

politics of the time; she explains this finding by citing Blair's circumvention of the normal policymaking process.

The virtue of the work lies in deepening our understanding of these three American allies and their responses to the U.S. decisions to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Von Hlatky also highlights certain historical lessons, such as those learned by Australia after its support for the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Although the case studies were chosen carefully, it is curious that in her concluding chapter, von Hlatky did not, at least briefly, address other cases, such as the French and German decisions to oppose the Iraq War, the constraints on German and Italian operations in Afghanistan, and the German abstention in the UN vote on Libya. There certainly has been a wide variety of alliance behavior within NATO over the past 15 years. Some new members like Poland have sought to prove how important an ally they can be to the United States, an impulse that is perhaps even more true for aspiring alliance members like Georgia. In addition, Australia is not the only American ally outside of NATO to face key decisions on Afghanistan and Iraq; South Korea and Japan, for example, faced both domestic and capabilities constraints and participated at different levels and in different ways.

Von Hlatky's dissection of the politics and strategic approaches of three key American allies paves the way for future research in comparative foreign policy concerning these types of states and their relationship to the United States. By going beyond a simple domestic politics argument and showing us the importance of different types of strategic calculations, the author provides valuable insights for comparing the foreign policies of medium powers in their interactions with their dominant ally. Expanding the scope to a broader range of allies would allow us to consider a greater number of options that states have to make contributions to war efforts, particularly when their military capabilities are limited.

The Sovereign Citizen: Denaturalization and the Origins of the American Republic. By Patrick Weil.

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— J. M. Opal, *McGill University*

Between 1906 and 1967, the United States government denaturalized some 22,000 people, revoking the citizenship claims they had obtained and removing them from the protections of American nationhood. A substantial number of natural-born Americans also lost their "Americanness," at least in the eyes of the national state. In this respect, the United States behaved much like other Western democracies during the twentieth century, though not approaching the Soviet Union, which cast more than 1.5 million people into statelessness.

Citizenship under threat of revocation was "conditional," Patrick Weil notes, hardly the building block of a liberal and democratic social contract (p. 4). And yet that was the nature of American citizenship until the later decades of the 1900s. Worse still, the majority of the denaturalized had something less than their proverbial day in court. Denaturalization was a matter of "equity" or of "ex parte" jurisdiction overseen by individual judges without juries. By the 1920s, most of the work happened within the walls of the Division of Naturalization: a faceless bureaucracy of the kind that continues to inspire antigovernment fantasies. And then, over about a ten-year period at the height of the Cold War, a tenuous majority of Supreme Court justices ended the government's authority to terminate citizenship. "The numbers speak for themselves," Weil notes; since 1968, fewer than 150 people have been denaturalized (p. 179). For the author, this amounts to nothing less than "a revolution in the definition of American citizenship" (p. 9), the installation of the citizen's "sovereignty" at the expense of the state to whom he or she grants conditional legitimacy.

Weil recounts this transformation through close and careful examination of government files and memos and of the records of various federal courts. Working chronologically from the Naturalization Act of 1906 to the decisive *Schneiderman* and *Afroyim* cases from the late 1960s, he offers a trove of individual stories framed in a careful accounting of denaturalization through the decades. We read about scores of obscure people who obtained U.S. citizenship—as a result of the Civil War and Fourteenth Amendment—only to see it suspended or destroyed. They included American-born women who married and lived with foreign nationals abroad; immigrants who had once been welcomed by city machines but who now lost their citizenship if they returned home; and various communists, anarchists, and fascists whom the government deemed to have taken their oaths with "mental reservation." Weaving their stories into that of the institutions that decided their fates, Weil also offers a fresh look at some familiar figures: Theodore Roosevelt, who blanched at the idea of recent immigrants gaining citizenship too easily; Felix Frankfurter, who thought that the courts should defer to the government's interest in guarding national security; and Earl Warren, who was fundamentally appalled by denaturalization and eventually found the juridical tools with which to kill it.

"Changes in America's management of naturalization and denaturalization reflect larger structural phenomena," Weil argues, "but these changes were not the inevitable product of broader forces" (pp. 9–10). Indeed, his approach is very much the "zoom-in" variety. He keeps our noses close to the most relevant sources, only occasionally pointing out the larger sweep of history rushing by. For those of us inured to overcautious argumentation, this approach is refreshing in its clarity and certainty. The author *explains* change over time.

His accounts of the Bureau of Naturalization and of the key court battles during the 1950s and 1960s, in particular, sound very much like the last word on the subject.

For a book that posits such implications for its subject matter, though, *The Sovereign Citizen* is somewhat quiet on what sovereignty or citizenship meant or means, apart from legal permanence or immutability. Weil is to be credited for staying focused on the task he set for himself, rather than giving in to the gravitational pull of such vast concepts. But when he states at the outset that “present-day Americans feel secure in their citizenship” (p. 1) and at the end that those citizens now enjoy “sovereignty” (p. 183), it is somewhat unclear what definitions rest behind the assertions. Without a doubt, citizenship is now secured against revocation by the state, and in their permanent status Americans might be called sovereign. Their nationality precedes and supersedes the government that administers it. But their sovereignty has carried other meanings that might enrich not just the story Weil tells but also the larger history of American nationhood.

American political theory coming out of the Revolution established that some iteration of “the people” was sovereign: They alone granted legitimacy to political institutions. The Federalists revised this somewhat, placing in the Constitution the fount of all authority because it conveyed the will of “We, the People” to endure as a nation—or, rather, as a “Union.” As the author duly notes, this understanding of sovereignty actually supported a highly decentralized form of citizenship, at least until the passing of Amendments Thirteen to Fifteen on the ruins of the Confederacy. For much of American history, the right to have rights came from being a white, propertied male member of a state, not from being born or naturalized within the United States.

In some respects, then, Weil captures an essential and neglected dimension of one of the great themes of modern American history: the creation of a national citizenship that secured to its bearers the right to live abroad, to marry foreigners, and—in most cases—to convey their political

opinions. The end of the government’s denaturalization program put another nail in the coffin of the old, decentralized Union and the messy, conditional citizenship it enabled. But there was another, more individualistic meaning of “citizen sovereignty,” or “popular sovereignty,” to come out of the early republic, one that does not fit so easily with the democratic progress that Weil describes.

It largely developed along the southern borderlands of the new nation, where natives and whites launched (literally) hair-raising vendettas on each other and elite men balked at any efforts to contain their reckless speculations in lands, goods, and slaves. Such men thought of their membership in political societies as flexible and conditional, and insisted that they retained “natural” rights to violence, even as they also relied on legal protections for commercial and speculative forms of property. The most important example here was Andrew Jackson. His political education had less to do with republican or democratic ideas than with a practical engagement in the terms of nationhood. Eventually, he embraced a kind of antigovernment nationalism that pictured the citizen as sovereign over both noncitizens and society itself. This kind of sovereignty rejected any public interest other than the primal right of the gathered citizens to defend themselves in a brutal world.

Such ideas moved from the fringes to the center of American political life with Jackson’s ascent to the White House, and ever since a certain kind of populism has been nurtured: a celebration of “the people” against anyone who inhibits their private pursuits or runs afoul of their moral standards. In other words, the idea of the sovereign citizen underlays a strain of nationalism totally at ease with some of the authoritarian measures that Weil deplors. To take one example that he mentions, the American Legion—a perfect reflection of the idea of citizen sovereignty against radicals and troublemakers—helped the government with its denaturalization cases during the 1920s, targeting, in particular, communists and socialists. Similar forces and traditions push for targeted executions of American citizens today as part of the War on Terror.