Nation, Country, and State

These words are commonly conflated and treated as synonyms. Do you know the difference between them?

> ***Nation****: a group of people with common ancestry and language*
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> ***Country****: a geographic region or native land*
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> ***State****: political organization or government*

Nations are people. They are an organic extension of family relationships.

Countries are places. They exist whether people live in them or not.

States are artificial entities. They are used to claim and exercise control over nations and countries.

It is natural and understandable to strongly identify with a nation. These are the people who sacrifice to bring you into the world. They show you what it means to love and communicate and share and belong. They provide you with opportunities and resources. They constitute a division of labor within which you can serve and be served. Everyone should celebrate and honor what makes their nation special.

The earth is a beautiful place, and it is natural and understandable to develop a special appreciation and fondness for the country you grow up in. This is the corner of the planet where your nation learned to grow food to survive. It is where you learn to walk and explore. It is where you work and play with friends and loved ones. It is where you sleep at night and where you invest the fruits of your labor and plan for dreams of your family's future.

States are not nations. States are not countries. States are control systems. The word government means "mind control" (from the Latin *gubernare* for "command" or "control" and *mentalis* for "of the mind"). These are the systems whose agents rule over you. They claim the right to take and redistribute your property as they see fit. They claim to be the sole legitimate source of ultimate decision making with a monopoly on violence in countries and over nations. They deserve neither your allegiance nor your praise.

When people wave state flags or sing state songs, it's easy to cringe at the thought that oppressive monopolies are being celebrated. While this is sometimes sadly accurate, I

think it’s important to understand that most people who do so are really thinking of the people and land and way of life that they cherish.