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National identity and citizenship have become increasingly visible and contentious issues in recent years as established alignments of people, places and policies have become unsettled. In this chapter, we explore some of the ways in which a cultural analysis can illuminate these processes in relation to the politics and policies of welfare. We begin by discussing the problems and possibilities associated with foregrounding questions of culture. We then examine how questions of citizenship and national identity have been bound up with the formations of welfare, state and nation associated with the ‘golden age’ of the welfare state and nation state (Huber and Stephens, 2002; Leibfried and Zürn, 2005). The destabilization of these formations has made the relationship between national identity, citizenship and welfare appear more fragile and contested. We consider how contemporary processes – including new transnational flows of people – have contributed to this unsettling. Finally, we consider whether such contemporary unsettling might make us rethink the assumed unity of people, places and policies in older formations of nation, state and welfare. In this we share Sharma and Gupta’s aspiration that ‘new insights might be gained from treating states as cultural artifacts while simultaneously framing them in transnational dynamics’ (2006: 5-6).

The (re-)discovery of culture

Culture has been a marginal or residual concept in the social sciences, particularly in those disciplines that have laid claim to analysing welfare states – economics, political science and social policy. A concern with the ‘hard’ analytics of
structural or institutional regularities and differences has dominated the study of welfare systems. By contrast, culture has usually been identified as a ‘soft’ term, hardly adequate to the demands of rigorous social analysis. There have been attempts to operationalize ‘culture’ in ways that would turn it into a usable independent variable in social analysis, for example, by quantifying the elementary characteristics of different cultures – national cultures, organisational cultures and so on. In this chapter, we take a rather different approach to cultural analysis – one which draws on developments in anthropology, cultural studies, social history and a variety of forms of post-structuralist theorising (see, for example, Clarke, 2004; Sharma and Gupta, 2006; Steinmetz, 1999).

Calhoun (2005) has argued that there are two main views of culture in the social sciences. One treats culture as a specific and delimited social field – the domain of values or aesthetics that can be distinguished from other fields (the economy, politics, etc.). The alternative view sees culture as saturating society. Here, culture denotes the practices of meaning making, and all domains of social life involve social agents in the production, distribution and consumption of meaning. Our analysis starts from this latter view. Culture leads to questions of how meanings are made, contested and institutionalized, taking us to our second starting point – the study of culture as articulated formations rather than unitary totalities. The attempt to define distinctive cultures has always been at risk of essentializing, naturalizing and de-historicizing them. For example, the study of organisational cultures tends to focus on the dominant, official, and formal cultural elements of organisations. In the process, other dimensions – the subordinate, the unofficial and the informal meanings of the organisation – tend to disappear. As a result the dynamics that shape the organisation as a cultural formation – the unity of different, disparate and sometimes
contending elements – also disappear from view. National cultures also merit being treated as formations: the (temporary) unity of disparate and sometimes contending elements.

Our other starting points flow from these. We share the view developed in the editors’ introduction that culture, rather than being a property that people possess (or that possesses people), denotes the social practices in which meanings are produced, distributed and consumed. This view of culture as meaning also implies dynamics of contestation. It is linked to questions about the relationship between meanings and power, or between meanings and the construction, consolidation and challenging of relations of domination and subordination. In the context of this volume, we want to emphasise a view of culture as socially endemic; as articulated in specific formations; as the product of social practices; and as contested and changeable.

**Fixing the Citizen: formations of welfare, state and nation**

The citizen is located at the centre of formations of welfare, state and nation in the West. Citizenship has become predominantly associated with the ‘Westphalian’ nation states of Europe and North America, particularly in their post Second World War ‘Golden Age’, and forms of social citizenship have been tightly bound up with questions of national membership, even though the conditions and meanings of being a citizen/member have been constructed differently in particular nation-states (Castles and Davidson, 2000). This association of citizenship with welfare provision has been a critical element of modern western conceptions of being a citizen (Leibfried and Zürn, 2005). Welfare added a substantive social content to the status of being a citizen: processes of education, health and social care, as well as the array of social protection benefits. At a time when discussions of welfare and
welfare states are often narrowed to questions of labour market policy and income transfer systems, it is important to remember that the experience of citizenship is also located in relationships, processes and practices of service provision (Lewis, 2004). This social dimension of citizenship has been exposed to processes of retreat, retrenchment and reform in the complex conflicts associated with remaking the relationship between welfare and the state (Clarke, 2004; 2005c).

We suggest that the figure of the citizen can be viewed as triangulated in formations of welfare, state and nation as in Figure 1 (borrowed from Clarke, 2004):

**Figure 1.1: Locating the citizen**

![Diagram](image)

Different national welfare systems have articulated specific conceptions of welfare, state and nation. This is rather different from saying that there are different welfare states (a founding conception of comparative social policy). Rather, different forms of welfare systems are connected with different state formations in the service of specific imaginaries of the nation/people and its needs. Each of the three terms – welfare, state and nation – is the focus of conflicting imaginaries: ideas and ideals of
what welfare, state and nation should mean and how they might be brought into alignment. For example, Castells and Himenan’s (2002) study of Finland identified a distinctive nation-building role for the Finnish state through expansive and interventionist forms of economic and social policy. In contrast, the limited welfarism of the UK has been articulated with a more disciplinary model of the state, and with concerns about how to manage the future of a ‘post-imperial’ nation. We want to emphasise here the importance of thinking about the (different) assemblages of welfare, state and nation – rather than treating nation as merely the territorial basis on which different welfare states are constructed. ‘Nation building’ is a term usually associated with ‘developing’ societies, but all societies are concerned with how to manage, regulate and ‘improve’ the nation/people. This view treats nations as ‘imagined communities’ or ‘political imaginaries’, rather than pre-existing entities whose ‘character’ is expressed or reflected in its political institutions or cultural forms (Anderson, 1983; Eley and Suny, 1996; Puri, 2004).

For most western societies, national identity was also the condition for what Morris (1998) calls ‘legitimate membership of the welfare community’: being part of the nation was the basis for claims on the state. Such national identity has been bound up with imagined communities of shared racialized or ethnicized identities, where the test of ‘legitimate membership’ has often been closely associated with the apparent difference between ‘nationals’ and ‘others’ (Castles, 2000). As a consequence, nation-states have engaged in the business of how to tell the difference between ‘legitimate members’ and ‘others’: trying to identify ‘aliens’, ‘illegals’, and other people who ‘do not belong’. This business of marking difference ranges from the most formal statements of nationality and entitlement in legislation down to the everyday practices of public agencies ‘sifting’ people. As a recent study by
Morissens and Sainsbury (2005) indicates, such nationalising systems of welfare entitlement have profound consequences for the social rights of migrants, producing ‘large disparities between how migrant and citizen households fare in welfare states’ (2005: 654).

This ‘national’ model of how welfare, state and nation are articulated was shared by most western societies in the twentieth century, resting on an assumed unity of people, place and political institutions: what has been called the territorial or container view of the nation state (Clarke, 2005a; Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). Recently, different tendencies have come together to undermine or destabilise this assumed unity of people, place and political institutions. These include the greater internationalization or globalization of economic processes such as flows of capital, goods and manufacturing processes (Yeates, 2001); the rise of supra-national political institutions (such as the European Union), and the associated growth in significance of regional or sub-national levels of governance, whose combined effect is sometimes described as the ‘hollowing out’ of the nation state (Rhodes, 1997; see also Ferrera, 2005). Equally significant are the multiple movements of people across national borders. Such migrations across and around Europe compound different dynamics: ‘postcolonial’ diasporas along Europe’s colonial lines of force; or the flows from Eastern to Western Europe, from Southern to Northern Europe, and across what Balibar (2002) calls the ‘Euro-Mediterranean ensemble’.

Such tendencies have produced an outburst of what might be called ‘epochal’ scholarship, announcing both the end of the welfare state and the death of the nation state. Much effort has also been expended on demonstrating the counter view – that both welfare states and nation states persist (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 1996; Kuhnle, 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2001). But the binary structure of these debates obscures what
ought to be the most interesting questions: in what ways have these processes unsetted the established formations of welfare, state and nation; and what new formations are being constructed in their place? Such questions refocus our attention around a different conception of the current period, seeing it as marked by profound political uncertainty and conflict about:

- what welfare should mean, especially about its relationship to independence and dependence; its costs; and to whom it should be provided;
- what the role of the state should be, especially in relation to markets and the private realm of families/households; and
- what the nation is and should be, especially in relation to supra-national institutions and processes; and to migration and the ‘multi-cultural’ question.

Such issues intersect: what sorts of welfare, organised through what sorts of governance systems are needed to secure the future of the nation? Who are the people who should receive welfare, and under what conditions? We have seen different political-cultural projects seeking to create new settlements in the face of these uncertainties: attempts to imagine, institutionalise and naturalise new alignments of welfare, state and nation. These range from the globalising demands of corporate neo-liberalism seeking to ‘liberate’ people from the confines of ‘old’ systems, states and processes; through resurgent nationalisms, aiming to restore the imagined unities of people, place and political institutions; to efforts to articulate a ‘European’ identity, located in, and sustained by, a ‘European social model’ that would provide an alternative to the anti-welfarist and anti-statist drive of corporate neo-liberalism. European ‘welfare states’ are being remade in these encounters where drives towards
‘liberalization’, ‘flexibility’ and ‘activation’ meet commitments to promoting ‘social protection’ and ‘social inclusion’ in local, national and supra-national settings (see, for example, Fink, Lewis and Clarke, 2001; Newman, 2005; Sykes, Palier and Prior, 2000).

**Transitions and trajectories**

These unsettling times have called into question the apparently fixed relationships between nation, state and welfare that formed the taken-for-granted embodiments of the ‘social’ in Western societies (Clarke, 2004). The sense of stability has been replaced by uncertainty as multiple transitions coincide. Each element of these formations – nation, state and welfare – has been subject to contending forces, struggling to define its future direction. These may not always sit comfortably together, for example where attempts to sustain social-democratic or expansive conceptions of welfare encounter political projects intended to diminish or roll back the state (and its fiscal and operational capacities). While we can see some general tendencies here, they tend to be most visible in terms of welfare and the state. After three decades of neo-liberalism, we can recognise the sorts of connections that it makes between anti-statism and anti-welfarism, such that programmes of marketisation, privatisation and deregulation go hand in hand with encouraging ‘entrepreneurial’ flexibilities and ‘enabling’ people to be active producers and consumers. We can see the efforts to define and defend of the ‘European social model’ and its variants in which the state and welfare are institutionally embedded and co-constitutive (Huber and Stephens, 2001; Taylor-Gooby, 2001).

Such tendencies are easier to see if we limit ourselves to how welfare and the state are aligned. They become more problematic if we add ‘nation’ to the analysis.
New Labour’s quest to ‘modernise’ Britain, the German project of unification, the Finnish nation-building project, the Hungarian entry to the EU, and other national trajectories intersect in complex ways with the remaking of welfare and states. How the nation is understood, who forms its membership, how its historical arc is narrated (the representation of its past, present and future), and how its relationships to many other places (to ‘Europe’ or to the USA, for example) are framed: all of these bear on political and cultural imaginaries of welfare and of the state. For example, the dynamics of migration to European societies are often viewed through a ‘welfare lens’. Are migrants a ‘drain on the welfare state’? Are they, by contrast, a productive and tax-generating rescue from the problem of an ageing national demography and the accompanying ‘pensions crisis’?

At this point, we will consider these issues through the example of the UK, although a similar analysis could be developed for any Western/Northern society (relations of dependence and subordination – historic and continuing – change the frame of analysis for societies of the South). In the UK, the national question has been a difficult one, with England/English tending to dominate and subsume the other elements of Britain/British (Wales and Scotland), and with (Northern) Ireland a continuing site of contestation and conflict. Currently, the UK is being reinvented as a ‘multi-national nation’, with different forms of devolved government for the ‘nation regions’ of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Mooney and Williams, forthcoming). Controversies about different sorts of national identity persist (with continuing conflicts over language, culture and space). Englishness – once the dominant, normalised and taken-for-granted identity – is now exposed as a site of uncertainty, anxiety and reinvention, with public discussion of ‘what it means to be English’ taking place alongside debate about ‘what it means to be British’.
In political terms, New Labour has persisted with a vision of a ‘modern British People’ (Clarke and Newman, 1998; 2004) in whom tradition and a future-oriented dynamism are happily combined. This People is understood as committed to traditional virtues (though tolerant of ‘alternative life styles’) while having the capacity to be forward-looking, innovative and entrepreneurial. They form the ‘hard working families’ who are the focus of New Labour’s most recent policy initiatives and, as a result, are the beneficiaries of tax cuts, and tax credits in relation to employment and child care (Brown, 2005). At the same time there are also particularly ‘vulnerable’ groups (for example, younger children and older people) who are seen as being in greater need of welfare intervention and support.

However this emphasis on ‘vulnerable groups’ and ‘hard working families’ in New Labour’s modernizing agenda does not acknowledge the diversity of family practices at the beginning of the twenty-first century nor does it address their implications for welfare. There is an assumption that family members organize and understand their responsibilities to each other and the state through shared values and attitudes. Such a situation is not unique to the UK. Across Europe, family policies are shaped by normative assumptions about the meanings of care (Pfau-Effinger and Eissler, 2005; Chamberlayne, 1999) or the transition of young people to adulthood (Bynner, Chisholm and Furlong, 1997). This means that some family groups are marginalized or policed by welfare practices that fail to acknowledge the differential effects of class, religion, ethnicity or sexuality. Within such differences it is those families whose national identity and citizenship claims are most provisional who are assiduously positioned outside the symbolic boundaries of the nation and who, as a result, have differentiated access to welfare systems and provision (Castles, 2000; Dunkwu, 1993; Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005).
Here the long histories of Europe’s policies of immigration and settlement come into play. To meet the demands of economic growth in the period following the Second World War, large numbers of workers were recruited from the colonies and former colonies of Britain, France and the Netherlands. Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Sweden recruited ‘guest workers’ whose stay was permitted only as long as their labour was required. By the 1960s, migrant labour had become a structural feature of west European labour markets and many workers settled permanently, formed new families or were reunited with existing family members. Yet the presence of these families was often only tolerated and usually in ways that emphasised their difference, their subordination and their ‘minority’ness. Such tolerance is always conditional, subject to being revoked for inappropriate behaviour on the part of ‘the guests’ (Rosello, 2001). For members of migrant families, where gendered and racialized restrictions have long been applied both to their entry to a nation-state and their access to welfare systems and labour markets, their difference is simultaneously inscribed with relations of hierarchy, of projected superiority and inferiority. Their membership as (national) citizens is in doubt, because the dominant ‘imaginative geographies’ (Said, 1995) through which we map the world persistently associate ‘other people’ with ‘other places’. The notion of ‘hard working families’, identified by New Labour as the corner-stone of social order, responsibility and security, struggles to include families with histories of migration because their presence is always imagined as temporary or conditional.

Such issues are closely linked to the dominant narratives of Britain’s ‘historical arc’, linking pasts, presents and futures. These national narratives characteristically name past glories and virtues; delineate present troubles; and lay out the necessary line of development to a better future. The British past has been
framed through some characteristic tropes, combining images of power (industrial, economic, imperial) with a distinctive value set that has defining institutional embodiments. In a characteristic speech, the then Home Secretary David Blunkett claimed that:

Britishness is defined not on ethnic or exclusive grounds – but through our shared values, our history of tolerance, of openness and internationalism, our commitment to democracy and liberty, to civic duty and the public space. These values, embodied in our great institutions – such as the NHS, the BBC, The Open University – tell a national story that is open to all citizens. (Blunkett, 2005: 4)

Diagnoses of the present’s troubles have been more varied – and more politically contested. They have centred on conceptions of modernity and modernisation with the dominant political-cultural projects of the last thirty years addressed to the problem of how to undo the ‘blockages’ that prevented the nation from achieving modernity and its pleasures. Modernity is, in part, defined by having a place in a new world that is primarily understood as a global economic order. Many political and policy initiatives – from challenging ‘trade union power’, through labour market activation policies, to ‘modernising’ public services – are located and justified within the logic of adapting to these ‘new realities’. This historical arc – connecting the nation’s past, present and future – often links the apparent opposites of tradition and modernity. In this sense, ‘tradition’ is constantly being revised and revitalised as it is put to work in the construction of new futures. At the 2005 Labour Party conference, Tony Blair insisted that: ‘The challenge we face is not in our values. It is how we put them into practice in a world fast-forwarding to a future at unprecedented speed.’ (27 September, 2005).

Identifying this new world (and how to be modern within it) involves triangulating Britain in relationship to some critical spatial reference points. One of
these remains ‘Empire’ as a series of ‘other places’, as processes of colonial internationalisation in the metropolis, and as the persistence of what Gilroy has called ‘postcolonial melancholia’ (2005). A second geographical axis concerns ‘Europe’ – a site of persistent British ambivalence and anxiety, not least the stress of trying to make Europe an economic and political space that more closely fits the way Britain imagines global modernity. Finally there is the persistently problematic relationship with ‘America’: filled with fantasies of power, yet also the focus of fears about the emasculating effects of dependency and the dangerous consequences of choosing the wrong modernity. These are profoundly cultural geographies: imaginative mapping of economic, political and social relationships. Each involves distinctive poles of attraction and repulsion; each is profoundly contested, yet centrally constitutive of the possibilities of a ‘modern Britain’. At stake in them are contested conceptions of affinities, alliances and antagonisms (what Gregory calls the ‘Architecture of Enmity’, 2004: 17-29). Each European nation is the focus of such (contested) national stories whose purpose is to name and claim the future. Nations (and their trajectories) are always constituted transnationally through such imagined relations with ‘other places’.

De-centring the nation

In some ways, we think that one of the most significant contributions that cultural analysis can make to the study of welfare states is this double movement around the issue of the nation. Firstly, it enriches the concept of the nation, moving it from being a territorial container: no longer merely the box in which economic, social and political processes take place. Instead, it treats the nation as the object of processes of social construction (and reconstruction) expressed in attempts to
produce and stabilise the imagined unity of people and place. Welfare states have played distinctive roles in producing, and reproducing, nations, and their internal distinctions. Each nation is both an imagined unity – the People – and an imagined system of differences – a population (Chatterjee, 2003).

Secondly, cultural analysis de-centres the nation. Rather than the stalled debate about the death or persistence of the nation and its state, this version of cultural analysis is concerned with the changing ways in which nations are constituted. It foregrounds questions about the transnational conditions through which nations are imagined, institutionalised and de-stabilised. This process takes the nation out of its territorial ‘box’ and offers instead a view of the relationship between people and places (and politics) as contingent and constructed. This destabilisation of the nation has consequences for the relationship between nation, state and welfare condensed in ideas and practices of citizenship:

Diasporic movements point to how the space of the nation, or “home”, and the affective ties that bind this imagined community are expanding across the boundaries of the nation-state … For this reason, citizenship too is being imagined, practices, and regulated transnationally and flexibly …Citizenship is unevenly experienced and spatialized – both transnationally and nationally… People inhabiting different circuits of the global capitalist economy are subjected to different regimes of rights and citizenship … (Sharma and Gupta, 2006: 26)

Citizenship is the focus of such disturbances because of its place at the intersection of state and nation. But transnational movements of people also intersect in complex ways with formations of welfare (Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005). For example, ‘global care chains’ are part of new welfare processes in which migrant women perform care work in the first world as a means of sustaining families in the third (Hochschild, 2001; Yeates, 2004). Such chains change the social architecture of
care (who performs care, under what conditions, in what relationships) in both first and third world locations.

In the present, it seems particularly easy to take up this view of the nation as constructed, and to see how it is located in transnational conditions. So many transnational conditions and processes and their effects on the established formations of nation, state and welfare are so visible, that it becomes possible to highlight the constructed and contingent, and unsettled and unstable, character of national formations. But there are some risks attached to this focus on the present. There is a danger of making epochal distinctions: for example, between the institutional density of the ‘Golden Age’ and the present liquidity in which people, places and policies appear more ‘loosely coupled’. We are sceptical about such simplifying contrasts of past and present. They take place in what we think of as ‘sociological time’ where distinctions between past and present persistently offer over-unified accounts of a stable and settled past against which can be set a view of the present as dynamic, mobile, and fluid. Instead, we think there may be some merit in ‘historicising the present’. Rather than stressing the difference of present, we might look for continuities in the conditions, relations and processes that underlie the construction, destabilisation and reconstruction of nation-state-welfare formations (and their forms of citizenship).

**Anti-citizens and false citizens:**

To explore these continuities we might return to the long histories of national welfare states and view them as part of projects to construct and stabilise nations, and institutionalise the relationships between people and places through policies and practices of welfare. We might trace the shifting imaginary unities of nation-peoples
and their internal differentiations as populations and consider how welfare is deployed as a way of making these imagined unities and differences come true. Here we might understand in a better way Beveridge’s view of ‘housewives as mothers’ who had ‘vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuance of the British race and of British ideals in the world’ (Beveridge 1942, Para. 117). We might locate the shifting definition of ‘labour’, who is supposed to perform it and who is legitimately excused from it. As Susser argues:

We need to consider what in fact constitutes a labor force at different historical periods with different effects on inequality, poverty and social welfare. Nation states, employers and working class movements define the categories of people available to work differently over time. As social programs and regulations shift, so too do those people who can be viewed as labor … Alternatively, constructions of legitimate dependency and community responsibility, institutionalized in state regulations, entitlements and cultural expectations of age, gender and other social identities, protect some members of the population from accepting the lowest wages (Susser, 2001: 230-1).

Here we can see the intersection of formal categories and everyday practices in the production of citizenship (Lewis, 2004). Everyday practices highlight the binary distinctions embedded in meanings of citizenship, including notions of ‘anti-citizenship’ (Matless, 1998) and the ‘false citizen’ (Paul, 1998), and how their consequences for processes of inclusion and exclusion. In the 1940s, for example, welfare was concerned with not only social inequalities but also the making of ‘new’ men and women (Lewis and Fink, 2004). Moral norms and assumptions have been embedded in welfare policies, practices and relationships and how they work to legitimate constructions of a seemingly inclusive nation. The obverse was the designation of individuals and groups as ‘anti-citizens’ when they resisted exhortations to develop ‘the right attitude towards health’ (BMA, 1946: 74); or when they refused to accept that work ‘means doing what is wanted, not doing just what
pleases one’ (Beveridge, 1944, Para 16); or when they took their recreation in the
countryside – their national heritage - without the ‘appropriate’ knowledge for
appreciation of its beauty (Matless, 1998: 182). Everyday practices reveal the
normative dimensions of citizenship and national belonging, and vividly foreground
the ‘imagined community’ of Britain that linked nation, state and welfare. They also
demonstrate how such ‘anti-citizens’ were constituted as people who were ‘out of
time’: their behaviour, moral codes and social commitments had not adapted to the
‘new’ conceptions of national character that were being brought into play through
welfare.

A longer history of welfare might also make visible the ‘problem’ that mobile
people have persistently posed for attempts to institutionalise and settle the
relationship between people and places. Exploring the shifting politics of citizenship,
through legislation concerned with national identity, belonging and migration
through the twentieth century, would reveal changing constructions of citizens. For
example, the British Nationality Act, 1948 portrays critical aspects of how the nation-
people was being constructed in the immediate post-war years. The Act was intended
‘to make provision for British nationality and for citizenship of the United Kingdom
and Colonies’ in which no distinction was drawn between British subject and
Commonwealth citizen since they were held to ‘have the same meaning’ (Part I, 2).
Here we can see a particular formation of a tolerant and inclusive nation that
recognised its obligations as an imperial power and, as result, kept an ‘open door’ to
citizens of the Commonwealth (Webster, 2005).

However, from the early period of European capitalism when ‘welfare’ laws
and systems attempted to control landless and displaced people, through to the
contemporary ‘welfare’ anxieties about refugees and migrants, mobile people have
been a disturbing presence for institutions built on expectations that people will ‘know their place’. The British Nationality Act was built on expectations that Commonwealth citizens would equally know their place, which, despite the rhetoric, was not within the boundaries of the ‘Mother Country’. The subsequent 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act sought to restrict the entry of black and Asian migrants (despite being British passport holders) and transformed the Commonwealth citizen into the colonial migrant. These exclusionary legal practices identified migrants from the Commonwealth not as British subjects but as different from the British people and not ‘of Britain’. Through these processes Commonwealth citizens became ‘false citizens’, making their claims to welfare subject to suspicion and challenge since their citizenship identity was located in their country of origin (Paul, 1998). Here welfare policies and practices constitute the distinction between ‘real’ citizens with ‘genuine’ claims to a national identity and ‘false’ citizens and claims. Binaries of belonging and not belonging, of deserving and undeserving are constantly worked and reworked in such processes of national inclusion and exclusion.

The efforts to unify people and place through welfare policy and practice, might be examined through notions of anti-citizenship and false citizens, and through ideas that migrant people are ‘out of time’ and ‘out of place’. To illustrate the contradictory elements in such struggles, we turn to the recent attempts to introduce (National) Identity (ID) Cards in the UK to tackle ‘terrorism and organised crime’ and to affirm ‘entitlement to draw down on [welfare] services’ (Blunkett, 2004). The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee examined witnesses in 2004 about the financial, technical and legal implications of the proposed ID Cards. The following exchange took place between the Chairman of the Committee and Nicola Roche (Director, Children, Identity Cards and Coroners at the Home Office):
Q38 Chairman: Can I just go back on the question of access to public services? ...Is it an inevitable consequence of the ID card system that every GP and every headteacher will have to become responsible for being a gatekeeper into those services and for checking a system they do not at the moment?...

Nicola Roche: In respect of schools, I do not think there is any expectation that there will be checking of ID to enable a child to start school. Children under the age of 16 will not have an ID card but, of course, their parents or carers would.

Q39 Chairman: So if you have a family here who are here illegally, their children do not have ID cards, so there would be no question of checking their children’s entitlement to education? They would get free education even though their parents were not here legally and the children were not here legally?

Nicola Roche: There is no expectation that the card would be used to check children starting at school and we talked that through with the DFES [Department for Education and Science]....

Q40: Perhaps we will ask the DFES, but if the aim of the system is to prevent people who are not entitled to expensive public services getting access to public services, it seems a bit odd that that would not apply to schools.

Nicola Roche: Well, in terms of the parents being here illegally, there will be other ways of highlighting their presence here through other services....

Q41 Chairman: But unless the parents were picked up in some other way, the DFES have no objection to children getting free education in this country, even though they and their parents have no right to be here?

Nicola Roche: That is clearly a matter for the DFES, but this is about the adult population, this is not about children....

This brief exchange demonstrates some of the tensions in the formations of welfare, state and nation. We can trace the insistent use of ‘here’; illustrating that ID cards are expected to identify those who should be ‘here’, rather than ‘there’ (or somewhere other than ‘here’). In such ways migrant people continue to be defined as ‘out of place’ within the boundaries of ‘this country’ and as ‘false citizens’ whose claims to public services are invalid. Yet, the children of migrant families are understood to have claims, not least to ‘free education’, irrespective of the alleged illegality of their presence. Their status as children constitutes their rights in different ways to those of their parents and welfare policy constructs the place of children in ‘modern’ Britain in relation to education rather than through their familial associations with ‘elsewheres’. This is one example of how the population of the
nation comes to be constituted through the hierarchies of difference that are formulated and enacted in welfare policies, practices and relationships.

In political and policy arenas, education has increasingly been regarded as central to meeting the challenges of the ‘modern’ world. As a result, those people (‘nationals’ and ‘others’) who fail to grasp either their rights to education or their obligations to be educated could be categorised as anti-citizens. However ‘illegal’ migrant parents, defined as false citizens because their status ‘here’ cannot be validated, cannot also be identified as anti-citizens when they present their ‘children at school’. Undertaking this everyday practice denotes recognition of their responsibilities as citizens even while their rights are under question. Such twists and turns point to the instabilities in conceptions of the nation/people relationship. As Sharma and Gupta argue ‘[t]he sphere of everyday practices is the primary arena in which people learn something about the state’ (2006: 11).

**Constituting nations, producing people**

In the end, we might attain a fuller view of the transnational conditions of European imaginaries of nationhood by emphasising the continuous processes of nation-state-welfare formation. Rather than associating the present with instability and uncertainty, it may be more productive to see the longer historical processes of nation formation, destabilisation and re-formation as continuing dynamics involved in the attempt to make nations. We would highlight three such processes that are intimately associated with the apparently integrated and stable European model of nation-state. First, everywhere nations had to be imagined and brought into being: tutored into a ‘shared’ national identity and language. Such unifications still encounter challenges from the not quite compliant peoples and places being
incorporated. For example, subordinated, but not settled, counter-nationalisms persist as alternative imaginaries to the dominant formations of modern European nations – from Catalonia to the Celtic others of the more or less United Kingdom.

Second, it is important to keep sight of the ways in which borders – the territorial markers of national space – have a long history of both mobility and permeability. There is no European nation whose ‘space’ has not changed or been displaced during the era of Westphalian ‘stability’. Even when turned into ‘facts on the ground’ through border posts, checkpoints and controls, national borders have always been traversed by processes, relationships and mobile people. Borders are the focus of persistent political anxiety and innovation as nations work to fix them and sometimes to move them. Borders are the means through which nations attempt to make the myth of national territorial sovereignty come true in practice. But Europe’s nations and Europe itself are shape-changing entities (Leontidou, 2004).

Finally, the European mythology of the integrated ‘container’ of national space is a piece of myth-making that conceals its colonial conditions. Most European nation-states were constructed economically, politically and culturally through their colonial relations. European modernity, as Gregory and others have argued, is an intrinsically colonial modernity.

Modernity produces its other, verso to recto, as a way of once producing and privileging itself. This is not to say that other cultures are the supine creations of the modern, but it is to acknowledge the extraordinary power and performance force of colonial modernity … this process of colonial transculturation is inherently asymmetric, and colonial modernity’s productions of the other as other, however much they are shaped by those various others, shape its constitution of itself in determinate and decisive ways (Gregory, 2004: 4).

The apparently enclosed space of the modern nation-state was, in fact, traversed by multiple lines of flow and force, involving the movement of material
objects and subjects (trade and the trade in people), and the symbolic work of imagining metropole and colony (Hall, 2002). The national space was constituted by transnational relations and systems of power that traversed the globe. The effects of those ‘forgotten’ colonial conditions continue to haunt Europe’s contradictions and confusions about nationality and racialised/ethnicised identities.

In such ways, cultural analysis brings into view complex and shifting alignments of nation, state and welfare. It opens up the possibility of a different comparative form of study – one that would explore how different societies have articulated formations of nation, state and welfare. Such an analysis would be attentive to the dynamics of such formations – their transitions and trajectories. The current problematic politics of citizenship might be easier to grasp if located at the intersection of these changing and contested formations. Such an approach might also open up a more complex view of what welfare states (or welfare systems) do in producing and reproducing ‘nations’. Earlier, we noted Chatterjee’s distinction between ‘people’ and ‘population’ (2003). It clarifies about what is at stake in the relationships between welfare and nation. Welfare policies are shaped by political-cultural projects that aim to reflect, create and secure the ‘people’ – the imaginary unity of the nation (sharing character, values, culture, ways of life and the territory).

Debates about citizenship, membership, entitlement and dimensions of culture/ethnicity are the site of contemporary struggles about what unities can be imagined. But welfare policies also seek to produce, reproduce or improve *populations* – imagined aggregates of differentiated groups. Nations have different ‘demographies’ in terms of the categories of people that they recognise. How the national population is divided up, named and addressed through social and other policies is itself a process of construction (see for example, Kertzer and Arel, 2002;
Lopez, 1996 and Nobles, 2000, on the legal and census constructions of racialised categories). Struggles for ‘recognition’ have engaged with such population categorising processes, bringing disability or ethnicity to visibility, for example (see Miller, 2003, on ‘indigenous peoples’). Finally, we believe that Sharma and Gupta’s concern for viewing states through their ‘everyday practices’ as well as their formal statements is one focus for research in which questions of nationality, identity, categorisation and welfare might be productively examined. They suggest that ‘the state as an institution is substantiated in people’s lives through the apparently banal practices of bureaucracies’ (2006: 11). It is in such banal practices that categorisations of identity, belonging and entitlement are made real. Cultural analysis can provide ways of studying ‘welfare states’ that are attentive to the relationship between different sites and can link policies, programmes and practices. It also enables ways of thinking transnationally about the shifting alignments of global, national and local domains of welfare (Stubbs, 2002). For all these reasons, we see the ‘cultural turn’ as long overdue in the study of welfare states.

References


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