

# The anatomy of patriotism

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## Abstract

Both historically and conceptually, patriotism has been one of the foundational characteristics that defines the very essence of one's attachment, identification, and loyalty to a political community and a basic virtue associated with citizenship as a political conception of the person. Despite its centrality in the pantheon of political ideals, patriotism remains a contested concept and an elusive virtue as well as a source of potential conflict and violence. In fact, the willingness to kill or die for one's country has been traditionally viewed as the most profound and genuine form of expression of patriotism. This paper examines some of the foundational elements associated with the discussion of patriotism. The introductory part presents the "contextual" aspect of patriotism, and the ambivalence of contemporary discussions about it are examined. This paper is composed of five parts. The first and the second part examine the "standard" analysis of patriotism and its basic elements. The third part provides the identification of the fundamental motivating impulses most commonly associated with patriotism. The next part discusses the most important objections to patriotism as articulated by its many critics. The concluding part of this paper emphasises that patriotism is to be understood as a civic, moral, and epistemic phenomenon.

KEYWORDS: patriotism, citizenship, foundations of patriotism, critique of patriotism

## Patriotism: some preliminary considerations<sup>1</sup>

Both historically and conceptually, patriotism has been one of the foundational characteristics that defines the very essence of one's attachment, identification and loyalty to a political community and is a basic virtue associated with citizenship as a political conception of the person. Despite its centrality in the pantheon of political ideals, patriotism remains a contested concept and an elusive virtue as well as a source of potential conflicts and violence. In fact, the willingness to kill or die for one's country has been traditionally viewed as the most profound and genuine form of the expression of patriotism. There is, therefore, hardly any concept in contemporary studies on citizenship and nationalism or political philosophy in general that is more complex, controversial and prone to abuse than that of patriotism (Kleinig, Keller & Primoratz 2015). This paper aims to examine some of the neglected aspects of this discussion as well as to identify a number of previously unacknowledged distinctions that the "standard" analysis of patriotism leaves largely unexamined.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an expanded version of the article published in Slovenian language in Sardoč (2012).

The aim of this paper is to identify some of the basic issues associated with the status, scope and the justification as well as the foundations, nature and the limits of patriotism, i.e. the anatomy of patriotism, the justification of patriotism, the motivational impulses of patriotism, and the objections to patriotism. As a matter of fact – or so I argue – existing approaches (either advocating or criticising patriotism) rely largely on a reductionist understanding of the nature, moral status and the value of patriotism. Moreover, each of the two positions, I maintain, fail to pay due respect to this topic as existing conceptions of patriotism leave unspecified a number of important distinctions. The motivational impulse of this article arises to a large extent out of a sense of dissatisfaction with how both advocates and critics of patriotism have framed the discussion of the status, scope and justification of patriotism.

This paper is composed of five parts. The second part examines the “standard” analysis of patriotism and its basic elements. The third part provides the identification of the fundamental motivating impulses most commonly associated with patriotism. The next discusses the most important objections to patriotism as articulated by its many critics. The concluding part of this paper emphasises that patriotism is to be understood as a civic, moral, and epistemic phenomenon.

## **The standard analysis of patriotism**

Both intuitively and theoretically, patriotism has been defined as “love of country” (*amor patriae*). Despite its simplistic depiction, this definition is anything but clear and unproblematic. In fact, throughout history, the very status of patriotism has been characterised by a fierce ambivalence. The Roman poet Horace described patriotism as the highest form of political sentiment. As he famously emphasises, ‘It is sweet and honorable to die for one’s country’ (*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*). In contrast, Leo Tolstoy, Mark Twain, and Oscar Wilde defined patriotism as being immoral and questionable, i.e. as ‘the virtue of the vicious’ and – perhaps most notoriously – as ‘the last refuge of a scoundrel,’ as Samuel Johnson put it. Patriotism, as Igor Primoratz (2002a) emphasises, is therefore intertwined with two extreme and opposed positions. On the one hand, patriotism is viewed as ‘a morally unacceptable partiality to one’s country and compatriots’ (*ibid.*: 12) whereas, on the other, patriotism is viewed ‘as a morally legitimate stance, or a duty, or a moral virtue’ (*ibid.*). This double nature of patriotism has been described by Martha C. Nussbaum (2011) in her article *Teaching Patriotism: Love and Critical Freedom* as the Janus face of patriotism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This ambivalence towards a particular notion can also be found when examining some other basic concepts, e.g. toleration. Despite the fact that patriotism and tolerance are far from being compatible, they share their dependence on their object. Rainer Forst – in the case of tolerance – termed this as a “normative dependent concept” (Forst 2007) whereas in the case of patriotism Eamonn Callan defined it as ‘depending virtue’ (Callan 2010: 270). For example, if we are tolerant of violence, tolerance would not be recognized as a virtue. The same would apply for patriotism. For example, constitutional patriotism is generally recognized as positive, as it is based on the commitment to shared public values and common principles of modern pluralistic society, e.g. equality, justice, freedom, whereas “unconditional” patriotism is far from unproblematic. The similarity between toleration and patriotism is also contextual, as both patriotism and toleration are being criticed as being pre-democratic.

## **The object of patriotism**

In order for a particular attachment to one's country to qualify as patriotism, it needs to encompass four separate elements, i.e. the subject of patriotism (who is a patriot); the object of patriotism (*who* or *what* is the object of this relationship); the nature of the special relationship between the subject and the object of patriotism (e.g. love), and the justification of patriotism (why patriotism is important, necessary, or even urgent). I examine each of these elements below.

As with the definition of citizenship, any conception of patriotism encompasses two separate dimensions, i.e. a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension of patriotism connects an individual [subject of patriotism] with its object, i.e. one's country (*patria*), a particular geographical area or a political community. This dimension of patriotism refers to the relationship between the individual and the object of patriotism. We can distinguish between two versions of the vertical dimension, i.e. a "pre-political" dimension of patriotism where the focus is primarily dedicated to the culture, language, history, and traditions of one's *patria* or a political community, and a "political" dimension of patriotism where the central object of loyalty, pride and emotional attachment are the common principles and fundamental values of a polity (e.g. justice, tolerance, etc.).

The pre-political justification is based on the relationship with a territory and the people who inhabit a particular geographical area while the political justification of patriotism is based on common principles and shared values. At the same time, these two dimensions also differ depending on the nature of the relationship between the subject and the object of patriotism, i.e. the identity-based conception, and the value-based conception of patriotism. The pre-political dimension is an example of identity-based patriotism (including nationalism). The most famous example of value-based patriotism is "constitutional patriotism" as articulated by Jürgen Habermas (1994, 1996).

In contrast, the horizontal dimension of patriotism is primarily related to the social, cultural, and psychological relationship between a political community and its members. In this view, a common political identity provides a sense of unity and solidarity among members of a political community. In this interpretation, as Igor Primoratz emphasises, patriotism needs to be viewed as a 'duty of special concern for the well-being of our country and compatriots' (Primoratz 2009). This dimension of patriotism connects members of the political community, which, on the one hand, share the same political status and identity whereas on the other differ according to the type of properties that are part of their choice (e.g. religion or conception of the good) as well as other elements of their identity (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity). As Robert Audi emphasises, definitions of patriotism essentially refer to:

at least three different kinds of things: a trait of character, as where we speak of a person who is patriotic to the core; an emotion, as where people are described as glowing with patriotism or bursting with pride in their country; and (perhaps by extension from these more basic cases) a position, such as the view that one owes loyalty to one's country (2009: 367).

## ***The nature of patriotism***

Both at the vertical as well as at the horizontal levels, two different conceptions of patriotism can be identified, i.e. extreme conceptions of patriotism (*extreme patriotism*) and moderate conceptions of patriotism (*moderate patriotism*). At the vertical level, extreme conceptions of patriotism are associated with an unconditional acceptance or loyalty to one's country, best represented by the slogan 'My country: right or wrong.' In this case, the defence of patriotism is absolute, because the object of patriotism receives unconditional support. Extreme conceptions of patriotism are characterised by three separate characteristics, i.e. unconditional loyalty to the object of patriotism; an exclusive attachment to the object of special treatment (e.g. love) and the distributive dimension (giving priority to one's compatriots). These conceptions of patriotism, as Igor Primoratz (2009) has emphasised, have been framed in a variety of ways, e.g. "strong", "extreme", "robust" etc.

In contrast, moderate conceptions of patriotism are limited by two sets of constraints, i.e. procedural constraints and object-related constraints. Given the fact that patriotism – per Alasdair MacIntyre – is a constant source of moral hazard (1984), both conditions are to set restrictions that would give these conceptions of patriotism a sufficient degree of legitimacy and neutralise their potentially negative effects. The vast majority of contemporary conceptions of patriotism – as exemplified most clearly in the case of the constitutional patriotism advanced by Jürgen Habermas – appear as a form of moderate patriotism, thereby avoiding the potential objection of being discriminatory, homogenising, exclusionary, etc. Some of the other most recent examples that might also qualify as being moderate include cosmopolitan patriotism (Appiah 1997); moderate patriotism (Nathanson 2010), civic patriotism (Laborde 2002), democratic patriotism (Callan 2010), and the patriotism of best tradition (Blum 2007).

The horizontal dimension of patriotism primarily denotes the relationship of the individual with other compatriots in the context of which it is necessary to distinguish the redistributive aspect of the horizontal dimension and the substantive aspect of the horizontal dimension of patriotism. The redistributive aspect indicates the priority that compatriots should be given in comparison with other individuals. In fact, it raises a major problem any conception of patriotism is bound to face, i.e. the problem of priority, partiality and discrimination. As Richard Dagger emphasises:

[c]ompatriots take priority because we owe it to them as a matter of reciprocity. Everyone, compatriots or not, has a claim to our respect and concern – a claim founded on the rights of autonomy – but those who join with us in cooperative enterprises have a claim to special recognition. Their cooperation enables us to enjoy the benefits of the enterprise and fairness demands that we reciprocate (1985: 446).

## ***Patriotism and the problem of partiality***

The redistributive dimension needs to be further distinguished so as to differentiate between different conceptions of patriotism, i.e. the absolute version ("absolute" advantage), and the relative version or patriotism ("relative" advantage). According to the absolute version, one's compatriots always take precedence over other individuals or groups,

irrespective of the effects of the policies of the cultivation of patriotism. In contrast, the relative version of the redistributive dimension favours compatriots or members of the same political community only under specific conditions or under particular circumstances. The absolute version of the redistributive dimension thus allows for one's compatriots to always take precedence over others or those who are not members of one's political community, while the relative version gives priority to compatriots only under certain conditions.<sup>3</sup>

The substantive aspect of the redistributive dimension of patriotism denotes various forms of the manifestation of special treatment justified either as a duty or obligation. As Andrew Mason emphasises, we have a special obligation to our compatriots

to participate fully in public life has been thought to include or entail various specific obligations such as an obligation to vote, to take one's turn at jury service, and to keep a watchful eye on government and speak out when it acts unjustly (1997: 428).

The basic question associated with the substantive aspect of patriotism is what is the advantage of the special obligation we have to our compatriots. Nevertheless, we could take into consideration the assertion associated with effectiveness as giving priority to one's compatriots could be justified that by giving them priority we do make a difference instead of distributing the limited resources available to us to a larger set of individuals, e.g. globally (*the distributive assertion*). The problem of partiality, therefore, leads to the "challenge of reconciliation", i.e. of how one's attachment to other fellow citizens can be reconciled with a commitment to equal respect of all others (Nathanson 1989).

### ***Justification of patriotism***

Irrespective of the advocacy by its supporters or opposition by its critics, patriotism has been justified in two separate ways, i.e. a positive justification of patriotism and a negative justification of patriotism. The two definitions differ primarily over the nature of justification and the related concept of patriotism. The "positive" version of the definition of patriotism, define it as "love of country" (*amor patriae*) or as loyalty to the laws and institutions as well as the rights and freedoms they do provide. As Maurizio Viroli emphasises, in the republican tradition, patriotism has been defined as 'love of the political institutions and the way of life that sustain the common liberty of a people' (1995: 1). The so-called positive version of the argument for patriotism as 'active identification with one's particular nation as a cross-generational political community' (Callan 2002: 468) is directly independent of the status of patriotism as it is based on the internal relationship between the subject and the object of patriotism. The moral value of patriotism as 'a certain kind of emotional attachment to a certain kind of object' (Hand & Pearce 2009: 454) depends primarily on the value of the relationship (love) between the subject and the object patriotism.

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<sup>3</sup> For a further elaboration of the redistributive dimension of patriotism and the giving of priority to one's compatriots, see Dagger (1985), Goodin (1988) and Mason (1997).

Unlike the intrinsic moral value of patriotism, the negative alternative of defining patriotism has been justified through a comparison with an external object or what it is not (as a negation). The most common comparison used in the negative definition of patriotism has been to distinguish it – either negatively or positively – from what it is not, i.e. cosmopolitanism and nationalism. When comparing patriotism and nationalism, patriotism is defined as being something positive whereas nationalism as being something negative. As Maurizio Viroli emphasises in his book *For Love of Country*:

The language of patriotism has been used over the centuries to strengthen or invoke love of the political institutions and the way of life that sustain the common liberty of a people, that is love of the republic; the language of nationalism was forged in late eighteenth-century Europe to defend or reinforce the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic oneness and homogeneity of a people (Viroli 1995: 1)

Perhaps the best known negative version of the definition of patriotism or the distinction between nationalism and patriotism was articulated by George Orwell in his essay *Notes on Nationalism* (1968). While nationalism, as Orwell emphasises, is ‘inseparable from the desire for power,’ as it is the goal of every nationalist ‘to secure more power and more prestige, *not* for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality,’ patriotism is defined as ‘devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people’ (ibid.: 361). On this interpretation, the nature of patriotism has been defined as ‘defensive, both militarily and culturally’ (ibid.). In accordance with this interpretation, the fundamental difference between nationalism and patriotism, as Maurizio Viroli put it, is: ‘for the patriots, the primary value is the republic and the free way of life that the republic permits; for the nationalists, the primary values are the spiritual and cultural unity of the people’ (Viroli 1995: 2).

There are two ways of distinguishing patriotism from nationalism since there are two elements that distinguish patriotism from nationalism. The first is the object-related distinction. The object of patriotism is one’s country, whereas the object of nationalism is one’s nation. This distinction is uncontroversial as the two objects are distinct from one another. The second (and more important) distinguishing feature between patriotism and nationalism is their justification. In the case of patriotism, the justification is based on one’s attachment or “care/love” for one’s country. In contrast, nationalism – as its critics emphasise – is based on domination. Orwell’s distinction between patriotism and nationalism has been a justificatory-based version of it whereas some of the contemporary discussions of patriotism have advanced an object-related version of how to distinguish patriotism from nationalism, e.g. Nathanson (1989) and Primoratz (2007). Patriotism, therefore, does not (or should not) comprise any form of domination over others whereas domination is inherent in the very nature of nationalism.

Alongside the negative definition of patriotism, it is often placed alongside an ideal that is wider or less confined, for example, cosmopolitanism (Nussbaum 2011). On this interpretation, the moral value of patriotism is being negative as the basic moral

object is smaller in size than in the case of cosmopolitanism, i.e. a global community. Nevertheless, the relationship between nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism is far more complex than this as the crucial difference is in the special treatment of those with whom one primarily identifies. As Maurizio Viroli has emphasized, for patriots, the basic moral unit is the republic, whereas for nationalist the basic moral unit is the nation as a cultural and spiritual unity (1995). With this interpretation, the object of love between patriotism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism does not coincide; therefore, a comparison of their moral value is to a large extent misguided. In the context of this comparison, the moral value of patriotism is smaller due to the “size” of the community of one’s attachment, i.e. a *patria* and not a global community. The difference between patriotism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, I maintain, therefore cannot be reduced to a single distinction as it is a complex relationship that encompasses both a diverse object of special treatment, as well as a virtue.

### **The motivating factors of patriotism**

The requirements for the cultivation of patriotism can be distinguished between two sets of motivating factors that are used by all those who claim that patriotism is a necessary moral virtue, i.e. external motivating factors (such as war, aggression or other conflicts, etc.) and internal motivating factors. Among the internal factors, four distinct impulses can be identified, i.e. the “integrative” impulse, the “redistributive” impulse, the “compensatory” impulse, and the “responsibility” impulse.<sup>4</sup>

The integrative impulse associated with patriotism is basically to provide a sense of unity and cohesion. The role of patriotism, as Charles Taylor emphasises, is primarily in providing a ‘strong common identification’ (1996: 120). Patriotism, he asserts, ‘is based on an identification with others in a particular common enterprise,’ and as such is ‘somewhere between friendship, or family feeling, on one side, and altruistic dedication on the other’ (Taylor 1989: 166). The redistributive impulse is aimed to ensure the redistribution of property among members of the political community. At the same time, it aims to cultivate mutual solidarity as democratic societies are, as Taylor points out, ‘highly vulnerable to the alienation that arises from deep inequalities and the sense of neglect and indifference that easily arises among abandoned minorities’ (1996: 120). As the traditional critique of the liberal model of a rights-based conception of citizenship emphasises, the compensatory impulse is primarily viewed as a correction to the rights held by members of a political community. In this interpretation, patriotism is viewed as a counterweight to the rights and a number of associated negative effects including apathy, indifference, etc. Furthermore, the responsibility-based impulse is primarily viewed as a mechanism for the cultivation of associative virtues normally identified with patriotism, e.g. loyalty, pride, etc..

As can be discerned from the presentation of the four basic motivating impulses associated with patriotism, two basic aspects can be identified, i.e. the social aspect and

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<sup>4</sup> This distinction on the four basic “internal” impulses of patriotism is based on the presentation of patriotism and nationalism by Rogers Brubaker (2010).

the individual aspect. The social aspect aims primarily at the creation of stability and unity as well as the greater social cohesion of individuals and different social groups. This aspect of patriotism, therefore, contributes to the creation and maintenance of stable and sustainable relationships between members of the political community, thereby creating a sense of unity and solidarity as well as strengthen trust between different social groups and individuals. As such, patriotism is viewed as a viable mechanism for ensuring unity and social cohesion. On the individual level, the cultivation of patriotism aims primarily to contribute to the experience of the interrelationship between individuals and the promotion of those expressions we “normally” identify with patriotism, e.g. raising a flag, singing anthems, special concern for compatriots, loyalty, pride, courage, respect for law, critical thinking, etc. In contrast to other sets of characters identified as civic virtues (e.g. tolerance), the main problem is not what might be the limits of patriotism (as this is a central question on tolerance), but what counts as a legitimate form of expression of patriotism (*how* are we patriotic). As Michael Ignatieff emphasises,

[w]hile love of country has to be shared, the feelings that are shared are not necessarily the same for every citizen. Patriotism is a contested emotion because countries are contested places. Citizens disagree with each other about what the country should stand for, what its tradition means and what path it should take in the future (2009: 16).

This raises the “expressivist” challenge, a major issue in what counts as a true, legitimate or (potentially) the most genuine form of expressing patriotism. Nevertheless, any defence of patriotism (including forms of moderate patriotism) faces a diverse set of objections against the moral status, the justification and the expression of patriotism. I examine them in the next part of this paper.

## **Criticism(s) of patriotism**

Despite the fact that there are a number of “well established” objections to patriotism, its critique is far from simple or straightforward. The starting point of the critique of patriotism is centred around its nature and its moral status (Kateb 2008; Keller 2005). Each of the two criticisms raises various objections over the inadequacy of patriotism. For example, patriotism has been depicted as a mistake (Kateb 2008), deficient or insufficient (Canovan 2000), outdated (MacIntyre 1984) or has even been equated with racism (Gomberg 1990). Each of these criticisms contain a number of objections that differ according to two basic criteria, i.e. the contextual criticism and the substantive criticism of patriotism.

### ***Contextual criticism of patriotism***

The contextual critique of patriotism revolves around a number of separate objections centred on the alleged inadequacy of patriotism. Two separate groups of objections can be identified, i.e. the worthlessness of patriotism and the redundancy of patriotism. The first objection (*the worthlessness criticism*) does not question the moral status of patriotism. Instead of that, it argues that patriotism – as a virtue – is unnecessary given its pre-

democratic origins. In this interpretation, patriotism cannot qualify as being an eligible characteristic trait of citizens in a plurally diverse polity. As George Kateb emphasises, ‘there seems little plausibility to the contention that citizens of one democracy can always want citizens of other democracies to be patriots’ (2008: 10).

The second contextual objection to patriotism (*the redundancy criticism*) is not restricted exclusively to patriotism alone but on the redundancy of civic virtues in general. Given the fact that in this interpretation the stability and cohesion of a plurally diverse polity does not depend on civic virtues, all civic virtues, including patriotism (as well as tolerance, etc.) are redundant. As Stephen Macedo points out, this is closely related to a paradoxical situation as in order to flourish, democracies ‘need depoliticized institutions capable of drawing on expertise and impartial, non-partisan judgment: courts, auditors, inspectors general, ombudsman officials, research services, etc’ (Macedo 2011: 421). To summarise: in the first case, civic virtues are a necessary component of a plurally diverse polity, but patriotism is not one of them, whereas in the second case, all virtues are redundant, including patriotism. In the first case, due to the nature of a political community (e.g. a liberal-democratic one and not an autocracy) there is no need for patriotism. In contrast, in the case of objections over the redundancy of patriotism together with other civic virtues, it is redundant, given the effects of modern pluralistic society and its institutional framework.

### ***Substantive criticism of patriotism***

In contrast to the two contextual objections identified above claiming that patriotism basically has no moral value, advocates of patriotism face a series of potentially more “dangerous” substantive objections related to its negative effects, i.e. *political* (the “community of fate problem”); *moral* (the “problem of moral asymmetry”) and *epistemic* (the “distortion problem” and the “problem of double standards”). I examine each of the three objections in the remaining part of this section.

#### ***The community of fate problem***

One of the main objections against patriotism is directed to its alleged non-reflective relationship with the past as the cultivation of patriotism is largely characterised by a selective attitude to past events or its historical figures (Archard 1999). As William Galston eloquently emphasises, we need ‘a nobler, moralizing history: a pantheon of heroes who confer legitimacy on central institution and are worthy of emulation’ (1991: 244) or a “useful past” (Fullinwider 1996). As part of these discussions, critics have raised the objection that advocates of patriotism advance a non-voluntaristic conception of membership in a political community. As Lawrence Blum argues, this should put forward a conception of membership as ‘a felt bond with one’s compatriots based on a sense of shared fate as fellow citizens dedicated to the nation as a shared project’ (2007: 61–2). In this context, the prevalent objection is associated with the claim that in order to qualify as effective or plausible, patriotism needs to be indoctrinatory.

## **The problem of moral asymmetry**

Like nationalism, patriotism may also be a useful tool in the creation of internal homogeneity. The concept of social unity through patriotism can be either exclusionary (*external negative effect*) or homogenising (*internal negative effect*). Whereas advocates of cosmopolitanism question the partiality associated with patriotism and its giving priority to one's compatriots, advocates of multiculturalism point out that one of patriotism's major shortcomings is the equation of the interests of all members of the political community (*the fallacy of equal interests*). In this interpretation, patriotism is being depicted as either particularistic (from the perspective of cosmopolitanism) or assimilative and uniforming (from the perspective of multiculturalism). How, therefore, to give one's country and one's compatriots priority over others? Can one give priority to one's country without exhibiting superiority compared to others? Is one giving priority just because a country happens to be one's country or does one give it priority for what it has achieved (*merit-based assertion*)?

Furthermore, patriotism also needs to be distinguished along two separate dimensions, i.e. recognition patriotism (*status-based dimension*) and appraisal patriotism (*performance-related dimension*).<sup>5</sup> The first is primarily linked to one's relationship to one's country without being connected to it. The second is linked to one's country's achievements or products. We can furthermore distinguish between positive and negative outcomes. In this sense, the two dimensions of patriotism can be either complimentary or in tension.<sup>6</sup> For example, pride can be linked only to this second dimension as one can be proud of the achievements one's country or its representatives have performed (*performance-related dimension*).

## **The distortion problem**

One of the major problems raised by the critics of patriotism has been "the distortion problem" (Brighouse 2006; Hand 2011). This criticism is based on the hypothesis that the promotion of patriotism requires two separate conditions, i.e. a reductionist presentation of historical events and an uncritical acceptance of the object of patriotism. Patriotism is, therefore, confronted with the problem of epistemic reductionism, because the cost of providing unity and social cohesion may turn out to be in sharp contrast with the advantages offered by diversity.

## **The problem of double standards**

Patriotism has also been associated with one's own actions or actions by other agents that may have a positive valence. In contrast to notions such as terrorism where it is used exclusively to describe negative actions of other agents, patriotism is used with a positive valence for those types of actions that are to be described as positive primarily

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<sup>5</sup> The recognition and appraisal aspects of patriotism are based on Darwall's distinction between appraisal and recognition respect (1977).

<sup>6</sup> In specifying the necessary and sufficient elements of patriotism in terms of one country's 'merits and achievements,' Igor Primoratz distinguishes between value-based and egocentric patriotism (2002b: 10–2).

for ourselves. Acts that we may carry out are evaluated differently from acts carried out by others. As Stephen Nathanson has emphasised in the case of actions depicted as being terrorist, one's man terrorist is another man's freedom fighter (2010). This problem raises the challenge of "subjectivism", i.e. depicting deliberately the valence of the act in question or – as Stephen Nathanson observes – 'a matter of taste rather than an objective description' (2010: 4). The most famous perhaps of all the historical cases best exemplifying the problem of double standards is the killing of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip (a member of the Young Bosnia organisation). While he was labelled by Austria and Germany as a terrorist, Serbia and its allies have viewed his action as the most genuine form of the expression of patriotism.<sup>7</sup>

As the objections identified above make clear, we can identify three different criticisms against patriotism, i.e. a non-reflective and idealised view of the past, (ii) an exclusionary attitude in the present as it indiscriminately excludes those who are not members of a particular political community, and determinism in the future including a non-voluntaristic understanding of political membership. Based on these objections, patriotism has been depicted as being non-reflective (*past*); discriminatory, exclusive, assimulative, and homogenising (*present*), as well as deterministic (*future*).

## Conclusion

As the exposition of the standard analysis of patriotism presented above clearly shows, without a more in-depth understanding of concepts traditionally associated with it, e.g. love, citizenship, identity, nationality, virtue, loyalty, unity, (national) pride, allegiance, courage, solidarity, the "common good", and (civic) responsibility, patriotism is bound to remain a vigilant piece of political rhetoric largely derided by its critics or uncritically advocated by its defenders. On one hand, advocates of patriotism largely fail to articulate a viable conception of it that would sidestep three of the most pressing challenges advanced by its critics, i.e. *the expressivist challenge*; *the challenge of partiality* and *the ultimate sacrifice challenge* (associated with the claim that the willingness to kill or die for one's country is the most profound and genuine form of expressing patriotism). On the other, critics' insensitivity or outright ignorance of the civic, moral and the epistemic dimension of patriotism fail to provide conclusive arguments for its ultimate rejection.

As a number of different conceptions of patriotism bear witness, the search for a single answer to the many challenges and problems associated with patriotism as love of a country representing, as John Kleinig et al. emphasises, a 'social contract between citizens' (2015: 9), is likely to face a number of shortcomings. In fact, here more than anywhere else, providing an answer to a question – unfortunately all too often – becomes part of the problem and not the solution.

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<sup>7</sup> For the claim that terrorism has no objective reality, see Nathanson (2010).

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## Povzetek

Tako zgodovinsko kakor tudi konceptualno velja patriotizem za eno od temeljnih značilnosti, ki opredeljuje bistvo navezanosti, identifikacije in pripadnosti posameznika politični skupnosti ter za temeljno vrlino, ki jo povezujemo z državljanstvom kot političnim pojmovanjem posameznika. Kljub svoji osrednji vlogi v panteonu političnih idealov, patriotizem ostaja sporen koncept ter zmuzljiva vrlina kot tudi vir potencialnih konfliktov in nasilja. Pravzaprav je veljala pripravljenost ubijati ali umreti za svojo domovino – tradicionalno gledano – za najglobljo ter najbolj pristno obliko izražanja patriotizma. Ta članek preučuje nekatere od temeljnih elementov, ki jih povezujemo z obravnavo patriotizma. Uvodni del predstavi “kontekstualno” razsežnost patriotizma ter nekatere izmed ambivalentnosti, s katerimi se soočajo sodobne razprave o patriotizmu. Članek je sestavljen iz petih delov. Prvi in drugi del preučita “standardno” analizo patriotizma in njegove osnovne elementov. Tretji del vsebuje opredelitev temeljnih motivacijskih vzgibov, ki jih najpogosteje povezujemo s patriotizmom. Sledi obravnava najpomembnejše ugovorov, ki so jih na patriotizem naslovili njegovi številnimi kritiki. Zaključni del tega članka poudarja, da je potrebno patriotizem razumeti kot državljanski, moralni in epistemološki fenomen.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** patriotizem, državljanstvo, utemeljitev patriotizma, kritika patriotizma

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