Post-national belongings, cosmopolitan becomings and mediating mobilities

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Abstract

In this commentary piece, I combine insights gained from the various contributions to this special issue with my own research and understanding to trace the (dis)connections between, on the one hand, (post-)nationalism and its underlying concept of belonging and, on the other hand, cosmopolitanism and its underlying concept of becoming. I pay special attention to the human (im)mobilities mediating these processes. This critical thinking exercise confirms that the relationship between place, collective identity and socio-cultural processes of identification is a contested aspect of social theory. In the discussion, I suggest four points to be addressed in the future if we want to make existing theories about post-national formations and processes of cosmopolitanization more robust against the huge and complex challenges humankind is facing.

My take on cosmopolitanism and post-nationalism is influenced by the fact that I have spent most of my life in Belgium, a country where all nation-related matters are buried under multiple layers of complexity. Moreover, I live in Brussels, the so-called 'capital of Europe', a place *par excellence* for cosmopolitan processes and ideas to flourish. Cosmopolitanism is a concept I have academically engaged with on multiple occasions, but always with an anthropological focus on how cosmopolitan values translate in everyday imaginaries, discourses and practices (e.g. Salazar, 2015, 2017). In contrast, I have never been a huge fan of 'post-' concepts. They carry the assumption that whatever came before has gone but seem unable to clearly describe the current situation without

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constantly referring, explicitly or implicitly, to the earlier condition. To phrase it in the language of this special issue, I am mostly interested in the 'belongings and mobilities associated with postnational processes', but I do recognize the need to contextualize these within larger 'economic and material conditions' (Fozdar and Woodward, this volume).

Most of the contributors to this issue engage with a set of questions that has kept social scientists busy for at least half a century. Saskia Sassen succinctly described some of the key points many years ago (when the concept of globalization was still popular):

> If the global partly inhabits and arises out of the national, it becomes evident that globalization in its many different forms directly engages two key assumptions in the social sciences. The first is the proposition about the nation-state as the container of social process, with the implied correspondence of national territory with the national; that is, if a process or condition is located in a national institution or in national territory, it must be national. The second, also implied by the first, is that the national and the global are two mutually exclusive entities. (Sassen, 2007: 1)

The issue of 'methodological nationalism' has been widely tackled over the last two decades (Amelina et al., 2012), with scholars also addressing 'methodological post-nationalism' (Ragazzi, 2015) and 'methodological cosmopolitanism' (Blok and Selchow, 2020). However, the criticism against the tendency to analyse everything through a national lens certainly does not mean that the national scale becomes irrelevant (cf. Conversi, 2020).

Much of the scholarly debate revolves around the role of (bounded) territory in contemporary ideas and ideologies of belonging and becoming. The fact that in recent history territory has often been conflated with the nation and/or the state only adds to the confusion. In my own anthropological research, I have documented ethnographically the complexity of these matters. Among others, I have written about the flexible 'boundaries' of the modern-day nation concept (Salazar, 2018). At the beginning of the new millennium, the Culture Division of the Chilean Ministry of Education, for example, launched the idea of a project designed to address the demands of inclusion and socio-political participation that many associations of Chileans living abroad were making. At that time, Chile was officially made up of 13 regions, but President Ricardo Lagos adopted the informally used concept of 'Region XIV', also referred to as *Región del Exterior* (foreign region) or *Región del Reencuentro* (re-encounter region). This virtual administrative region, a deterritorialized national territory, was intended to represent and ensure the continued loyalty and identification of Chileans living abroad.

As a mobilities scholar, it has not escaped my attention that most of the discussions about cosmopolitanism and post-nationalism centre around mobility, primarily of people but also of objects and ideas. Even though nation-states are relatively young in the *longue durée* of our planet's history, we have come to imagine that mobilities, certainly of the long-distance kind, are border-crossing, as if borders historically developed first, and movement only came second. Of course, the truth is more the other way around (Abram et al., 2017). In this commentary, then, I combine insights gained from the various contributions to this special issue with my own research and understanding to trace the (dis)

connections between, on the one hand, (post-)nationalism and its underlying concept of belonging and, on the other hand, cosmopolitanism and its underlying concept of becoming.

Where we come from . . .

Post-nationalism: belonging via 'sameness'

There are many aspects to a concept as complex as post-nationalism, but the one I want to focus on here relates to the question of belonging. As social animals, humans have always felt the need to belong to, and be accepted by, a group. Belonging has often been used interchangeably with (collective) identity, as both terms refer to qualities of 'sameness' that people identify in their connections with others. Belonging, however, involves a dynamic process, constructed, and negotiated along multiple axes of sameness – for example, class, race, gender, life cycle stage, sexuality, and ability. Throughout history, belongingness has taken various forms. It evolved from a survival strategy to a resource used to draw socio-cultural demarcations and set up borders and boundaries. Since the 19th century, and partially as a reaction against the universalism espoused by the Enlightenment era, the nation-state has developed as the most influential political project of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). If the national scale, which has been so strongly related to issues of belonging, is believed to be losing importance to the post-national, what are the implications for belongingness?

In the current era, with people, objects and ideas moving rapidly and widely across the planet, belongingness has come to constitute a field of global contestation. Consequently, this situation raises questions about the extent and nature of normative national forms of belonging. For one, scholars question whether belonging requires territorial fixity. At the supra-national level, for instance, the link between belonging and place is much less obvious because group 'members' can be in many different places (and they also move around). However, we should add Rogers Brubaker's observation here that 'although the nation-state is one among many loci of contestation over membership, it remains – contrary to certain postnationalist arguments – a particularly consequential one' (2010: 64).

The concept of post-national belonging is built on the assumption that processes of globalization, both actively experienced and passively undergone, lead to the development of new forms of belonging. Yasemin Soysal (1994), for instance, argues that migrants and diasporas escape the statist conception of the nation through sub-national, supra-national or transnational forms of belonging. According to Brubaker (2010), however, contemporary forms of the external politics of belonging are neither post-national nor transnational; they are forms of 'transborder nationalism'. In his words:

> the literatures of trans-nationalism and postnationalism are correct to stress the diminished significance of territoriality. The point should not be overstated; the nation-state remains fundamentally a territorial organization. But it is also a membership association, and the frontiers of membership increasingly extend beyond the territorial borders of the state. These new forms of external membership, however, are neither trans-state nor transnational; as forms

of transborder nationalism, they represent an extension and adaptation of the nation-state model, not its transcendence. (Brubaker, 2010: 78)

Post-national scholarship rightly points out that the 'roots' of people have been conflated with culture and territory. Ethnographic research has confirmed that belonging is not necessarily territorial; it can equally be related to social networks that can be geographically distributed (Lien and Melhuus, 2007). Moreover, in cases where belonging is territorial, it can involve more than one place at the same time (e.g. the transborder nationalism Brubaker writes about). In sum, it is more difficult to conceptually delineate post-national forms of belonging because one always tends to compare with the better-known territorially bounded forms of national belonging. The open question here is whether post-nationalism implies a more inclusive model than nationalism or not. After all, a perceived weakening of the national scale and a strengthening of the supranational also lead to stronger sub-national entities of belonging. Which scale is better suited for people to become 'members' of a group? This brings us to the concept of cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism: becoming via 'Otherness'

It is not a big surprise that within the wider geopolitical and socioeconomic context characterizing the turn of the millennium, scholars across the humanities and social sciences became (re)captivated by the concept of cosmopolitanism (Beck and Sznaider, 2006), variously viewing or invoking it as: (1) a socio-cultural condition; (2) a kind of philosophy or worldview; (3) a political project towards building transnational institutions; (4) a political project for recognizing multiple identities; (5) an attitudinal or dispositional orientation; and (6) a mode of practice or competence (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002: 8–14). The 'unique way of uniting difference and equality, an apparent paradox of wishing to reconcile universal values with a diversity of culturally and historically constructed subject positions' (Ribeiro, 2005: 19) means that cosmopolitanism is an ambiguous term that is often misunderstood.

The complex dynamic between universalism and diversity is constructed in the encounters between people. Unfortunately, the (mostly Western) philosophical debates on cosmopolitanism have tended to neglect actual existing manifestations of cosmopolitanism or processes of becoming cosmopolitan. Assuming that nobody is born a cosmopolitan, cosmopolitanization involves a process of becoming. It requires a flexible openness toward difference, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity – the allure of elsewhere and Otherness. Cosmopolitanization, as defined by Ulrich Beck (2006), is a change process that not only affects how people think and act (e.g. in terms of radical openness and sharing with each other) but also their understanding of nationality and nation-state. However, a growing sense of global consciousness does not necessarily imply that national identification becomes less important. As Ulf Hannerz (1990) has pointed out, a cosmopolitan susceptibility toward the world resists immersion and deep engagement in other cultures and societies, opting instead for an ability to move *between* cultures and societies.

Stated differently, any conceptualization of cosmopolitanism starts from the premise of (radical) 'difference', which needs to be maintained (through boundaries) to allow

would-be-cosmopolitans to overcome it in one way or the other. Much of the literature maintains a binary of difference by defining cosmopolitanism as a rejection of ethnic separateness and an openness to difference (Salazar and Glick Schiller, 2014). Some scholars, however, have taken a further step by not only discarding the binary between sameness and difference but also refusing to see rootedness in territory and culture and cosmopolitan openness as oppositional (Werbner, 2008). Cosmopolitanism requires not only tolerance, respect and enjoyment of cultural difference, but also a concomitant sense of global belonging, a kind of growing global consciousness, a difficult task given that the world is structured by considerable inequality (Salazar, 2015). It is in relation to this last point that border-crossing mobilities are brought in.

Mediating mobilities

People have always been on the move, for various reasons (Salazar, 2018). The rise of the nation-state model across the globe had a substantial impact on people's mobilities. This is because nation-states have always preoccupied themselves with the ordering and disciplining of mobile peoples (particularly those with a lower socioeconomic status), viewing them as a threat to their sovereignty and security. Human mobilities between countries were seriously curtailed after the First World War, when the world settled into a bordered world of sovereign nation-states. The passport became the iconic symbol of a system that presumed mutually exclusive citizenries.

In the 1990s, globalization – theorized in terms of transborder 'flows' – was often promoted as normality, and too much place attachment a digression or resistance against globalizing forces. Mobility became a predominant characteristic of the modern globalized world. This led to a new scholarly focus on transnational mobilities that deterritorialize identity. As Aihwa Ong explains, '*Trans* denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something' (1999: 4). The great irony is that in the era of globalization, marked by its free movement of capital and goods, the movement of people is subject to greater restrictions than at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution (Abram et al., 2017).

Cosmopolitanism, whose discourse draws on many of these predicates, is a powerful (utopian) figuration of itinerancy in the global world (Couton and López, 2009). Contemporary interpretations of the concept are heavily influenced by Enlightenment ideas. The link between travel and becoming cosmopolitan, for instance, goes back to the 'Grand Tour'. During the 18th and 19th centuries, this was a prescribed trip through Europe for young, educated, wealthy men, giving them the required social and cultural capital for a future as political leaders (Salazar, 2018). However, as Neepa Acharya rightly argues, 'the contention that cosmopolitanism can only be accessed by a select mobile few has been symbiotically equated with its elite Western dominance and origins' (2016: 16).

Political and philosophical visions of cosmopolitanism are very much related to the principle of free movement (in the sense of '*libre*'). This implies that people can cross borders, back and forth, to live, work, study or retire elsewhere, temporarily or permanently (Abram et al., 2017). Indeed, many scholars have linked cosmopolitanism to mobility, regardless of the class positioning and relative power and status of travellers

(Acharya, 2016). The cosmopolitan idea of 'becoming through mobility' (*moveo ergo sum*) is part and parcel of the perceived shift from inherited or acquired identities to a focus on identification, a change from relatively stable (place-based) identities to hybrid (achieved) identities characterized by flux (Easthope, 2009). This 'recasting of identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and instant transformation' (Elliott and Urry, 2010: 7) poses important challenges to issues of social belonging and cultural rootedness (Hedetoft and Hjort, 2002). Trans-local mobility has become a key difference- and Otherness-producing machine of our age, involving significant inequalities of speed, risk, rights, and status, with both 'movers' and 'stayers' being engaged in the construction of complex politics of belonging and becoming, location and movement.

Where we are . . .

Conceptual developments

This brings us to the wonderful set of novel contributions gathered in this special issue. I start by discussing those authors whose approach is more theoretical, aiming to fine-tune the existing conceptual toolbox to analyse post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism, and this in times of existential uncertainty, planetary crisis, and rapid societal transformations.

Gary Wickham (this issue) argues against 'the proposition that sovereignty and the state are obstacles to the quest for the postnationalism'. As he explains, such a proposition is based on the assumed opposition between a spirit of rule (as evident in the coercion used by sovereign states) and a spirit of reason (as evident in the quest to promote post-national formations). Not surprisingly, the example Wickham uses to illustrate coercion relates to human (im)mobility, namely 'restricting the movements of people, especially movements beyond the borders of the sovereign territory into which they were born or moved, whether voluntarily or through circumstances beyond their control'. The superiority of human reason is an idea inherited from the era of Enlightenment. One of the main underlying problems with giving primacy to public reason is its inherently elitist foundation story – a criticism that has also been made against cosmopolitanism (which is a concept Wickham does not engage with). Drawing on the work of Thomas Hobbes, he argues that sovereign states are still best equipped to take care of whole populations, something that becomes particularly clear in times of crisis (although the COVID-19 pandemic shows that much depends on the structure and leadership of a state). This argument works particularly well in those cases where there is a nice overlap between (one) nation and (one) state. After reading this contribution, however, I wonder whether post-national formations are the same as post-state formations. Where does the difference lie and how are they (dis)connected?

Daniel Chernilo (this issue), too, is convinced of the ongoing importance of nation-states. However, he adds that global problems need coordinated interventions beyond the national scale. Chernilo draws on the ongoing Anthropocene debate and the Covid-19 pandemic to reconsider the idea of the global and the relations between nature and society. This allows him to (re)assess Ulrich Beck's influential theory of risk society. The Anthropocene scholarship shows that nature and society are, *pace* Beck, not separate domains and not even self-contained. One of the problems with Beck's theory is the

hypothesis that increased globalization is related to a decreased importance of the national dimensions of social life. In other words, it seriously underplays 'the interaction between global, regional, national and local trends'. Covid-19, however, shows us 'the globalisation of the very globalisation trends that started in the second part of the 20th century'. Much of what before was described as global is just transnational. According to Chernilo, we need 'a globalisation of a different kind, one that will no longer be a zero-sum game between the global and the national'. The logical next question would be which type of post-national formation he sees as the most workable one and whether there is any role for cosmopolitanism.

Gerard Delanty (this issue) reflects on what post-national or cosmopolitan future imaginaries look like and how these are shaped by the major social and ecological transformations going on in contemporary society. He describes three dystopian future scenarios: transition, collapse/breakdown, and transformation. While there are clear tensions between cosmopolitanism and (neo-)nationalism, according to Delanty the central societal conflict today is between 'the earth based Eco-Politics and the politics of unsustainability of the Neo-Right'. Despite the current anti-cosmopolitan forces, he still advocates for a normative conception of a cosmopolitan future, but one that 'identifies links between the social and the ecological as well as widening the notion of justice to include a broader sphere of issues'. This, of course, is quite a challenge in a world where 'global elites . . . unlike elites of earlier times are not interested in the future'.

Antipodes: Europe vs. Australia

The European Union (EU) is probably the most advanced example of a post-national entity committed to the 'free' circulation of people, within its borders, with legal provisions extending well beyond the basic economic logic (Abram et al., 2017). Indeed, promoting the free mobility of European citizens has been a major aim of the EU since its inception (Salazar, 2018). At the same time, the opening of intra-EU borders has gone hand in hand with the heavy patrolling and control of Europe's external borders (through Frontex, the EU's border control agency). In other words, more supra-national EU integration does not necessarily solve all the limitations commonly attributed to restrictive national policies (Hansen, 2009). Moreover, every situation that has been labelled as a 'crisis' – be it the 2004 enlargement of the EU with ten new member states, the 2009 European debt crisis, the 2015 European 'migrant crisis', Brexit, the process of withdrawal of the UK from the EU, or the 2020 coronavirus pandemic – reignites the discussion surrounding the free movement of people across Europe.

David Inglis (this issue) draws on the work of Norbert Elias to interpret the Brexit process as 'a set of interlocking phenomena and tendencies which are de-civilizing in nature, and therefore de-cosmopolit(an)izing too'. De-civilization is to be understood as 'a shortening, weakening, and breaking of peaceful chains of interdependence between individuals and between groups'. Inglis couples the British de-civilizing process explicitly with the implementation of neoliberal policies since the Thatcher governments of the 1980s. The accession of the United Kingdom to the EU (formerly the EEC [European Economic Community]) had been rocky and only two years after becoming a member (in 1973) there was already a referendum on whether to stay or to leave. Throughout the

years, British exceptionalism was often invoked to negotiate with the EU. No wonder some people on the European mainland now argue that Britain was never really part of the EU (at least not from the perspective of 'belonging'). In other words, there may be some truth to the idea that 'being *British* means being *not-European*'. However, as Inglis rightly points out, few Brits are aware of the many negative consequences to their individual rights and freedoms when the EU leaves the UK.

(Im)mobility acts as a crucial marker of belonging here. Tightened UK migration rules and policies have created a hostile environment for everybody 'foreign' or 'not British'. Representing migrants (no matter whether they are European or not) as scapegoats for anything that goes wrong in the country works in the interest of the ruling class. In this context, it would be interesting to hear more about the various stakeholders involved in ongoing processes of de-cosmopolitanization and counter-processes of re-cosmopolitanization. At the end of his contribution, Inglis points to some 'internal' reactions against Brexit that may grow in the future. The first involves the younger people in Britain, the 'Erasmus-generation', who are more cosmopolitan-minded – although one should seriously question how broad their cosmopolitanism is (and which categories of people may be left out, including from the EU). The second includes the possibility of both Scotland and Northern Ireland leaving the UK, through a counter-intuitive logic of 'cosmopolitan nationalism'.

Based on narrative research among Polish migrants in the UK and Germany, Magdalena Nowicka (this issue) describes how 'migrants develop new forms of multiple belongings and loyalties to groups and places that are of regional, supra-national or trans-local scope'. These do not easily fit into a national, exclusionist logic. One function of migrant narratives, as part of justifying the migratory move, is to stress what is wrong with the place one left, while praising what is good in the place one is currently at. In other words, imaginaries of place may positively 'skew' the ideas one has about a 'normal' state. In this context, it would have been interesting to read a little more about the differences between the Poles in the UK vs. those in Germany. As stated before, I concur with Nowicka that processes of belonging concern both place and social networks (people inhabiting place). She rightly points out that it is important to consider 'historical legacies, and thus different contexts in which nationalism and postnationalism operate'. After reading her article, I was left wondering how exactly trans-nationalism and post-nationalism relate to each other.

Alev Kuruoglu and Ian Woodward (this issue) take the discussion in a very different direction. Instead of the usual focus on discourse and representation, they are interested in how visual and socio-material arrangements contribute to create spaces conducive to 'cosmopolitan welcoming'. Their case study involves an ethnographic comparison between two very different cafes in the socio-cultural space of Nørrebro, an ethnically mixed neighbourhood in Copenhagen, Denmark. To come to an 'understanding of the embodied and practical dimensions of everyday social interactions where diversities are experienced', Kuruoglu and Woodward draw on the concepts of affordances and atmosphere. This allows them to 'capture the full array of actors beyond the human' that is involved in facilitating or hindering cosmopolitan openness and relations of difference. Important to remember here is that 'strategies for cosmopolitan meaning-making are not merely imagined, nor just embodied, but materially structured and enabled'.

It is no coincidence that Europe is used most often as an example in discussions of post-nationalism because the EU offers the strongest case of supra-national integration. But what of the rest of the world? Anthony Moran (this issue) zooms in on Europe's antipode, Australia, to answer the question of the extent to which we live in a post-national world. He makes an important distinction between post-national institutions and a post-national sense of identities (which is related to cosmopolitanism). In Australia, Moran notices the existence of 'internal cosmopolitanism', a general acceptance among the population of (multicultural and immigrant) 'Otherness', which is not necessarily post-national. On the contrary, this internal cosmopolitanism has strong interrelations with forms of nationalism. This makes Moran conclude that what we see around the world are 'postnational tendencies, which are reflective of and respond to globalisation, and the transformed conditions under which nation-states operate'. The strength of these tendencies varies from place to place. In his case, 'much that happens in Australia is still shaped by forms of nationalism'.

Farida Fozdar (this issue) focuses on Australia, too, acknowledging that it is an unusual case. Given its history as a young nation, it should be 'the ultimate candidate for a cosmopolitan vision'. Instead, 'it is a nation where nationalism, of both civic and ethnic forms, is strong'. Fozdar describes the current situation as one of 'multicultural nationalism, which celebrates internal diversity within limits, but remains hostile to postnationalism and cosmopolitanism'. There are encounters between various groups within society but no ongoing commitment to a concrete engagement with 'Otherness'. Important in her highly nuanced meta-analysis is the observation that in Australia cosmopolitan values are cleverly repurposed for nationalist ends. According to Fozdar, 'the problem remains the nation, even the multicultural or cosmopolitan nation, because it still presumes categories of insiders and outsiders'. The question is, of course, whether there is a type of cosmopolitanism possible that is all-inclusive. As I argued earlier, without assumed 'difference' as a starting point there are no processes of cosmopolitanization.

Finally, Kellynn Wee and Brenda Yeoh (this issue) draw on the concept of 'orientation' to help us understand the serial migration biographies of mobile middle-class migrants in Singapore who are originally from Australia and Indonesia. Migratory orientations, which indicate the intention of movement relative to one's current position, are 'a form of competency acquired as part of their cosmopolitan repertoires'. This is a useful strategy in a context where 'mobility – the option to choose, rather than the act of making a choice – itself is prized'. Contrasting the Australian and Indonesian cases shows that 'cosmopolitanism (and its recognition and validation as a valued quality) is not a universal abstract, but grounded in practices and structures that make it easier for those from Western cultures to successfully exhibit its outward features'. What is missing here is a parallel reflection on post-national constellations, those that allow Western dominance to be continued and new ones that would potentially allow to break that dominance.

Where we could be heading . . .

Throughout human history, we see a pendular movement between two extreme societal positions: total openness (towards 'Otherness') versus total societal closure. Ideas and

expressions of cosmopolitanism seem to be at their strongest in times and regions of little conflict and crisis, when borders and boundaries are opening. It is therefore always important to specify whose experience, understanding, or vision of cosmopolitanism is being described and for whose purposes (Glick Schiller and Irving, 2015). The idea of 'becoming' opens the perspective of multiple cosmopolitanisms, helping us to overcome the arrogance of universalism and the relativism of localism. The least we can say is that the relationship between place, collective identity, and socio-cultural processes of identification is a contested aspect of social theory. In any case, we urgently need more critical scholarly engagement with concepts, representations, and embodied as well as emplaced experiences of mobility, cosmopolitan becoming, and post-national belonging (Salazar and Glick Schiller, 2014).

If anything, this special issue, with its intellectually stimulating set of articles, gives us much food for thought. I take away the following points. First, it is crucial to clearly define the key concepts of the debate, particularly if these concepts are widely used, both within and outside of academia. What exactly do we mean by post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism? How is our scholarly and disciplinary understanding of these concepts different from how others use them? The suffix '-ism' in English means 'taking sides with'. However, while post-national*ism* and cosmopolitan*ism* have their own scholarly genealogies, the contributions to this issue seem to confirm that they are more like two sides of the same coin, different but complementary ways to look at the same set of issues. Second, concepts such as post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism remain abstract ideas if one does not empirically study the processes through which these ideas are translated in concrete practices and discourses. This is easier for the concept of cosmopolitanism because of its association with 'becoming'. However, the 'post-national formations' in the title of this special issue refer explicitly to agentive socio-political processes. After all, formation literally means the *process* of being formed.

Third, and related to the earlier point, the Western bias in the scholarship that theorizes post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism remains striking. This is especially remarkable given the subject matter of these theories. What can non-Western viewpoints add to the already existing insights? What would a more 'global' theory of post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism look like? Fourth and last, there is the underlying issue of scale. What is the proper unit of analysis for studying post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism? There is no linear local-to-global continuum but a truly diverse refiguring and multi-scalar entanglement of groups to which people (want to) belong. When linking post-nationalism with cosmopolitanism the focus automatically goes to the supra-national scale, whereas the sub-national scale is equally gaining importance (again) but is much less studied. Despite this complexity, it is puzzling to see how often the 'national' level is still taken as the logical point of departure, particularly in a context where our planet urgently needs action on multiple fronts, and this on scales that largely transcend the limiting boundaries of nation-states.

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