state will be both of these types, that is, some will concern both the nation and the state at the same time.

The national components must include all of those that are necessary for all nationalist structures (liberal, Aristotelian, and all others as well); a state that lacks any one of these components would no longer be 'nationalist.' Each nation-state must have national sovereignty and national self-determination (both are possessed by each nation-state but must also be respected in others, in other words, there must be reciprocity between states). Each has a national identity, to be determined by co-nationals themselves, although in a Virtuous Nation-state virtue must be the primary basis of national identity. This does not preclude the existence of religion, ethnicity, race, etc., but they must be subordinate to virtue. There must also be an expectation of loyalty to that national identity and to the nation-state to which it corresponds. And each nation-state also has a concern for national self-interest, including national self-defense (presumably against those other nation-states – non-virtuous ones – that do not respect its sovereignty and self-determination). In addition, there will be some amount of
partiality and inequality since these always appear in a nation-state, at least to some degree, when these general nationalist components are all present;\textsuperscript{71} to what degree partiality and inequality will be present in the Virtuous Nation, will be discussed later.

A Virtuous Nation-state would have a minimum and maximum limit on its size, both in terms of area and population. These limits cannot be set with an exact specification for all nation-states since circumstances differ and since nation-states are already formed, but would be presented in an outline with the particulars for a given state determined by each nation-state. Circumstances can change over time and then require adjustment of these limits, and they include accessibility to natural resources, ability to defend the physical area of the state, and the ability to sustain the population. These can be affected by changes in technology, and the greater the technological change, the greater the possible effect. But limits are important, even in theory and even for already formed nation-states, because they allow us to clearly distinguish between a nation and some other entity (tribe on the smaller end, a multi-national organization on the other), and because they provide a possible explanation for where a problem lies when a nation suffers from instability of some sort.

The sole criteria to be used at any time to determine the appropriate range for the area and the population size are self-sufficiency and flourishing. To meet these criteria the state must be able to provide for its people yet do so in a way that benefits everyone in the state over the long-term. A state that is too small is

\textsuperscript{71} This was discussed earlier, in Chapters 1 and 3.
not able to provide everything needed for prosperity (due to a smaller pool of resources) and will then be entirely dependent on trade with other states, and so it is not self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{72} A state that is too large will have a hard time providing for everyone (due to a greater number of people), at least not in a way that allows everyone a chance at living \textit{well} (as opposed to merely living). So a state that is too small or too large is not self-sufficient; thus, neither could provide the conditions necessary for flourishing.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{72} This is not to say that trade is precluded on this view; rather, I mean that a state should not allow itself to be in a position where another state can effectively control its policies through trade. For example, if country A requires some resource that can only be obtained through trade with country B, country A is then in a position of vulnerability in relation to country B: there is a potential for extortion at the whims of country B, should it choose to use its bargaining advantage to harm country A. This monopoly of resources – a result of nature’s random distribution of goods and man’s discovery of uses of those particular goods, neither of which is rationally chosen by humans – need not result in actual abuse by a country, but the potential is always there. This is not to say that this disadvantage cannot be dealt with or that this makes trade itself bad; a useful resource can become unnecessary with the discovery of an alternative resource that can be synthetically produced or is more equitably distributed, and trade can be good if it supplements a country’s ability to live well or if it fosters good relations between allies, \textit{etc.} My point here is that the less a nation-state is vulnerable to manipulation (through trade) by other nation-states (and so, the greater its self-sufficiency), the greater a nation-state’s national sovereignty and ability to exercise its national self-determination.

\textsuperscript{73} See \textit{Politics} VII.iv.1326b2-1326b25; Aristotle’s primary concern for states that become too large is actually that they will not be able to monitor their population and consequently that appointments to offices will suffer (inferior people will be participating in the state’s affairs). I will deal with this specific concern separately when I deal with deliberation as a necessary feature of this Virtuous Nation-state, especially when I deal with its population (as opposed to its physical size, as this section is meant to address).
5.1.2 The Virtuous Nation: Goodness, Representative Democracy, and Deliberation

A Virtuous Nation-state is determined to be ‘good’ in relation to other nation-states based on its constitution. I follow Aristotle’s standard when he writes, “those constitutions which aim at the common good are right, as being in accord with absolute justice; while those which aim only at the good of the rulers are wrong” (Politics III.vi.1279a16-20; see also III.vii.1279a25-31 Sinclair). For Aristotle, this standard is used to differentiate all good states from bad ones. I also follow Martha Nussbaum in reading the common good as a ‘thick-vague’ conception that does not impose some specific set of requirements. Rather, it is a general outline that advises states to take the general functioning of citizens into account when creating conditions that allow citizens to function well (should they choose to act on those conditions) yet leaves the details of how to create those conditions in a particular nation-state up to the government of each state (due to differences in local circumstances). Whether or not each individual citizen then functions well does not affect a nation-state’s ‘goodness’ – what matters is that the conditions for being good are provided and that citizens can choose to make use of those conditions. In this way, the common good is achieved through the opportunities provided to the citizens and not through the additional (stronger) requirement that citizens actually take advantage of them.
Within the context of nationalism, though, a further clarification is required concerning Aristotle’s standard. He may seem to imply that rulers who aim at the proper *telos* of the common good will act appropriately and with proper means, that is, “in accord with absolute justice;” however, I do not think that this can be intended. My interpretation is based in part on what history has revealed about different nation-states and on the concerns of anti-nationalist critics: the *telos* alone is not enough, but the *means* used also matter. In other words, there can be nationalist leaders who have the common good in mind yet who act toward it in ways that contravene it. It is quite possible to imagine a nation-state (or point to an actual one) that has rulers claiming to act (or at least believing they act) for the common good yet interpreting the common good in such a way as to include the need to rid the nation-state of non-nationals (or some other immoral action). They will use means that cannot be justified by the *telos* of flourishing (in other words, by an appeal to the common good), although they think there is such justification (perhaps even a requirement), even justification for any action whatsoever. But this is most certainly not a consequentialist standard (nor a consequentialist moral view) for the Virtuous Nation: the means used matter as much as the *telos* sought, so that a Virtuous Nation-state can reliably be counted on to prevent the sort of abuses that anti-nationalist critics often point to as proof of what they think is nationalism’s necessary immorality.

It is also possible to argue that many nation-states that commit such actions do so with an incorrect *telos*, which necessarily leads to using incorrect means. This possibility, though, is a different problem than the one I am concerned with here; such a nation-state would merely be ‘bad’ on the standard used. My concern, rather, is for leaders who read this standard and think that having the common good as the *telos* is all that is involved in being ‘good’ so that having the common good as *telos* justifies any action whatsoever (that is, justifies the use of any means in order to meet the common good). I aim to dispel such a notion.
The best governmental structure the state can take to meet its virtue and nationalist demands is that of a democratically elected representative government. That is, this form will do for good nationalism what Aristotle required for any good political form: it will be “so ordered that any person whatsoever may prosper best and live blessedly” (Pol. VII.ii.1324a23-25 Sinclair). In the context of liberal nationalism, the preference was for ‘deliberative democracy,’ and in Aristotle’s ideal state it was for a rotating democracy. Each of these, though, comes up short as an alternative for a Virtuous Nation-state since democracy in its truest form, where each citizen plays a very active role in the state, is difficult to sustain in a large, modern state. This is because the level of participation required would take far too much time to allow everyone to participate adequately and fairly (and if they did so participate, there would be time for nothing else, inside or outside of government). Pure democracy is only possible in very small communities (such as small towns in New England), but these are too small to be self-sufficient nation-states; so democracy alone – whether deliberative or rotating – is not the best form of government for a Virtuous Nation-state, which would be significantly larger than a small town.

I have modified the democratic requirement to account for this issue of size by including a democratically elected representative government. The representative aspect means that not everyone will take a direct role in the state, although all citizens who are qualified would be eligible for such a role. This is a definite change from what Aristotle recommended: one vote for each household becomes one vote for each qualifying adult. Although I think this change is
necessary, I also acknowledge that Aristotle would have serious concerns about it. Yet the change must be made, I believe, because the size of modern nation-states (in terms of size and in terms of population) makes his view unrealistic for the modern world. I think it is more important to be faithful to his requirement that a political view should be possible than to any other particular idea that he had (especially when the world has changed significantly from his time to ours).

But I also believe self-sufficiency and flourishing are more likely to be achieved under a government that actually functions on a regular basis (rather than a democratic one that becomes bogged down on each issue while waiting for sufficient or full participation to be achieved). And this change allows for a greater size, since it is unrealistic to ask modern states to break up into units limited to what would have been appropriate in Aristotle’s time. Yet self-sufficiency and flourishing must take precedence over being true to Aristotle on the size issue since they are essential for happiness, but the democratic aspect is still included, with its appeal of mass participation intact.

Furthermore, what is essential for both liberal nationalists and Aristotelians is that any form of (democratic) government requires deliberation. For the majority of citizens in the Virtuous Nation, the deliberation will concern for whom to vote as representative and how that representative is doing in working toward the common good. Aristotle believed that citizens must have direct knowledge of all other citizens in order to make informed decisions about who to vote for (Politics VII.iv.1326b11-25). I have modified this requirement, given the infeasibility in the modern world of having states small enough to allow this (as a
direct democracy). Technology can help to a degree: modern communications allow for knowing more people at once. The drawback to this, though, is that there is less depth to those more numerous acquaintances, so we know more people but only superficially. This lack of acquaintance means that voters may be more informed about their system of government and even the issues facing the state than about the characters of those who would represent them.

Some people may not think that this is really a problem, in part because modern attitudes toward character are generally that it is old-fashioned or just irrelevant to job performance. Also, since modern communications allow a candidate for office to get his message to a greater number of voters at once, they would be informed on his stances on the pertinent issues and how he deliberates, and so they would be able to make an intelligent decision as to whether or not to vote for him. And the more modern technology advances, the more this potential will be realized.

There may be a concern, though, that citizens will only know what candidates tell them (and what others say about them), but will not readily know what sort of character they have. And this means that even if they say all the right things about their history and their deliberative approach, voters will not know with certainty if they are ones who can or will act on those words.\(^{75}\) The distance involved in modern communication makes it easier for a person of low

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\(^{75}\) I do not mean that citizens will be concerned that representatives will vote in the ways that they indicate before elected, but rather that candidates will articulate certain inaccuracies about themselves that are supposed to reveal their good character (and trustworthiness) and about their deliberative approach to problems. In other words, the problem here would be one of trust, instead of forecasting how votes will be cast on issues that are anticipated at election time. Misrepresentation concerning character and approach would allow for citizens – who do not know this candidate personally – to trust a fellow citizen that they would not trust if they did know him.
character to fool others (at least for a time) and harder for citizens to trust others, especially those they do not know (let alone know well). Such a person may have fewer opportunities to do obviously bad actions, since he would be recognizable to more people over a greater distance and so it would be more likely he would be exposed as unreliable. But the fact is that the absence of outwardly bad actions by a man of low character does not make him good; to qualify as ‘good’ a man must actually be good, not merely not-bad.

Yet the size of modern world (especially in terms of population) forces one to make the best of this downside. Due to circumstances, there are possible ways of using technology to address these issues while minimizing the downsides. For example, citizens can be encouraged to share whatever knowledge they have of their (potential) representative to others in the relevant district. And the variety of media who report the actions of public figures could be asked to watch for and report to the public those facts about candidates or officeholders that reveal their characters (good and bad) as well as their deliberative approach to problems. These measures would at least mitigate the lack of intimate familiarity each voter would have with representatives.

The latter measure (and ones similar to it) would require that our theoretical Virtuous Nation be an open society with a free media that is willing and able to report all such information, as well as a public that demands that the media behave this way (and holds it accountable, perhaps by turning to other sources when it is perceived to have fallen short). And it requires that those who seek to represent others willingly give up a certain amount of privacy in order that
strangers (co-nationals) may be better informed about them, their deliberations and votes, and their character (which would be needed to have a fully informed voting public and for a flourishing society). This is not a perfect situation, but it is the best way to deal with the reality of the modern world and a population that is much larger than what Aristotle could have foreseen. In other words, such conditions are the best way to achieve the Virtuous Nation under the current circumstances, and are conditions that would allow voters (and candidates) to deliberate well in a representative democracy. When technology evolves to allow better solutions, a Virtuous Nation-state should adopt such measures.

For representatives in this form of government, deliberation will concern the means to be used to meet the common good. This sort of deliberation requires that those in government know the constitution and what it involves as well as what sort of means can and are appropriate to achieve the end of the constitution, which is flourishing. This deliberation will be quite demanding, since failure to deliberate well has an impact on the well-being of the entire state (and not just of that individual or his household). Yet this makes the deliberation and voting of the general body of voters that much more important: failure to vote into office representatives who are capable of deliberating well (and of acting on

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76 Anti-nationalist critics, especially globalists, could have the same problem of the lack of familiarity among citizens or among all humans, at least if they think familiarity when deliberating on representation is a good thing. They may choose to offer a different solution, perhaps even a non-democratic government, but the larger the political unit that they advocate, the larger the potential problem would be for them as concerns deliberation and the amount of information needed for citizens to make a “fully informed” decision. So although my requirement is not perfect, it is at least a better position than that of the critics.
those deliberations) would have serious consequences (namely, the impact cited above on the well-being of the entire state and the failure of the nation-state to meet the conditions required for flourishing).

Thus, deliberation will be expected from all who participate in the nation-state – both voters and representatives. What matters here is that deliberation is fundamental for the individual and for the state to flourish: deliberating well and choosing to act on this capability is in each citizen’s self-interest for his own immediate circumstances and for those conditions created by the state. This means that the nation-state first has to develop within citizens this capability and the desire to act on it in order for those citizens to actually choose to deliberate.

Although liberal nationalists include consent as a completely separate component of a liberal nation, I believe that it is presupposed by deliberation, so that any nation that values deliberation (as the Virtuous Nation does) must also value consent. Expecting citizens to deliberate on public policies means that those citizens are also expected to voice their agreement or disagreement on whether or not those policies should be implemented. Otherwise, the point of asking them to take the time and expend the energy required to deliberate is unclear if such deliberation is not going to amount to anything.

Yet even though the liberal nationalists are wrong to view consent as entirely separate from deliberation, their use of it is similar to that of Virtue Nationalism in terms of becoming a member of a nation. Specifically – and prior to actually beginning to deliberate on policy – citizens will also have to consent to being members of a nation. The Virtuous Nation (like a liberal nation) is not
based primarily on ethnicity, race or religion but on an idea of what sort of people the nation ought to aspire to create and of which its government ought to be primarily comprised (in this case, virtuous). So the Virtuous Nation requires its members to agree to try to be that type of person and to strive to flourish, that is, to try to be the sort of people who are able and willing to act on the opportunities that a Virtuous Nation-state provides to all of them. And in order for this requirement to be meaningful, so that citizens work toward achieving the goal of being such people, citizens must give their consent to such an idea.

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As I noted earlier in this section when I mentioned the national components, this primary identity would not preclude ethnicity, race or religion as secondary identities, in the same way that each citizen may have a secondary identity of a political nature (liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, Labour or Tory, etc.), and would likely be expected to have such a secondary identity. The only stipulation would be – no matter what the secondary identity – that the primary identity should serve as the common foundation among all citizens and also as the basis for determining the common good and how best to achieve it. And when there is a conflict between the two, generally the primary one should take precedence (although there may be situations when this is not the case).
5.1.3 The Virtuous Nation: Education (Rhetoric)

The Virtuous Nation has as its key component paideia, or education; this has both a national and a state component. This education will be public, overseen by the state and the nationals within it, and will not only teach the deliberation just discussed, but also all of the facets of citizenship (the responsibilities and burdens, as well as the benefits, for nationals) under the particular constitution at work. These topics have to do primarily with the state and its functioning, although the nation is concerned with educating the public on the cultural aspects of the nation. In addition, a couple of educational topics have to do with both the state and the nation: rhetoric and morality. Each of these educational topics plays its own fundamental role in a Virtuous Nation-state, and each has a direct impact on lives of individual citizens. Accordingly, I will discuss the role and the resultant impact of rhetoric and morality in turn.\(^78\)

Rhetoric is a tool Aristotle explores that allows leaders in a nation-state to foster ties between members of a community; it is a tool that other nationalist theorists tend to neglect and that critics often rightly criticize. Clearly, rhetoric can be, and has been, used to promote bad ends – Hitler is an obvious example of someone who “used rhetoric” in this way. But like nationalism itself, rhetoric can be used for good or for bad, and treating it as only a tool for bad is unfair to

\(^{78}\) There is an additional role for rhetoric that I will discuss in section 5.1.9, concerning its use as a bridge between the rational and emotional aspects of the Virtuous Nation.
political debate (since it denies good leaders a necessary and effective tool) and naïve (since it is used by all leaders, under all political systems). Rhetoric is only a problem where morality is already a problem; in other words, rhetoric itself is instrumental and is morally neutral: rhetoric itself cannot be a corrupting influence on otherwise good nationalists or national leaders but it can be a powerful tool for those who are already bad and who use it as a means to achieve their bad ends.

Rhetoric can be used to emphasize and reinforce a common history that is transmitted through a nation-state’s public educational system. The reason some people hastily conclude that such a tool is bad is that this emphasis means demarcating one group from all others; hence, it promotes exclusion and partiality. Yet it can also be used to include people: for nations that are founded on beliefs and behavior (a liberal nation, the Virtuous Nation), rhetoric allows a leader to promote the inclusion of those who meet the conditions of national identity (believing in certain values and principles, behaving in morally good ways) but who would be unknown to members of a nation-state or who are mistakenly thought to lack these qualities (perhaps because they are of different ethnic, cultural, racial or religious backgrounds). Rhetoric can be used to bring people together just as well as to tear them apart. As Aristotle writes,

if it is argued that great harm can be done by unjustly using such power of words, this objection applies to all good things except for virtue, and most of all to the most useful things, like strength, health, wealth, and military strategy; for by using these justly one would do the greatest good and unjustly, the greatest harm (I.1.13 Kennedy).

This means that we should judge an individual rhetorician on his aims and abilities, not on the mere fact that he is a ‘rhetorician.’
In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle discussed the various emotions that are used by orators, and this discussion, especially in Book 2, gives explanations of emotions that could be relevant to nationalism. For example, fear (II.5.1, 3, 9, 10, 11, 15, and II.5.20), shame felt from not sharing (III.6.12), as well as emulation of others who have been honored (II.11.3). He also gives a lengthy explanation of anger and enmity. A person feels anger toward particular individuals because they have done or will do something “to him or those near him” (2.2.2; Kennedy). He distinguishes anger from enmity in the following way:

Now anger comes from things that affect a person directly, but enmity also from what is not directed against himself; for if we suppose someone to be a certain kind of person, we hate him. And anger is always concerned with particulars, ... while hate is directed also at types (everyone hates the thief and the sycophant). The former [anger] is curable in time, the latter [hatred of types] not curable (2.4.31; Kennedy).

His pessimism concerning hatred toward groups can seem disheartening if we apply his view to national groups where hatred already exists for non-nationals. And this is a concern of the anti-nationalist critics, especially given the stereotypically bad nations that they highlight.

Aristotle also gives us an explanation of why humans hate others due to anger, including some reasons that may explain the success of bad nationalist leaders at convincing their co-nationals to be angry at and subsequently hate non-nationals. Aristotle writes that people become angry at opponents who are inferior to them (2.2.17). And when they are distressed over being prevented from obtaining something they desire, people are “irrascible [sic] and easily stirred to anger, especially against those belittling their present condition,” since
those who laugh at or scorn at or mock them are wantonly insulting them (2.9-10, 12; Kennedy). They are angry at those who belittle them (2.2.18), especially if done before any of five classes of people: rivals, those whom they admire, those from whom they wish to receive admiration, those before whom they have been embarrassed, or those who have been embarrassed in front of them (2.2.22). People become angry with those who rejoice at their misfortunes, since this can be a sign of an enemy, and at those who do not care that they are suffering (including those who are announcing bad news) (2.2.20). Finally, he writes that people are angry with those who scorn and speak badly of those things that they take seriously (such as philosophical studies or how they appear and dress) (2.2.13).

In spite of all of this, Aristotle claims that there might be justification for invoking anger. He writes that “it is clear that it might be needful in speech to put [the audience] in the state of mind of those who are inclined to anger and to show one’s opponents as responsible for those things that are the causes of anger and that they are the sort of people against whom anger is directed” (2.2.27; Kennedy). We may disagree at first, since we generally think anger is always bad and irrational. But he may be right, since righteous anger can inspire nationals to take on a just cause of action (such as freeing those who are enslaved) and sometimes necessary acts (such as sacrifice, either of property or of life). Caution is in order, but anger (and other non-rational emotions) should not be dismissed out of hand as an inappropriate part of rhetoric for a virtuous orator in the Virtuous Nation.
The role of rhetoric in a Virtuous Nation-state is dependent on the condition that the rhetoric used will be truthful and honest (as would be expected with an emphasis on *virtue*). The role of such rhetoric is to provide a sound basis for deliberation by creating conditions among participants for decision-making that are based on debating the facts and the means for achieving the *telos* of the nation-state. When representatives spend their time thinking about the actual circumstances and what to do about them, nationals can be sure that the deliberation is on the right track. This is best seen when contrasted with representatives who engage in “politics” in the modern (pejorative) sense of trying to win an argument (or for any end other than the common good, such as self-interest) and not necessarily making the best judgment for the nation-state (in other words, engaging in ‘sophistry’). There are many examples that can be cited for this sense of politics, and how this is when mistakes are likelier to occur that are damaging to the nation-state; yet this is not my concern here. Rather, my concern is with honest rhetoric, and I do not mean to imply that mistakes will not be made when honest rhetoric is used, since as long as imperfect beings take part – mistakes are a fact of life. However, when deliberation occurs under good conditions (with honest rhetoric used to debate facts and options and the best course of action), mistakes are less likely to occur or to be so detrimental when they do occur.

It is also the case that honest rhetoric allows citizens to vote in an informed manner for their representatives and to consent to their decisions. This consent is necessary for the stability of the nation-state, and to avoid the
cynicism that results from the unfulfilled promises of representatives. Dishonest rhetoric fuels cynicism and distrust, and can lead to the destabilization of a government; it also prevents those citizens who are not currently ruling as representatives from playing a meaningful role in the public sphere by making their voting and oversight of representatives an activity based on manipulation by dishonest rhetoricians and not on facts and deliberation.

The impact of rhetoric, when used properly, is to aid in bringing about the flourishing of the nation-state. This flourishing occurs when people in government make optimal decisions concerning the means to achieve the common good for that nation-state, and these decisions can only happen when people deliberate best, which requires honest rhetoric among such deliberations. So aside from the fact that dishonest rhetoric would preclude the ability of citizens to give consent to those decisions, the incentive to achieve flourishing will provide an appealing inducement to encourage citizens to engage in this proper use of rhetoric.
5.1.4 The Virtuous Nation: Education (Morality)

The most important topic, though, to be taught in the public schools of a Virtuous Nation-state is morality. I follow Aristotle in claiming that moral education naturally occurs first in the family, through the habituation of children in how to behave. The lessons taught within the context of the family concern what sort of actions are right and which are not, and they are learned both through guidance of parents and through reinforcement by the other, older members of the community as well as by appealing to role models as examples of good behavior. Children must be trained – with a system of reward and punishment– to behave in accordance with how a virtuous agent would act: a consistent system of rewarding correct behavior and punishing incorrect behavior helps children modify their behavior while habits are being formed. Ideally, the habits formed would only be for good actions.

In addition to parents and other adults in the community who function as teachers and role models for children in that community, it is possible, when citizens are willing to do the necessary work, to use the media and technology to influence children in a positive manner. Under the direction of parents, music or computer programs or television shows aimed at children can not only teach skills like reading, but can also provide more role models for moral behavior. Characters who are appealing to children and who behave properly can reinforce the lessons presented by parents and other adults.
There is a concern, of course, that there can also be negative examples of behavior, and that these are as influential as, or even more influential than, parents and adults that children know personally. But there is no necessary reason these negative influences must be accessible to children all the time or even most of the time, and parents who show their displeasure at such influences as well as communicate with their children about these examples and who reward not following these examples can counteract such influences. Parents who spend a great deal of time with their children – by talking with them, reading with them, playing constructive games with them – and who present a unified and consistent pattern of reward and punishment to modify their children’s behavior and who themselves consistently behave well can have the biggest (positive) influence, since it is personal and direct influence they possess (as opposed to indirect, through a television or computer screen, or a radio).

The behavior being taught involves being able to discover the proper telos (end) of a situation, one that is best for eventually bringing about individual flourishing, and this allows a person to develop the sensitivity required to choose the appropriate means for achieving that telos. This sensitivity is acquired through years of experience that is guided by teachers: after proper habits have been set and after enough experiences that reinforce those habits have been lived, teachers (like Aristotle) who discuss morality help explain why such habits are the right ones to have, and this serves to reinforce moral behavior.

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79 In a free society, where it is not possible to live completely isolated and removed from the community that allows such outlets, it would be impossible to shelter children from these influences all the time, so some exposure is to be expected. But parents and adults can lessen the time of exposure so that the influence is minimal.
Paideia is what reinforces this habituation and helps clarify the mean by providing students with an understanding of the behavior they have inculcated. The explanation of why they behave the way they do will serve the community well, since they can justify their behavior to other citizens and in doing so, they can intelligently serve as role models and teachers to the young. In this way, they will be prepared for their future roles in the nation-state: participant at some level in the public affairs and adult member of a household that will have influence on a new generation of children (future citizens).

The role of morality here is reflected in the name of this nation-state (the Virtuous Nation). Morality is an aspect of political thinking that is often ignored, yet it can have a tremendous positive impact if explicitly included. The political values of equality, impartiality, consent, and rationality mean less and are less constant if the people bringing about and sustaining these values are of bad character. Those who cannot be counted on to behave well in terms of individual behavior certainly cannot be counted on to respect these values as concerns co-nationals and non-nationals: a person who is undependable in one area of his life is often (though not necessarily) undependable in many other areas. And this should be of concern to liberal nationalists who clearly want a political system where people not only reliably believe in certain values but (more importantly) reliably behave in certain ways toward those values, specifically, in ways that promote the liberal aspects of their nationalism. But leaving morality out of liberal nationalism does not provide any basis for actually behaving in such ways; perhaps there may be an implied political (or civic) requirement to behave
consistent with these political values, but this is not strong enough to bring about such behavior. Instead, I add morality to the list of required components of good nationalism and make this requirement of moral behavior explicit in order to achieve the political benefit that comes from including morality.

The impact of the additional feature of morality in nationalism is that it is more likely that leaders of nation-states will behave in ways contrary to the criticisms of anti-nationalist critics. Instead of resembling the stereotypical nations that critics find so repugnant, the ideal of the Virtuous Nation will set a theoretical standard for how citizens should behave within a nation and for relations between nations.\(^{80}\)

Also, the public education (\textit{paideia}) which is at the heart of the Virtuous Nation has an additional impact. Because all children will have the same moral and political training (that of citizenship), there is now an equality and impartiality that is central to the Virtuous Nation (and not just stipulated as a political value, as in liberal nationalism). This will moderate the inequality and partiality that will exist to some degree in the components of nationalism. There would be equality among those who have completed the nation-state’s education, since each citizen would have the same training and the same opportunities, as well as the same burdens and responsibilities. And because moral education is a part of \textit{paideia}, there would also be impartiality in dealing with others insofar as virtue would require treating citizens and non-citizens alike. To qualify as virtuous, one

\(^{80}\) This ideal may seem too utopian to be useful. I will deal with this potential problem in section 5.2.4 below.
must be virtuous in his relations with *all* others; there are no exceptions in virtue theory based on factors such as ethnicity, religion or even citizen status or being a co-national or non-national.
5.1.5 The Virtuous Nation: Limits on Inequality and Partiality

However, there will still be inequality and partiality in the Virtuous Nation, though in limited amounts and in two ways. First, those who are not citizens (or future citizens) would have an unequal standing in the nation-state, such that they would be denied full participation. But this is a justified exclusion of (and so justified partiality against) such people, due to the fact that non-citizens have not been trained to participate well, and so there is no assurance that they will work toward the flourishing of the nation-state. It is not unreasonable, though, to think that any non-citizen who could demonstrate an ability to fit into a constitution and both an ability and willingness to work toward its flourishing would be able to acquire citizenship. In this sense, there is an equality of opportunity to become a citizen: any non-citizen who qualifies could, perhaps should, be included, since the addition of his virtuous character would benefit a Virtuous Nation-state (and not harm it) and make positive contributions to its well-being. But in the end, a nation-state would retain the national self-determination to make decisions about naturalization, so there could be no guarantees of citizenship to such a person by outsiders who (rightly) have no say in a nation-state’s internal policies.

Second, inequality and partiality will appear on this view in the laws of any given Virtuous Nation-state. The laws will be written for the benefit of that particular nation-state, and will not consider other nation-states (or ‘humanity’ as an abstract identification or the ‘international community’). Yet even here there is
a rough sense of equality: other nation-states will act the same, and will do so without interference from other nation-states (no matter how virtuous they may be or what good may result from such interference). So each nation-state is equally able to legislate for its advantage, and the only restriction would be that the nation-state’s behavior be virtuous (which would preclude, for example, offensive attacks to seize lands or resources). Some nation-states may not choose to restrict themselves to being virtuous, and not only would they be seen as ‘bad’ nation-states, they also would not be able to attain the common good (telos) for the state, in other words, to create an environment that allows citizens to be happy. Thus, this disincentive would serve as an egoistic hook on rulers tempted to lead their nation-states away from virtue; even rulers who do not care about their citizens’ unhappiness will probably be motivated by the fact that overall happiness is more likely to lead to stability, something rulers presumably do care about (out of the self-interest of staying in power).

Even though inequality and partiality are natural at least at some minimal level and cannot be eliminated entirely, they can and should be moderated, so that they are not the dominant aspects and instead are managed and kept to an appropriate level. One way to limit these within multi-national states is to treat national groups (or any other subset, such as religious groups, ethnic groups) within the state as secondary to the state as a whole (which limits the level of partiality shown in these secondary groups). In other words, the primary identity of being a member of a Virtuous Nation-state matters in determining the relationship between the state and individual (while the secondary identities
matter in other relationships citizens have).\textsuperscript{81} Also, a Virtuous Nation-state (as a whole and in terms of each of its citizens) is limited by morality, so that participation is earned and not merely inherited by virtue of being born within certain borders.\textsuperscript{82} Thus, a Virtuous Nation-state cannot act however it wants, including showing undue inequality and partiality toward or against neighboring nation-states or their nationals.

The moderation of inequality and partiality comes about by employing an egoistic hook. In the case of inequality, it will be minimized by teaching citizens that the nation-state will function best if awards and distributions are based on merit and not on secondary categories like ethnicity, religion or family ties, since these latter distinctions have no bearing on whether or not an individual has earned the award or should be the recipient of some distributable good. For people who associate with others based on secondary categories of identity, there is an incentive to also associate with citizens who are outside of those categories. Thus, the active encouragement of equality among citizens directly affects the well-being of the nation-state that aids in their chances at individual well-being. In a nation-state based on respect for virtuous activity such

\textsuperscript{81} This does not mean that a citizen must view this primary identity as the one most important to him personally; for example, he might view his ethnic or religious identity as more meaningful in his life. However, in terms of his public relationship with the state and with other citizens, this national identity must be primary. Otherwise, citizens may think that they can be exempt from some (or all) of their civic duties merely by appealing to some other identity as overriding the obligations that arise for (all other) citizens. Certainly no state would allow this, let alone one that aims at providing conditions for flourishing for all of its citizens equally.

\textsuperscript{82} This need not mean that some will be exiled for not being virtuous, but it probably would lead to certain restrictions or revocations of privileges, especially that of participation.
associations will already occur, at least among the virtuous. But this hook allows us to advise non-virtuous nation-states on how to lessen inequality through increasing the chance of achieving (statewide) well-being.

As for partiality, the egoistic hook is the same: the nation-state’s well-being. But the obstacle here is a more powerful one – partiality is usually given to those for whom one has an emotional or sentimental attachment. So a mere appeal to reason is not likely to be enough, no matter how rational the argument for well-being is. Rather, such an argument must demonstrate that those for whom there is an attachment will be made better by getting less partiality – namely, that they will benefit individually from a collectively better society. One way to convince skeptics of this is to argue for meritorious qualifications that are supplemented by national preferences in the case of a tie between qualified citizens. For example, if there are two equally qualified candidates for a job in terms of merit, then let partiality settle the issue. This will reward nationalists for giving merit preference over other categories (whatever the basis for national identity is in that state), while working with, not against, their attachments toward those who share a secondary identity. Such a tactic is more likely to work even in non-virtuous nation-states than would an effort to remove partiality altogether.

The hook here need not be permanent (although it may be, especially in non-virtuous nation-states). As nation-states become better over time, they will come closer to being virtuous. And if they actually become virtuous, such hooks are no longer needed at all, since they will not only act in good ways, but over

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83 This is also a problem for (anti-nationalist) globalists who want there to be impartiality among all humans.
time they will have become good. Critics may charge that such a transition would take too long; I concede time is necessary yet disagree that it is too long. Changing humans, especially where emotions or sentiments that are the basis of partiality are concerned, takes time, perhaps even generations. But this is the surest way to have these changes take hold for good, rather than be unstable and vulnerable to relapse.⁸⁴ In the end, this hook can lead even bad nation-states toward eventual flourishing, through managing (human) nature rather than trying to go against it. This is the best way to manage the partiality (and its resultant inequality) that is a necessary part of any nation (or of any political structure in general), including an illiberal nation.

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⁸⁴ As an example of change that took a long time but that was stable, one need only look at American attitudes on slavery. Just a few generations ago there was a significant portion of the population willing to die so that slavery would remain legal in this country; yet now, not only does no one seriously advocate slavery being re-instated, any one who tried would be laughed at. There are other issues that have had similar, long-term evolutions in societal thinking (in the West): ‘separate but equal’ segregation of blacks, denial of admission to women to medical schools, institutionalization of the mentally handicapped, etc.
5.1.6 The Virtuous Nation: The Middle Class

A primary component of a Virtuous Nation-state, one that helps limit inequality and partiality and that provides a basis for stability, is the inclusion and expansion of the ‘middle class.’ This is a modification of Aristotle’s ‘middle people,’ who are people with a moderate amount of property, who represent what the average citizen in the state is, and who are the basis for the identity of the nation-state. Such people do not merely live, but they live well by making use of the opportunities that the nation-state provides. Yet they do not live excessively, especially in terms of wealth, and in terms of how they treat others.

The middle class forms the basis for mass participation in the Virtuous Nation. They provide a balance to those on both extremes (those with too little and those with too much) in that their numerical advantage makes it unlikely that one of these extremes could dominate the political scene (unless the middle class consented to it). This balance means that the interests of the majority middle class would be given the most weight, while those of the other groups would not be allowed to skew the interests of the state (so the rich could not pass laws benefiting only the rich, nor could the poor pass laws benefiting only the poor). There would then be stability in terms of the political discourse and the balancing of interests within the state, and in terms of the opportunity to live well, since this opportunity would be provided to the majority of people within the state.
Also, in terms of morality, the middle class could provide stability to a Virtuous Nation-state. These people would be educated in virtue, and due to their resources, would be most likely to act moderately toward others. Because they have enough wealth to live well, they have enough to be fully engaged in the moral requirements of citizenship (for example, giving time or money to charity). This is not to say that humans are incapable of wanting more than they have earned. Concerning property, Aristotle discusses pleonexia, which is striving for more than one deserves; he thinks it is subsequently possible to have too much wealth, namely, more than is needed to live a good life. But the people in the middle class of the Virtuous Nation would not be pleonectic, that is, they would not seek to have more than they deserve, since having more would require treating others unjustly, which would be prohibited by the moral requirements of this nation-state. Instead, they would seek to have an appropriate share of the nation’s prosperity. Those to watch are the ones in the upper class (the wealthy), who Aristotle thinks will seek to increase their wealth, some of them by any means necessary (even unjust means).

My view on why the middle class would not be pleonectic is based in part on Aristotle’s link between virtue and prosperity. He writes that “it is not by means of external goods that men acquire and keep the virtues, but the other way

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85 Because a Virtuous Nation-state has not been instantiated, it is hard to provide any historical examples of the middle class bringing stability. However, there are examples from Latin America of instability following the loss of the middle class, and this would seem to show a link between stability and the middle class.

86 For example, see Politics 1282b29, 1297a11, Ethics V.i.1129b6, Rhetoric 2.15-17; also, see Nussbaum 1998, 140-141, as well as Fragility of Goodness 339-340.
around" (Pol. VII.i.1323a38-41). Although many people assume otherwise, Aristotle believes that this is shown by the fact that “those who live under the best-ordered constitution (so far as their circumstances allow) may be expected, barring accidents, to be those whose affairs proceed best” (Pol. VII.i.1323a16-19; Sinclair). If Aristotle is correct that his skeptics are wrong, then there is a further reward in terms of material well-being that is found in the Virtuous Nation for the nation as a whole and the individual citizens who adhere to the virtue requirement, and this serves as an incentive (or egoistic hook) for those who are unsure as to why the Virtuous Nation should be sought.

There is a key difference, though, between ancient Athens and the modern world that makes relying solely on Aristotle undesirable (and which is why I have modified his ‘middle people’ to the ‘middle class’). This difference has to do with the type of economy within the nation-state. In ancient Athens, property was, to a large degree, limited in amount and controlled by a small group of citizens.\(^\text{87}\) This means that there was little social mobility between groups. Yet in the modern world, economies are based on growth and expansion of money and prosperity, and so social mobility is possible and creates an incentive among individuals to improve themselves and seek more. One reaction to this difference is to think that this incentive in the modern world to acquire

\(^\text{87}\) Victor Davis Hanson (1999, 403) writes that “One third to one half of the adult male native population within most Greek city-states never owned adequately sized land” and this affected their lives in other ways: “They never voted in the assembly, never fought in the hoplite phalanx” etc.
more necessarily also means there is an incentive to be pleonectic, and that the economy of the modern world is constructed so that the middle class cannot function as the Virtuous Nation mandates.

But there are two responses to this reaction. First, economic growth is not the same thing as *pleonexia*. This is because economic growth means there are more goods to share (even within a larger population), and so each member of society will have more as the economy expands. This growth is not pleonectic, as long as the share each has is an appropriate share of the societal prosperity. So striving for more is not inherently wrong, as long as that striving does not become striving for more than one is due or a justification to use immoral means of getting more. With more to go around, the middle class can have more than it previously had, and can increase in size.

Second, a Virtuous Nation-state is an *ideal* nation-state, and is not meant to be a reflection of any actual nation-state, especially not ones that may have a problem with *pleonexia* (in its middle class). In fact, the function of this ideal is to present a standard for evaluation and a guide for improvement; so if some actual nation-state falls short, we have a tool for criticizing it intelligently. Perhaps this call for a non-pleonectic middle class seems like a high standard; I agree that it is, but this is a good thing, as I will argue (in section 5.2.4) when I deal with the general criticism about using an ideal.

The next obvious concern, though, is to determine what an appropriate share is for a member of society. For the middle class this would be based on merit, and should not be based on the fact that they could control (due to being a
majority) how laws distribute the nation-state’s wealth. Wealth should not be concentrated in any one group of the nation-state alone, even the middle class, but instead should be possessed by all of the citizens in a way that benefits the state as a whole. This does not mean some sort of equal distribution of wealth, but rather a general prosperity of the community. Such prosperity would best meet the common good of providing an opportunity for citizens to live well should they choose to act on those opportunities. And not requiring an equal distribution leaves in place an incentive for members of society to try to earn more and (in the process) to improve. This also keeps this ideal realistic, given what can reasonably be expected from the voluntary and private transactions between people.88

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88 See, for instance, Robert Nozick’s example of voluntary exchanges of wealth in Anarchy, State, and Utopia, 160-164.
5.1.7 The Virtuous Nation: Freedom and Private Property

This general prosperity of a Virtuous Nation-state, though, also requires freedom as well as a strong respect for private property. As for freedom, Aristotle points out that the end of democracy is freedom, and this is what democratic orators should realize about their government (since choices are made based on this end) (Rh. I.8.5.1366a2-6; Kennedy). Freedom, as the goal, is likely to occur under democratic representation, since voters would choose those who would best provide and protect their freedom (and they have a procedure – voting – for punishing those who do not).

This is not to say that a democratic structure guarantees freedom; it does not. Democracy is generally assumed to be an important source of freedom (especially in the modern world), such that the mere fact that a democracy exists is believed to guarantee freedom. It is not a guarantee, though, since it can also be abused, as Jusdanis pointed out: many democratic countries have a history of committing serious moral breaches (the two most notable examples being American slavery and British colonialism). What is needed is a distinction between a democracy that is likely to commit abuses and that which is not likely (though there are no guarantees).

Fortunately, I need only point to representative democracy based on a citizenry whose majority is made up of a middle class to make this distinction. Although the two examples above were from representative governments, I
would argue that that is *precisely why* they are notable. For such abuses are unexpected from such nation-states, since they are rare in those nation-states and since they violate the principles and values of the nation-states’ citizenry. Specifically, in the case of slavery in America, this was a “peculiar institution” that stood out because it was in such obvious contradiction to the principles of equality found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In addition, these countries subsequently abolished their moral breaches, have worked to make amends for them, and have attempted to put in place safeguards to prevent recurrence.

Yet in contrast to non-representative non-democratic governments, such nation-states seem (on balance) more good than bad, even with occasional egregious flaws such as slavery. It was precisely through pressure on representatives that injustice and unfairness was dealt with and lessened; this was certainly the case with the Civil Rights Act in the United States. Hence, it is *because of* the existence of representative government that injustice is addressed and eventually eliminated.

But in non-representative non-democratic states, there is little or no allowance for dissent from official policies, which means that there can be no pressure on officials to address injustice. These governments also discourage deliberation on the part of citizens (something Aristotle thinks is essential to flourishing), since thinking about injustice will likely lead to unrest in that society (especially with no outlet for prompting change – there can only be frustrated dissatisfaction). Such prohibitions appeared in the Soviet Union, and currently in
Communist China, even though both claimed (to outsiders) to be republics and democracies. By denying their citizens the freedom to choose their representatives (since there is only one candidate from one party), by denying them freedom of speech and by suppressing a free press, such nation-states make their claims of “representative democracy” ring quite hollow.89

In addition, citizens are educated to understand their government, which will protect them from easily ceding freedom to the state. This is especially likely among citizens who are not only educated in politics but in morality, since freedom to act is important in assigning moral praise or blame and would have been a fundamental part of citizens’ upbringing. This is not to say that certain acts will not be punishable by law (murder and treason, for example). Instead, this freedom involves moral acts, such as charity: citizens who freely choose to give to others are praiseworthy, while coerced giving is not. So it is with all of the moral virtues: adhering to them is only meaningful morally if it is voluntary.

In addition to freedom, Aristotle tells us that private property must be respected and considered an essential part of the state (Politics VII.viii.1329a17). As he writes, “members of the state must be free and must have taxable property (you could no more make a state out of paupers than out of slaves)” (III.xii.1283a16-20; Sinclair). Property is a fundamental part of households, and

89 The fact that such societies feel the need to put such values into their constitutions or to advertise themselves to outsiders as having these values shows that these values have a strong, universal appeal and are important for claiming legitimacy.
its acquisition a part of household-management; in fact, property is necessary since "neither life itself nor the good life is possible without a certain minimum supply of the necessities" (I.iv.1253b23; Sinclair).

But, as noted previously, Aristotle warns us that a person can have too many external goods (although never too many psychic goods) (Pol. VII.i.1323b7-12), since they can lead their possessor away from virtue by wanting to acquire yet more. Clearly a moderate amount of wealth is good, not merely enough to meet the necessities but somewhat more, since "the life which is best for men, both separately, as individuals, and in the mass, as states, is the life which has virtue sufficiently supported by material resources to facilitate participation in the actions that virtue calls for" (Pol. VII.i.1323b40-24a2; Sinclair). In other words, good citizens will have some extra property that they can then use to help others and to achieve (on an individual basis) virtues like charity.  

This means, then, that there is an intimate connection in a state between freedom of citizens and a strong respect for their ability to legally have private property. For Aristotle’s list of virtues (that have a mean), see Ethics II.vii.1107a28-08b7. The virtues that would apply best to the issue at hand – the giving of money (in major and minor amounts) – would be magnificence (megaloprepeia) and liberality (eleutheriotes) (1107b8-21).  

For a full discussion of this claim, see Property and Freedom by Richard Pipes. Being an historian, his account is largely empirical, based on the history of countries with strong property rights (notably England) versus those with historically weak property rights (notably Czarist Russia). Countries with strong property rights (or who increased the protections of property rights) are ones in which political freedoms took hold or strengthened as property rights strengthened. Those with weak or diminished rights also saw the freedoms of its citizens diminish (or become non-existent). Pipes argues that there is not mere correlation at work, but causation (based on the ability of citizens to limit the power of those in charge by denying them the free and unlimited use of citizens’ property through, for example, taxation).
that the state can exercise over those citizens. This limitation comes essentially from the citizens' control over the flow of money to the government – in other words, since the state relies on tax revenues for spending money, the citizens have some say in how much money is collected from them, and on what it is spent. Without a strong right to private property, the state takes as much money as it wants, whenever it wants, and the citizens must comply, seemingly without complaint or recourse. And the state may then use those resources to further abuse its citizens (as with, for example, a secret police force). But with a strong right to private property, citizens can demand that the state act like any other agent in the state, so that it may take only as much as the citizens allow (through the voice of their representatives), namely, as much is as deemed appropriate and only under pre-determined conditions (“due process”). The result is that the sovereignty of the state inheres in the citizens, so that they have say in the government as well as freedom from harassment by their leaders.

Private property also is essential to the ability to choose how to act. This element of choice is necessary for virtue, since coerced virtue is not praiseworthy; the requirement of material resources with which to be virtuous is also necessary. This joint requirement of freedom and property in order to be virtuous means that these are requirements of the Virtuous Nation and must be found in any nation-state that is good. And middle class citizens, with a moderate amount of wealth, exemplify a respect for private property in the nation-state without the excesses of material gain, and they would be unlikely to vote away their ability to possess it (since it would not be in their interests to do so).
5.1.8 The Virtuous Nation: Friendship and the Virtue Alliance

The final concept to be explicitly included in a Virtuous Nation-state is friendship. According to Aristotle there are three types of friendship – one based on utility, another on pleasure, and a perfect type based on goodness (Ethics VIII.i.1156a6-b32). The last one is the one that concerns a Virtuous Nation-state, since it is the sort found among virtuous people, who are good and worthy of such friendship. The people of the middle class will be prime candidates for this, but it is possible to find among any of the citizens “who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake” out of love for the other for what he is (and not based on some incidental quality) (VIII.i.1156b6-12 Thomson). The primary benefit of this sort of friendship is that trust will exist among such friends. The trust that is found between good men is not based on ethnicity or race or birthplace or religion, but on virtue alone. Hence, good men will trust good men of a different background because they are virtuous. For instance, good men within country A will trust good men in country B, possibly even before they trust their own fellow countrymen who are not good.

More important than how this concept affects relations among citizens, though, is how this concept can allow for a broader application. In particular, I extrapolate on this friendship to apply it to relations between nation-states in the international sphere. This goes beyond what Aristotle envisioned, since he thought all alliances were built on utilitarian grounds: “it is considered to be for
advantage that they form alliances” (VIII.iv.1157a27-28 Thomson). But I believe that his conception of perfect friendship can be used to show that nation-states can have a fuller, healthier and more robust sort of an alliance, what I call the ‘Virtue Alliance.’

This alliance would be between two or more Virtuous Nation-states, ones that provide the common good to their citizens and that have citizens who are willing and able to act on the opportunities for the good life that has been provided. Such nation-states also have a trust existing among citizens – both within each nation-state and between citizens of different nation-states – that serves as a stabilizing force.

Trust, however, always serves as the basis for alliances between states, to the degree that trust exists. Utility alliances work so long as both parties know the other has a use for the alliance. But a ‘Virtue Alliance’ entirely based on trust and friendship – that is, based on goodness – would be more enduring, more stable and more desirable. Admittedly, such an alliance will be difficult to achieve. For it would be difficult to have two or more Virtuous Nation-states - it is difficult enough to have one nation-state comprised of good leaders (given the rarity of good men in general due to the difficulty in becoming individually ‘good,’ there is an added difficulty of becoming collectively ‘good’). Notice, though, that
this would be difficult, not impossible (as critics may allege). Thus, it would be difficult, but not impossible, to have a stable nationalist system (including at its foundation a Virtue Alliance) based on Virtuous Nation-states.92

However, were one nation-state to become ‘good’ (based on virtuous people), its example, which would include its achievement of the opportunity for the good life for all citizens, would provide incentive for other nation-states to become good. And once two Virtuous Nation-states exist, I believe that this Virtue Alliance would inevitably follow. The more nation-states that join, the more stable the alliance. This does not mean that all nation-states would inevitably become virtuous, or even that a majority would, or that some Virtuous Nations could not possibly backslide, or that nations that remain non-virtuous could not do significant damage (including to other nation-states, even the virtuous ones). But once the example existed of what other nation-states could achieve, the likelihood would increase that at least some others would work at becoming virtuous or at staying virtuous once it is achieved: the benefits would be enough to serve as a powerful incentive to many (or most) nation-states.

Let me be clear, however, on what this Virtue Alliance would not include or lead to: (Stoic) cosmopolitanism. I am not claiming that friendship between good men would lead those good men to place the interests of good men in another country above those co-nationals who are not good, simply because they trust the good men as opposed to their co-nationals. Rather, the primary concern would be for one’s own nation-state, since promotion of its virtue is the way to

92 It would be no more impossible than changing all persons so that they love ‘all mankind’ or ‘humanity’ as globalists would have us do.
achieve happiness (as an individual) and the good life. The Virtue Alliance with another nation-state will further that happiness – it will add to a nation-state’s stability and also serve as a further source for things like defense and resources – but it alone could not bring the good life within a nation-state. Besides, it could not happen until the good life had already been established in both nation-states. Otherwise the friendship would merely be a personal one between good men of different nation-states; it would not yet qualify as an alliance between virtuous states. And although a personal friendship based on virtue is good, it alone does not provide a sufficient political basis for relations between nation-states (nor for a good life).
5.1.9 The Virtuous Nation: Rhetoric as a Bridge between Reason and Emotion

Finally, a common stereotype about nationalism is that it is an entirely emotional view, held by people who are emotionally attached to their national identities, and is not—and cannot be—rationally justified. While that may be true for some people, it is not necessarily the case that all nations are overly emotional entities, nor that they should be. An obvious example is the liberal nation, which seems consciously constructed to be rational and devoid of emotion. The Virtuous Nation is rational as well, though not without emotion.

Accordingly, there is an aspect of this view that provides a bridge between emotion and reason: rhetoric. This is a tool that is used by the leadership of every nation-state, yet how it is used determines its value. For a Virtuous Nation-state, rhetoric should be a tool that is used to strengthen the virtue that underlies the community. By using rational persuasion, the common political values at the base of the nation-state are emphasized and continually justified. More importantly, rational persuasion based on honest rhetoric is at the heart of the deliberation that is required for a Virtuous Nation-state to flourish. By having an ongoing rational discussion of a Virtuous Nation-state’s core values and by facilitating deliberation, consent of the ruled is achieved and reinforced, so that the rulers can more effectively and virtuously govern, and so that citizens’ emotional identification with the Virtuous Nation is justified.
Rhetoric also allows for emotional appeals that are equally essential to the flourishing of a nation-state. These appeals reinforce an emotional sense of belonging with the political community, which is a necessary part of living a good life. But this sense of belonging is an emotional attachment to a group larger than the family or clan, on which an individual (through his household) depends for opportunities to flourish. The community requires its members to be willing to perform certain actions on behalf of that community in order to sustain it (so that the opportunities can be provided to others), and to perform them in a manner that allows the community not just to exist, but exist well. And without such an existence, the members of that community cannot exist well either. The actions in question include mundane tasks such as paying taxes to support programs that have no obvious, direct benefit to each and every member (for example, arts programs, university support, emergency aid) but also more serious tasks such as contributing to the self-defense of the nation-state (perhaps even sacrificing one’s life for other, unknown members of the community). Without an emotional attachment, there would be less success at convincing members to make such sacrifices voluntarily, especially giving one’s life, even if the sacrifice can be justified rationally. Rational arguments alone are not enough to motivate people to act altruistically, but rational arguments can aid in motivating citizens to do such things because they are right and they feel a need to do what is right for the larger community based upon an emotional attachment to it and its members.

This bridge between reason and emotion serves to meet the primary challenge to defenders of nationalism. Since critics often focus on the emotional
side of nationalism and the problems that seem to always follow from it, defenders must show that these problems need not appear in all forms of nationalism. But liberal nationalists did not address this issue, choosing instead to focus on reason alone, as though this is adequate to satisfy critics. It is not, since there is no explanation of how emotion fails to appear in liberal nationalism, as is implied by not dealing with it. In fact, emotion is a necessary part of nationalism, and as I have tried to show, not only might it be unproblematic, it actually can be beneficial to a Virtuous Nation-state.
5.2 Beating Critics to the Punch: Potential Problems with the Virtuous Nation and My Responses

This is not to say that there are no potential criticisms of the Virtuous Nation. First, there may be a concern that I have constructed it to reflect some actual nation-state that I favor. In other words, I have chosen Aristotle’s concepts that best lead (theoretically) to some actual nation that I think is best. If this were true, my ideal would transparently resemble some nation-state; presumably, the United States. And if true, this would also make everything I have written about this ideal suspect since I claim to present a view that is only theoretical (not based on some particular nation) and that is good because it meets a certain standard for what a good view would be (and not because it best justifies the existence of that particular nation).

Second, some may object to how I have used Aristotle, in that it may seem that I have selected only certain concepts that I find desirable and have left out aspects of his view that are unpalatable to modern sensibilities yet are intimately connected to the concepts I included. Examples include the role of women and laborers in Aristotle’s state or his inclusion of natural slavery as necessary extensions of his concept of the common good (and how, and on whom, to use a state’s resources). In other words, my view would have to include
these roles as well, since they cannot be separated from the ‘thick-vague’ reading of the ‘common good’ in Aristotle’s standard, yet I have chosen to leave them out, seemingly without justification.

The third concern follows directly from my response to the previous problem. If I modify Aristotle’s concepts so that I am not saddled with the same role for women and laborers that he includes, I now have even more people to account for as participants in the state. And by expanding the population of citizens and participants, I am increasing the number of people the state must prepare for participation (and this requires a greater amount of resources), as well as the size of the problems that arise with a large representative democracy that I discussed previously. There will be an even greater distance between citizens and their representatives, which leads to concerns about how citizens can make informed decisions when voting. And a new problem arises with this larger population: there will be a greater ratio of citizens to representative, so that representatives have a larger number of people to report back to and to be accountable to, and this brings a risk of a sense of disconnect for the citizens. For each citizen will think his vote counts for less and less as the population grows and there are more and more voters, and this can contribute to disillusionment and apathy among voters.

The fourth potential problem is a more general one that has to do with my use of an ideal (or with any use of an ideal in politics), which raises two different questions. The first is whether this ideal is even possible to instantiate. The key reason this can be raised is that this ideal seems to require perfect people – ones
who are perfectly virtuous and perfectly rational – as the only way the ideal could work. The second question is about the feasibility of this ideal even if it is possible. Specifically, that instantiating this ideal would be too hard, or take too long, or would create worse conditions before the ideal is achieved. These are three different possible ways that this ideal, even if it were possible, may not be worth seeking. All of these related concerns are the most serious and most difficult to address, and so pose the greatest obstacle to the Virtuous Nation.
5.2.1 Potential Problems: Theoretical Bias in the Ideal

The first potential problem concerns my use of Aristotle’s concepts, and how I may seem to choose those that would, when used in my ideal, lead to a theoretical nation-state that closely resembles some actual nation-state. Obviously the nation-state I would most likely be accused of mirroring – but then labeling ‘ideal’ – is the United States, since it is my nation of birth and citizenship. I concede that many of the components in the Virtuous Nation are similar to those actually found in the United States (and other nation-states as well), but there is one major difference that undermines this criticism: a concern with virtue, including especially the training (habituation) and educational system that bring about and sustain morality. To a lesser degree, other differences include the ‘thick-vague’ concept of the common good and the standard to judge nations based on the common good, the inclusion of self-sufficiency and flourishing as explicit aims, the requirement for deliberation in voting and other participatory acts of citizens, the requirement that there be honest rhetoric used, the demand that the middle class avoid pleonexia, and the use of perfect friendship as the basis of an international alliance between certain nation-states.

Merely having some differences is not the only response to such a criticism, although this list of differences is significant. Rather, it is more important that the differences between my ideal and any actual nation-state (including the United States) illustrate that all nation-states are in need of serious
improvements to become ideal. While some nation-states may be better than others and closer to the ideal (or at least closer to being ‘good’ on this standard), none actually qualifies as an example of the Virtuous Nation. Indeed, this ideal exposes how flawed all actual nation-states are, how far away from the ideal they are, and what they need to improve upon. And this includes the United States; in fact, given that it is where I hold my citizenship, I am inclined to be more critical of it than of other nations (if only out of self-interest, since it plays the greatest role in my flourishing and of those I care most about).

So even though the United States has some features in common with my ideal – representative democracy, a middle class as the majority of citizens, freedom and respect for private property – the most important aspect (concern for virtue) is missing. And that means that the United States (along with all other nations) cannot be considered an example of the Virtuous Nation. In fact, due to this defect, it is not even close to being the Virtuous Nation (although it may be closer than other nation-states that not only are not concerned with virtue but also lack other components, for example, states that have serious restrictions on freedom). But being closer than other states merely means that there is less distance to become ‘virtuous’ than those other states would have to travel; but that does not mean that the work required would be easier or quicker, or even that the work has been started, let alone that there is any movement among its citizens to start this work. And given how the differences pointed to above (for example, self-sufficiency and flourishing as explicit aims, requirements for deliberation and honest rhetoric, a non-pleonectic middle class) are all tied to
virtue and the educational system that brings it about, the distance is still quite significant for the United States to travel to even begin to be on the path to being an example of the Virtuous Nation.
5.2.2 Potential Problems: Selective Use of Aristotle’s Concepts

The second problem that can be raised also has to do with the components that I have selected from Aristotle’s writings for the Virtuous Nation. In this case, the criticism may be that I have used some concepts from Aristotle’s works while leaving out others that are necessary for an Aristotelian view. These components are sometimes seen as so connected to the concepts that I include that they cannot be left out (and I have done an injustice by leaving them out). But if they were included, they would bring with them serious inequalities and partialities; in fact, they would bring more inequality and partiality to a nation than it would have without using Aristotle’s concepts. Specifically, the necessary components that I have omitted (but cannot, by this criticism) are the roles for women, laborers and farmers, and the presence of ‘natural slaves’ in Book I of Aristotle’s Politics. Any one of these would be unpalatable to a modern reader; so it would be a problem for the Virtuous Nation if it must include these. Yet I believe that I am not saddled with any of them, at least not in the form that critics imagine. In fact, I believe that were Aristotle alive to look at the evidence in the modern world, he would revise his roles in the way that I will suggest here.

In the case of slavery, Aristotle’s view was that nature endowed certain groups with important abilities and left them out in other groups; in particular, he is concerned with the ability to reason. For him, some humans are ‘natural slaves,’ to whom it is just and expedient to deny freedom; this is the sort of
human who “by nature belongs not to himself but to another,” that is, one who “in spite of being a man ... is a piece of property” meant to function as a tool for another human (I.iv.1254a13-17 Sinclair, original emphasis). These are people whose function is entirely dependent on “the use of their bodies and nothing better can be expected of them” (I.v.1254b16-20 Sinclair). This function is based on the person’s nature, not on any contingent circumstances that may affect how well he is able to reason (or in this case, not reason).

Notice the radical implication of what Aristotle is saying, though: some men are naturally meant to be slaves, while others are naturally meant to be free (I.iv.1254a13-17, v.1254a17-27, v.1254b16-23, v.1255a1-3, vi.1255b4-8). This means that those enslaved by force (usually as a consequence of losing a war) are unjustly and improperly denied their freedom. At a time when slavery was seen as a justifiable consequence of losing a war, Aristotle is telling his fellow Greeks (many of whom were holding such ‘unnatural’ slaves) that this was wrong. Forced slavery was unjust and would not have a place in a good state; but this leaves the unpalatable view that there is slavery in some form.

On Aristotle’s view, natural slaves do not have the same ability to reason as free men (or free women). At one point he claims that the deliberative faculty is absent in natural slaves (I.xiii.1260a12-14), yet later states that masters should not merely issue orders but it would be appropriate to give suggestions and advice, since slaves have some reason (and that those who think they have none at all are wrong) (I.xiii.1260b5-7). He explains this apparent inconsistency in his view by stating that slaves are able to recognize reason in others, even if they
cannot use it themselves (I.v.1254b21-23). In some sense, then, they possess reason, albeit to a (naturally) limited degree, namely, limited to an ability to recognize reason but not to exercise it themselves.

For Aristotle, this limited ability to reason means that such people, by nature, are fit only to be ruled, and never to be in a position of ruling others or even themselves. Natural slaves are suitable for slavery because “they need someone else to deliberate on their behalf if they are to survive.”

He claims that nature creates a situation, because it is necessary, just and expedient, that based on differences between them one commands while another obeys (I.v.1255a1-3 and I.v.1254b21-23). Merely obeying another is not all there is: his definition of a slave is anyone who by nature belongs not to himself but to another, and is then a piece of the master’s property (I.iv.1254a13-17).

As a piece of property, the natural slave is a tool of the master, a tool capable of using inanimate tools to work. In fact, Aristotle claims that this is what makes slaves necessary to masters, since if there were tools that could work on their own (machines), there would be no need for slaves (I.iv.1253b33-54a1). Nature provides these slaves with bodies amenable to their purpose: there is a physical difference between free men and slaves, such that slaves are strong enough to perform their necessary (physical) tasks (I.v.1254b27-32). Another definition of slave, then, is that they are the ones whose condition makes it the case that their function is the use of their bodies, nothing better (I.v.1254b16-20).

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93 Schofield, in Patzig, 14; he points to Pol, I.ii.1252a30-31.
Aristotle believes that masters can be friends with their slaves, although not with slaves qua slaves, but rather with them qua humans (Ethics VIII.xi.1161b5-6). This may be due, in part, to the fact that their interests overlap, since both parties are served well by a well-functioning household. Or, as Aristotle puts it, if the master does his work badly, it works contrary to both their interests (Pol. I.vi.1255b8-12). Just as the master is expected to perform his function well, so is the slave. This means that there are virtues that apply to slaves, although their virtues are different from those of free men and women (Pol. I.xiii.1260a2-5, 7-14). What is required of slaves is only what is required for them to fulfill their proper function, and this means that the amount of virtue appropriate to the slave is less than for free persons – only as much as is needed to ensure that he will not neglect his work (I.xiii.1260a14-24)

A charitable reading of Aristotle’s ‘natural slavery’ is that he is providing a societal mechanism for taking care of those members of society who are mentally unable to take care of themselves (that is, the mentally handicapped).94

94 Nussbaum agrees: after describing natural slaves, she remarks that these “people are, presumably, people who suffer from some severe degree of mental retardation” (1995, 117). One caveat to this reading is that Aristotle seems to introduce an ethnic component to slavery: he seems to agree with Euripides that “It is proper that Greeks should rule non-Greeks” (Pol. I.i.1252b9). The evidence he provides is that Asians have intellect and skill but no spirit (so are easily enslaved), while Europeans from the cold regions lack skill and intellect, yet are full of spirit and remain free (Pol. VII.vii.1327b23-29). His view of natural slaves as nonrational implies that the Asians should not be enslaved while the northerners should, although this is unclear, since he himself came from Thrace – a cold, northern region – and he would not qualify as a natural slave. But notice that, at least according to Aristotle’s empirical evidence (he, of course, may be wrong), these groups are not entirely able to care for themselves, and so they seem to fit under his conditions, especially if certain groups (Thracians) were physically larger than others (southern Greeks). What would have to be argued against is the evidence and the generalization to entire nations, as is the case with his view of slaves in general and whether or not any humans actually fit his conditions for natural slavery. There are other readings possible; for example, Schofield maintains that Aristotle’s inclusion of natural slavery is done to explain the various kinds of
In a society that did not have state-run social programs, those who are mentally handicapped could be left to fend for themselves or exposed to die. But Aristotle makes use of these people (who are only mentally, not physically, handicapped), makes them part of society’s productivity, and does so in a way that requires their masters to care for them (as members of their households, in an appropriate fashion).

I contend that were Aristotle to see modern societies, with their mechanisms for providing for such people, he would at least allow the modern attitude toward such people as an alternative to his view of natural slavery, and perhaps he would eliminate his view entirely. This is especially the case when we take into account that slaves are no longer needed for mundane chores (farming, housework): there is a proliferation of machines to do the (physical) tasks with minimal work, less time, and less physical strength required. By Aristotle’s own theory, machines make slaves unnecessary to masters, though this does not change the necessity for ‘natural slaves’ to have guardians of some sort. In political rule (which he thinks are mirrored in domestic relations), and not because he thought that slavery was an essential part of the state (16-21).

In fact, this is what Aristotle thinks ought to be the case for the physically handicapped. He advised that, by law, the ideal state should call for such people to be exposed to die (Pol. VII.xvi.1335b19). A charitable reading of this, though, is that he is referring to people who would only be a drain on scarce resources, and would be unable to contribute in any meaningful way to society, especially without modern medicine to aid such people. Modern readers may automatically think Aristotle is harsh and unfair to people who were born this way, but a prosperous (modern) society with resources to spare can afford to find uses for people who will not contribute as much to society as others (at least not without significant help from medical personnel, family and taxpayers), and will not even contribute as much as they use. In societies without such luxury, using resources for the physically handicapped that would otherwise be used on non-handicapped persons, and because of which non-handicapped persons may suffer, would seem wasteful, perhaps even unfair (especially to those who would suffer or who care about those who would), and so may be considered unjustifiable under those circumstances.
modern societies, the state becomes guardian to such people, at least to some degree, in conjunction with families and friends. I believe that the additional facts that most modern societies find slavery morally reprehensible\textsuperscript{96} and that modern (welfare) societies find other uses for (mentally and physically) handicapped people so that they no longer only drain a society’s resources but are contributing members, would further sway Aristotle toward the view that his ‘natural slavery’ is an outdated institution.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{96} At least Western nations do; there are still some nations – mostly in Africa and Asia – that allow citizens to hold slaves, in some cases unofficially.

\textsuperscript{97} I assume here that there are such humans who qualify as ‘natural slaves.’ This is not universally agreed to among commentators. W.W. Fortenbaugh, for instance, after explaining that Aristotle’s view is logically consistent – since he is merely claiming it is possible for some humans to recognize reason while not being able to reason themselves – asserts \textit{without argument} the following: “Of course, there are no natural slaves in the world, so that the view remains theoretical” (137). Yet Nicholas Smith makes the opposite claim, based on Fortenbaugh’s interpretation: “Critics have argued that Aristotle’s account of the natural slave ensures that few, if any, human beings would qualify. On this conception, however, it would seem that \textit{too many} qualify: namely, all those that gain their good moral habits and reasons for actions from others. There is ample reason to suppose that this is the case for each and every one of us, for we all receive moral training of the requisite sort. Moreover, left initially and utterly to ourselves, we would be unlikely to generate these habits and reasons on our own” (149). But Smith admits that one difference between the reasoning ability of children and ‘natural slaves’ is that children grow and develop, whereas according to Aristotle natural slaves do not and will always depend on their masters for guidance (yet he finds this explanation unsatisfactory, and goes on to provide a different interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of slavery, based on ethnicity; 150 ff.). Clearly there are still questions as to whether anyone actually is a ‘natural slave.’ Jonathan Lear thinks there are, but by Aristotle’s own view “there ought not to be very many of them” since nature only “occasionally throws up a deficient member of the species” (199). One writer who agrees with me that there are (as mentally retarded) is Nussbaum: “it seems perfectly correct in Aristotle to hold that an ethical theory of human nature should force us to answer for ourselves, on the basis of our very own ethical judgment, the question, which beings are the fully human ones and the members of our community. It seems reasonable, furthermore, that people with very severe mental handicaps should not have exactly the same political and ethical rights as people whom we all regard as fully human. Aristotle is wrong because he makes silly and unfounded judgments about barbarians and women; but the question he raises is a perfectly legitimate one” (1995, 122). She assumes he is wrong to exclude women, but does not deny that there may be natural slaves (although I assume she would also want to refer to modern examples by a different name; perhaps ‘nonparticipating citizens’ would be adequate to indicate that such people will not be engaged in the political arena yet would receive protections from the state).
Thus, there are some people who may qualify as members of Aristotle’s category ‘natural slaves.’ They are unable to ever choose to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Virtuous Nation because they are unable to reason at a level that allows for self-sufficiency, and so they cannot achieve the virtuous life of a full citizen. Yet I can leave the concept of ‘slavery’ (natural and unnatural) out of a modern state without apologies for my use of Aristotle’s other concepts. Rather, such people are cared for through social programs, with the state aiding the family, and they are no longer considered property and dependent on non-related households for their care. Instead, they are cared for (by family whenever possible), they contribute what they can to the state and they possess citizenship and the protections it brings, even if they cannot be fully participating citizens who take part in all of the burdens of citizenship (because they cannot deliberate).

Another aspect of Aristotle’s view that seems to be necessary and that would bring more partiality and inequality to nationalism is his place for women. In *Politics*, Book I, Aristotle makes it clear that he believes that nature has made females inferior to males. Under such circumstances, the former should be a subject of the latter (v.1254b13-16). The cause of female inferiority is her inability to reason: she possesses reason, but it is *akouron* (‘ineffective’ or ‘without authority’) (xiii.1260a12-14), though Aristotle never explains exactly what he means by this. Her faculty is better than that of slaves (who are only able to recognize reason in others); but it is also lesser than that possessed by (naturally) free men. Richard Mulgan thinks the most likely meaning of *akouron* is
that they are unable to persuade others, so that the lack of authority with her reason is interpersonal (199-200). W.W. Fortenbaugh and Deborah Modrak speculate that Aristotle more likely means that a woman has a conflict inherent to her such that her emotional (or alogical) side often (or usually) overrides her reason, so that her problem is intrapersonal. Her behavior, then, is more emotional than rational and resembles that of an *akratic*, even though she is capable of deliberation and reflection (Fortenbaugh 138-139; Modrak 213, 217).

As far as society is concerned, though, Aristotle advises that women are rational enough that they should be educated with an eye to the state’s constitution, since they are one-half of the state’s (free) population (I.xiii.1260b13-20) This may be because women will be raising men’s sons, who are then expected to take part in the state and whose mothers can give them a sound foundation for future participation if those mothers know what is expected of their sons. More likely, it is because education is necessary for being virtuous, and Aristotle expects women to be virtuous (though in a different way than men – the virtues of women would be those appropriate to their functions) (Pol. I.xiii.1260a14-17, 20-24).

Even though they have a vital role, women would not be allowed to participate in Aristotle’s ideal state (that features a rotating democracy where free

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98 For a similar argument, see Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, where she argues that women should be educated in order to better raise their husband’s sons for future endeavors, especially since the intellectual equality of the sexes has yet to be proven. One reading of this, though, is that she is using this argument to persuade men who are skeptical or even disbelieving of the intellectual abilities of women, and who are only going to be persuaded by providing them an incentive to do so (an egoistic hook, which is similar to Aristotle’s practical advice to leaders of deviant constitutions in the practical section of the *Politics*, the so-called ‘Middle Books,’ Books IV-VI).
and equal men rule and are ruled in turns), nor would they share in the ruling at home. This is so even though they are ruled in the homes “as equals” and Aristotle “never categorically rules out the political participation of women” (Mulgan 181, 182). The husband properly rules as a statesman, in a permanent ruling position, while his wife is always in the position of being ruled (I.xiii.1259a40-b1, b9-10). A husband is more fit to rule, according to Aristotle, unless conditions in a given household are contrary to nature (I.xiii.1259b1-3). This is because women are in the same position as young male citizens, who also do not share in the ruling but are only ruled: in both cases there is a lack of experience such that these citizens, though free, are not ready for rule (and Aristotle thinks women never are ready) (Mulgan 194-195). Clearly this aspect of Aristotle’s view involves an unequal situation between men and women, where women are permanently relegated to a lesser place in society relative to men.

But I don’t believe that using some of Aristotle’s concepts obligates me to accept this view of women. Indeed, I believe Aristotle himself would accept a different view of women given evidence in the modern world. Aristotle based his view on observations of women in his time, who for the most part were not educated nor allowed to participate in household or societal management to any great degree. Effectively, a woman was under the protection of a male

99 See also Ethics VIII.x.1160b32-61a3, xi.1161a22-25.

100 Blundell (132): there is scant evidence for literacy among Greek women.

101 Blundell (129) suggests “the development of democracy in Athens may have been a parallel phenomenon to the subordination of women, in that both were linked in some degree to
guardian her entire life, usually her father and then her husband, sometimes her eldest son if she became a widow (Blundell 114). It was also the case that women married young (14- to 18-years-old), to husbands generally 30-years-old (Blundell 119-120). Blundell speculates on why there is such an age difference between spouses, and it is not to have as large a family as possible since resources were scarce.

The reasons for early female marriage are not at all clear. ... Perhaps in general it was the perceived need to control women that was responsible for the practice. The belief that women became wild and ungovernable at puberty, the stress on premarital virginity and the fact that the girl’s father (who would have been over thirty when she was born) might die in the near future, may all have made early marriage appear desirable. A husband might also prefer a young wife whom he could educate to run the household in the way that he wished...The disparity in the ages of husband and wife would have helped to foster the notion of the intellectual inferiority of the female, and would have reinforced patriarchal attitudes towards women (Blundell 120).

The reasons for the historical treatment of women are not what matter here, though. Instead, modern evidence matters. Not only is the evidence now different, the evidence perhaps would have even been different in the ancient world if Aristotle’s own advice had been influential. First, he advises states to

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the emphasis placed on the economic independence of the oikoi (see p. 118). Democracy might also be said in a very real sense to have robbed some women – those belonging to aristocratic families – of the influence which they had exercised in former times. More pervasively, since democracy created a growing dichotomy between activities which were public and collective, and those which were private and individual, it accentuated the disparity between males and females. Increasingly, men in the democratic state were defined by their active involvement in political life, and women were defined by their exclusion from that sphere.”

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102 An alternate explanation that she does not give might also be due to a negative ratio of women to men (like in modern India). When there are fewer women, there is an incentive for a family to find mates for its sons early (so that they don’t lose out to other men), before all marrying-age women are claimed. But I have no evidence that this was the motive or that Blundell’s are inaccurate, I merely present this as another alternative to her speculations.
start allowing women to marry at 18, a later age than was customary in his time.\textsuperscript{103} Second, he thinks women should be educated (with an eye to the constitution of the state). These two recommendations, if implemented, would have significant impact on the ability to reason, such that women would be shown (at least for those who are educated) to be able to reason at a level close or equal to that of most men, and to have a better balance between their emotion and reason than he witnessed. There would also be an impact on the primary function of women: childbirth would become less a burden to women, since there tends to be an inverse proportion between the number of children and the level of education, so that women would be less bound to the home to care for their (fewer) children.\textsuperscript{104} I disagree with Modrak, who thinks that Aristotle clearly believed that the differences between men and women were natural, not cultural, so that education would make no difference (214-215). I believe that the evidence \textit{would} be different, given that women are capable of playing roles that were denied to them in the ancient world (as seen by the fact that women \textit{do} play such roles today). So even if Aristotle did not think that the evidence would be different, it is, and it would surprise him to learn about the evidence the modern world provides concerning women. And this is just based on \textit{his own} two suggestions, not on anything foreign to his ideas.

\textsuperscript{103} Pol. VII.xvi.1335a28-29; the age for men that he suggested was 37, also a later age than was the customary age in his times.

\textsuperscript{104} Mulgan (186): there are differences in the lives of men and women for Aristotle because they have different functions; “Women, it is assumed, are more directly involved in child-rearing and more confined to the house.”
Yet modern medicine also changes the observations that would be made concerning women. It has made childbirth less dangerous for women, so that there is less risk that a pregnant woman participating in public affairs would also risk becoming ill or even die in the middle of her term of office, either one of which would interrupt the continuity necessary for orderly government (especially if such events were to occur on a frequent basis). And the availability of reliable birth control means that women (and their spouses) have greater control over if or when they become pregnant, so that a woman need not have her public service interrupted by pregnancy (and she can reduce whatever risks remain with pregnancy). These changes mean that women may be seen as able to participate in public affairs on a footing near or equal to that of men. And given that I have already modified his rotating democracy (with the effective principle of ‘one household, one vote,’ where the man exercises the household’s only vote) to a deliberative, representative democracy (with the principle of ‘one person, one vote’), there is no reason for women to be denied (direct or indirect) participation equal to that of men in a Virtuous Nation-state.

Aristotle also excludes farmers and laborers from participation, and this affects a state. Indeed, as Jonathan Lear points out,

That citizenship in a good state is restricted to the virtuous men has dramatic consequences. Almost all of society is excluded from participation in political life. It is not merely slaves and the poor who

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105 Aristotle’s methodology was observation-based, so I maintain that if the observations were different, his conclusions would be different as well. And this is consistent with at least one reading of why he held the view of women that he did: he was not necessarily a sexist, instead, he relied on observations and assumed that what he saw was the result of the intuitions of wise and respected Athenians who created the situation that gave rise to the place of Greek women and that they were right. Thus, he defended the Athenian view of women because what he observed seemed reasonable to him (Modrak 218-219).
are excluded; tradesmen, craftsmen, mechanics, and laborers – those who perform functions necessary for the state’s existence and well-being – are denied a role in civic life. Citizens, for their part, are barred from performing many of the tasks required for a healthy society (206).

Others have addressed this exclusion as well. Martha Nussbaum, for example, takes issue with Aristotle’s exclusion of farmers and laborers (as well as women) from participation in the state. Aristotle excludes them because their functions in the state do not allow for the leisure time required both for education and then for participation. But Nussbaum acknowledges that he does so for practical reasons: “given the city’s need for labor and trade, the city cannot do its job for all the people who are” capable of being rational (when provided with educational opportunities) (1992, 195-196, original emphasis). Yet she thinks that such people ought to participate since they are able to (develop the capacity to) deliberate, which is Aristotle’s criterion for participation (and for the education it requires).

Nussbaum suggests that an Aristotelian could lessen the leisure requirement, so that free (non-labor and non-agricultural) men with mostly leisure time would not be the only ones who would qualify as participants. Farmers and laborers would also be allowed to receive an education and then participate. She also frames it in terms of opportunities due to wealth: by heavily subsidizing public education and having a program of redistribution, such people would not have to work so much and would be able to develop the ability to participate (1992, 196). Presumably such measures would work to include women as well.
Fundamentally I agree with Nussbaum on this issue and would include all of these people that Aristotle explicitly excludes. The flourishing of the Virtuous Nation is enhanced by having all citizens who are capable of participating also have the opportunity to participate. The increased talent pool – of people who are capable of deliberation – means the Virtuous Nation should never be at a loss for filling its offices with qualified citizens, and the Virtuous Nation will also meet the liberal requirements articulated earlier (freedom, non-discrimination).
5.2.3 Potential Problems: An Expanding Population of Participants

But another potential problem arises from including women, farmers and laborers: now there are many more people to include in participation, which brings back the problem of citizens not knowing other participants well enough to decide for whom to vote and adds the problem of having to accommodate so many participants. This is not a problem merely for me; Martha Nussbaum's inclusion of farmers and laborers along with women means more participants on her view, and this increased burden significantly changes Aristotle’s view. This increased burden is now a problem that must be addressed by the Virtuous Nation, since women, farmers and laborers now qualify as full participants.

Nussbaum suggests that education and opportunity will show that these excluded groups are capable of participation, and so would now be included. But this is not enough to deal with the issue of an increased burden, given that Aristotle’s concern with a large number of participants resurfaces here (especially given the size of modern states’ populations), namely that when there are more people participating, citizens are not going to know others well enough to make well-informed decisions about them, their deliberative capacities, and their characters. And Nussbaum’s solution does not address how to include all these people in Aristotle’s rotating democracy (nor does she suggest an alternative form of democracy).
I agree with Nussbaum that such people should be educated for participation and should be allowed to participate. The change that I made from rotating democracy to a representative democracy is part of how I try to address the problem of how to include more people, since there would not be one vote per household, but one vote per participating adult. This revision of his democracy means that less leisure time is required, since there is less a burden of time to be one of the represented in such a democracy. The time it takes to deliberate on whom to vote for as representative and on holding representatives accountable is significantly less than the time required by representatives to do their job well. And the use of modern technology by such citizens (that is, farmers, laborers) would free up some time, since modern methods are much less time intensive than those of the ancient world.

And this change also tries to address the problem of not knowing other citizens well enough to have sufficient information to deliberate properly. In the previous section, I proposed that the Virtuous Nation could make use of modern technology and freedom of the press to make sure there is an adequate amount of information about candidates and how representatives do their jobs to make up for the lack of personal contact among citizens. And among good citizens, there is a good chance such technology would be used, since they would want this information in order to deliberate well. Admittedly, the solution of using modern technology to learn about candidates is imperfect. But at least it addresses the sort of concerns that Aristotle had with including so many people

106 Some nations – especially large ones – may even want to introduce term limits to increase further the number of different participants.
in the state, and the alternatives – leaving these people out or waiting for a perfect solution – are even more undesirable since exclusion of the qualified is unfair and perfection very likely will never come about. Should a better solution come along, the Virtuous Nation would be well advised to adopt it.

Another factor to take into account here is the much larger global population than in Aristotle’s time: there will also be larger states and more participants even if only a small percentage of the men in the state are considered qualified (as on Aristotle’s view). It is unreasonable to expect modern nations to break up into units the size Aristotle advocated, so the size is already changed. Since the nations are already larger than what Aristotle advised, enlarging them by including those who are otherwise qualified is not such a surprise. But given modern technology and its usefulness in terms of making greater distances less an obstacle to participation in government – vehicles that allow greater travel distances in shorter times, communication devices that allow citizens to not even need to travel – a larger population can participate just as effectively as a smaller population in technologically more primitive times, especially if the participation is indirect (voting for representatives and holding them accountable) instead of direct. And this is the way I believe the realities of the modern population base are adequately accounted for.

On the other hand, there is a distinct advantage to a Virtuous Nation-state from adding so many more participants than Aristotle would have included in his ideal state, and this makes worthwhile the cost of using more resources to prepare these participants. There is now a greater pool of participants, and thus
a greater possible pool of qualified people to choose from. More importantly, because there would be a larger pool of representatives to work with, more people will be able to enjoy even more leisure time over the course of their lives that would not have to go toward direct participation in the state. This is not to say that each citizen will make use of his non-participatory time to contemplate and achieve the good life (as Aristotle would advise him to do); but there will be a greater opportunity for contemplation if each citizen needs to spend less time in participation. For those who make use of this opportunity, this would be the best feature of an expanded participatory base of citizens; in fact, I believe this arrangement would allow for a greater possibility of both a flourishing state and a flourishing life (with its requisite contemplation) for a greater number of people than Aristotle’s own ideal would have allowed. And this aspect of my proposed change may even have made Aristotle rethink his arrangement.
5.2.4 Potential Problems: The Use of an Ideal

There is another very serious potential problem, namely the concern that the ideal Virtuous Nation is impossible because it requires perfect people: that is, it must be based on people who are virtuous and do not make any moral mistakes in order to function or even to come into being in the first place. Otherwise, the nation-state would be liable to making serious errors, potentially the very ones that current non-virtuous nation-states make and that anti-nationalist critics use as the basis for rejecting nationalism in general. Or, more importantly, it is utopian because the standard for current nation-states is so high that none would ever be able to qualify as a Virtuous Nation-state.

First of all, I do not need to require that all people be virtuous individuals in a nation-state for it to be considered virtuous as well. Aristotle is explicit that not all citizens need to actually be virtuous in order for a state to be 'good;' it is 'preferable' (since it would guarantee goodness), but is not necessary (Pol. VII.xiii.1332a35-37). To be good, a state must create the right conditions for citizens to achieve goodness, then it is a matter of individual choice; as Aristotle himself writes, obviously the best political system is necessarily that arrangement by which anyone could act in best way and live blessedly (Pol. VII.ii.1324a23-25). I agree with Aristotle on this: citizens need not all be perfect; the nation-state must create conditions, though, for the possibility to exist that its citizens could all be virtuous, and it should certainly encourage its citizens to so choose to act
(though not require it or coerce them to do so). One way to non-coercively encourage them is through education; but if some still choose otherwise, then they will have to live with the consequences (including being unhappy). Yet I believe it is unlikely that many would choose not to flourish.

Second, without the ideal to use as a standard, it is difficult to see how we could make a distinction between good and bad states. If a standard is only based on what humans actually do achieve, then there is no basis for improving beyond that, no room for aspiring to be better – we would be limited by our past. But when we set goals beyond where we have been, we make improvement and success possible; the debate may then be about the details of the goals or the details of how to achieve them, but the debate would still be about improvement and success.

This is not just the case for politics, but for all areas of human life and all human endeavors. For example, many people thought that President John Kennedy’s call for Americans to land on the moon within a ten-year period was impossible, yet his goal allowed others to strive to achieve what he envisioned. The point is that if leaders provide direction and inspiration to achieve high goals – ones that seem difficult or even impossible – there is a capacity among humans to rise to such occasions, particularly if there is an incentive to do so. And in the case of a Virtuous Nation, the incentive is that there would be the opportunity for flourishing for a large number of people, so I believe it is possible that some humans may be willing to put in the necessary work.
Finally, once the moral requirement is included, it is best to expect more out of people rather than less. Dropping the expectation allows people to work less, which I believe they will do, since it seems to be a part of human nature to take an easy way when it is offered. If the political leadership allows citizens to get the benefits of citizenship while not living up to all (or even any) of the responsibilities and duties that come with citizenship, then most citizens will take advantage of this opportunity.

But raising the expectation means that it is possible that some will achieve virtue; not everyone will do so, but some is better than none (which would likely result from a lowered bar). Yet perfect attainment of a goal need not be a condition for success. It is unlikely any human will ever know everything (attain perfect knowledge), yet education is valued anyway: being better than one is now (by learning more) is preferable to staying at a stagnant level of knowledge. The educational system could not function well if the expectation were low, since students would give teachers precisely what they expect (not much). After all, it is easier for students to meet a lowered standard and there would be no incentive to do otherwise, especially since they would get the reward of praise for this lesser effort (given that they achieved exactly what was expected of them) and face no punishment.

This does not just apply to intellectual efforts, but to behavior as well. For example, there are standards in baseball for achieving perfection, such as pitching a 'perfect game' (when no batters reach base for the opposing team). Since 1900, there have been only 16 regular season perfect games pitched; yet
their rarity and difficulty do not discourage other pitchers from trying to throw one. Even those who have achieved this perfection over nine innings of one game are not discouraged: no one has ever pitched a second such game, yet no one has retired immediately following a perfect game either (even though history shows it is unlikely he will repeat his performance). Each pitcher goes to the mound with an ideal as a possibility; most will not come close to achieving it in their careers, but to never try to achieve it would make it difficult to evaluate how one does, how he improves, and would give him nothing significant to aim at.

The same should be true for moral expectations (whether of individuals or nation-states): having high expectations is not the same thing as requiring perfection. Rather, it is a requirement that people aim high, beyond some minimal level of moral behavior that is expected (because it is easy to achieve) as well as a requirement that people aim to improve by learning from the mistakes they make. The ideal presents a vision to aspire to and a guide for what needs to be done, not an impossible challenge to meet (and certainly is not meant to discourage people from trying to improve).

Another set of potential problems arises from the use of an ideal, however. Even if the ideal is possible and useful, some may object it would be too difficult and time consuming to implement or that while implementing it, conditions in the nation-state would become worse before it got better. As for the first problem, that it would be difficult and time consuming to make worth implementing, I concede that this is true but only if properly understood, for two reasons. First, this is a long-term strategy at promoting a better nationalist system. Any feasible
plan for large-scale improvement of nationalism would be difficult and would take a long time, since there is to be expected a slow rate of change in improving any human behavior or attitude.\footnote{Also, any plan anti-nationalist critics may have for eliminating nationalism and turning humans away from nationalist tendencies would likely take a long time, perhaps longer than it would take to improve nationalism (if elimination were even possible).} The pace of change cannot be sped up through coercion (even in the form of legislation or government mandates), since such measures are likely to provoke a backlash and ultimately will fail to make changes in attitude (other than resentment). Whatever changes occur under such coercion are only due to threat of punishment (and if the threat is removed, the real attitudes will reappear). However, a nation-state can provide incentives for long-term change through rewards for better behavior and education in how it expects nationals to treat others. But these cultural and societal measures are most effective only over long periods of time, sometimes over the course of a couple of generations. So it would not be too difficult or too time consuming to be worthwhile.

Second, though difficult, if achieved the end result of flourishing would be well worth the effort. Although it may be time-consuming along the path to change, citizens would ultimately reap benefits from this change, since flourishing is not going to be given up or traded away (there would be nothing better that could be offered in return). So sacrifices in the short-term would lead to long-term, stable payoffs, though sometimes only for future generations.

The other concern about the use of an ideal is more serious, namely, that while putting the ideal into practice the nation-state would face a worse situation
than it is in now. In other words, things would get worse before they get better, and that working toward an ideal does not necessarily mean things are getting better to the same degree as the distance to the ideal. It is possible that coming close to an ideal but failing to achieve it has worse consequences than staying as is or even than being far away from it would have.

To give an illustration of how this might work, let me return to the example from the first concern of this section. Obviously, there are some similarities between the United States and the Virtuous Nation, including freedom, a free press, respect for private property, a middle class and a public education system. For the sake of argument, suppose the United States was like the Virtuous Nation in all ways but one – the role of morality (including its inculcation by habituation and its demand for honest rhetoric).\(^{108}\) The question then is whether such a nation, one aspect short of the ideal, would be just shy of being ideal (and so quite good) or a far worse situation (and so quite far from being ideal).

A strong case can certainly be made that being so close but with such a serious defect would be bad or even worse than if the state were not so close at all (and had more defects). The middle class, for example, would be the largest voting bloc with a capacity to do significant damage because the members would lack the virtuous grounding to vote for the common good. And Aristotle’s concern about the presence of *pleonexia* would likely exist, especially considering the freedom that such people would have; rather than use that freedom to bring about good, there is a good chance it would be abused. The same concern

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\(^{108}\) In other words, the other differences I gave in 5.2.1 would not be present.
would arise in relation to a free press – the freedom can be used constructively or not, and without guidance of virtue, there is a good chance it would be abused. For every other aspect of the ideal nation, if virtue is lacking, the consequences could be worse through the potential abuse that could happen.

There are several responses to this criticism. First, a nation-state that has far fewer aspects of my ideal would be a far worse place to live, even if virtue were one of the aspects present. A nation that lacks virtue is undesirable, but the cumulative effect of the other deficiencies would be worse. Imagine a nation, for instance, that has virtuous people who always do the right action, but who are not free, do not have access to a free press or private property. These people lead worse lives because they lack flourishing or even the possibility of flourishing, and so have lives that most humans would never choose. For history shows that flourishing does not happen in unfree states; not only do people not live well, in many cases large numbers of people do not even live because they are killed by government agents or because their basic needs are not met – long food lines or even (intentional) starvation occurred in the Soviet Union, Communist China, and occur now in North Korea, to give a few examples.

Yet even citizens’ virtue in unfree states is questionable: under these circumstances it is likely that such people behave this way involuntarily. For their situation is such that they merely live as they are only allowed to live (and if they live otherwise, there would be some sort of punishment). But ‘coerced virtue’ is not praiseworthy and cannot be considered virtuous, since it is not chosen or voluntary, and it may not be due to character (only to fear). And this means that if
such a nation-state decided to move toward the Virtuous Nation ideal and added other aspects, there could be even worse behavior than in my imagined (nearly perfect) United States. A good example of how difficult it is to have citizens behave appropriately after a repressive regime has fallen is Russia: since the fall of the Soviet Union, there are serious problems with crime and how citizens treat one another (not to mention how the government behaves with respect to democracy and toward its citizens).

Also, there would be benefits achieved while on the way to flourishing – even before nation-states become good, their leaders would have to act good. Actions leading to a nation-state actually becoming good would bring benefits, though they would not be guaranteed to continue. But along the way, trust would slowly build, citizens would become better at deliberating, and so on. This would seem to decrease seriously the chance that such a nation-state would start wars, would abuse its citizens or engage in any behavior often used as the basis for criticisms of nationalism. All of this shortens the time required to see actual benefits appear. In the end, this may help to defuse the criticism that the benefits are too far off to be motivating to bad nationalists: if some benefits are seen along the way, and continue to increase as a nation-state behaves better and better, then those who receive these benefits will likely stay with the changes and give more support for them; in other words, the benefits will be self-reinforcing.

And, finally, these benefits would not just be self-reinforcing within a nation-state but also between nation-states. One state that achieves these benefits (trust, no war, a flourishing citizenry) will stand as a model for other
states: certainly not every state will aim to improve itself in the way that the first state did, but many will so aim, since it is in the citizens’ interests individually to demand the opportunity to flourish and it is in the interests of the leadership (to stay in power) to keep citizens happy.

The most difficult part of emulating another state’s effort, though, will actually be trying to figure out how to achieve the same results under a different set of circumstances. Yet the more states that begin to achieve these results, the more models there would be for lesser states to look to for examples of how to improve (and with different local conditions). To think that there are some people in the world who would not want to try these improvements is to claim that there are some who do not desire to be happy and who do not care to even try to achieve happiness; I believe Aristotle is right to think such a claim is highly unlikely. The leader who may not desire change and who may impede his citizens’ chance at flourishing is one who has everything to lose (including his own perceived happiness) by allowing his people to have a say in their own happiness. In other words, his people will want change in order to be happy, while he wants no change in order to remain happy.109 This would be the case, for example, with the current despots in Cuba and North Korea. But the fact is that those nation-states’ leaders who want to change their nation-states would look to those who have already improved (although not enough to achieve flourishing or to be the Virtuous Nation), for example, the Philippines, Poland, the

109 Or at least what he believes is happiness: there is a good chance, on this Aristotelian view, that he is wrong about his evaluation of his own perceived happiness, and that he would need changes to occur in order to actually be happy.
Czech Republic. I admit that the hardest part of instantiating this theoretical ideal would be the first nation-state, since there is no example to look to for possible ways of dealing with obstacles to change and of meeting the conditions laid out for virtue.

Having addressed criticisms that could be raised against this view, it is now appropriate that I put forth what I believe are positive reasons in favor of the Virtuous Nation. The final chapter will lay those reasons out, in order to show that not only is a defensible version of the nation possible but it is desirable.
CHAPTER 6

WHY AN ARISTOTELIAN VIRTUOUS NATION?

During the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan gave a speech in which he famously referred to the Soviet Union as an “evil empire.” The reference was meant both as a particular and a more general label, which together served to highlight what he was criticizing about the Soviet Union. First, it was meant as a particular indictment of the Soviet Union as a country led by an historically corrupt regime – no matter who was leader – that had the immoral aim of universal domination. Yet he also meant the label to serve as a general condemnation of communism as an immoral political ideology, no matter where it was instantiated or by whom or under what conditions.

Critics of nationalism often use similar language, and seem to mean it in both of these ways, as well. There are particular condemnations of certain nations, for example, Nazi Germany, 1990’s Yugoslavia and its component (fracturing) states, etc. But the general condemnation of all nations as immoral is intended precisely because of the inherent immorality that critics believe they see in nationalism, which is most vividly illustrated in particular examples but they believe could be found in any nation-state, at least to some degree.

I believe such language is unwarranted in the case of nationalism. I have aimed to provide a model nation that meets the anti-nationalists’ concerns and
that is based on some Aristotelian concepts and on some modern (liberal) concepts. This model would serve as an example of a nation that need not be immoral, and so would answer the critics’ general condemnation of nationalism. I also addressed some of the particular potential problems that might be raised against my view. This concluding chapter will highlight and argue for certain general strengths of the Virtuous Nation that would show it would be not simply not-bad but actually good. In the meantime, it is an ideal, the best possibility for a nation, something to strive toward and to use as an evaluative tool.

In the end, while anti-nationalist critics are correct in their particular indictments of certain nations, they are wrong to make the general claim that nationalism is inherently flawed. This argument may not convert all of the critics into supporters of nationalism, but the aim is to convince them that there is at least a viable version of it that cannot easily be dismissed by pointing to examples like Nazi Germany. The Virtuous Nation is so far removed from those sorts of nations that their only commonalities are some basic components. In fact, it could very well be that Nazi Germany is the best example of a vicious nation (the exact opposite of the Virtuous Nation). Yet my concern here has not been to find an example of what the Virtuous Nation is not – my critics are quite capable of doing that – but instead to have provided a nation to which the anti-nationalist criticisms do not apply and which is a better alternative than the one that had been articulated to date (the liberal nation).

There are four questions to be asked at this point concerning the Virtuous Nation. First, why use virtue theory as the basis of a nationalist view? Second, of
all of the virtue theories that could be used, why use Aristotle’s version; and why use Aristotle’s concepts that are not typically included in nationalism? Third, why try to defend nationalism at all, given that there have been so many good criticisms raised against it – why not work to replace it with something that does not have its flaws? And finally, why combine virtue theory with nationalism into this new Virtuous Nation? I will answer each of these questions in turn as a way of trying to show that the Virtuous Nation is the best nationalist theory possible right now, one that would be better than even the otherwise promising liberal nationalism.
6.1 Why ‘Virtuous’?

In general, morality is often a completely neglected area of political theory; it is often left out in the belief that a discussion of morality is misplaced, an imposition of one's own view, is an entirely separate topic of discussion, or some combination of these. The strange result, though, is that morality can be invoked as a criticism of a political system or ideology, used to show how some instantiation of a system is clearly immoral, but because morality has been left out, there seems to be no plausible response to such criticism. With regards to nationalism, this neglect has allowed critics to imply, with some credence and persuasive force, that nationalism as a whole is at best indifferent to morality and at worst encourages immorality.\(^{110}\)

Yet those who aim to defend nationalism often distinguish certain nations from the stereotypical ones that give nationalism a bad name. But I believe the distinctions made to date – Western vs. Eastern, ethnic (or cultural) vs. civic (or political), liberal vs. illiberal nationalism – have been insufficient for making the evaluations of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for which they are intended precisely because they lack a moral foundation. In each case, it is unclear how the distinction made is supposed to work or why it is justified or even how it is arrived at; perhaps it is an

\(^{110}\) The strange result in general seems to be that if morality is allowed only to criticize a political system, and cannot be used in its defense, then it appears that all political systems are either amoral or immoral (since there is some instantiation of each system that could be pointed out as amoral or immoral, and would then allow this same generalization as is used against nationalism).
empirical distinction, which is problematic, or an intuition, which captures a sense but is all too often unconvincing. But explicitly including morality in nationalism can provide precisely what is needed to meet this criticism: a rational basis for morally judging between good and bad states. In addition, because there is a clear standard articulated for what makes a state good, there is then a guideline for actual states on how to improve and what to work toward. And this is what I have aimed to do.

Making this distinction between good and bad states, though, requires including a restriction on the means that are used by nationalist leaders, so that the ends of leaders are not the only basis for determining good and bad. Without such a restriction, the only basis for judging the means used would be whether or not the goal at hand was achieved. This means there would be no basis for criticism of a country like Nazi Germany except on the grounds that they had a bad goal. Yet if the goals of the Nazi leadership were shown to be good, then there would be no justification at all for criticizing the means they used to achieve those goals if there were not a moral prohibition on certain means. Most people, including anti-nationalist critics, would have a problem with a view that would not allow for criticism of the behavior of Nazi Germany. So this restriction is necessary for any good political view.

So far I have only pointed to using morality in general in discussions of nationalism. Specifically, though, I believe that virtue theory is best to fill this
For one thing, it is the only view that deals with both means and ends, so that the concern I just articulated is fully met. This is in contrast to consequentialist theories that could allow questionable means to be used by a nation to achieve the ‘common good.’ These means could provide for the welfare of a particular nation or they could even be justified by reference to making the whole world better. Examples of such questionable means would be killing off some who are judged to be undesirables, or using up all of the resources a nation can find, or polluting a stream that runs into a neighboring nation.

Yet virtue theory places a limit on what sort of means can be used to achieve a nation’s goals, and this addresses the serious criticism of anti-nationalists who seem to think that all nations are just a small moral step away from becoming Nazi Germany. The Virtuous Nation would not allow immoral actions to be taken on its behalf, and this is precisely because the ends are not the only moral determinant to consider. So virtue theory has a distinct advantage over consequentialism as a moral theory to be used as the foundation of a good nation-state, in that it defuses this common criticism of nationalism as well as provides guidance for the leadership on how to behave or on what needs improvement in the nation-state.

Like consequentialist theories, Kant’s moral theory has a serious drawback too, as far as nationalism is concerned. Kant’s theory is not open-

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111 I am assuming here for the sake of my argument that the only good alternatives for a moral foundation of nationalism would be Kant’s moral view or some form of consequentialism. Some may argue that moral relativism or moral egoism or rights theory would be viable alternatives; but I think it is important only to note that each of those would not be able to address the first and most serious concern of critics, namely, that nationalism allows or encourages immorality. For these moral theories cannot put restrictions on the means used, and would justify the very actions to which critics point as reasons to reject nationalism.
ended or flexible, which means that all nation-states would have to look and act exactly the same in order to be considered good. But this would make it difficult, if not impossible, to allow for cultural differences between nations; perhaps this is precisely why Kant himself articulated a universal or global political view (cosmopolitanism). This difficulty goes against the modern value of tolerance, seems to be the imposition of one particular view that concerns critics of using morality in politics, and, more importantly, makes Kant's view impractical since not every state has the same circumstances and not every nation wants to give up its cultural uniqueness (especially if nothing is to be gained by doing so).

By contrast, virtue theory provides a goal for all nation-states to strive toward, one that is amenable to everyone (namely, flourishing). But to work toward this goal, there is a guideline given: the details are left to each state to figure out, and to each individual within those states, so that the particular circumstances at hand can be taken into account when deliberating on what to do in order to flourish. Thus, virtue theory does not impose a view or a global standard and allows for cultural differences, yet it still provides helpful advice on how to live well (as opposed to simply living) and how to use appropriate means for achieving the goal of living well.

But it is also the case that only virtue theory can have both reason and emotion involved in a way that adequately balances these two necessary features of nationalism (and of human life). Kant's theory is too rational (it fits better, perhaps, with liberal nationalism), because it relies solely on having a

\[112\] While this flourishing is a consequence that is aimed at, the ends do not justify the means (as in consequentialist theories).
rational respect for moral duty as the basis of being considered ‘moral.’ And consequentialism leaves emotion out as well, since what matters is the results brought about, not how we feel about them or about how such feelings may motivate us to act. Yet virtue theory can provide guidance on how to think through a moral situation, and this would involve how to feel appropriately under those circumstances. Notice, though, that virtue theory can do this, but it need not; what matters is which virtue theory is used. And so I turn next to my use of Aristotle in particular, as opposed to Plato’s virtue theory, or that of the Stoics, or even modern virtue theories like that of Phillipa Foot.
6.2 Why Use Aristotle?

First, Aristotle’s virtue theory not only accounts for both reason and emotion, but also provides a moral connection between them. Both rational decisions (and the actions that follow from them) as well as our feelings are supposed to be moderate in order to be ‘good.’ Other moral theories focus on other aspects – for example, the respect for moral duty or the consequences of the actions – without ever considering how the agent feels when he behaves. Yet Aristotle is clear that with respect to actions and feelings, virtue is hitting the mean between the extremes of excess and deficiency. This moderation is important especially concerning our feelings, since it is a good way to reinforce moral behavior and helps to bring about future good actions on the part of an agent who feels appropriately when he acts (especially if he receives pleasure when he behaves well).

Aristotle’s virtue theory also emphasizes some concepts that fit in nicely with nationalism and that serve as a good moral foundation for a nation-state. One of these concepts is deliberation. In general, deliberation is necessary to have consistently good behavior, as well as to bring about the conditions for an opportunity to flourish (since such conditions do not happen by accident). But in a nation-state that is based on a national identity and that relies on national loyalty for stability, deliberation becomes integral to its functioning as a long-term political unit. For without self-reflection, evaluation of the state, and decisions on
what is needed for the common good, citizens could not meaningfully participate in the processes required for participation in a state. And without meaningful participation, it is hard to see how well they could really give loyalty to the nation or get the psychological benefits of national identity if they do not fully take part in, and so do not feel like a genuine part of, the state and its governance.

Deliberation also justifies mass participation in the state, since there would be well-informed voters and a stable foundation for mass participation. In this way, his concept supports the modification I made to his theory: instead of a rotating democracy, I include a democratically elected representative government. In either type of democracy, the consent of the voters is needed and works best when those voters are fully informed and deliberative. In a representative government, such voters serve as a check on the government and its power, and this means less chance of abuse, since leaders must satisfy rational voters in order to stay in office. And equality now appears in this democracy, at least in the form of an equal vote (‘one person, one vote’ instead of Aristotle’s ‘one household, one vote’).

At the same time, a representative government allows citizens to work jobs that help the state but are not usually elected government positions: law enforcement, education, production of food, national defense, etc. And the ability of citizens to elect new officials periodically means that they can tap into the

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113 This assumes, though, that the representative democracy in question is a fully functioning one that gives voters actual power over government, and so is not a façade of democracy, where voters are told to confirm the one choice they are given by the only people in the state who have power (as has traditionally happened in states like Communist China, Castro’s Cuba, the Soviet Union, Hussein’s Iraq).
resources of different people to serve them, ones who may have better ideas, better talent, better experiences, or all of the above. Also, a representative government that demands less time for participation on the part of those who are represented (who only participate indirectly) allows for those who work time-consuming jobs (farmers, laborers) to have a chance at participation (something Aristotle denied to them). More importantly, the time freed up from constant (direct) participation that is allowed to the ruled – to the majority of citizens – means that there is more leisure time than there would be with direct democracy. And this is something Aristotle believes is essential for living a good life, since leisure time allows time for both contemplation and virtuous activity. And this means that more citizens will have the chance to achieve the good life with a representative government that is based on a solid foundation of fully-informed and deliberative citizens.

But a representative government that uses deliberation also makes it possible to have a larger (good) state than what Aristotle thought was possible for a good state in his political theory. A larger state is more practical for the modern world, since it would better fit with what the world has become and it would provide governance for a much larger human population than existed in Aristotle’s time. It would also retain the benefits of larger states, in that it provides better self-defense and better use of modern technology (so that self-sufficiency would be available to a greater number of people overall with use of smaller areas and smaller shares of resources). Finally, it also provides for a larger pool of candidates for office, not just for government positions but for all necessary
jobs within a state. This means that a small group cannot easily monopolize choice jobs, there will be a greater opportunity for more people to participate in public life should they so choose, and there would be a greater chance at the best opportunities of the private sector. Even though this is not a part of Aristotle’s ideal state, I believe it all follows from applying his concept of deliberation to the larger states of the modern world, and this expanded concept brings more benefits for a modern theory than Aristotle intended.

A related concept that works well with nationalism is rhetoric, in particular when combined with deliberation in a representative democracy. In order to work well, the rhetoric ought to be honest, and this expectation may be possible for the reasons Aristotle gave, namely, that the truth and good character are more persuasive and bring certain benefits to those who use them and to the state. The use of honest rhetoric allows voters to truly give consent to the government and its leaders, since communication about candidates means voters are fully informed about what and for whom they are voting, and they can choose rationally. Honest rhetoric also allows voters to trust their government and its leaders since they are not deceived and this makes their democratic participation meaningful. There is need for caution with rhetoric, however, since it does have such potential for abuse, and so this concept must be used not only for good ends but also as part of good means to achieving a good end; otherwise, rhetoric can be used to make bad ends or bad means sound justified.

Aristotle also cites self-sufficiency as vital to the state, a concept that the liberal nationalists ignore, I think to their detriment: self-sufficiency is important
both for moral and political reasons. Morally, it is good for citizens to be self-sufficient, since it allows them to be virtuous without anyone’s aid; that is, a citizen who has the means to behave virtuously, and then chooses to so behave, is not acting that way as a condition of receiving something from someone else and is likely to act that way in the future (out of a constant character). Similarly, politically it allows a nation to be able to exercise its national sovereignty and self-determination, since there is no need to rely on other states and whatever demands they may make as conditions of aid or support. Whatever decisions are made, collectively or individually, are freely chosen and are an extension of autonomy; and only self-sufficiency can guarantee this freedom of choice.

Another concept from Aristotle’s virtue theory that improves nationalism is his emphasis on flourishing both as the goal of all humans and of the state. By articulating the goal and what it involves, it is then possible for a state as well as for individual citizens to achieve the end of flourishing and to appreciate it. Otherwise, it is possible that one could do the things required for a good life but not know it (like a blind man on the right road), and so likely one would veer off the path and not achieve happiness or the good life.

Aristotle also provides a concept that makes that flourishing possible: paideia. Only by having an educational system that explicitly teaches moral behavior, from earliest youth (parents) through formal education (teachers), and reinforced throughout by external influences such as other family members and
neighbors as well as positive examples in the media and children’s books,\textsuperscript{114} can a state hope to have reliably moral citizens. This educational system prepares future citizens for their roles in the state, and provides them with the learning needed to be able to take advantage of the conditions and opportunities for flourishing. Such citizens would also be taught the value of making good choices, so that it is more likely that they will choose well concerning those conditions and opportunities (since they would understand the benefits of choosing well).

While I believe that this addition from Aristotle’s concepts is necessary for moral behavior to be the norm in the state, I acknowledge that this will not fit with the views of modern readers. The key concern is that this moral education will be used to impose a specific, and controversial, set of moral values onto future citizens when they are students. Yet such an imposition would not be inevitable, nor do I believe it would be justified. This Aristotelian view calls for an outline of the virtues with the details to be filled in later, with each nation deciding – through deliberation and debate – what details are appropriate for its circumstances and culture. In other words, the virtues will be taught as values, but not specific as moral viewpoints on issues of a contentious nature (abortion, homosexuality, \textit{etc.}). Any educational system that tried to settle such issues in the classroom

\textsuperscript{114} These are the sources that already influence the moral development of children in any society, whether for good or for bad. My view acknowledges this and calls for all of these sources to be positive influences; that is, it reminds all adults in a society of the influence that they have on all of the children and young adults with whom they interact or for whom they provide entertainment (or any other examples of behavior that children will observe).
and without debate would violate the citizens’ role in deliberation, and so would be unjustified in doing this (and would then disqualify the nation-state from being considered an example of the Virtuous Nation).

Also, a state that provides the opportunities and conditions for flourishing must also emphasize that citizens have the freedom to choose to be virtuous. In this way, the modern value placed on freedom, seen as an inherent good, is fully respected. It is to be expected that not everyone will choose well with such freedom; but with good training (from *paideia*), many people will likely choose well since it is in their interests to do so (in order to flourish). And it is better to have a society where everyone has the opportunity to be good but some choose to be not good (or even choose to be bad) than a society where no one or not everyone even has the opportunity to be good (for example, where only a few are free and the majority has no freedom). This latter includes closed societies where everyone seems to behave well, yet they do so involuntarily (under coercion). Being good must be earned, which means it must be chosen and voluntarily done; one cannot be morally praised for behaving correctly if one did not choose to act that way, that is, if one was coerced into behaving a certain way. Thus, the freedom that is essential politically also captures the necessary moral requirement that in order to be praiseworthy an action must be voluntary (and this requires freedom to act).

My reading of how to achieve flourishing in a nation blends the freedom found in a democracy with the reliance on merit, education and virtue that are hallmarks of aristocracy. This is a mixture of the best of both systems, while
avoiding the downsides of both. Aristocracy tends toward elitism (which would not occur in the same restrictive way, since everyone in a democratic system has an opportunity to participate), while democracy tends toward commonness (which would not occur among a publicly educated, virtuous community). This makes the Virtuous Nation better than a liberal nation, since values of liberal nationalism (diversity and open membership), which are based on common beliefs and rational consent to them, do not by themselves guarantee flourishing. They may prevent certain bad consequences from occurring (war, arbitrary discrimination, hatred based on morally irrelevant categories like ethnicity, religion, race); but the prevention of bad things does not necessarily mean promotion of good things or achieving flourishing conditions. Yet the Virtuous Nation tries to account for both the prevention of bad things and the promotion of good things; perfection cannot be guaranteed (so some bad behavior will still happen and some good behavior may fail to happen), but including prevention of bad and promotion of good makes it more likely the good will happen.

I believe Aristotle’s concepts can usefully inform the current debate. Martha Nussbaum certainly thinks so: “The close link that Aristotle wishes to establish between philosophy and public policy … is rarely found in the contemporary world. The Aristotelian conception urges us to forge that link” (1992, 195). I agree with Nussbaum here; Aristotle discusses things that modern writers avoid and discusses things that they do, too, but in a different and useful way. This means that he already has a coherent political theory and discusses more things, and does so better, than many modern writers. Accordingly, I think
we ought to use the insights that he had in order to make our modern views and values even better so as to achieve the goal common to all humans, flourishing.

One additional concept that can add to the debate, though not always in the way that Aristotle imagined, is that of friendship. Between citizens, the friendships that are possible are based on utility, pleasure or goodness; this last type is the one that interests me most for the Virtuous Nation. The best friendship is one that is both emotional and rational: it occurs between (rational) persons of virtue, yet the attachment would be emotional nonetheless (even if its basis is rational). Friendship provides the psychological tools needed to make sacrifices for others and for trust, and it provides a solid foundation for a national identity, especially one with virtue as its basic commonality.

Friendship makes self-sacrifice more likely than without it, since citizens are likely to help those with whom they have some sort of relationship. This sacrifice can be material or physical, up to and including death. The willingness to sacrifice is essential to a nation-state’s survival since without sacrifice the nation-state is made up of autonomous individuals who work for their own interests and not together for the interests of all. Such an entirely autonomous condition guarantees that flourishing will not occur, since flourishing at times requires citizens to act in part toward the common good (and not exclusively toward their own good).

Working toward the common good requires trust in other citizens, which is brought about by friendship. It is hard to imagine trust between citizens without also having present the conditions that underlie friendship. Certainly an
Aristotelian would argue that the condition for both trust and friendship are the same: having a good character, known by each person with whom he is acquainted; conversely, not knowing a person’s character disqualifies him as a ‘friend’ or ‘trustworthy’ (since it is unclear what such labels would be based upon). As Aristotle writes, trust is found between neighbors and fellow citizens (Rh. I.11.16), presumably because they know each other well enough to make such a judgment.

And friendship provides a foundation for a national identity that is agreed upon by co-nationals. This is especially the case in the Virtuous Nation, where virtuous citizens will not only view others as friends but as similar enough to make them all members of a relevant group, one that joins together in order to achieve a common goal (namely, flourishing). In contrast to Aristotle, though, I believe it is not necessary in the Virtuous Nation for a citizen to personally know every other citizen in order to consider each of them ‘trustworthy’ co-nationals. Rather, it would be enough for citizens familiar with a certain number of others to trust them. Part of this trust would mean that friends of those trusted individuals would be considered potential friends, with a presumption of trustworthiness, in a chain of trusted individuals such that a man at one end of the chain could rationally trust someone at the other end even though he does not personally know him (albeit to a lesser degree than if he did know him). In the end, friendship would, through creating a national identity based on trust, help forge and maintain the emotional ties that form the bond of a community.
I used the idea of friendship in an expanded way to deal with relations between states, and this is expressly not a use of Aristotle. In fact, for him the only alliance possible would be a utility-based one. But on this expanded reading, the Virtue Alliance that would be possible between good states would have an enormous effect on the world as well, mostly as a stabilizing force. It would not guarantee peace between all nations, especially since there will likely always be some nation-states that are not good and that have leaders who are willing and able to be aggressive and other nation-states that are not yet virtuous but are working on becoming so.

But I believe that it would serve as a moral authority that is needed to deal with nations that all have self-determination and sovereignty. In fact, that moral authority is the only credible basis for criticism of nations; otherwise, criticism looks like the thinly-veiled self-interest of critical nations. This moral authority may not work against some states, though, and so the alliance could work together with other, non-allied states through conditional alliances (based on utility) or through economic incentives (such as trade) or even through deterrence (based on the threat of a powerful military response). All of these could serve to decrease even further the probability of armed conflict. Liberal nationalism, for example, offers no such incentive as part of its workings nor does it explain how relations between nation-states would be better if an individual nation-state had diversity, equality, etc. It would be possible for liberal nationalists to promote their values internally yet have no impact on international
relations (let alone a positive impact) except through conditional alliances, economic incentives or deterrence, all of which can work, but not as well as a fully functioning moral authority.

Finally, Aristotle’s example of an ideal that must be within the realm of the possible is useful and served as the model for the Virtuous Nation. In fact, contrary to the belief that the use of an ideal can be a potential problem for a political view, I actually see it as a strength, at least when it is combined with the requirement that it be possible. For one thing, having a model to use as an evaluative standard makes it easier to compare actual nation-states to the ideal goal. And this comparison is the best way to criticize actual states as well as to find ways to improve them. The ideal also provides an incentive for such nation-states to improve – namely, to be able to achieve flourishing. This is a clear goal to work toward; even though the details are left open for specific circumstances, there is still an outline to look to for guidance.

But the outline of this ideal additionally has the benefit of being open-ended and flexible. This means that the modern concern with tolerance can be met, since this ideal can allow for various particular cultures, and provides a rational basis for such tolerance. For any culture would be allowed as long as it met the requirement that it be virtuous (so that it has the common good of flourishing as a goal and that it uses justifiable means to achieve that goal). How each nation meets this requirement would differ due to circumstances, although this does not mean that however a nation chooses to try to meet it will work (since some actions are not courageous, even if called so within some culture,
for example). It does mean that there would be a range of possible ways for a nation to bring about virtue and flourishing. So a thoroughly secular state – for example, France or Canada – could become a Virtuous Nation, as could a thoroughly religious state – for example, Israel or Qatar. The improvements that would have to be made in order for that state to be considered ‘virtuous’ would not have to affect a community’s religious outlook (or lack thereof). And this would apply equally to any other cultural aspect of a nation (language, literature, etc.) that has no bearing on whether or not citizens are virtuous. In fact, all of these aspects could be used to promote virtuous activity, and so the decision of whether – and how – to use them should be left to each particular nation-state.
6.3 Why ‘Nationalism’?

It could seem to critics that liberal democracy is all that is needed for my view, especially since my view is partly based on liberal nationalism, which itself seems close to merely being liberal democracy. This would make the nationalist aspect superfluous; but this is not so – the *nation* in ‘nation-state’ is needed in order to achieve flourishing, just as much as the *state* is necessary. Nationalism can have the rational basis that is found in liberal democracy, yet it should include an emotional element that liberal democracy does not. This is not a minor addition: positive emotions are necessary for a successful community because they include trust, loyalty, and a sense of belonging to a community. Having rational values (such as equality, diversity, tolerance) as the commonality between citizens is no better a basis of an identity to feel good about and to rally around than a globalist identity would be. The most that both a rational identity and a global identity can do is to justify why certain actions should be done, but that justification alone does not necessarily mean that citizens will actually behave that way because it does not necessarily motivate citizens to act.

However, having an identity based on certain values as well as on emotions like pride (in being virtuous citizens, for example) can inspire nationals to become better and to act in ways that a merely rational identity cannot. Some of these ways, in fact, are necessary for the survival and well-being of a state, such as sacrifice and delaying gratification in order to aid other citizens. Without
an emotional attachment to the state, citizens would have to be relied upon to act these ways merely because it is rational to do; this may work for some people some of the time, but it is unlikely to be a reliable motivation for most people, and unlikely to do so enough of the time to actually achieve these necessary aspects of citizenship.

Also, for better or worse, the nation-state system is the one that evolved and that we have inherited. When trying to make changes to the political environment, it is better to try to work within the natural tendencies of humans in order to have a good chance at success for reform or improvement. The relevant tendency here is that humans want to associate in small groups. These are the groups that provide meaning in human lives and that fulfill our emotional needs: family, friends, social groups, etc. Co-nationals represent the largest possible group of this sort – it is the limit on an ability to feel a consistent, long-term attachment. It is possible to have an emotional attachment to a non-national, for instance, a friend who is a non-national. But it is unlikely merely meeting a non-national would evoke this feeling, because it is unclear what commonalities may exist to provoke any sort of emotion, whereas being introduced to a co-national can do so (when traveling in another nation, for example).

Yet there are certain constraints on the nation-state – it must be large enough to be self-sufficient – and the nation-state system meets these constraints (while alternatives fail to meet these constraints). And there is also the demand that the nation-state must convince its nationals that they ought to act in the interests of this larger group when necessary, since the smaller groups
in a national’s life (family and friends) will have a greater pull on their emotions. Most of the time this emotional pull will not be a problem, but on the occasions that the nation needs its nationals to work for its goals, it will have to make its case and draw on the national identity and loyalty it has created and earned to gain their emotional support (over the support they may initially want to give to those who are close to them).

Finally, it is better to fix a system that is known and understood than to move toward a system (like globalism) that is unknown. The questions that would be asked about an entirely new system include: how hard would it be to instantiate? Will it work? Will it actually be better, or will there be a lot of effort for a lateral move? Without answers, many people will rationally decide that it is better – in terms of time and resources and chance of success, let alone the risks of damage that comes with failure – to try to improve the existing system and its underlying theory rather than start over with an unknown and spend time on a new theory that may turn out to be unworkable and impractical. And no anti-nationalist critic has yet provided an alternative, let alone one that has these necessary answers.
6.4 Why the ‘Virtuous Nation’?

This final section is most important: it will address Roger Scruton’s moral question and my additional questions from my criticism of liberal nationalism. That is, I need to show that the specific shortcomings of liberal nationalism have been met by my view. The first deficiency of liberal nationalism was the failure to confer moral benefits; the second was a failure to account for an emotional component of nationalism; and the third was the lack of an explanation of the balance of ‘liberal’ and ‘nationalist’ components.

As for my first criticism of liberal nationalism, that it did not provide moral benefits, the Virtuous Nation does not face this criticism. Morality is now included as an explicit component of nationalism, and this inclusion is the only way to even attempt to provide this benefit since without it, there is no guidance on what morality would consist in or how it would be achieved. So although traditional and liberal nationalisms may contain morality, they also may not since it is not required. Only the Virtuous Nation can consistently show that there is a moral benefit brought about by (its version of) nationalism; so only the Virtuous Nation can answer Scruton’s question about moral benefits.

The second criticism I raised against liberal nationalism was that it failed to account for the emotional component of nationalism. By not addressing emotion, we are left with several questions about liberal nationalism: is emotion included or not? Can emotion be left out? Should it be left out if it can be? Or do
liberal nationalists just ignore emotion? Liberal nationalists seem to think emotion is not necessary for a good nationalism, and liberal nationalism seems coherent without it. But it is not a good reflection of how humans live – emotion is a fundamental part of what it is to be human. So aside from the fact that traditional nationalists will not be satisfied with the failure to include emotion (which may not bother liberal nationalists), the fact that a key feature of being human is ignored is a serious flaw. And it is a flaw that the Virtuous Nation does not have: it is addressed, explicitly and in detail.

The third criticism was that there was no explanation of how the ‘liberal’ and ‘nationalist’ aspects would be balanced. The explanation is required, since without it there is a chance that both target audiences – liberal readers who are skeptical of nationalism and traditional nationalists – would either reject liberal nationalism or withhold their support until this explanation is provided. For both groups, there would be a concern that the aspect they care about more, liberalism or nationalism, would be watered down or compromised in some way. The Virtuous Nation tries to address this concern, because each aspect is given its due and robustly defended. The nationalist components (national sovereignty, self-determination, etc.) are each discussed and retained, and there is no attempt to compromise them. On the other hand, the liberal features that were added (for example, consent, deliberation, tolerance) were also retained and left intact, and the concerns about excessive partiality and inequality were addressed (by
discussing how these cannot be eliminated, so would be kept with some restrictions). These two aspects, then, serve as an integrated foundation on which the additional features of the Virtuous Nation are built.

A few more points are in order. The Virtuous Nation provides a balance between emotion and reason, while other nationalisms do not: traditional nationalism seems to emphasize emotion over reason (sometimes excluding reason altogether), and liberal nationalism is rational to the complete exclusion of emotion. But both reason and emotion are important to a political view, especially nationalism, and the Virtuous Nation accounts for both. Moreover, it does so in a balanced manner by providing mechanisms for managing emotion (rather than try to eliminate it altogether). This makes it within the realm of the possible, since humans are both rational and emotional, but by managing emotion it also tries to defuse the criticism that nationalism is necessarily emotion run amok.

In the end, the emphasis on emotional needs in a political unit is itself rational, for it leads to a better chance at societal flourishing: citizens will work together and they are more likely to sacrifice for others, since the political unit provides a way to meet the psychological need of connecting with others who are like oneself in some relevant way. Given that the Virtuous Nation can do this while also including the political values of liberal nationalism as well as promoting moral behavior and a meritorious basis for identity, I believe that the Virtuous

\[115\] And at individual flourishing. Deborah Achtenberg points out that Aristotle thinks that both reason and passion are needed for human development and for human flourishing. She asserts that for Aristotle emotion and reason are not separate, which means “first, that for a person whose character is well-developed, emotion and reason are in harmony, not in conflict; second, that for him emotions are types of cognition” (100; see also 97). For a modern writer who argues that reason and emotion are inseparable, see Antonio Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. 285
Nation is superior to the liberal nation. Its primary benefit, then, is that it manages emotion, even though critics think that nationalism, commonly understood, cannot achieve this. But it also adds emotion to the overly rational liberal nation, so that the naturally emotional side of humanity is now put to use to work toward human flourishing. This balancing act of the Virtuous Nation – a mean between the extremes of the critics (who think nationalism is too emotional) and the liberal nationalists (who omit emotion, and so present an incomplete view) – provides a serious and solid foundation for a good and workable political structure for the modern world.

Finally, the nation is usually seen as an exclusivist entity, and it is criticized for this feature. Liberal nationalism offered an inclusivist nation, one that values tolerance and that allows different cultures to exist within its realm. The only requirement for inclusion seems to be a belief in the right values. The problem, however, is that liberal nationalists do not also include a moral mechanism to require or at least encourage citizens to actually behave in accordance with these values. The Virtuous Nation does both, though: there is an inclusivist basis for citizenship – anyone who values virtue could be a citizen – and there is an additional requirement that citizens actually try to be virtuous. Various instantiations of the Virtuous Nation would differ in appearance, since (like liberal nationalism) each Nation would have its own culture and look: different languages, religions, literature, art, etc., as well as its own way of being virtuous. Yet each Virtuous Nation would be virtuous, which could not be guaranteed by liberal nationalists concerning instantiations of their view. And
while a lack of inclusivism can be a criticism of a political view, merely being inclusivist is not enough, since it alone does not bring about a good life. That is, more people will exist in such a nation-state, but will not necessarily exist well.

In conclusion, I have taken the anti-nationalist critics seriously and tried to provide them with the strongest criticisms possible, especially the theoretical one. And I tried to show that as appealing as liberal nationalism is as an alternative to traditional nationalism and as a response to the critics, it still fell short. The Virtuous Nation fills in these gaps and is a much better alternative than the liberal nation. For it has all its strengths yet has improved on its flaws to provide a justifiable foundation for a 'good' nation-state. And it is most likely to meet the following, plausible standard for the best constitution: it “must be one which is so ordered that any person whatsoever may prosper best and live blessedly” (Pol. VII.ii.1324a23-25 Sinclair). In other words, a system should provide the best opportunity for individual flourishing, and the Virtuous Nation does, in part, because flourishing is accounted for on this theory. And something is more likely in general to be found when people know what they are working toward (rather than go blindly without any direction or purpose). This is especially the case when they are part of a positive, productive goal-oriented whole, namely, the Virtuous Nation. Because it offers what no other nationalism can and because it can be a positive structure that can provide the basis for widespread flourishing, I believe that the Virtuous Nation is the best model for the nation-state.
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