

Nation Building: Big Lessons from Successes and Failures

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Collective work: 26 chapters by 57 authors

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Why nation building?

- Philosophers and politicians throughout history: stability, security, and development of a society crucially depends on its **social cohesion**
- **Social cohesion** – degree to which members of a society have a common identity and a shared sense of responsibility for the well-being of the entire society
 - Aesop's fable "The Bundle of Sticks" concludes with "Union gives strength"
 - Abraham Lincoln paraphrased a verse from the New Testament by claiming "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (1858)
- In the book **nation building** is understood as the policies that ensure social cohesion, for a given set of initial conditions

The central questions of the book

- Which policies are adequate to build social cohesion in different circumstances?
- What are the perils of social cohesion and pitfalls of building it?
- What are the big lessons from the political economy literature on nation building?

Why now?

- 1 With the rise of polarization in many democracies and the war in the heart of Europe, this topic is as important as ever
- 2 Over the last decade, the literature has advanced and grown
 - It is time to take a stock and draw lessons

Internal and external conditions and policies matter

Individual book chapters consider many of them:

- Structure of the population
- Education policies
- Internal institutional factors
- Propaganda, leadership, joint experiences
- External interventions and wars

Structure of the population:

Definitions of ethno-linguistics diversity measures

Fractionalization (F) = the probability that two people from the same country are not from the same group

- Maximized when everybody is different
- Minimized when everybody is the same

Polarization (P) = the extent to which the population is clustered around a small number of (distant) poles

- Maximized with two equal-size groups
- Minimized when everybody is different and when everybody is the same

Segregation (S) = the extent to which different groups within a country live in different regions

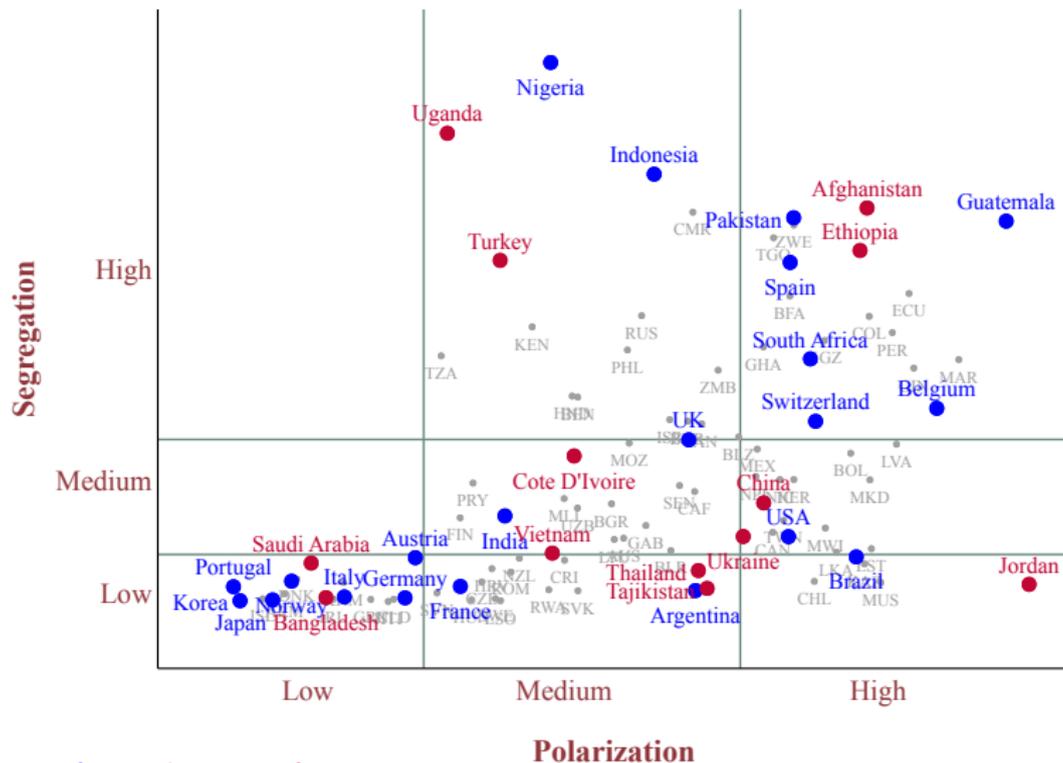
- Maximized when each region is homogenous, but populated by different group
- Minimized when composition of population is the same everywhere

Key internal “initial” conditions

The introductory chapter “Nation building: What could possibly go wrong?” (Rohner & Zhuravskaya) ⇒ key aspects of ethno-linguistic diversity are:
Polarization and **Segregation**

- 1 **Polarization** reflects potential antagonisms within society
 - When there is small number of groups, it is easier to see them as opposites, the divisions are salient
 - Eases the emergence of social identity driven by social comparisons, in which people see the society divided into “us” vs. “them”
- 2 **Segregation** adds geographical dimension to these antagonisms
 - Makes the threat of secession more credible
 - It reduces contact between different groups, which diminishes inter-group trust and cooperation

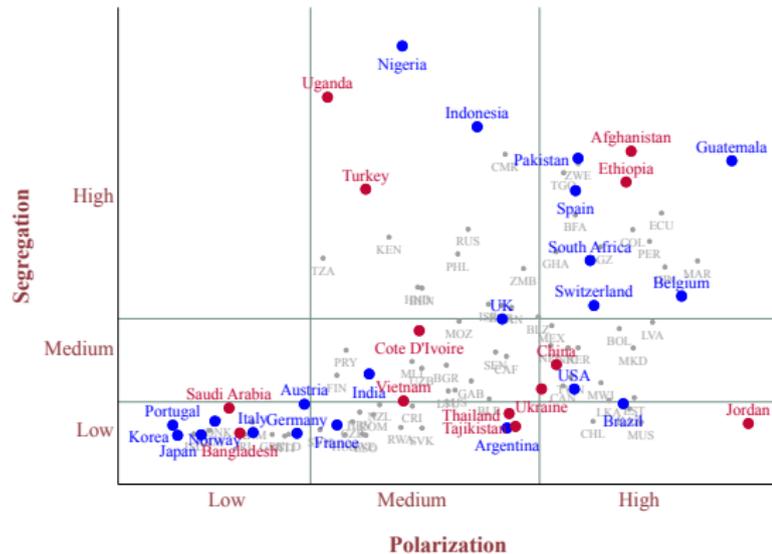
Modern countries on Polarization × Segregation space



• Democracies • Autocracies

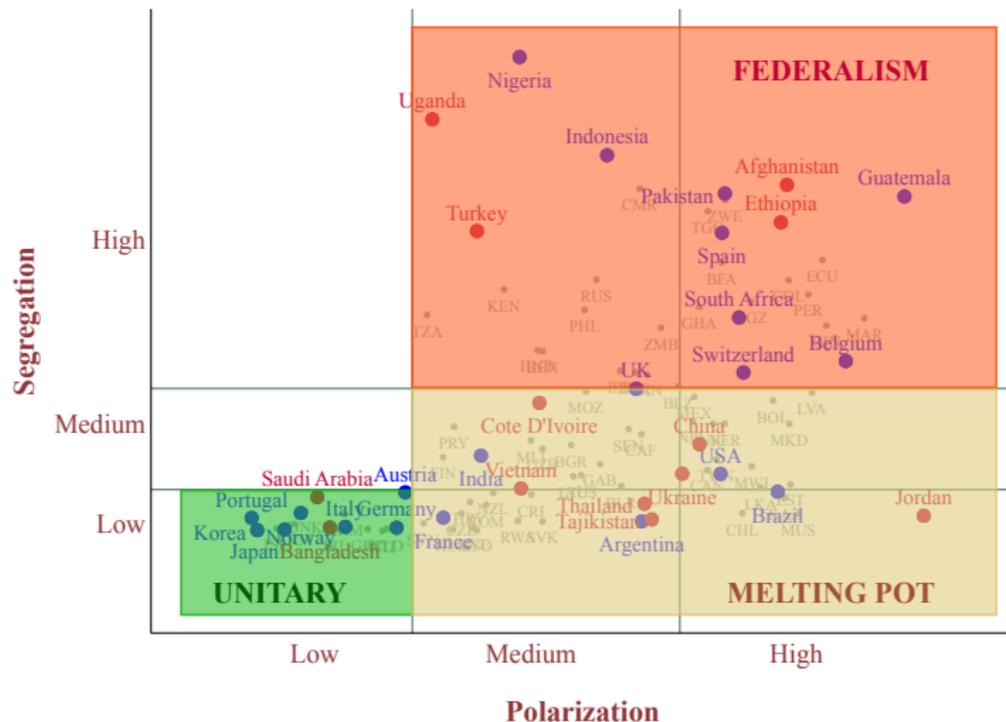
Immediate observations

- 1 Low **P** => low **S**
 - in practice, homogenous
 - in theory, could be very heterogeneous
- 2 Medium to high **P** says nothing about **S**
- 3 Political regime is not predicted by these axes



3 segments with distinct types of nation-building strategies

Different initial conditions create different challenges in achieving social cohesion \Rightarrow different nation-building strategies, abstracting from other differences:

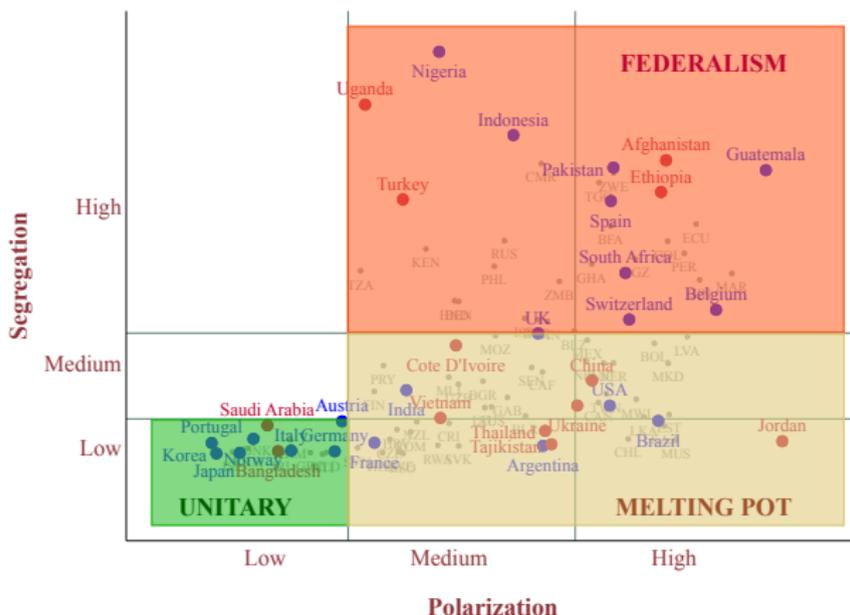


Low Polarization - Low Segregation: Green Segment

- Typically: homogenous with no secessionist movements or internal group conflicts
- Could build national cohesion around common culture (language and positive history)
 - Geographic isolation (Japan or Iceland)
 - Forced population exchange (Greece after population exchange with Turkey 1923)
 - Forced assimilation policies (Bismarck's German Empire 1870s)
 - Up to: mass killing or forced expulsions of minority groups (Armenian Genocide 1915–1917)
 - Most homogenous nations try to forget dark pages of their history
- **The Nation Building Strategy going forward: society-wide national cohesion based on common positive narrative in a unitary democratic state**
- A possible peril: aggressive nationalism
 - Totalitarian regimes could motivate their population to stage aggressive wars
 - Germany, Italy, Japan, and Austria – with large-scale fascist movements in the 1930s and 1940s – were in this corner
 - This highlights the crucial role of democracy

High Segregation: Pink Segment

- Homogenous regions, populated by different groups
 - Strong regionalist identity \Rightarrow a possible rejection of a national identity
 - Risk of separatism, resulting in instability, civil conflicts, up to a break-up
 - Without a break-up: the need to appease or oppress secessionist movements

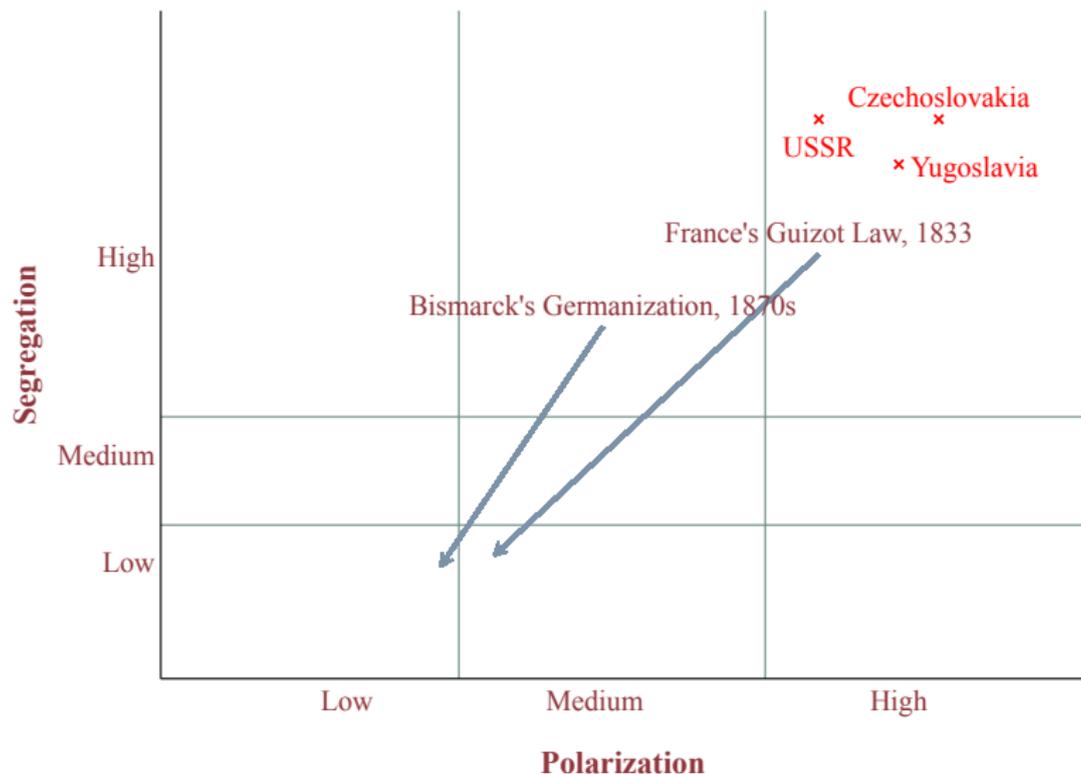


Break-up is very costly

Response of autocrats to the risk of conflict: Forced assimilation, public education

- Examples: Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Nagorny Karabakh
- One example of a peaceful break up is Czechoslovakia
- Even initially (relatively) peaceful break-ups may lead to postponed conflict: USSR & Russian invasion into Ukraine
- To avoid conflict or break-up, some autocracies undertook forced assimilation policies
 - Bismarck's Germanization 1870s
 - Atatürk's Turkization 1929
 - French common school curriculum 1833
 - Historically, the level of segregation was similar in France and Spain
 - Different strategies in Catalonia and French Bretagne
 - Forced assimilation can be an efficient strategy from the point of view of a dictator, but can be very costly for minorities and can backfire on a part of population

Countries move out of high-segregation segment



How can a democratic country cope with high segregation?

Swiss show case

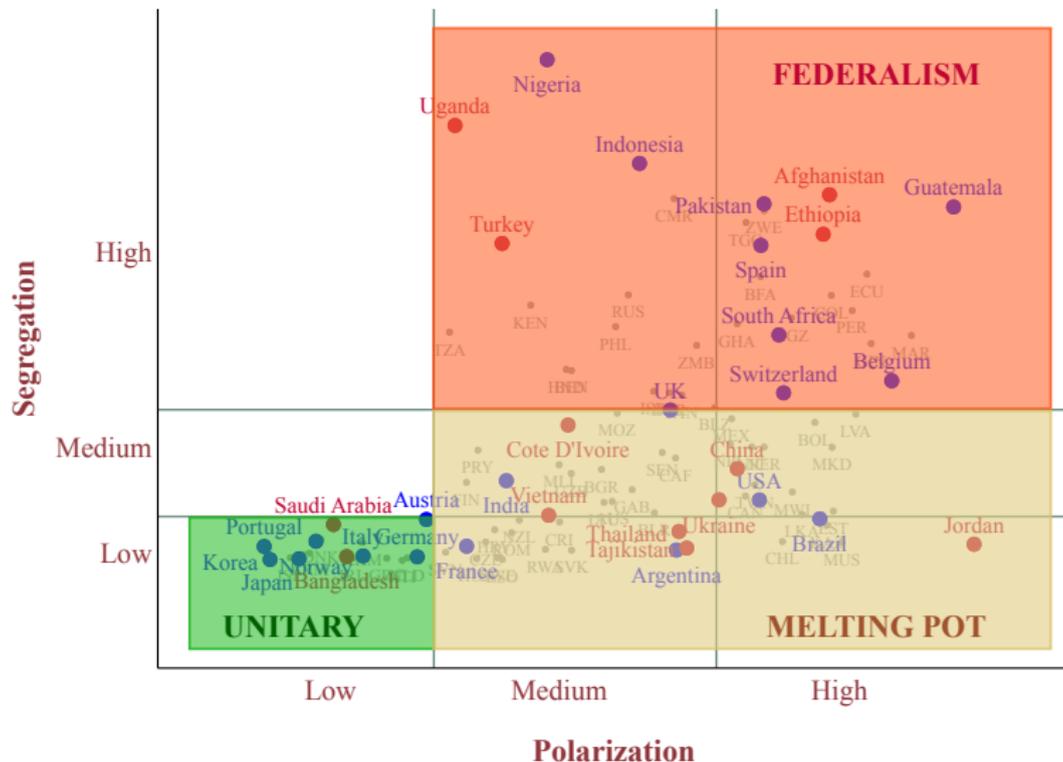
Switzerland:

- Secessionist religious wars ended with a Constitution (1848) based on inclusion and power sharing
- It installed political institutions characterized by sharing power between Protestants and Catholics
 - Bicameralism, proportional representation, coalition governments with a rotating presidency and regular popular votes on key issues
 - Creating a unique system where no religious or linguistic group could dominate the other
- Key components of modern Swiss identity: multilingualism, federalism, and direct democracy (Kriesi 1998)
 - The idea is to embrace the differences and make them the center of a common identity

Is Switzerland an exception? Can other countries cope?

- Switzerland is special in many respects, of course
- Yet, there is systematic evidence (Ch 24) that power sharing is a key for political stability when inter-group cleavages are salient
- Power sharing and federalist institutions have been used in the UK (in Northern Ireland, in particular), Spain (bilingual education in Catalonia), post-Apartheid South Africa (“co-operative governance”), and Belgium
 - Less smooth than Switzerland:
 - Northern Irish “Troubles,” Basque’s ETA and Catalonia’s independence movement, spells of the absence of government in Belgium
 - all to a large extent linked to segregation
- Yet, power-sharing institutions have helped to prevent worse outcomes in each setting
- Autocracies have no power-sharing institutions
 - In many, ethnic tensions explode into full blown conflicts: e.g., Afghanistan, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Uganda
- **The Nation Building Strategy: power-sharing and federalism in a democracy, i.e., embracing differences**

Medium-Low Segregation & Polarization: Yellow segment



Medium-Low Segregation & Polarization: Yellow segment

- Inherent group divisions without any geographical dimension
 - Different groups live in close proximity
 - No option of secession
- Only one way to avoid conflict: **the Melting Pot Strategy of Nation Building**
 - Make the ethnic differences less salient by fostering non-group identity
 - Democracies and autocracies use public education and propaganda
 - Imposing common language
 - And focusing nation-building narratives based on shared positive experiences
 - The US Melting Pot is a classic example
 - Opening to immigration actually can make this strategy easier by reducing polarization and increasing fractionalization, which reduces the salience of group differences (Ch 2)

Summing up – big picture

- The nation-building strategies based on polarization-segregation space
 - **Unitary** democratic nation for homogenous states
 - **Melting Pot** democracy for high polarization – low segregation states
 - **Federalism** in a power-sharing democracy for high segregation for high polarization states
- None of them are easy, each can fail and backfire
- The chapters describe the perils and costs

Section I: Contact Hypothesis versus Social Identity Theory

Diversity, contact, and nation building: Evidence from population resettlement in Indonesia by Bazzi, Gaduh, Rothenberg, and Wong (Ch. 2)

- A unique policy experiment to test the effects of polarization and fractionalization on nation building
- Indonesia's Transmigration program (1979–88), one of the largest resettlements in history
 - The ethnic mix of the destination localities was exogenously determined
- The pan-Indonesian inclusive national identity increased with village Fractionalization, decreased with village Polarization
 - Measured by: share of speakers at home of the national Indonesian language Bahasa Indonesia; inter-ethnic marriages; non-ethnic names
- Big lesson: Fractionalization is not an obstacle to nation building
- Using housing lottery within villages, show that S decreases the effect of $F \Rightarrow$ “contract hypothesis”

Ch. 3: A direct test of forming social identity

Defining national culture in opposition to a domestic outgroup: Identity in the Russian Empire by Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya (Ch. 3)

- Social identity theory (Tajfel et al. 1979): People define who they are by how they differ from others, dividing all people into “us” versus “them”
- Use exogenous border of the Pale of Settlement region of the Russian empire, where Jews constituted the largest minority to study the effects co-existence of Jews and non-Jews
- Find that identity of the non-Jewish majority emerged from the social comparisons
 - they defined themselves in opposition to what a stereotypical Jew represented in their eyes:
 - market intermediary: a trader, a creditor
- This social identity enshrined persistent anti-market and anti-entrepreneurial values among non-Jewish population
- Geographical proximity to anti-Jewish pogrom locations, made these social comparisons more salient, leading to a stronger anti-market culture among non-Jews

Ch. 4: Role of economic interdependence and mobility

Building resilient inter-ethnic peace: Hindus and Muslims in South Asia

by Jha (Ch. 4)

- Motivated by the variation in presence Muslim-Hindu violence in India, develops a framework to understand conditions for resilient peace in a polarized society
- Inter-group violence can be prevented even in the presence of clear-cut group divisions under three conditions:
 - ① different groups should be economically complementary to each other, so that there are economic benefits of cooperation
 - ② group-specific comparative advantage should be intangible, so that replication or expropriation of minority by the majority unfeasible
 - ③ minority needs to be mobile and have a good outside option, so that it could credibly threaten to leave
- Use natural harbors to predict the locations of Muslim trading ports in South Asia, and test the theory using Hindu-Muslim violence as outcome
- Mobility – key difference between Jews in Russian Empire and Muslims in South Asia

Ch 6, Ch 7: Policy lesson: contact with horizontal equality can diminish social identity

Two chapters test directly the Allport's contact hypothesis (1954)

- **Building nations through internal mobility: Evidence from Spanish conscripts** by Cáceres-Delpiano, De Moragas, Facchini, & González (Ch 6)
 - Random assignment of army conscripts to different regions of Spain
- **Promoting national integration through national service programs: Evidence from Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps** by Okunogbe (Ch 7)
 - Random assignment across different ethnic regions of mandatory national service program for young adults of Nigeria
- Contact fostered national identity, increased likelihood of voting in national elections, and lowered vote for regionalist parties.
- Importantly, national identity was fostered without weakening local ties and local ethnic identity
 - Suggesting that in segregated places, it is not a zero-sum game
 - Other possible policies: student mobility programs such as ERASMUS in Europe

Summing up – Section I: Contact vs. Social Identity

- Polarized and segregated countries face a serious risk of inter-ethnic animosity due to the formation of ethnic social identity
- There are ways to circumvent this with policies that ensure interactions between different groups under conditions of fair and equal exchange and the absence of domination of representatives of one group by another
- There are important benefits of economic integration, specialization, and complementarities between groups

Section II: Nation building through education

Charles Tilly (1975): *“almost all European governments eventually took steps which homogenized their populations”, including “the institution of a national language [and] the organization of mass public instruction.”*

- Education is one of the pillars of nation building; it is used to teach national language and transmit national values
- Shared language and values improve communication and trust
- Yet, it could come at a cost of oppression of minorities and exclusion
- The benefits and drawbacks of education as a tool for indoctrination can be intertwined

Chapters of this section deal with these issues

Seven different case-studies:

Four cases where goals of the reforms were attained:

- France Guizot Law 1833 Ch 8: **State-sponsored education and French identity**, Blanc & Kubo
- Ch 9 USA 19thC: **America's melting pot: Lessons from the Age of Mass Migration** by Mohnen & Viarengo
- Ch 10 Catalonia 1983: **Education, language, and national identity: Evidence from education reform** by Clots-Figueras & Masella
- Ch 11 China 2004: **Curriculum and ideology: Evidence from China** by Cantoni, Yang & Yuchtman

Seven different case-studies:

Three cases, where reform backfired on minorities:

- Bismarck Germanization on Poles 1880s: Ch 12 **Lessons from Bismarck's Germanization policy** by Cinnirella & Schüler
- USA ban of German schools 1920s: Ch 13 **Language policies in education and the possibility of an identity backlash** by Fouka
- Indonesia 1970s secularization of schools on pious Muslims : Ch 14 **Education for the masses or the pious? Public and Islamic schools in Indonesia** by Bazzi, Hilmy & Marx

Take-aways – Section II: Education

- Education can be a powerful tool promoting tolerance, knowledge, and prosperity
- It can also be (mis)used by nondemocratic governments to promote nationalism by indoctrination and discrimination
 - It is hard to weigh long-term against short-term goals, but minorities suffering can be very substantial with forced indoctrination
 - Ch 26 by Giuliano, Reich, and Riboni shows that often mass primary schooling to homogenize population is introduced by autocrats when democratizations is inevitable, reduce costs of democratization
 - In part, because the population is not ready to bear this cost of undergoing homogenisation
 - and in democracy it has a voice

Section III: Propaganda, leadership and joint experiences

There are many means of indoctrination: news media, entertainment, political speeches, role models. What they aim at depends on the incentives of the source: can be uniting and divisive. Some can lead to unintended negative effects

- Ch15 **Leadership and propaganda in nation building: Evidence from Rwanda under Kagame**, Blouin & Mukand
- Ch16 **Memory and nation building: The dangers of common enemy narratives**, Esposito, Rotesi, Saia & Thoenig
- Ch17 **Unintended cross-border effects of nation-building media**, DellaVigna, Enikolopov, Mironova, Petrova & Zhuravskaya
- Ch18 **Charismatic leaders and nation-building: The case of Mustafa Kemal 'Atatürk'**, Assouad
- Ch19 **The influence of heroic networks: French collaboration with the Nazis**, Cagé, Grosjean & Jha
- Ch 20 **One team, one nation: Football, identity and conflict in Africa**, Campante, Depetris-Chauvin & Durante

Instead of summary Section III: Propaganda and Leadership

- Propaganda is an effective tool for shaping identity in autocratic states
 - its results, however, depend on the dictator's idiosyncratic preferences
 - in many cases dictators have exploited propaganda to instil division and hatred
- In democracies, more effective are:
 - role models from “other” groups
 - shared positive experiences of effective inter-group cooperation

Section IV: External interventions and wars

Can one impose a national identity from outside? Most likely it will backfire badly...

- Ch 21 Nation building through military aid? Unintended consequences of US interventionism, Dimant, Krieger and Meierrieks
- Ch 22 Nation building through foreign military intervention? Evidence from the Vietnam War, Dell and Querubin
- Ch 23 Identity formation under occupation and external threats: Evidence from Alsace-Lorraine and the annexation of Crimea, Gehring
- Russian invasion into Ukraine fostered Ukrainian social cohesion, the opposite to Putin's intentions. Historically polarizes state, now is more united than ever.

Conclude:

- Nation building is a task that can only be achieved by a nation and not imposed by a foreign power
- Outside threats do help build nations

Section V: Representation and redistribution

Can one buy national loyalty? With what?

- Ch 25 **New patriots: How Roosevelt's New Deal made America great again**, Caprettini & Voth
 - Welfare spending in 1930s boosted US patriotism
 - Higher New Deal social support was associated with a greater frequency of patriotic acts during WWII, such as war bond purchases, volunteering for the US Army, and exceptionally brave acts in battle field (represented by medals)
- Ch 24 **Power sharing, conflict and state building**, Mueller, Rauh & Rohner

Conclude:

- Social Welfare State and Power Sharing help building nations

Lessons?

- 1 Democracy is the backbone of sustainable and peaceful nation-building
- 2 Inter-group contact with horizontal equality and security guarantees can reduce inter-group animosity and salience of group divisions
- 3 Fostering a positive common identity, e.g., through education and propaganda, is key with high polarization and low segregation
- 4 Power-sharing and federalism are crucial in high-segregation settings
- 5 One cannot build nations from outside: military interventions and aid backfire

Definitions of ethno-linguistics diversity measures

Fractionalization:

$$F = 1 - \sum_{m=1}^M \pi_m^2 = \sum_{m=1}^M \pi_m(1 - \pi_m) \quad (1)$$

Polarization, with and without between-group distance:

$$P = \sum_{m=1}^M \pi_m^2(1 - \pi_m) \quad P^d = \sum_{m=1}^M \sum_{k=1}^M \pi_m^2 \pi_k d_{mk} \quad (2)$$

Segregation = whether F of the regions is the smaller than of the country:

$$S = \frac{1}{M-1} \sum_{m=1}^M \sum_{j=1}^J \frac{t_j}{T} \frac{(\pi_{jm} - \pi_m)^2}{\pi_m} \quad (3)$$

M groups; J regions; π - share of group; T - population; d - distance