

Understandings of Nation and Nationalism

Chapter

1



Figure 1-1 ▲

Canadian Alwyn Morris accepting a gold medal for 1000-metre K2 kayaking.

Alwyn Morris, a Kahnawake [guh-nuh-WAH-gay] Mohawk, held up an eagle feather while receiving his medal at the 1984 Olympic Games. Of that moment, Morris said:

“ I raised the feather to share that experience and identify the fact that I was a Mohawk person, and I was very proud of that aspect; of being able to share that experience of being an Aboriginal person, share the aspect of my grandfather, and the honour that I wanted to bestow on him. And certainly from Canada’s perspective I was representing the country.¹ ”

By holding up the eagle feather, with whom was Morris sharing his win?

- If you were to hold up a symbol or make a gesture during an awards ceremony, what would it be?
- Share your response with others in the class.
- What symbols and gestures did other students share?
- What connections did you feel with their symbols and gestures?

Chapter Issue

To what extent do understandings of nation and nationalism vary?

The first step toward understanding the relationships between identity, nation, and nationalism is to explore understandings of the concepts of *nation* and *nationalism*. What do these concepts mean to people in Canada and around the world? What do they mean to you?

In this chapter you will explore a variety of understandings of these concepts, as well as what causes individuals to feel connected to others. The following inquiry questions will be used to guide your exploration:

- What is a nation?
- What is nationalism?

This chapter will also help you develop a foundation for addressing the Main Issue for Part 1 (chapters 1–5): *To what extent should nation be the foundation of identity?*

¹ http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-41-1344-8109/sports/olympics_summer/clip3

Understandings of Nation

Question for Inquiry

- What is a nation?

If you asked a group of people to answer the question “What is a nation?” you would likely get as many answers as there were people in the group. The concept of nation has many understandings. When we think of the term, we often define it as it relates to the people or citizens of a country. Although citizenship may be a key part of one understanding of nation, there are many other understandings of the concept.

A nation can be defined as a group of people who feel connections to one another in some way. As Harvard University Professor Rupert Emerson notes, “The simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation”.² This feeling of belonging or connection is an important part of what it means to identify as a nation, as what unites people is often something intangible. Benedict Anderson, a scholar of nationalism and international studies, has written that a nation:

*... is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.*³

Nation, therefore, can be viewed as something found in the feelings and minds of people, an internal connection to others.

One way to explore the many understandings of nation is by looking at what creates connections between individual members of a nation; for example, their shared experiences related to

- ethnic background and ancestry
- cultural values and beliefs
- history
- language(s) and communication
- religious or spiritual beliefs
- geography
- politics and citizenship

There is often overlap between these shared experiences. For example, experiences related to ethnicity may include culture, language, and religion.

² Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation—The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 6.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you share common experiences with others in your class? Your community? Your province? Your country? The world? Think about experiences you might have in common with others. These may be related to history, culture, citizenship, ethnicity, language, or geography.



Figure 1-2 ▲

There are many understandings of nation. What does the concept mean to you?

Understanding the Concept of Nation



Figure 1-3 ▲

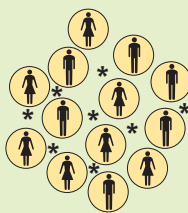
Different understandings of the concept of nation often focus on different types of shared experiences between the people of a nation. For example, some understandings may focus on connections related to citizenship, whereas others may focus on connections related to language and culture. Any combination of these types of shared experiences may be found in an understanding of nation.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

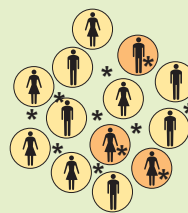
Nation can refer to your country or your connection to a group, and can be an important part of who you are. What groups do you feel connected to? Can you think of any shared experiences you might have with the members of these groups?

How Nations Can Develop

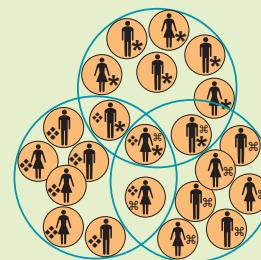


A group of people sense that they share something in common:

- ethnic background, ancestry, history
- cultural values and beliefs
- language(s) and communication
- religious or spiritual beliefs
- geography
- politics and citizenship



Some may internalize the feeling, which generates a sense of belonging and acceptance.



The people may then identify themselves as a **nation**.

Individuals may belong to multiple nations.

Figure 1-4 ▲

Nations can develop when a group of people sense that they share something in common and internalize that feeling. The resulting sense of belonging and acceptance may lead them to identify as a nation.

Exploring Understandings of Nation

When exploring different understandings of what it means for a group of people to be a nation, consider what connects the individual members to each other. Think about the types of experiences they might share. As you review the quotations below, ask yourself the following question: What connections are described in each person's definition of nation?

Ernest Renan

The 19th-century French philosopher Ernest Renan is famous for the definition of nation he gave in his 1882 discourse *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (*What is a Nation?*). For Renan, a nation is primarily a group of people who have a desire to live together. They share a number of qualities that are part of a rich legacy, and as a group they “have done great things together and wish to do more.” In his lecture, Renan said:

*A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Only two things constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past ... One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common.*⁴

⁴ Ernest Renan, lecture at the Sorbonne, Paris, 11 March 1882.
<http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/231/-Joseph-Ernest-Renan.html>.

What aspects of nation does Renan emphasize in his explanation of the concept? For Renan, does nation have much to do with a people's citizenship in a country, the language they speak, their political beliefs, their ancestry, or the place where they live?

Antonine Maillet

Acadian writer Antonine Maillet's novels and plays have been translated into many languages from the original French. A graduate of the Université de Moncton, Maillet is informally an ambassador of the Acadian people. She says:

*Acadia needs to say what it is: that it is part of Canada, that it is part of America, that it is part of the international fraternity of Francophone nations, and that it therefore has its own place in the world—a place that is unique, just as each of the world's peoples is unique.*⁵

What aspects of nation does Maillet emphasize in her description of the Acadian nation? How does Maillet relate Acadia as a nation to geography or citizenship?

N.S. Rajaram

N.S. Rajaram is an author who writes about India's history. When describing India as a nation, he says:

*What defines a nation is shared history and tradition ... India is unique as a nation in that its sense of nationalism is founded on an age long spiritual concept of freedom and inclusiveness that has always been known as Sanatana Dharma [eternal natural law].*⁶

Despite the variety of different languages, ethnicities, and political beliefs of the people of India, what does Rajaram consider to be the basis of India as a nation?

Douglas Coupland

Douglas Coupland is a Canadian author and artist who often reflects on the nature of Canada in his work. The following is an excerpt from his book *Souvenir of Canada*:

I'd been thinking about the Canadian landscape, and then suddenly—craaaack!—in my head I was racing across Canada at a thousand kilometres a second: over the mountains that made the pioneers despair, across the prairies that will remain flat until our sun goes supernova, over the rocks and roots of Ontario and Québec—and then down to the lunar gorges of Newfoundland ... I was unable to move and saw a

⁵ Antonine Maillet, on the Atlantic Cultural Space website, <http://www.artsnb.ca/acsc/en/presenters.htm>.

⁶ N.S. Rajaram. "Nationalism and Its Enemies." India Independent Media Center. 19 September 2004. <http://india.indymedia.org/en/2004/09/209741.shtml>.

Ernest Renan's Understanding of Nation



Figure 1-5 ▲

Which shared experiences does Ernest Renan focus on in his concept of nation?



Figure 1-6 ▲

Le Tintamarre ("the racket") is a celebration that lets the world know that the Acadian nation has survived.



Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website to learn about National Acadian Day, another Acadian day of celebration. How might holidays such as Le Tintamarre and National Acadian Day foster a sense of nation among Acadians?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

The quotations above illustrate several understandings of nation. With a partner or in a group, discuss

- the thoughts about nation presented in each quotation
- another quotation that offers an understanding of nation
- your thoughts on the connections shared by the people of a nation

Fast Facts

There are more than 190 nation-states in the world, and more than 15 nations have become nation-states since 1990. What opportunities does a nation have as a nation-state?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Based on the understanding that a nation is a group of people who feel connected to one another because of their shared experiences, are nation-states also nations? Form two groups and have one group brainstorm evidence supporting the idea that nation-states are nations and have the other group brainstorm evidence challenging the idea. Discuss the results of the brainstorming, remembering to respect the points of view and perspectives of others.

*lucid flashing sequence of my life in this country: the weather, soil, the plant life and animals ... I was connecting with something vast—connecting with all the people with whom I've ever shared the land.*⁷

Consider Coupland's description of Canada. Have you experienced these types of Canadian images? Does the sharing of similar images and experiences by Canadians make Canada a nation?

Nation and Nation-State

What is the difference between a nation and a nation-state?

Whereas the concept of *nation* relates to something in the feelings and minds of people or to an internal connection to others, the concept of *nation-state* is a more concrete, external concept. A nation-state is a territory with internationally recognized boundaries and a politically organized body of people under a **sovereign** government. Nation-states are considered sovereign because they are recognized by other nation-states as having the right to govern themselves independently. Nation-states are often countries, and many different nations can exist within them.

When the people who live in a nation-state feel a connection to one another and a sense of belonging and acceptance, that nation-state can also be described as a nation.

Nation-states may or may not depend on people's linguistic, ethnic, or cultural connections. Citizens of a nation-state live in a politically defined territory that operates with common legal and moral beliefs. For example, some beliefs and values that connect the people of the nation-state of Canada are

- a belief in democratic government
- the protection of rights and freedoms described in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (for example, language rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion)
- a belief in the principles of a mixed economy

Belonging to a nation-state can also provide individuals with a sense of security because those who belong to the nation-state must abide by a common set of laws.

Many nation-states around the world are made up of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and other nations that live together within the same political framework. Examples include Belgium (the Flemish and Walloons) and China (the Han, Zhuang, Manchu, Tibetans, Mongols, and others). In geographically large countries with diverse nations—such as India, Russia, the People's Republic of China, or Canada—why might the connections between members of the nation-state be challenged at certain times?

⁷ Douglas Coupland, *Souvenir of Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2002), p. 48.



Nations within Canada

Can members of diverse nations feel a bond with others in the same nation-state? An individual's feeling of connection to others in his or her nation-state can evolve based on new experiences and exposure to new ideas.

Below are some quotations from students who participated in government-initiated exchange programs under Exchanges Canada, part of the federal Heritage Department that brings together students from different communities, cultures, and language groups. The students provide their opinions on how living and meeting with diverse Canadians from regions across the country shaped their views on how connected they are and what they share with others in this country. As you read through the quotations, consider how the students' experiences shaped their understandings of nation.

*When I share experiences with people from all over Canada, I feel that I am living in a community of diversity. Team building with people of all different backgrounds and places allowed me to form relationships and care about people all over Canada. I found differences between my peers, and also similarities.*⁸

—Participant, Summer Work/Student Exchange

*It definitely made me feel more connected with the country after meeting someone from each province and territory.*⁹

—Emily from New Brunswick,
Exchanges Canada exchange program

Everyone involved realized that although we all came from different parts of the country, with different political, economic and cultural differences, that we all have so much in common. We are the same, have the same hopes, dreams and goals.

—Organizer, National 4-H Citizenship Seminar

It really opens your eyes to the amount of diversity within the borders. You get acquainted with different cultures, that although 100% Canadian, could exist independently. It really makes you feel part of a great thing.

—Participant, Society for Educational Visits
and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC)

⁸ From: http://www.exchanges.gc.ca/Sharing_Experiences.asp?Language=0&MenuID=4.

⁹ From: http://www.encounters-rencontres.ca/overview_quotes.php.

Web Link

To read more accounts of students' experiences and explore additional understandings of *nation*, visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the links to Exchanges Canada and Encounters with Canada.

- 1 What words and phrases do the participants use to describe their connections to Canada as a result of their experiences? Create a simple diagram or graphic for each quotation using these words and phrases.
- 2 How would you describe each participant's understanding of Canada as a nation?

INVESTIGATION

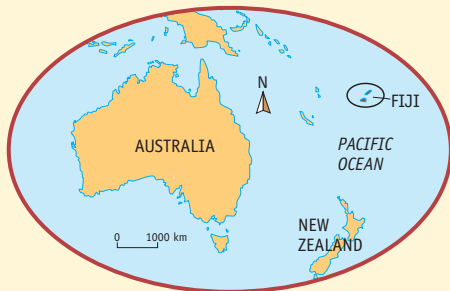


Figure 1-7 ▲

Republic of the Fiji Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean.



Fiji: Different Understandings of a Nation-State

Something to Think About: How can people's different understandings of nation lead to conflict?

An Example: Fiji is a nation-state divided between two main nations, ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Ethnic Fijians are a people of Polynesian and Melanesian ancestry, and are largely Christian. Indo-Fijians are descendants of Indian contract labourers brought to the islands by the British in the 19th century, and are largely Hindu and Muslim. These two nations have very different cultures, religious beliefs, histories, and traditions, and are divided on what the nation-state of Fiji should be: an ethnic Fijian nation-state, an Indo-Fijian nation-state, or a nation-state that allows both nations to be recognized as equal yet different.

Over the last two decades there have been four **coups** in Fiji, with the most recent occurring in 2006. The coups have stemmed from efforts by Indo-Fijians to attain equal rights, and by ethnic Fijians to reduce the rights of Indo-Fijians.

Perspectives

Point of view of Sitiveni Rabuka (democratically elected ethnic Fijian prime minister of Fiji from 1992–1999), after staging two coups in 1987:

*I want the Indians to be converted to Christianity ... It will be big challenge for us to convert them to Christianity ... we either go that way, or they convert us and we all become heathens ... Christianity must be the official religion of Fiji, because that is the religion chosen by the Fijians ... Those who do not choose to become Christians can continue to live here, but they will probably find that it is a difficult place to live in.*¹⁰

◀ Figure 1-8

Ethnic Fijian coup leader George Speight claimed he was fighting for the nation-state of Fiji. Here Speight signs an agreement with military commander Commodore Frank Bainimarama to bring an end to Fiji's hostage crisis of 2000.

¹⁰ Eddie Dean, Rabuka: *No Other Way* (Suva: The Marketing Team International, 1988), pp. 11, 121. www.education.ucsb.edu/socialjustice/spickard.pdf.

Point of view of Mahendra Chaudhry, Fiji's first Indo-Fijian prime minister:

*There is absolutely no doubt that our future as a nation, lies in drawing strength from the richness of the cultural diversity that surrounds us, for in that alone lies our sustainability and viability as a sovereign state.*¹¹

*The message in the last five years, in particular, has come through loud and clear: We need to get together as a nation. If we are to surmount our many problems, if we are to realise our full potential as a nation so that the benefits of developments are passed on to all and sundry, then we must reject racist and fundamentalist forces.*¹²

Point of view of Peter Witham, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Representative for the Pacific:

*Yes and of course it's got to be done with great sensitivity ... However what we did this year was to have Ratu Epeli, who is the Chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs of Fiji, and certainly the one person in Fiji who is best qualified to talk about Fijian culture and traditions, to launch [our] report. And he was absolutely unequivocal, and he said people must realise that you can be Hindu, you can be Indian, you can be Christian, you can be Muslim, you can be Fijian, you are still equally a national and have a stake in the Fiji islands.*¹³

- 1 Based on the quotations in this feature, what options do you see for Fiji?
- 2 Predict what impact a nation-state that excludes one of the nations would have on the people of Fiji. Predict the impact of a nation-state that includes both nations.
- 3 Identify possible situations in which the goals of your nation may differ from those of another nation, and the effect of this on how you all live together as a nation-state.

11 Mahendra Chaudhry, "Diwali Is an Integral Part of Hindu Culture," speech at Diwali celebrations in Ba, 2 November 2002.

12 Mahendra Chaudhry, Parliamentary speech, 14 November 2005 (excerpts), Fiji Times, 15 November 2005.

13 Peter Witham, on "Pacific: Striking a Balance: Cultural Freedom vs. Integration," interview on Radio Australia. <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/pacbeat/stories/s1157735.htm>.

SKILL PATH

Selecting Pertinent Sources for Your Inquiry

In the quotations included in this chapter, Emerson, Anderson, Renan, Maillet, and Coupland offer diverse understandings of nation. What other understandings of nation do people have? Research individuals and groups or collectives. Find three views on nation that best demonstrate a diversity of understandings. Assemble these understandings in a format of your choice, such as a concept map, an illustration, or a display, and present your conclusions.

To conduct your research, you will need to decide which information will best support your inquiry. You can reduce your research time by beginning with those sources that will best provide the ideas and information you need. The criteria to the right will help you evaluate which sources are **pertinent** to your inquiry.

Pertinent: directly related to the matter at hand

Step 1 Consider your Inquiry Question

1

- Begin by considering your inquiry question: Are there alternative meanings of *nation*?
- Brainstorm where you can access information for your inquiry. List possible sources. Include a variety of print, non-print, and electronic sources, as well as primary and secondary sources, and interviews.

Step 2 Assess your Sources

2

- Review your criteria to determine whether or not the first source is pertinent to your inquiry.
- Apply the criteria to each source on your list.
- Remove the sources that are not relevant to your inquiry.

Criteria for Assessing Pertinent Sources

Criteria are principles or standards by which something is judged. In this case, the criteria are a set of questions that can be used to guide your judgment when determining which sources are most pertinent to your research:

- Is the information relevant to the inquiry?
- Does this source have the authority to provide this information?
- Is the information based on personal experience and/or knowledge?
- Is there **bias**?
- Are biases supported by evidence and/or an informed position?

bias: an inclination that makes it difficult to judge fairly

Practise It!

Using the criteria described above, assess the following three sources and determine which you would use to respond to the inquiry.

Source 1:

*Using my own definition of the nation—as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members ...*¹⁴

The author of this quotation, Anthony D. Smith, is one of most important contemporary scholars of nationalism. He is editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal *Nations and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press) and is the author of many books on the subject, including the “classic”, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

¹⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 11.

Source 2:

*I'm a member of Red Sox Nation, it's a kind of a family
Wherever I roam, my Fenway home, that's where I long to be
I'm a member of Red Sox Nation, it's a kind of insanity
Yeah, I'll live and die, with Red Sox pride, for eternity.*¹⁵

The above lyrics are from the song *I'm a Member of Red Sox Nation* by songwriters Rob Crawford, Dan Page, and Michele Page.

Source 3:

*A strong nation, like a strong person, can afford to be gentle, firm, thoughtful, and restrained. It can afford to extend a helping hand to others.*¹⁶

American presidential candidate Jimmy Carter spoke these words on 14 October 1976, during a speech in New York City. He was elected president in November 1976.

1. Which source best meets the criteria for assessing pertinent sources?
2. Which source would you evaluate as the most pertinent to your inquiry?
3. Which source does not meet the needs of your inquiry?
4. Which source do you find biased or lacking in authority or evidence?

Apply It!

Conduct your research and answer the inquiry question posed in this Skill Path.

Explore the Issues

- 1 How is *nation* defined by the news media? Investigate what understandings of the term are presented in headlines and news segments. Apply the criteria introduced in the Skill Path to the sources you find to determine which sources are most pertinent to your research. To what extent do the understandings of nation offered here reflect the understandings you have explored in this chapter?
- 2 Research a prominent Canadian's views on how he or she defines his or her identity. Apply the criteria introduced in the Skill Path to the sources you find, to determine which sources are most pertinent to your research. Does the individual identify with a particular nation? Is an understanding of nation reflected in how the individual identifies who he or she is?

¹⁵ From: <http://crawdaddycove.com/im-a-member-of-red-sox-nation>.

¹⁶ Jimmy Carter, in a speech on 14 October 1976, New York City.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What do you think of when you hear the word *nationalism*? Does it bring to mind any particular ideas, events, or people?

Fast Facts

The term *collective consciousness* was first made popular by French social theorist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917). He used it to refer to an entire community coming together to share similar values and beliefs.

Figure 1-9

What aspects of nationalism are conveyed in each of these images? (1) A huge Canadian flag is passed along a crowd gathered in Montréal to rally for Canadian unity in 1995. (2) Montréalers fill the streets of Old Montréal in celebration of Fête Nationale. (3) Ivan Baptiste of Ebb and Flow, Manitoba, performs a grass dance prior to the grand entry during a day-long Awasisak powwow held at New Era in Brandon, Manitoba. (4) A ranching family rides the range near Waterton Lakes National Park in southern Alberta, with the Rocky Mountains visible in the background.

Understandings of Nationalism

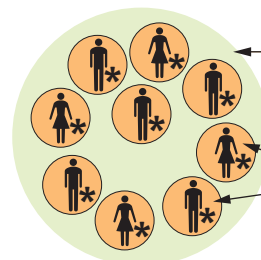
Question for Inquiry

- What is nationalism?

As with the concept of nation, there are diverse understandings of nationalism. **Nationalism** can be a belief in nation, a shared sense of kinship or belonging, or a shared consciousness of a collective identity. Political scientists also define nationalism as a specific type of political or sociological movement. Generally speaking, it can be said that nationalism is the collective, shared sense of belonging of people who identify themselves as a nation.



Nation and Nationalism



Nation: a group of people who are connected by a sense of belonging and acceptance and who identify themselves as a nation

Nationalism: the collective, shared sense of belonging of people who identify themselves as a nation

Figure 1-10

At times, nationalism is the shared sense of belonging that gives meaning to a nation. At other times, it is membership in a nation that gives meaning to and generates nationalism.

Creating a Sense of Nationalism

Geography, language, spirituality and religion, ethnicity, culture, and citizenship can all inspire a sense of nationalism among members of a nation. As you explore various factors that can create a sense of nationalism or belonging, consider the types of shared experiences that connect individual members of a nation and remember that these experiences can overlap.

Geography and Nationalism

Ideas and Opinions

“ These mountains are our temples, our sanctuaries, and our resting places. They are a place of hope, a place of vision, a place of refuge, a very special and holy place where the Great Spirit speaks with us. These mountains are our sacred places. ”

—Chief John Snow, *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney People* (Calgary, AB: Fifth House, 2005), p. 4.

Why does the land inspire an internalized feeling of belonging between members of a nation?

The land on which we live is a strong force in shaping our nations and in creating a sense of nationalism. A people's relationship to their land can play a key role in defining a nation and creating a sense of belonging among a group of people.

This is especially true for the people of Canada's First Nations. For example, Roy Fabian, from Hay River, Northwest Territories, is a member of the Dene Nation. He describes how his nation's sense of nationalism is derived from the people's relationship to the land:

*One of my Elders told me a situation. He said we can get rid of all the Dene people in Denendeh, we can all die off for some reason, but if there was another human being that came stumbling along and came to Denendeh, the environment would turn him into a Dene person. It's the environment and the land that makes us Dene people.*¹⁷

Connections to the land that inspire nationalism may be defined by distinct political boundaries or may exist outside of borders, and may be associated with a specific landscape, climate, or environment.

¹⁷ Roy Fabian, quoted in *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Part Three: "Building the Foundations of a Renewed Relationship," chapter 15, "Rekindling the Fire" (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, October 1996), p. 31. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/cg_e.html.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Think of the sense of belonging you share with other members of a particular nation. What inspires your feelings of belonging to that nation?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

One of the questions we often ask a new acquaintance is: "Where are you from?" Why do you think knowing where a person is from helps identify who they are?



◀ **Figure 1-11**

For many people worldwide, a connection to the land inspires nationalism. (1) The Pyramid of Kukulcan (also known as El Castillo), a Mayan ruin, as seen from the Thousand Columns (foreground), Chichen Itza, Mexico. (2) Stonehenge, England. (3) Israeli flags at the Wailing Wall, Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel.



In addition, natural features such as mountains, bodies of water, forests, plains, foothills, and valleys to which people feel a connection often inspire a sense of nationalism. Manmade places, such as Chichen Itza in Mexico, Stonehenge in England, and the Western Wall in Jerusalem, can also inspire nationalism and feelings of

connection to the land.

The people of a nation can also have strong feelings about the land of their ancestors. Qasim Ahmed is an 18-year-old Muslim from Gloucester, England, who journeyed to India to gain first-hand experience of his family's native land. On his trip, Qasim retraced the journey made by his family after Partition divided the Indian subcontinent into two separate nations 60 years earlier. Qasim said:

I feel deeply that this land of India, that I was separated from because my relatives moved over, is my land as well.

I feel deeply possessive of India, and I feel angry and bitter that my relatives had to move during Partition. I feel as if this country is a part of me as well as Pakistan ... For once I felt I was seeing a real part of my heritage. I felt connected to that place.¹⁸



Figure 1-12 ▲

India and Pakistan, before and after Partition.

Ideas and Opinions

“Modern nationalism in the vast majority of cases points to a deep, almost spiritual connection between land and people ... Territory is the physical aspect of the life of the community and therefore reflects and conditions the identity of that community.”

—Malcolm Shaw, *Title to Territory in Africa—International Legal Issues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

Do you believe that territory is necessary for people to feel a sense of belonging to a nation?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you think it is possible to feel a connection to a place in your family's history and memory if you have not spent a great deal of time there?

¹⁸ BBC News. "Qasim's Journey." http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/content/articles/2007/06/22/qasim_ahmed_feature.shtml.

Language and Nationalism

Many nations consider language the “clay” that shapes its people’s sense of nationalism or belonging. Through a common mode of communication, the people of a nation can share ideas, knowledge, and wisdom, and can make connections in a meaningful way. The language or languages of a nation can affect how it expresses itself and how its members communicate with one another.

For example, a report on strategies for revitalizing First Nations, Métis [may-TEE], and Inuit [IN-yoo-it] cultures describes the importance of language:

*We came from the land—this land, our land. We belong to it, are part of it and find our identities in it. Our languages return us again and again to this truth. This must be grasped to understand why the retention, strengthening and expansion of our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures is of such importance to us and, indeed, to all Canadians. For our languages, which are carried by the very breath that gives us life, connect us daily to who we are. Without this awareness and understanding, the past will not be understood and appreciated by all Canadians, and in particular, by the youth of Canada.*¹⁹



Reclaiming Language

In many of her poems, Rita Joe reflects on her time at the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. There, First Nations students were

taught to be ashamed of their Mi’kmaq [MIG-mah] language and culture. As you read the poem below, consider how language can create a sense of nationalism.

*I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.*

*You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my
word.*

*Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.*

*So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.*

—Rita Joe, “I Lost My Talk,” from
***Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of
Rita Joe (Charlottetown, PEI:
Ragweed Press, 1988).***

PAUSE AND REFLECT

How is language related to identity in this quotation?

Web Link

To learn more about Rita Joe and find a bibliography of her collected works, visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the link to the entry on Rita Joe in the *Canadian Encyclopedia*.

- 1 In this poem, Rita Joe makes a statement about reclaiming her traditional Mi’kmaq language. Her poetry speaks on a personal level, but also for the Mi’kmaq nation. How do you think reclaiming their traditional language could create a sense of belonging for the people of the Mi’kmaq nation?
- 2 Consider the role language plays in defining who you are. How is your language related to your identity?
- 3 The people of Canada speak many different languages. Do you think having two official national languages helps unite us and promotes a sense of belonging? Why or why not?

¹⁹ Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, *Towards a New Beginning—A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages and Culture*, Part III: “Our Languages and Our Cultures: Cornerstones for Our Philosophies”. www.aboriginallanguagetestaskforce.ca/rpt/part3_e.html.

Ideas and Opinions

“ This province of Québec is Catholic and French and shall remain Catholic and French. ”

—Honoré Mercier,
speaking as premier of
Québec during a speech on
Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, 1889.

During Honoré Mercier’s time as premier, the people of Québec were united by their Catholic faith. Today, especially in Montréal and Québec City, where immigration is a factor, there is a greater diversity of faith within the Québécois collective identity. Do you think Mercier’s statement is still true today? Why or why not?

Spirituality, Religion, and Nationalism

Spirituality is a very complex concept that can mean many different things depending on the beliefs, values, and culture of an individual or group of people. Beliefs in spirituality may centre on finding the meaning of life, connecting with a spiritual being, or achieving individual potential.

From Aboriginal perspectives, an individual’s spirituality comes from his or her relationship to the natural world. Spiritual beliefs promote respect and honour for what the world holds, including human beings, animals, plants, land, wind, and sun. Individuals can hold diverse spiritual understandings.

The religious beliefs of a group are based on understandings of one’s place in the world and ideas about how the group will live. Members of the group share a system of beliefs and values based on those understandings.

These spiritual and religious understandings can create a sense of nationalism by the sharing of common systems of beliefs and traditions among members of a group. Spirituality and religion can be separate understandings for some individuals, while others may express spirituality and live by a religious belief system.



Figure 1-13 ▲

How can common religious traditions, beliefs, and values create bonds between the people of a nation? (1) Pope Benedict XVI addresses the crowd at the Vatican, Christmas 2007. (2) Crowd praying in Turkey, Istanbul, at the Suleymaniye Mosque. (3) Buddhist monks walking in single file to create the form known as the “circle of joy” (gakhyil) at the Shechen Tibetan Monastery in Bodhnath, Nepal. (4) People celebrating a Bar Mitzvah in Jerusalem, Israel. (5) Garrette Courchene finds healing in drumming and singing at Winnipeg’s urban sweat lodge.

Ideas and Opinions

“ When we surrendered and signed the land, in terms of our philosophy, we don’t own the land, it was created by God for the benefit of all people. So we couldn’t have given it away; we could have only shared the land and its resources. So basically we viewed that transaction to be a sharing of the land and resources and also one of co-existence, that we would live side by side with each other and respect each other, and not to have dominance. ”

—Elijah Harper, Red Sucker Lake First Nation and member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba (1981–1999), speaking about the treaty negotiations and the relationship with the land.

How does Elijah Harper express the spiritual relationship between the people of Red Sucker Lake First Nation and the land?

Ethnic Ties and Nationalism

Members of a nation may share ethnic ties such as ancestry, characteristics, family ties, history, and language, as well as cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. Shared ethnic ties can create a sense of belonging or nationalism among the people of a nation because of their shared experiences. People may also feel connected due to a shared sense of pride or loyalty to an ethnicity.

Many nation-states are composed of people of various ethnicities. This is due to migration as well as to the fact that political boundaries sometimes divide territories in which nations live. In Africa, where the traditional lands of many ethnic nations were divided between several nation-states, many ethnic nations live within the same territory. The nation-state of Chad, for example, includes over 200 distinct ethnic groups.

Culture and Nationalism

Can sharing a culture generate a sense of belonging within a nation? *Culture* is the unwritten way of knowing, being, and acting among the people of a nation based on their shared traditions, beliefs, and values. Shared cultural experiences can shape a person's identity. Individuals often identify with a variety of cultures; for example, those associated with their ethnicity, nation-state, language, region, or community.

Culture can inspire a sense of nationalism among members of a nation through such things as shared values, beliefs, traditions, ways of life, oral stories, history, food, clothing, arts, TV, and film. Cultural representations can unite people by expressing the shared experiences of the nation.

*It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story ... that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us.*²⁰

Storytelling and oral traditions are an important means of transmitting cultural beliefs and values. What does Nigerian author Chinua Achebe say about the importance of storytelling in the excerpt above from his novel *Anthills of the Savannah*? Many of Achebe's stories are about the history and experiences of the people of Nigeria. How can storytelling create a sense of belonging and connection among the people of a nation?

²⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (Oxford: William Heinemann, 1987), p. 124.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

People who have diverse ethnic backgrounds may find it challenging to describe their identity. If your parents are from different ethnic backgrounds, which do you identify with? Can you belong to more than one ethnic nation?

Fast Facts

The Sothos people are a single ethnic group that makes up almost the entire country of Lesotho. Lesotho is geographically surrounded by another nation-state, South Africa.



Figure 1-14 ▲

The Kingdom of Lesotho, in Africa.



Figure 1-15 ▲

Scorched Earth, Clear-cut Logging on Native Sovereign Land, Shaman Coming to Fix, by Laurence Paul Yuxweluptun. What evidence can you find of Coast Salish culture shared by the people of the Salish nation?



Figure 1-16 ▲

Tom Thomson, the painter of *Algonquin October*, was associated with the Group of Seven. These artists journeyed all over Canada, painting the wilderness, and their vision shaped how Canadians saw their country. Artwork by the Group of Seven inspires feelings of nationalism in many Canadians.

Food can represent important beliefs and values associated with a culture, and the traditions related to preparing and eating particular foods can generate a sense of belonging and connection among the people of a nation. Do you share cultural experiences related to food with other people?

*For wedding celebrations, a large circular sweet bread, considered holy, is the most significant of all wedding breads. It is heavily decorated with symbolic ornaments shaped as pinecones (symbolizing fertility), doves, geese, or other symbols of peace, love and faithfulness ... Folklore says the making of Korovai was an important ritual in itself.*²¹



Figure 1-17 ▲

Ukrainian Korovai bread.

The culture that a group shares can include the stories, myths, and legends that form the history of the people. The history of a nation can provide shared historical experiences, celebrations, and accomplishments and inspire a sense of nationalism among its members. It can also serve as a record of the cultural beliefs, values, and traditions of the nation.

*The circle has neither beginning nor ending. It has always been. The circle represents the journey of human existence. It connects us to our past and to our future. Within the periphery of the circle lies the key to all Native philosophy, values, and traditions. All things depend upon its equilibrium. If it is unbalanced, the effects on our physical, mental, and emotional health can be devastating.*²²

PAUSE AND REFLECT

These paintings are part of the collection at the National Gallery of Canada. How do you think a gallery can inspire nationalism?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What does the quotation by Tallow tell you about the importance of history to First Nations peoples?

²¹ Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada, *Ukrainian Daughters' Cookbook* (Centax Books: Regina, Saskatchewan, 2001).

²² Robin Melting Tallow, "Writing Circle: Native Women of Western Canada," in *Aboriginal Perspectives* (Edmonton, AB: Duval Publishing House, 2004), p. 231.



◀ **Figure 1-18**

Games, such as this traditional Inuit blanket toss, can inspire a sense of nationalism among members of a nation. This game reflects the cultural beliefs and values of the Inuit, while the historical origins of the Olympic Games shape a Greek sense of nationalism. What games or sports inspire a sense of nationalism in you?

Citizenship and Nationalism

Citizenship refers to the membership and participation of individuals in a political community, most times a nation-state. The citizenship of the people of a nation-state creates a sense of belonging in a very tangible way, through legal documentation such as laws, charters, passports, and birth certificates. The type of participation by citizens depends on the nation-state, but can include

- paying taxes
- obeying the laws of the country
- serving in the country's armed forces
- voting in elections
- respecting the rights of others
- defending one's own rights and the rights of others



Figure 1-19 ▲

In 2000, the CBC sponsored and aired a 17-episode documentary entitled *Canada: A People's History*. The series told the stories of leaders, explorers, and everyday people who have shaped the nation. Broadcast in both English and French, it was immensely successful. How might knowing the nation's history inspire feelings of belonging in the people of Canada?



Figure 1-20 ▲

The Kutsyh family embraces after swearing an oath of Canadian citizenship in a ceremony for 93 new Canadians in Edmonton in January 2007. The ceremony was in honour of the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Citizenship Act. How do shared experiences of citizenship foster a sense of nationalism?

Ideas and Opinions

“ A man's country is not a certain area of land, of mountains, rivers, and woods, but it is a principle; and patriotism is loyalty to that principle. ”

—American writer George William Curtis

This quotation defines nation-state as a *principle*, or moral ideal, and *patriotism* as loyalty to that ideal. If you question the actions or ideals of your nation-state, are you being disloyal and unpatriotic?

Through shared experiences related to citizenship, the people of a nation-state feel a sense of nationalism and connection to one another.

A sense of nationalism inspired by the citizenship of a people is often confused with the concept of patriotism. *Patriotism* is a love for a nation or nation-state, and relates to a pride in that nation or nation-state's culture and achievements. Patriotism may also involve love and respect for national symbols, such as flags, landmarks, monuments, and cities. Some forms of patriotism involve the individual placing the interests of the nation or nation-state above his or her own personal or group interests.

Figure 1-21

These posters were produced in 1943 for the Wartime Information Board. Their purpose was to encourage men and women to do their patriotic duty. How are these posters expressions of patriotism? Which nation is represented? Are they also expressions of nationalism? If so, whose nationalism is expressed?



Explore the Issues

- 1 Conduct an interview to answer the question: What shapes understandings of nationalism? Use the criteria from the Skill Path to determine whom you would interview to respond to this question. Gather information from your interviewee and present your findings to the class in an oral report.
- 2 What understandings of nationalism do people have in Canada? Survey your classmates to determine if a range of understandings exists within your class. Are your classmates' understandings of nationalism based on geographic, linguistic, spiritual, religious, ethnic, cultural, civic, or patriotic understandings?
In a globalizing world, do diverse understandings of nationalism enhance or limit opportunities for identity and citizenship?



Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter, you explored many understandings of nation and nationalism. You investigated what connects individual members of nations, for example, their shared experiences related to

- ethnic background, ancestry
- cultural values and beliefs
- history
- language(s), communication
- religious and/or spiritual beliefs
- geography
- politics and citizenship

You also explored nationalism as a shared sense of kinship or belonging, as well as the elements that can inspire a sense of nationalism among members of a nation, such as geography, language, spirituality and religion, ethnicity, culture, and citizenship.

Respond to Ideas

- 1 To what extent do understandings of nation and nationalism vary in Canada? Choose a collective identity and research what shapes the sense of nation in that group. Apply the criteria introduced in the Skill Path to the sources you find and use the criteria to determine which sources are most pertinent to your research. Assemble the information and create a concept map. Display your concept map beside those of your classmates. Identify the similarities and differences between the understandings of nation and nationalism. Present a statement that describes the extent to which understandings of nation and nationalism vary in Canada.

SKILLS

Respond to Issues

- 2 The United Nations has acknowledged the existence of 192 nation-states as of 2006. If the United Nations were to acknowledge nations and not just nation-states, what would happen to that number? What challenges might this pose for the United Nations? Write a definition of nation for the United Nations to use. In a group, share your definitions and discuss.

Recognize Relationships between Concepts, Issues, and Citizenship

- 3 Review your investigation of Fiji. Explain the relationship between the acknowledgement of an Indo-Fijian nation or an ethnic Fijian nation and citizenship. How does recognition of your nation as a nation-state influence your citizenship?
- 4 Understandings of nationalism may lead to patriotic sentiments. Find examples of patriotic sentiments and create a presentation that shows how patriotism relates to one's love for and loyalty to a nation. Present a statement to your classmates and discuss it.