**Introduction**

Michael Skey (UEA) / Marco Antonsich (Loughborough)

The opening chapter will provide an overview of Billig’s original study, address the range of research that has made reference to his work and guide the reader through the subsequent chapters. In the latter case, it will point to the limits of the existing literature on banal nationalism / everyday identities and note how the different chapters, drawing on recent insights from across the social sciences, will look to develop our understanding of these key subject areas.

*Chapter 1*

**Title: The Rhetoric of Nationalism**

Professor Craig Calhoun, Director of the LSE

Michael Billig's Banal Nationalism was a breath of fresh air when it was published in 1995. Since Billig wrote, there has been a dramatic expansion of attention to everyday nationalism. This calls attention to the blind-spots in doxic, uncritically taken-for-granted everyday life and in social science itself. We notice violent nationalist mobilizations and extreme nationalist politics but fail to spot the pervasive appearance of national symbols and the constant location of 'the' nation as 'our' location in the world. This paper examines the interplay of rhetoric and social structure in Billig's work and as issues for contemporary studies of nationalism and identities in general.

**Section 1: Practices**

*Chapter 2*

**Between “Evgeny“ and “Eugen“: Name change as a practice of “banal nationalism“ in the context of ethnic German migrations from the former Soviet Union**

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With his influential work on “Banal Nationalism” (1995), Michael Billig has importantly contributed to the study of nationalism from a bottom-up perspective, showing how national belonging is reflected in ideological habits of practice and belief. In his study, he turns our attention towards small, seemingly insignificant, “banal” details that contribute to sustain nationhood as something natural or taken-for-granted in everyday life. Drawing on this perspective, this article aims to empirically analyse the practices through which individuals contribute to reproduce, but also to redefine the meaning of nationhood in their daily encounters. It argues that, especially in the context of migration which will be the focus of this study, ordinary people have to be considered as active protagonists with their own agency, who contribute to not only sustain, but also to renegotiate the categories imposed on them.

What are the practices through which migrants become participants in the re-production, but also the re-definition of national belonging in their everyday lives? To address this question empirically, this article will concentrate on a specific case study, examining the practice of name change in the context of ethnic German migrations from the former Soviet Union. The particularity of the so-called “ethnic return migrations” is that, on the basis of their ethnic ancestry, these migrants are exceptionally granted German citizenship at the moment of their arrival in Germany. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, about 2.5 million people have migrated to Germany on the basis of this ethnic migration policy. In contrast to labour immigrants or asylum seekers, these individuals are thus legally considered as “Germans” returning to their ancestral homeland, a country where they have actually never lived before. This act of categorization is legitimated through a specific administrative procedure: when they arrive in Germany, they not only obtain the citizenship of this country, but they are also offered the possibility to “germanise” their names, by transforming their Russian-sounding first and last names into German ones. What seems like a routine administrative practice is in reality a powerful act of state categorization, contributing to naturalize their belonging to the German nation as a taken-for-granted fact.

Based on ethnographic field research conducted in 2013 and 2014 in the city of Berlin, the article aims to analyse the ways in which ethnic German migrants deal with this practice of changing names in their daily encounters with other people, services and institutions. It will show that this practice is not necessarily perceived as a compulsory procedure of “germanisation”, but can also be appropriated strategically or pragmatically in certain contexts of everyday life. For example, some actors continue to use their Russian names when interacting with family and friends, while they reserve their German name only for administrative purposes. Especially when it comes to the rights linked to the status as German, such as issues of visa, insurances, pensions, etc., the German name is strategically used in order to prove the legitimacy to be entitled to these rights. The actors thus consciously decide to switch between their Russian and their German names according to the situation in which they find themselves. The choice to change one's name can also be motivated by the will to avoid discrimination on the basis of a foreign-sounding name, for example in situations such as at school or at a job interview. This means that the administrative procedure of renaming, initially designed by the German state to substantiate the belonging to the German nation, is associated here with a rather pragmatic purpose, responding to the preoccupations of everyday life.

As the article argues, the practice of name change constitutes a particularly illustrative case of “banal nationalism”. On the one hand, it shows very concretely how nationalism structures and infiltrates the daily lives of the people concerned. On the other hand, it allows us to analyse how nationalizing practices can be actively reinterpreted by ordinary people. As nationhood interacts with other practical considerations, such as economic welfare, professional careers or social advancement, it can fundamentally change its meaning. Thus, nationhood is not necessarily reproduced and re-legitimated, but can also be re-defined and re-negotiated as it interacts with the contingencies of everyday life.

*Chapter 3*

**The Negotiation over the Representation of National Identity: An Analysis of Strategic Performativity and Human Agency in the Everyday Encounters of Journalists**

Ozan Aşık, University of Cambridge

It is common to see journalists considering visible nationalism and nationalist opinions ‘uncool’ and ethically ‘undesired’ due to the required professional attachment to cosmopolitan identity. A long-term and in-depth investigation of the actual practices of journalists, however, may provide a different insight into the ways in which journalists engage with the concept of national identity in everyday life. Over a year of ethnography in the newsrooms of television channels in Turkey, I observed that journalists strategically *negotiate* varying representations of national identity according to their work-related commitments, expectations of their managers, political elites and viewers, and their political concerns. I consider the negotation over how to construct the imagery of a national community to be part of journalists’ everyday encounters. Through the analysis of this negotiation process, I examine how television journalists of the Turkish mainstream media represent national identities in the day-to-day practices of news production. In this analysis, my main argument is that, contrary to what Billig theoretically argues in ‘Banal Nationalism’, these practices do not occur through unnoticed, unreflexive and reiterative action, though journalists’ everyday life in the newsroom seems the realm of habitual, routinised and ritualistic activity. Rather, the identity representation is a deliberately negotiated process undertaken by journalists who observe the power dynamics and choose ‘appropriate’ implicated forms of nationalistic norms and values. For one thing, the organisation of news production is the site of daily encounters between various actors, floors, hierarchical positions and textual platforms. I argue that such encounters occur in a multi-layered and contested space of production relations, and they constitute discursive points of intersection where journalists *negotiate* over how to identify and project a certain image of a national community. As this environment is shaped by competing worldviews, complex hierarchical structures, and power relations that challenge any claims of unity, the production stage becomes a compelling site to explore how journalists manage a variety of multiple images.

In 2011 and 2012 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the newsrooms of three national mainstream television channels in Turkey. During the research, I discovered that the journalists deploy more than one facet of the national imagery in a social performance for the representation of a national identity in the production stage of news. This, on the one hand, means the continual modification of the represented national identity as a temporary, fluid and contentious social construct. On the other, it demonstrates strategic performativity in the everyday practices of representation. In a cultural matrix of conformity and subversion, journalists can disregard, contradict or scrutinise the image that they are expected by editors, managers, politicians and the general public to project. This situation necessitates the re-evaluation of the role of unstable and multi-faceted human agency in nationalism studies on everyday life. This research expands our understanding of the continual modification of the represented identity, and sheds a fresh light on the reflexive and conscious construction of the identity by news practitioners in their everyday encounters. My intention in this paper is to offer a conceptual framework on a theoreatical level by discussing some brief examples from my case study. It elaborates a research agenda for uncovering both the micro-processes and macro-dynamics of the construction of national identity in everyday life.

**Section 2 - Affect**

*Chapter 4*

# Affective nationalism: banalities of belonging in Azerbaijan

Elisabeth Militz, University of Zurich

With his concept of *banal nationalism*, Billig (1995) pointed to the significance of the seemingly trivial reproduction of national symbols in everyday routines. He highlighted that nationalism, as an ordinary practice across the globe is not exclusively associated with moments of the intentional celebration of a nation. In doing so, he focused on the representational, often deictic dimensions of making nation (states), such as flagging the nation and reproducing the nation through media discourses.

In this paper, I argue that the nation is not only brought into being through representational practices to remind people of a specific nationhood and a shared, continuous historical narrative. Feeling a sense of belonging to a national community also functions through bodily experiences and interactions between people and objects. Developing a concept of affective nationalism on the basis of long-term participant observation as well as ethnographic interviews in Azerbaijan, I take on the challenge of bringing Billig’s banal nationalism into dialogue with the more-than-representational, affective dimensions of nationalism. As is the case for the majority of successor states of the Soviet Union, the explicit representation of the nation is a (rather unsurprising) nation-building feature in Azerbaijan. I argue, however, that irrespective of representation of the nation in everyday realms, people’s identification with and affection towards Azerbaijan is strong (or weak), because of people’s capacities to affect and to be affected by the nation. People desire Azerbaijan and its material manifestations with their bodies. I explore how these corporeal attachments to nationalism develop and how they articulate with symbolic, banal nationalist ideologies, at the same time reinforcing and undermining them.

*Chapter 5*

**"Banal" and "ecstatic" national affective and discursive practices: The relevance of theories of group-based and collective emotions**

Dr. Gavin Brent Sullivan, Coventry University

A crucial feature of the notion of banal nationalism is the idea that what counts as national is so ubiquitous and mundane in its repetition that a given "we" fails to notice. These are the habits of thinking, language use and feeling or affective practices that reproduce national identity in the personal, political and social lives of many citizens. Increasingly, features of emotional, patriotic and celebratory or ecstatic nationalism (Skey, 2006) have become the focus for scholarly investigation, in part because these also have banal and taken-for-granted features. In order to further examine the complex interplay between banal and ecstatic discursive and affective practices, this chapter draws upon some of the recent contributions from theories and studies of collective emotion. Research on collective emotions has, until recently, been limited to theories of irrational crowds, scepticism about genuinely group-level psychological phenomena, and analyses of the unconscious or ritual sources of mass affective experience. However, collective emotion is now a thriving research are that combines studies from philosophy, anthropology, sociology, social psychology and neuroscience. Accordingly, this chapter applies neo-Durkheimian theories of collective emotions and relevant contributions of discursive psychologists and other social scientists influenced by the "turn to affect" to affects surrounding national citizenship, identity, interests and practices (e.g., Wetherell, 2012, 2014). It argues that future theoretical and empirical investigations should: 1) critically examine theories focusing on diffuse emotional energy and discrete collective emotions by also exploring the generation and production of genuinely collective mixed emotions; 2) clarify problems with "bottom-up" models of causal mechanisms through exploration of "affective practices;" and 3) explore the implications of Tuomela's (2013) "top-down" social ontology of "group agents" as a framework for theories and studies of collective emotion in national contexts. Further theoretical work on group-based and genuinely collective pride and hubris (which can occur at a variety of mutually reinforcing or contrasting mechanisms operating at different "levels"; Sullivan, 2013, 2014) is then presented along with examples from qualitative research that has been conducted by the author in post-2006 World Cup Germany, during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and interviews with children in their families about their experiences of national events. The results indicate how individual feelings can be understood as the "trace" of participation in collective events and rituals but also reflect ongoing normative reworking of national projects, symbols, narratives and interests in everyday community and institutional contexts.

*Chapter 6*

**Feeling the Nation: The Role of Affect in National Identification**

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For much of its history, research on nationalism has been preoccupied with explaining either the historical rise of nation-states or instances of nationalist fervor that sought to realign existing configurations of state governance over national units. One of the achievements of Michael Billig’s *Banal Nationalism* has been to shift the emphasis of scholarly inquiry toward nationalism as an institutionalized ideology whose continual reproduction in settled times requires systematic social scientific explanation. In response to this programmatic call, studies of everyday attitudes toward the nation have proliferated in the social sciences. Much of this research in sociology and political psychology has relied on nationally representative survey data, which have allowed researchers to examine the cross-national variation in criteria of national belonging, national pride, and chauvinism and to better understand the relationship between these phenomena and other social attitudes, such as perceptions of out-groups, support for social redistribution, and trust in institutions.

Though generative, this research has been constrained by the inherent limitations of traditional survey analysis. Chief among these is the well-documented difficulty of capturing the relational properties of meaning through variable-centered analytical approaches. A less frequently addressed theoretical consequence of survey-based nationalism research, however, is its failure to systematically engage with the role of affect in processes of national identification. The proposed chapter will identify two specific areas where existing research can be elaborated using new methods and sources of data in order to achieve a more meaningful understanding of the central role of affect in everyday nationalism during settled times. The discussion of these new directions will be illustrated with findings from my own empirical investigations. In particular, I will argue that nationalism research needs to take into account (a) the varied emotional content of multiplex cognitive schemas of the nation-state and (b) the contextual activation of collection emotional engagement with the national community. As I will demonstrate, by treating nationalism as emotionally charged, internally heterogeneous, and situationally activated it is possible to avoid the essentialization and reification of nationalist beliefs.

The first challenge for scholars of nationalism addresses the treatment of national categories as unitary and stable. Analyses of survey data often treat individual respondents within any given country as the units of analysis and focus on the correlations between their attitudes and sociodemographic characteristics. These studies tend to rely on survey questions that elicit attitudes toward the focal country, such as “How proud are you of America’s achievements in the arts and literature?” and “How important [for being a true American] is it to have been born in America?” Such items assume that cognitive representations of the nation-state can be captured by country labels (in this case, “America”). This assumption, however, is problematic given the multiplexity of cognitive representations of the nation-state, which capture distinct dimensions of the national community. Moreover, some of these dimensions are likely to be more affectively laden than others. I illustrate this argument with findings from a laboratory-based survey experiment that manipulates standard nationalism survey prompts, with one group of respondents receiving questions featuring the term “America” and the other group responding to questions featuring the term “United States.” My findings show that the former concept produces more nationalistic responses than the latter, particularly on items related to the symbolic boundaries of the nation. Moreover, by capturing physiological data in the course of the experiment, I demonstrate that “America” is more affectively laden than “United States,” because of its associations with the nation and its cultural heritage. These affective associations account for the variation in the survey responses across the experimental groups. My findings suggest that the assumption of the nation-state as a unitary object of affiliation is mistaken; individuals simultaneously hold at least two distinct representations of the national community with different affective loadings and different implications for attitudes toward out-groups.

The second limitation of existing research is that it frequently treats nationalist attitudes as stable over time within individuals. This is the assumption implicit in survey questions such as “How close to do you feel to your country?,” which inform much work on national identification in political psychology. Yet, decades of research in social identity theory have demonstrated that individuals concurrently hold multiple identities, which shift in their relative salience depending on the situational context. In the aggregate, this suggests that national communities should experience fluctuations in collective identification in response to events that increase the salience of the nation-state. This is indeed what I find in analyses of all public Twitter conversations between 2010 and 2013 that feature the terms “America” and “United States.” I show that exogenous events, ranging from national holidays to national security crises, produce upwellings in national identification, the duration of which is predictable based on event type. The relationship between events and nationalism, however, is not homogeneous across the national community: the magnitude and affective content of spikes in national identification varies systematically across geographic regions of the United States.

By focusing on the two primary limitations of existing research and proposing solutions that rely on innovative methods and new sources of data, this chapter points the way toward a richer understanding of nationalism in existing nation-states during settled times. When complemented by qualitative approaches that privileges depth of empirical observation over its breadth, nuanced quantitative research that takes seriously the affective dimensions, internal heterogeneity, and contextuality of nationalist beliefs has the potential to make important advances in the research agenda launched by Michael Billig’s seminal work.

**Section 3 - Media and Consumer cultures**

Chapter 7

**Banal nationalism and the internet: A critical review**

Lukasz Szulc

Classic authors in nations and nationalisms studies recognize traditional mass media as crucial for the construction of nations and the spread of nationalism. For example, Anderson (1983) insists on the importance of press capitalism, and the simultaneity of reading national newspapers in particular, for the creation of a national consciousness. Gellner, in turn, writes about media technologies and argues that ‘it is the media themselves, the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralised one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism quite irrespective of what in particular is being put into the specific messages transmitted’ (1983: 127). Hobsbawm (1990: 142) turns our attention to media content and argues that mass media connect the private and the public through making national symbols part of people’s everyday lives. The latter argument echoes Billig’s (1995) concept of banal nationalism, which, importantly, was developed mainly on the basis of a one-day survey of the British press.

However, as Diamandaki (2003) points out, ‘the Internet poses anew the issue of national or ethnic identity. It is another archive, mirror and laboratory for the negotiation of national and ethnic identity’. Some scholars claim that the ‘new’ medium dissolves national borders and facilitates the ‘hyper-deterritorialization’ (Stratton 1997) or a ‘denationalization of communication infrastructure’ (Fraser 2007). Others argue not only that nations are very much there on the internet but also that ‘nations thrive in cyberspace’, for example they show how the internet connects immigrants with their countries of origin and helps to mobilize people belonging to the dispersed nations (Eriksen 2007). In his critical engagement with Billig’s thesis, Skey (2009) too encourages us to rethink the concept of banal nationalism in the light of the emergence of new communication technologies such as the internet.

Therefore, in this paper, I will undertake a critical review of works which engage with the Billig’s concept of banal nationalism in relation to the internet. First, I will explore and categorize the literature’s main themes, units of analysis and conclusions. Second, I will employ such concepts as ‘methodological nationalism’ and ‘technological determinism’ to critically reflect on the literature’s methodological and theoretical foundations. In the final part, I will additionally present the results of my own four-year research into banal nationalism and the internet on LGBTQ websites in Poland and Turkey.

*Chapter 8*

**Crisis in the Eurozone, Nationalism and the Banality of Ethnocentric Consumption**

**EJ Lekakis, University of Sussex**

In the context of the Eurozone crisis, this chapter examines the relationship between nationalism and consumption. It aims to question the materiality of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) through the concept of ethnocentric consumption (Lekakis, forthcoming). On the one hand, banal nationalism relates to the subtle consumption of symbols which construct impalpable conceptualisations of the nation in public culture. On the other hand, ethnocentric consumption foregrounds the nation in the consumption of staples and commodities. The cross-examination of the two allows for a nuanced understanding of the relationship between nationalism and consumption in times of crisis and a re-examination of Billig’s thesis.

Nationalism and capitalism are inseparable. Since 2008, the global financial crisis has propelled an ongoing crisis in the Eurozone, which has, in turn, shaken the socio-political landscape of the European Union and aggravated extreme nationalism in institutional as well as in everyday politics. The results of the 2014 European elections have demonstrated a shift to ultra-right nationalist parties and extreme nationalism across the continental board. This ‘hot’ nationalism, as Billig (1995) purposefully puts forward, is easily disentangled from forms of ‘banal’ nationalism evident in our daily practices of consumption and engagement with social life. Acts which touch upon our banal experiential connection with political life are not only exhausted in the realm of the state, but also in the realm of culture; within the realm of consumption, the phenomenon of ethnocentric consumption finds fruitful ground in austerity.

Ethnocentric consumption is a long-standing element in the constitution of states and belongs to the toolkit of capitalist nations which have impelled national criteria (resources, production, labour and distribution) as preferable in consumer behaviour. This chapter argues that the revival of ethnocentric consumption causes tension between the hidden vernacular of banal nationalism and the pronounced lexica of ‘buy national’ campaigns. By no means is there always a direct link between ultra-right nationalist parties and attempts to promote ethnocentric consumption. Yet, in approaching the link between hot nationalism and banal nationalism, it becomes apparent that the concept of banality needs re-examining when states organised under capitalism endure its crisis. Billig (1999) has elsewhere argued for the persisting relevance of commodity fetishism in consumer capitalism. Yet, as far as campaigns for ethnocentric consumption go, it is not a process of commodification taking place – i.e. the relations of social relations between producers and consumers are hidden and thus forgotten. Simultaneously, a commodification of the nation is taking place. Through this process of commodification, the nation becomes a brand forged by political and economic elites, aimed towards an amnesiac public and promoted as panacea for an economy and state in crisis.

This chapter discusses how both forms of hot and banal nationalism are influenced by the economic sphere, by identifying key claims in the promotion of ethnocentric consumption. It argues that the way in which the nation is communicated in the marketplace attempts to forge a homogenised and forgetful understanding of it, and shows how nationalism becomes an economic ideology demonstrating both capitalist interests and populist rhetoric. It inquires on the relevance of the state and the promotion cultures which foster nationalism. Ultimately, it claims that the transformation of the relationship between citizenship and consumption in the context of the Eurozone crisis revives certain dormant tropes of banal nationalism which, in turn, intensify hot nationalism.

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*Chapter 9*

**The Particularity of the Global**   
Melissa Aronczyk, Rutgers University

Nation branding – the creation and communication of a version of national identity that aligns with a Western, market-oriented and liberalized vision of global exchange – has to date accomplished two apparently paradoxical goals. On the one hand, it has more or less successfully resituated diverse notions of national wellbeing within a single set of political and economic frameworks. By tying national identity to international interests and institutions, the objective of nation branding initiatives is to make states more attractive for global capital and investment as well as for transnational political relations. On the other hand, nation branding has revealed, intentionally or not, the ongoing importance of the nation as a site of affective attachment and belonging. Despite the many problematic consequences of its philosophical foundations, nation branding has helped to reassert the role of national discourse as a valid and necessary one in the context of global networks of exchange.

Narrating the outcome of nation branding in this way, however, has unwittingly reproduced a theoretical problem. In a competitive context of institutional isomorphism, supranational alliances, and “footloose” global capital, the story goes, a nation-state’s ability to convey what is special and distinct about its territory is its ticket to attracting capital away from its national competitors. In this sense nationalism becomes the best possible ideology for a globalizing world: successfully deploying the rhetoric and espousing the conditions of the global, but from the point of view of (and with the priority placed upon) the national.

The problem with this approach is that it leaves out an account of what is particular about the *global*. That is, what it means to be “global” is assumed to be universally understood across national spaces. This assumption is reproduced in much scholarship on nation branding (both administrative and critical), which relies on individual country case studies that focus exclusively on the discrete characteristics of the country’s culture, polity and economy. This literature might attend to the content of a country’s branding strategies, to a given campaign’s impact on the nation’s citizens, or to the foreign perception of a particular national reputation. Even in comparative studies, the focus is on similarities and differences between the countries compared, rather than on the possibility that the concept of what it means to be global itself might be highly differentiated.

Drawing on Michael Billig’s important observation about the fundamental dialectic of nationalism -- the universal need for nations to articulate what makes them unique and particular – I argue that an overlooked component of this dialectic resides in the range of interpretations and responses to the “global” imperatives of the modern condition. I use Billig’s insight to invert the common conflation of universal::particular and global::national, asking instead what is particular about the global in different national locales.

**Section 4 - Material Environments**

*Chapter 10*

**Local Contexts, Everyday Nationhood, and Canadian Identity:**

**Street Names in Greater Sudbury**

Tim Nieguth

The literature on Canadian national identity tends to focus on federal state policies, the role of various groups in shaping those policies, or key events that led to profound policy changes. Much of the literature also tends to focus on the “big three” metropolitan centres of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, especially when discussing the relationship between immigration and national identity. Both of these foci are understandable: the (federal) state has historically been crucially important in engendering a sense of Canadian nationhood, a fact that has led some observers to describe Canada as a “state-nation.” Likewise, the three biggest metropolitan areas are home to roughly a third of Canada’s population, receive the majority of immigrants to Canada, and wield considerable political and economic power. Consequently, they are important sites in the production of Canadian national identity.

The paper proceeds from the premise that a focus on state policy and the largest population centres is nonetheless problematical. While federal policy has been a crucial factor in shaping Canadian identity, it is only part of the equation. As Michael Billig and others have shown, national identities are challenged or entrenched, not only through public policy and contests over public policy, but also through subtle, fairly unremarkable mechanisms embedded in everyday life. Similarly, conditions for the production of Canadian national identity vary greatly across local contexts. For example, there are substantial differences between municipalities in terms of their ethnic, linguistic, or religious composition. These differences shape the local policy contexts of immigration, citizenship, cultural diversity, and ethnic relations. Municipalities are also embedded in different geo-political contexts – such as provincial jurisdictions, economic networks, or flows of migration. It is especially important to attend to local differences because the majority of Canadians live in medium-size cities, smaller urban centres, or rural areas, rather than metropolitan areas.

In order to unpack some of the local conditions of national identity production, the paper will focus on one element of everyday nationhood – city-texts – in the city of Greater Sudbury. Sudbury is a particularly interesting case study: as the centre of Northeastern Ontario, it is located in the political and economic hinterland of the province of Ontario. Unlike the provincial capital, Toronto, or the federal capital, Ottawa (located in Eastern Ontario), it is a relatively small urban centre. Sudbury also differs demographically from many other cities in Ontario; unlike Toronto, for example, Aboriginal and Francophone communities account for a sizeable share of its population. This is also reflected in the city’s linguistic make-up, which is marked by a strong French minority presence (unlike most cities in Ontario, where French plays a marginal role).

The paper will show that Greater Sudbury’s city-text reflects the historical dominance of British (and, to a much lesser extent, French) Canadians, marginalizing both Aboriginal peoples and non-British, non-French settler populations. As such, Sudbury’s city-text aligns more closely with mono- or bi-national visions of Canada than with visions that emphasize multiculturalism, diversity, and ethnic inclusiveness. Following the work of Azaryahu and others on street names, the paper suggests that the nature of Sudbury’s city-text matters because it inscribes a certain version of history and social reality into the cityscape, signals who does and does not belong to the community, and constantly remind residents of the individuals and events considered important to the development and character of the city.

The paper will further consider why a city-text that reflects the historical dominance of Canada’s two so-called “charter groups” – primarily the British, secondarily the French – has persisted despite decades of federal multiculturalism policy, the diversification of immigration, and the changing ethnic, linguistic and religious make-up of Canadian society. The paper will suggest that this is due to a combination of factors: a lacking local impetus for change, unequal distribution of socio-economic resources, and the contested nature of communal identities.

By way of a conclusion, the paper will emphasize that national identities are produced in complex and often contradictory ways. Consequently, it is worth keeping in mind that Greater Sudbury’s public sphere does not simply reproduce mono- and bi-national visions of Canada, but contains referents to competing versions of Canadian national identity as well. This is evident in some of the visual signs and symbols of Sudbury’s multicultural heritage, such as the Bridge of Nations (which is lined with flags representing the countries of origin of the city’s residents’), a number of downtown murals, and several public place names in central Sudbury.

*Chapter 11*

Everyday Nationhood and Urban Redevelopment Debates: Negotiating Identity through Space Making in Post-Colonial Hong Kong

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Like many place-based and national identitiesaround the world, Hong Kong’s strong place-based identity can be attributed to the prevalence of a localized founding myth that has been institutionalized by the state and simultaneously perpetuated by the public. This founding myth underscores and celebrates Hong Kong’s development and transformation from a “barren rock” to capitalist paradise and emphasizes notions of work ethic, entrepreneurialism, and capital’s triumph. According to such a myth, Hong Kong’s tremendous growth occurred during the 1950s-1970s when a largely immigrant population came to Hong Kong as they fled political turmoil on mainland China. As they overcame adversity, such families from mainland China ultimately settled in Hong Kong and contributed to the burgeoning manufacturing industry that was taking off. The cityscape then is an apt metaphor for Hong Kong’s growth and is seen as further legitimating this founding myth.

Since the 1980s, the trend towards globalization and neoliberalism has led to an increasing dominance of “world cities” and competition between them. While Hong Kong’s history has long been peppered with reclamation, renewal and redevelopment projects, since Hong Kong’s change in sovereignty in 1997, the Hong Kong government, in close relationship with property developers, has intensified the rebuilding, redevelopment and renewal of the city. In response, there has been a notable increase in civil society groups who resist and protest the new urban redevelopment projects in various different ways. I argue that the heritage preservation and anti-redevelopment efforts are ultimately concerned with questions of national identity in post-1997 Hong Kong. The preservationists and those fighting against the rapid urban redevelopment of Hong Kong understand the changing cityscape as, not only, an abatement of their local identity, but also the beginning of Hong Kong’s transformation into “another Chinese city.”

Whereas Michael Billig’s articulation of national identity and nationalism is not concerned with “the flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; [but rather] the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (Billig 1995, 8), this article goes further in arguing that the building, and by way of that the cityscape, on which the flag hangs limply and unnoticed is also capable of engendering banal nationalism. As such, this article examines this banal nationalism and what happens when the buildings that make up that cityscape are threatened by redevelopment and gentrification. The heated redevelopment debates between preservationists and developers and the state demonstrate the pervasiveness of this everyday nationhood. A second form of resistance to the ever-changing cityscape can be seen in the commodification of the cityscape of Hong Kong. The commodification of the cityscape can be found at local coffee shops, home goods stores, theme parks, fashion retailers, and restaurants which have, in the past decade, become popular among middle-class Hong Kongers.

Since 1997, scholarly work concerning Hong Kong has focused on political issues that illustrate the growing reign of power China has over Hong Kong, and Hong Kongers fight for autonomy. Issues have included debates about mother tongue education (1997), Right of Abode debates (1999), Article 23 – an anti-sedition legislation (2003), the creation of national studies in the education curriculum (2012), and the ongoing fight for universal suffrage as witnessed in 2014’s Umbrella Movement. However, as this article ultimately suggests, questions over Hong Kong’s autonomy and sovereignty, its relationship to the Chinese nation-state, and challenges to Hong Kong identity permeate through multiple layers of discourse and can be found in less “spectacular” debates. By focusing on the everyday, the banal and what is not immediately considered “political”, a fuller picture of the anxieties and tensions amongst Hong Kongers, their understanding of the Chinese nation and place within the Chinese nation, and Hong Kong identity can be studied.

**Section 5 - The universality of banal nationalism**

*Chapter 12*

**The universality of banal nationalism, or, Can the flag hang unobtrusively outside a Serbian post office?**

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The aim of this paper is to interrogate Michael Billig’s concept of banal nationalism from a perspective embedded in the contemporary Serbian society, an instance of what has been called the ‘semiperiphery’. The objective is both to test the applicability of banal nationalism to a particular context and to discuss two general questions: Who qualifies for banal nationalism? and, What exactly is ‘banal’ in banal nationalism?

The paper opens with a close reading of Billig’s own statements which position the Serbian case rather ambiguously with regard to banal nationalism. In the eponymous 1995 book, Serbs figure as the embodiment of the opposite, hot, belligerent kind of nationalism. The juxtaposition banal : non-banal is basically framed as Us : Them. In his Foreword to the Serbian edition (2009), however, Billig narrows this rhetorical gap, deexoticizes Serbs, and reassures them that now that the war is over, Serbian nationalism will turn banal as well.

So can Serbs have banal nationalism or not? The question is taken up in section two. Superficially speaking, the answer is – yes; there are plenty of symbols routinely flagging nationhood in the daily life of Serbian citizens. But at a more profound conceptual level, it becomes less clear whether what we find is exactly what Billig meant. There are two main circumstances that constrain the space for a possible Serbian banal nationalism. First, Serbia has only recently been reestablished as a nation-state, after a 90-year lapse spent in various state unions with other South Slavic peoples. Hence, the relationship between nation and state is shifting and complicated. To use Billig’s favorite metaphor of the flag: just as the Serbian present-day state flag had to be redesigned, so the Serbian collective identity has had to be reinvented after regaining independence in 2006. Neither the flag nor the nationhood are in close continuity with what went before. The second factor is Serbia’s insecure position at the periphery of the ‘West’ which, coupled with the stigmatization brought by the wars of the 1990s, has made Serbian national feeling uneasy, tense, self-conscious, politicized and internally divisive. The Nation is always barely beneath the surface, and the questions of ‘who we really are’ and ‘how we should present ourselves to the world’ are asked obsessively. In such circumstances, being Serbian in a relaxed, mindless way becomes next to impossible. This will be illustrated by a brief analysis of the public discourse on the tennis player Novak Djokovic. These two difficulties in applying banal nationalism to Serbia point to two serious flaws in Billig’s argument: the first to the unwarranted identification of nation and state, and the second to the missing dimension of global location, including its symbolic aspects.

The third section focuses on the meaning(s) of the crucial yet vague adjective *banal*. Three ways of defining it are identified: geographical (banal is the nationalism of the advanced, affluent, liberal West); substantive (manifestations of nationhood in non-political spheres are banal); and cognitive (banal is mindless, routine, implicit, cold, dispassionate). These meanings are not completely mutually exclusive, but they do point in different directions and lead to different conclusions. Billig himself does not seem to be aware of this multiplicity. The first understanding prevails in the book, but is explicitly denied in Billig’s subsequent writings. The remaining two crop up as need arises, without being distinguished. Now we see that the answer to the question of who can have banal nationalism – only Western nations, or also non-Western, and almost-Western ones, like Serbia – depends on which sense of banal is taken up. Moreover, even though meanings 2 and 3 may be found to apply, the danger is that by looking for manifestations of banal nationalism in every context we will lose sight of major social and political processes shaping a given society in fundamental ways.

In the conclusion, it is argued that the concept of banal nationalism, after all, really belongs where Billig originally placed it: among the ‘established nations of the West’. In other locations, it is likely to create more problems than it solves. The theory is presented as (potentially) universal, but Billig fails to specify, or even to acknowledge the importance of, major lines of differentiation between societies that impinge on the viability of the concept as an analytical tool. It is ironic that such a self-reflective author as Billig, intent on breaking some established habits of thought in the West, may in the end fall prey to an unwitting theoretical ethnocentrism.

*Chapter 13*

**Inducing Banal Nationalism: Brazil’s Promotion of a "Maritime Mentality" towards the South Atlantic**

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Michael Billig's notion of banal nationalism invites us to consider nationalism not in its "hot" moments, but rather in its quotidian variants. Critics of Billig acknowledge that this idea of everyday nationalism sheds light on how nations are reproduced through routine practices and beliefs, but they note that its manifestations are highly variable, and that this form of nationalism is restricted to countries in the global core.  In addition, banal nationalism is sometimes assumed to "bubble up from below"-- yet it can also be actively fostered as part of a specific political project that requires "cold" rather than "hot" forms of nationalism. In this paper, I analyze the efforts implemented by Brazilian government actors, including the Armed Forces, to foster a "maritime mentality" among Brazilian citizens--an "everyday awareness" of the South Atlantic's resources, which are reframed within this campaign as Brazil's "Blue Amazon."

 The project, undertaken as the Brazilian government  works to vastly expand its legal waters by filing a redefinition of its continental shelf with the UN Convention of the Law of the Seas, seeks to foster support among the Brazilian population for the concurrent naval buildup, which centers on the construction of a fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines.

 Analyzing sources that include didactic materials produced by the Navy and incorporated into the national education curriculum by the Ministry of Education, as well as cartoons widely distributed by the Armed Forces, I argue that state actors play a key role in fostering low-grade nationalism as a way to legitimize both the territorial expansion via UNCLOS, and Brazil’s role in the militarization of the South Atlantic.  Because Brazil has no clearly identified military antagonists, it is important to the government that this maritime mentality remain at the banal level.  More broadly, these findings also suggest the need to rethink the dynamics of banal nationalism away from the global center.

*Chapter 14*

**Banal Nationalism and the Construction of African National Identities**

*Igor Cusack*

Michael Billig’s concept of banal nationalism shows how, in the established nations of the west, the nation was flagged on a daily basis in the lives of its people. This chapter will argue that banal nationalism has played a major role in promoting a sense of national belonging in Africa. For example, Norbert Kersting has shown that banal nationalism has spread widely in African countries. Ben Vidacs argues that the idea of the nation has taken root among Africans and he focuses on the role of banal nationalism in the Cameroon.

African states, established in relatively recent times, have borders which were drawn on maps in nineteenth-century Europe and which entrapped, and sometimes divided, numerous ethnic groups. The imperative of forging a sense of national cohesion was therefore particularly important. The African nation-building elites (whether Marxist, socialist, capitalist or traditionalist) therefore set about ‘branding their flock’ with particular vigour.

The establishment of a sense of national identity has been achieved first by overt nationalist practices such as waving of national flags, singing national anthems in schools and cinemas or by celebrating national holidays. African elites have also promoted an assemblage of national discourses particular to their own nation, such as the celebration of their heroes of liberation in Zimbabwe and Namibia; masked dancing in Côte d’Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea’s promotion of ‘Bantu Unity’ or in Angola, taking a ‘backward look’ at the Queens Lueji and Njinga, who are seen as founders of the Angolan nation. We should note that some of these national discourses can be ‘trans-national’ such as the idea of Bantu-Unity.

This chapter shows how banal nationalism has played a crucial part in the nation-building process. Examples of this might be references to some cultural activity unique to the nation, such as the national dish, or the uniqueness of the national literature, or just the use of the little words ‘we’ or ‘us’ in the national media. The national territory is usually homogenised by dividing into provinces, counties or *départments* so that the very mention of one of these will quietly remind the populace of the whole. The reference to some parts of the specific national discourses mentioned above may also become examples of banal nationalism. Norbert argues that all this effort has been successful and that most Africans have developed a sense of national solidarity which has been a contributor to recent outbreaks of mob violence and xenophobia engendered by national and ethnic antagonisms.

Questions will be raised as to the validity of seeing banal and overt or ‘hot’ nationalism as dichotomous. Perhaps these extremes just lie on a spectrum of ways of ‘hailing’ the nation. Are all the various components of the population (men, women, children, different ethnicities) being equally interpellated as subjects? There is considerable scope for further research into the modes of nation-building amongst the rich diversity of African states. Does it matter, for example, if a large section of the populace is illiterate and what gender differences might exist in any establishment of a sense of belonging?

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**Response from Michael Billig**

**Conclusion**