

The Multisite Nation

Michel S. Laguerre

The Multisite Nation

Crossborder Organizations, Transfrontier
Infrastructure, and Global Digital Public Sphere

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The unbridled development of the globalization process, undoubtedly expressed through multidirectional immigration that is supported by mass transportation and enhanced by the routine use of social media, has unsettled the traditional territorial deployment of the nation. In its new manifestation, the nation is no longer seen as enclosed exclusively within a territory. Rather, it is viewed as a multisite social formation with a segment of its population in the homeland territory (and, in a few cases, former colonies) and another in diaspora: that is, outside its legally recognized geographical borders. The novelty of this distributional form of the nation is not simply geographical, territorial, and spatial; it is also jurisdictional, organizational, and definitional. Any attempt to explain the expanded contours of the transformed nation must, by necessity, reproblematicize these structural features to show the intermingling of diaspora and homeland in the production of the crossborder nation.

Prepared under the auspices of the Berkeley Center for Globalization and Information Technology at the Institute of Governmental Studies of the University of California at Berkeley, this book places the analysis of relations and interactions between the homeland and its multisite diaspora at the heart of the debate over the expansion, multiple locations, and crossborder organizations of the nation. It frames data in the context of globalization theory to explain both the expansion of the nation beyond its presumed geographical borders and its crossborder mode of operation, organization, interaction, and mobility. Massive emigration of individuals from their homelands and their subsequent resettlement in different sites, or even countries, have led to a proliferation of extraterritorial diasporic

communities that define themselves as constitutive of their original nation, despite their permanent residence abroad or their birthplace being outside the ancestral homeland.

Diasporas, hostlands, homelands, and international organizations have contributed in their own ways to this expanded definition of the nation: the diaspora by its extraterritorial residence, lobbying efforts on behalf of the homeland, crossborder relations with institutions in the homeland, and its own undertakings in the economic development of the homeland; the hostland as a territory in which such lobbying is allowed to flourish, and as a legal structure that polices the contours of such an engagement; the homeland by providing the legal frame of reference (laws, concepts, contents, and constitutional interpretation) and the transnational space of jurisdiction; and international organizations by using this new and enlarged definition of the nation as inclusive of the diaspora, both as a legitimate basis in their negotiations with countries and in their internal managerial practices.

Viewing a nation as expanding across borders and forming a network of sites—thereby becoming a cosmonation—is not a trivial matter or a neutral proposition because it reconfigures the space of interaction, organization, and sense-making of the collectivity, as well as the way it relates to external entities. In addition, the multisite nation provides a global context within which different activities and practices take place and from which their meanings can be deciphered. In other words, the logic of the cosmonation reflects and permeates the logic of activities of those who comprise its membership and citizenry. It was in view of unveiling the infrastructural mechanisms, transglobal mode of operation, and crossborder deployment of the multisite nation that I undertook this project.

The completion of this book has benefited from comments, questions, advice, and suggestions by a number of individuals too vast to list here. These include those who helped during the fieldwork period and writing process, those in the academic audiences who attended my presentations and gave feedback, those who read drafts of portions of the manuscript and pointed to areas that needed further attention, and external reviewers for the press who passed along their constructive criticisms and thoughtful commentaries. They have each, in every step of the way, contributed to the final empirical, analytical, and theoretical content of the book, and I am grateful to all of them.

Key individuals have provided information on various aspects of data collection and analysis. I want to particularly single out interviews on the

rise of the multisite nation that I undertook with Senators Richard Yung (Parti Socialiste) and Robert del Picchia (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire), both of the French Senate; Representative Ivan Bagarić (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednika/HDZ) (Croatian Democratic Union) of the Croatian Parliament; Senator Basilio Giordano (Il Popolo della Liberta) of the Italian Senate; and Edouard Mayoral, a former member of the Diaspora Electoral College, France. They provided a top-down approach to the dynamics of cosmonational integration while other informants who work at the grassroots associational level presented bottom-up explanations.

As in the past, graduate students and a cohort of undergraduate students recruited through the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program at the University of California, Berkeley, contributed to every aspect of the project, from collecting bibliographical materials through the use of campus digital databases, transcribing interviews, checking references, and typing my handwritten notes to serving as sounding boards, not only for the research and everyday management of the office but also doing miscellaneous tasks, which freed me to focus my attention on issues of hermeneutics, analytics, and theoretical interventions. I want to acknowledge the contributions of the following graduate and undergraduate students to this project: Ara Rostami, Alis Asatryan, Tatevik Manucharyan, Mangala Gopal, Roopika Subramanian, Flavia Garcia, Amy Bryce, Han Jing, Younshin Lee, Cristina Passoni, Martina Tacchella, Allison Dolan, Carmen Taylor, Mariam Yousuf, Annita Lucchesi, Jennifer Park, Jennifer Wu, Molly Hayes, Nancy Lam, Fatemeh Adlparvar, Stephanie Zhu, Laura Kaufmann, Stephanie Blazek, Sochi Indomitable, Rebecca Peters, Michael Lam, Gizem Efe, Cigdem Sagir, Ji-hae Misha Lee, Kehui Ouyang, Sarah M. Dorfmann, Young Ji Kim, Sheren Felicia Holama, Giacomo Zacchia, Kyle Shackelford, Celina Keshishian, Ila Bo Kovitz, Weng Lam Ao, Teresa Cotsirilos, Madeleine Jacobs, Mengqi Zhou, and Mi Thich. I also acknowledge the excellent research assistance provided by Christine Bae, who graduated from Berkeley Boalt Law School almost at the same time the first draft of the manuscript was completed.

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Chapters of the book were presented before scholarly audiences in the USA, Israel, and the European Union. For example, a portion of Chap. 2 was read at the international symposium on transnationalism sponsored and organized by the Sociology Department of Tel Aviv University and held at the Cymbalista Jewish Heritage Center, Israel, in September 2007. Chapter 3 was commissioned by the editor of the *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, based at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. An early version of Chap. 4 was delivered at the international conference on “Florida at the Crossroads: Five Hundred Years of Encounters, Conflicts, and Exchanges,” organized by the Center for the Humanities at the University of Miami on February 9–11, 2012, and sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. An expanded version of this chapter was again presented in February 2013 at an international symposium on comparative studies of cities organized by the Watson Institute and the Sociology Department at Brown University. Chapter 5 was prepared for presentation at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association held in New York City in August 2013. Likewise, Chap. 6 was delivered at the international symposium on “Immigration et Diversité Ethnoculturelle: Espaces Urbains et Communauté Politique,” organized by the Centre Jacques Cartier on the occasion of the “25èmes Entretiens Jacques Cartier” and held November 19–20, 2013, at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Lyon, France.

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This book on the multisite nation is the second of a trilogy on the diaspora question. The first volume on the cosmonational parliament was published in the NYU European Studies Series (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and the third volume on the postdiaspora condition is forthcoming. The proceeds from the royalty of the sale of this book will be donated to the Catholic nuns in Lascahobas, Haiti, to consolidate educational practices at St. Gabriel’s School and for the care of the physically challenged and disadvantaged students.

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