

# **The Construction of National Identity in Television Series**

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## **Abstract**

Beliefs, philosophy, and personal values guide peoples' actions, influencing the options they exercise. Nationalist sentiment is exemplary of this phenomenon. Nationalism refers to national consciousness that emphasizes loyalty to, and pride of, a nation. It affects how people perceive themselves, their nations, and fellow members of the nation. Nationalism is closely related to national identity insofar as nationalism is both a specific expression of national identity and a mechanism for maintaining this identity. The proposed study seeks to investigate the relationship between national identity and popular culture. The central research question guiding this work is: *What is the contemporary level of understanding about the ways in which TV series foster national identity?* In order to address this issue, the research undertakes a systematic review of content analyses of various TV series to evaluate contemporary understanding of the construction of nationalism in TV series and the extent to which it reflects Anderson's categorization of nationalism.

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## 1. Introduction

For more than half a century European states have been working toward fully realizing a vision of a pan-European community that transcends economic union.<sup>1</sup> In recent years this work has been increasingly at risk. The outcome of the U.K.'s Brexit vote on June 23, 2016 was a big shock to the project of European unification and has reinvigorated support for national independence in Scotland (Coco, 2017). Likewise, in September 2016, up to 800,000 Catalanian nationalists again marched for independence from Spain (Reuters, 2016). On October 1, 2017, the government of Catalonia held an independence referendum that led to violence in the streets, with some 900-people injured. In the wake of 42% of voters opting for independence, Catalan leaders declared their right to independence shortly afterwards (BBC, 2017). Meanwhile in the United States, white nationalists have embraced Donald Trump's election as president as a victory for their cause. In Asia, the tense relationship between China, Korea and Japan likewise remains precarious. The recent deployment of an American anti-missile defense system (i.e., Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)) in South Korea has aggrieved the Chinese people (Huaxia (2017); People's Daily (2017)) leading to the Korean supermarket chain, *Lotte* – who owns the lands on which the THAAD is being built – being boycotted by Chinese consumers. In Myanmar, the outbreak, in August 2017, of military violence and ethnic cleansing targeting the Rohingya<sup>2</sup> minority has caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee to Bangladesh to escape persecution.

These events, and many others, present a challenge to hypotheses about processes of globalization leading to a homogenous global culture (McLuhan, 1964; Lee, 1980; Featherstone,

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Dinan (2004); Parsons (2002); Vataman (2010).

<sup>2</sup> Rohingya people have been living in Myanmar for generations. They have their own language and culture, and are not considered as citizens of Myanmar (BBC, 2017).

1990; Belk, 1996; Bird & Stevens, 2003) insofar as they seemingly offer credence to Billig's (2010), Van den Bulck's (2001), Castells's (2012), James's (2006) and Moïsi's (2009) claims that, in the face of globalization, nationalism and national identity tend to consolidate themselves rather than giving way to individualism or internationalism. According to Gellner (1983), the homogenous national culture demanded by nationalism reflects the objective nature of industrial society. More recently, Castelló (2009) also has argued that the significance of nationalism is strengthened by globalization.

Identifying with national culture and national politics is central to the existence of a nation, or as Gellner (1983: p. 55) puts it, "It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round." Along with national images, religious icons and pictures of political leaders, are also crucial to nationalism according to Hobsbawm (1992). Considered as representations of rituals, ceremonies and traditional events, such images visualize the imagined community through common practice. The relationship between imagery and loyalty is further elaborated by Price (1995) who notes that, "Radio and television have been generators of mass public imagery, inscribed with special powers" (p. 4). Images that are repeatedly shown to, and remembered by, people become the collective memory of the nation (Conway, 2003; Dhoest, 2007; Misztal, 2003; Sturken, 1997). Collective memory is an important constituent of national identity as it projects people's impression of the unknown territory, acquaints people with each other within a nation, and helps to define the nation's past. If people cannot identify with the concept of nationhood, the whole community collapses (Billig, 2010).

For people to identify with a nation, the construction of national identity<sup>3</sup> and nationalism is important. National identity and nationalism must be understood as political and cultural phenomena which, in turn, calls for attention to be given to specific languages, sentiments, and symbolism as well as political discourses (Smith, 1991). For instance, Anderson (2006) points to the important role newspapers have historically played in fermenting the sense of ‘imagined community’ that undergirds nationalism. In his view, the assumption underlying his notion of ‘imagined community’ is that nations are an ideological construct, and that the ritual of news-reading helps to project people’s perception of their respective nation which, in turn, becomes a tool for politics. A quarter century after the original publication of his seminal work, the internet has become a, if not *the*, key information resource for many. Today, television and online content play significant roles in shaping the knowledge people have about their communities, in constructing national images, and in the formation of nationhood. The messages conveyed by broadcasting and networking-based platforms help to reinforce the unity of nations, emphasize a single identity, and weaken the existence of other nation (Eriksen, 2007; Melleuish, Sheiko & Brown, 2009; Hyun, Kim & Sun, 2014).

According to Billig (2010) this consciousness of nationhood integrates the idea of self, others, and national responsibility to invoke national identity especially under the situation of invasion or attack. However, he explains that the consciousness of nationhood is not produced by crisis but rather is reproduced through daily life. Put simply, national identity embodies itself through social habits including talking and thinking about nationhood. Stories we learn from

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<sup>3</sup> In accord with Verdugo & Milne (2016), national identity is defined here as a sense of belonging to geopolitical entity.

newspapers and images we see on television and the Internet can frequently be considered as representations of nation in daily life.

Television as a typical media form and TV series as typical television culture, influence people's perception every day. According to the 2016 Nielsen Total Audience Report, radio and television still reach the largest media audience in the United States, with each adult spending approximately 4.5 hours per day watching television. The report also reveals that seven of the top ten primetime TV programs in the US are TV series. Serials are also very popular among Canadians according to the findings of the Telefilm Canada Report (2015) which show that Canadians choose television to watch TV series more than twice a week. In 2016, Canadians aged 18-34 years spent an average of 19.7 hours per week watching television (Profile, 2016). Meanwhile, with the growth of video-on-demand (VOD) more people are accessing TV programs online. Nearly 65% of global respondents in 61 countries reported watching long- and short-form VOD programming content (Nielsen, 2016).

In the light of these considerations, the objective of this research paper is to address the following question: *What is the contemporary level of understanding about the ways in which TV series foster national identity?*

In outlining the complexity of nationalism, Anderson distinguishes between four types of geographically anchored nationalisms:<sup>4</sup> American nationalism; European nationalism; official nationalism and colonial nationalism. The objective of the analysis provided in the pages that follow is to evaluate contemporary understanding of the construction of nationalism in TV series and the extent to which it reflects Anderson's categorization of nationalism.

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson rejects the idea of Europe as the origin of nationalism.

It must be noted from the onset that my analysis is not intended to be an empirically grounded investigation of the relationship between TV series and nationalism. Rather, it is a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed published works pertaining to analyzing articulations of nationalism in TV. The underlying assumption guiding my research is that, media exerts certain influence on people's perception of nations. However, I reject the notion that media can control people's perception and behavior not least because the complexity of the formation of national identity cannot be explained solely – or even principally – by media. Social development, economic prosperity, political rights, and a host of other factors simultaneously contribute to shaping nationalism.

The discussion in the next section examines different notions of nationalism and the mobilizing potential of media. In section three, the framework for the systematic literature review is presented. In section four, a detailed case analysis of contemporary construction of nationalism in different TV series is presented. The discussion in the final section sets out the conclusions emerging from the research findings and their implications for understanding the relationship between the television series programming and national identity.

## **2. Literature Review**

The discussion in this section begins by identifying the constituents of national identity from the perspective of identity and nation. From there, the discussion shifts its attention to differing conceptions of nationalism. The objective is to examine key themes that shaped the foundation of the systematic literature review conducted for this research paper.

### **1.1 Agents of National Identity**

The significance of identity has been debated for years. According to Sen (2006), identity is a sense of belonging to one group. One's sense of identity can motivate people to make choices or

to behave in specific ways that are beneficial to the group. It can likewise be used to embrace people with love or to invoke hatred and violence against others.

Sen explains that identity can be easily manipulated to cultivate violence, especially when one specific identity is strongly encouraged over others. Moreover, the notion of a single identity negates the fact, for instance, that a Chinese woman can also be a mother, a daughter, a sister, an entrepreneur, an employee, a taxpayer, a fan of EXO, and a kick-boxer. Sen argues that ignoring these other identities within individuals often fosters tension and violence between groups and individuals because categorizing people under a single identity neglects the diversity of motivations for peoples' actions.

Sen contends that, although ethnicity, history, and origins impose specific predetermined identities on people, individuals have the freedom to acquire and prioritize other identities. However, this choice tends to be influenced by the information people receive through propaganda and media. National identity is one of the identities that is most frequently referred to in contemporary society whether via television or other channels. Today, people can access unprecedented amounts of information. On the one hand, this can make it difficult to define and confine people within specific territory, while on the other hand this phenomenon can be presented as a threat and used to re-entrench notions of national identity and nationalism.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2017) indicates that the word *nation* comes from the Latin word *natio* which refers to birth, origin; species; race of people, tribe. It defines nation as a community of people sharing a common origin, tradition, language, defined territory, history and culture. Both the origin and etymology of the word 'nation' reveal that ethnicity, territory, culture are key elements in the definition of this term.

According to Anderson (2006), the 'nation' is an artificial construct. Noting that members

in any nation can never know most of their fellow members, he defines nation as an imagined political community wherein an image of peoples' communion with one another at a national level lives in their minds. A nation, in Anderson's view, is imagined through people's experience of time as simultaneous. It enables oneself to confirm one's links with other people in the same community at the same time. Nation can also be imagined through space "embracing the inhabitants of a particular territory" (Billig, 2010: p. 70). This image ensures continuity of a nation as a specific and unique community. Hobsbawm (1992) agrees with Anderson's notion of imagined community, noting that nation, as a product of history passage, emerged as recently as 1884. The modern conception of nation involves politics, territory, history, culture, language and individuals' identification. As an imagined community, the notion of nation functions to overcome territorial and language barriers across human communities.

Anderson (2006) argues that "communities are to be distinguished by the style in which they are imagined" (p. 6). In so doing he stresses the rise of national consciousness derived from the emergence of capitalism, print technology, and language diversity. In his view the interplay between capitalism, vernacular language, and print technology was a key factor in making possible the emergence of modern nations. Print technology, he argues, was the basis for communication among hundreds of thousands of people, which formed the embryo of imagined community, while language diversity offers the opportunity to defeat old administrative vernaculars. According to this view, intellectuals took advantage of print technology to rapidly disseminate collective memories through print productions to foster interactivity between people which, in turn, generated national consciousness. Anderson contends that this was one of the principal ways in which people came to consider themselves related to fellow members of a community thereby generating a sense of nation.

## **1.2 Different Types of Nationalism: From Anderson to Smith**

The discussion in this section focuses on setting out the differing conceptions of nationalism advanced by Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Smith. From this discussion we observe an associating of nationalism with processes of modernization across the work of Anderson, Gellner, and Hobsbawm. Smith (1991), by contrast, proposes a somewhat different account of nation. For him, nationalism is best understood as being anchored in existing ethnic bonds and communities. After setting out the perspectives of these authors, the discussion moves on to examine points of convergence and divergence in their thinking.

Anderson outlines four different forms of nationalism. The first, American nationalism, was, he claims, created by European immigrants. Its key features rest in the conception of pilgrimage and the rise of print capitalism. The term ‘pilgrim’ which served as means for colonial administrative units to distinguish themselves from creoles help to perpetuate attachment to the colonies among creoles. Building upon this idea, Anderson suggests that creoles’ bonds to colonial empires were constrained, in part, because they were deemed as contaminated blood. He further contends that this institutional discrimination prevented and limited creoles’ social and political mobility in colonies, by restricting their ability to serve as important officials in colonial empires and to integrate into the upper echelons of society. This process, he posits, implies a decentralizing of the centrality of colonial empires. Coinciding with these events, was with the emergence of print-capitalism and spread of newspapers across America. Although provinciality, plurality, and simultaneity made it difficult to produce a Pan-American conception of nationalism, the conception of pilgrimage offered the possibility for nationalists to imagine their own nation.

The second type of nationalism specified by Anderson is European nationalism. It refers to vernacular nationalism and is defined by print-capitalism. Further, it is rooted in the

complementary notions that nationalists who were active at that time were largely professional intellectuals, and that individual American movements provided models of nationalism to Europe. The efforts of these individuals, he maintains, promoted the spread of language-of-state, which is fundamental to the establishment of accepted nations. According to his account, print capitalism provided a means for bureaucratic officials and the commercial bourgeoisie to gain access to the works of professional intellectuals and to establish themselves as a new bourgeoisie of nationalist intelligentsia. In turn, vernacularizing print language empowered the new bourgeoisie to cultivate the support of the masses for nationalism. In sum, Anderson's suggestion is that the vernacularizing of the print language made it possible to have the language-of-state which, in turn, facilitated both the dissemination of stories about the supposedly glorious past of the nation, and the proclaiming of the conception of nation.

Official nationalism is the third type of nationalism described by Anderson. It aims to transform old empires into nations with the purpose of justifying the legitimacy of the ruling class over large territories. According to Anderson, in the light of the rapid rise of European nationalism, old empires tried to maintain their status by combining empire with nation. This, he posits, involved replacing traditional legitimacy with nationalism. Anderson suggests Russia and Japan as examples of the successful implementation of official nationalism. He hypothesizes that in both countries the combination of promotion of language of the state, presence of print capitalism, and homogenous national education made it possible for people to imagine themselves as united distinct nations. He further contends that, the failure of Scotland to develop its own form of official nationalism was a result of it sharing the same language as England, and the relative ease of mobility from between Scotland and London. Official nationalism as Anderson concludes "can be best understood as a means for combining naturalization with retention of dynastic power.....for

stretching the short, tight skin of nation over gigantic body of the empire.” (2006, p86)

The fourth form of nationalism set out by Anderson is colonial nationalism. It refers to the nationalism that arose in colonized Asia and Africa after the World War I. He describes this type of nationalism as being manifest through the ways in which colonial educational systems, print capitalism, administration, census, maps and museums conditioned the thinking of nationalism in the colonized and the colonizers.<sup>5</sup> For him, colonial educational systems promoted nationalism by training well-educated young literate bilingual students who became leaders in national movements. These bilingual intelligentsias, he argues, learned the model of European nationalism and nurtured it in peoples’ minds. Secondly, this educational system contributed to fostering a sense of “us” versus “them” among these bilingual intelligentsias. Based on the concept of “us”, community can be imagined. In addition, and as noted by Anderson, the upgrading of print-capitalism contributed to the spread of colonial nationalism, and enhanced bonding among people. In discussing the colonial nationalism model, Anderson emphasizes that while the strength of language lies in its ability to generate imagined communities it is print-language that invented nationalism. He also mentions that the development of communication technology, especially radio and television allied with print-capitalism in involving illiterate and multilingual people into nationalism.

For Gellner (1983), power and access to educational system or high culture are central to

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<sup>5</sup> Sen (2006) also elaborates on colonial nationalism, proposing that admiration or disaffection towards the west are embedded in colonized minds due to the history of colonialism. One of the remarkable characteristics of colonial nationalism, he notes, is the emphasis on its spiritual supremacy. To seek independence from empires, colonized nations find strength in their spirits and values, referred to as discipline, order and collectivism which are in contrasted to what are considered as western values as democracy, individualism and liberty. According to Sen, this clarification is still an obsession with western culture and ignores colonized nations’ contribution to the world.

understanding nationalism, which he defines as “primarily a political principal, which holds that the principal and the national unit should be congruent” (p.1). In his view, it is the outgrowth of inescapable adjustment between polity and culture with the change of social development, aiming to confer political identity on culture. In examining the emergence of nationalism from the passage of agrarian society to industrial society, he emphasizes that nationalism is embedded in the division of labor. For him, industrial society is based on technology and perpetual growth. As such, it requires high efficiency and complex labor which, in turn, engenders a kind of mobility. This mobility enables people to work in different industries, to adapt to ever-changing society, as well as to communicate effectively with other people. Achieving this, he argues, requires establishing a modern national educational system to fulfill the high demand of labor. And, in his view, one of the consequences of this educational system is the articulating of nationalism.

For Gellner, nationalism “is the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures” (p.48) wherein culture is defined “the distinctive style of conduct and communication of a given community” (p.92). He also avers that language plays an important role in the formation of nationalism. In his view, literacy, division of labor, communication between strangers, and other features of industrial society require a shared language.

With this in mind, Gellner advances three different types of nationalism that share with Anderson’s taxonomy a linking of nationalism with processes of modernization. The first, Habsburg nationalism, is rooted in the idea that in the absence of access to high culture that is held by the powerful class, deprived peoples establish their own high culture from shared folk cultures. Gellner contends that this countervailing emergent high culture serves to raise national consciousness, and once it is confirmed as the ‘new’ high culture, a new state is inevitable. Indeed,

in his view, it is the transition from low to high culture that marks the emergence of a new nation.<sup>6</sup> The second type of nationalism set out by Gellner is liberal western nationalism. It, he suggests, is illustrated by Germany and Italian communities. Under the circumstances of this type of nationalism, high culture is accessible to the public with people sharing traditions, languages, cultural values and social experience insofar as a sense of community already exists across class boundaries. In this context nationalism functions to protect the existence of the community. Gellner's third type of nationalism is diaspora nationalism. He sees this type of nationalism as arising among foreigners who, with the arrival of industrial society, become politically and militarily vulnerable. Nationalism arises when members of the diaspora strive for protection and sustainability of their respective communities. Put it simply, the notion of a shared 'high' culture lies in the center of the three types of nationalism advanced by Gellner. It is this 'high' culture that he views as endowing people with national consciousness and operating to justify the legitimacy of the establishment of the new nation. In this sense, nation becomes protection of culture.

Echoing Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) defines nationalism as "a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (p.1). Hobsbawm contends that a central feature of this congruency is the need – both instrumentally and politically – for the presence of a standard and homogenized language so as to overcome different vernaculars and to enable communication between members of the nation. In his view, the foremost meaning of nation is politics, and national language is invented and constructed with the ideology of nationalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Gellner defines low culture as folk culture that is diversified, locality-tied and illiterate little culture or tradition, and high culture as literate, unified and training sustained culture that facilitates context-free communications. He posits that examining nationalism through a cultural lens reveals the intertwined relationship between culture and nationalism. Once high culture pervades the entire nation, the nationalism embedded in it can become an important identifiable organizational unit for people.

Hobsbawm contends that the popularity of national language enables states to propagandize nationalism nationwide, to implement standard administration, and to train homogenous citizens required by modern society. In this sense, nationalism also is closely related to politics insofar as nations usually mobilize people with the sense of collective belonging to achieve goals in national movements.

This imagined relationship is defined by Hobsbawm (1992) as proto-nationalism. There are two types of proto-nationalism. The first, “supra-local forms of popular identification” (Hobsbawm, 1992, p.46), refers to residents living in a specific space identifying themselves with another community. The second form of proto-nationalism focuses on the political bonds and vocabularies of selected groups that link with states. For Hobsbawm, proto-nationalism facilitates the formation of modern nationalism.

In Hobsbawm’s perspective, modern nationalism started with the outbreak of French revolution and the subsequent emergence of modern states.<sup>7</sup> He argues that this period coincided with national identity being pursued by rulers to justify the legitimacy of their authority over new states. This ‘new’ nationalism, he argues, differed from previous forms of nationalism in a number of ways. First, ethnicity and language were given special emphasis during this time insofar as nationalists united nations with high culture and national language. National language was more than mere communication skills; it empowered members with citizen rights. Second, the popularity

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<sup>7</sup> In Hobsbawm’s (1992) observations about nationalism in the colonies he seemingly agrees with Anderson’s assertion that colonial nationalism was new version of European nationalism brought in by nationalists. That is, the original nationalists in colonies were intellectuals who imported the conception of nationalism from Europe, constructing new national identification in the colonies. In Hobsbawm’s (1992) classification of national movements in the colonies, he stresses the function of three types of intellectuals: “local educated elites imitating European ‘national self-determination’, popular anti-western xenophobia, and the natural high spirits of martial tribes.” (p.151).

of cultural renaissance in Europe drove people to rediscover the national past and brought vernacular language to the top priority in the construction of nationalism, which became the basis for nationalism in the aftermath. Hobsbawm further notes that it was during this period that theories emphasizing the relationship between nations and genetics were developed.

Whereas the three preceding authors view nationalism as being linked with processes of modernization, Smith (1991) views nationalism as the reinvention of ethnic history and shared culture that can be used to maintain unity, to realize national will, and to assure the continuity of an abstract community. He defines nationalism as “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nations’” (p.73). For him, nationalism is immersed in political awareness. To this end, he maintains that symbols, customs and ceremonies that exist in one’s daily life are all part of nationalism, closely related to political ideology and essential to both the formation and stability of a nation. Through concrete activities and symbols such as ceremonies of remembrance, education, oaths, national anthems, national flags and museums, nationalism is made tangible in the form of shared culture, communal symbols, consented politics and sense of belonging.

For Smith, ethnicity is a crucial component in the formation of a nation. He contends that it is ethnicity that generates a blood bond that is instrumental to the solidarity of community. As such, he views individual ethnic groups as cultural collectivities whose continuity is contingent upon shared memories like religion, customs, language and festivals. Common histories, symbols and conventions are rooted in this community. For him, these national histories and historical tales convey the idea of a nation’s uniqueness. They are symbols of a nation that distinguishes itself from other nations.

Smith categorizes nationalism along two lines: territory nationalism and ethnic nationalism, which in turn generate two different models of national identity: territorial political identity and ethnic nation. Acknowledging the political consciousness embedded in national identity, Smith (1991) maintains that both identities are led by political forces and are aimed at achieving political consequences. It is his contention that through the repetition of national territory, ethnicity, religion, origins, language, customs and so on, nationalists build an imagined nation in which people live and share a common identity.

### **1.3 Converging and Diverging: Thinking about Nationalism**

Drawing from the preceding discussion we observe that a common thread running through the arguments advanced by Anderson (2006), Hobsbawm (1992), Gellner (1983) and Smith (1991), is an emphasis on the significance of national culture, educational system, national language and political consciousness in the formation of nationalism. For all four authors national culture is an inseparable aspect of national identity and nationalism. In Anderson's four models of nationalism, public culture is manifest through the enlightenment, vernacular culture and national propaganda. Gellner (1983) also points to the role of national culture, noting that nationalism is not the nature of nation and instead reflects a new social organization in the industrial world that relies on traditional culture and history legacy as nutrition to nurture national consciousness and justify the legitimacy of political units. Likewise, for Hobsbawm (1992) national culture offers a chance for cultural identification that holds a community together. Meanwhile, Smith (1991) views national culture as one of the fundamental features and elements, of national identity insofar as he sees it as serving to generate public opinions and to unite and mobilize people. National culture, he writes, can be achieved through public systems of education and mass media. In this sense, newspaper,

radio or television can all contribute to the construction of national identity. They can also function as education in daily life as well as contributing to the fostering of dress code, beauty standard, music taste, common values about right and wrong, justice and evil, which direct people's opinion and actions in the community.

For each of the authors the spread of national culture also is inseparable from the educational system. According to each of them, educational systems have historically served to promote nationalism by lending credence to the rise of national language and national culture, which, in turn, contributed to the formation of new middle classes from which national movements drew strength. In Anderson (2006)'s topology, for instance, educational systems served as an important way for colonists to promote official languages and to enable immigrants and the colonized to imagine a new community, developing their own national identity and nationalism. Gellner (1983), likewise argues that the presence of a national educational system guarantees the production of replaceable worker force who speaks the same language and who shares a homogenous sense of culture supposedly required by industrial society.<sup>8</sup> Hobsbawm (1992) also perceived educational system as reinforcing national identity through the promotion of national language. As for Smith (1991), he suggests that educational system functions to implant notions of a homogenous national culture and propagandized official nationalism so as to legitimate the existence of nation.

All four authors also share the notion that the presence of a national language as a key factor in the formation of nationalism insofar as it enables people to imagine themselves as

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<sup>8</sup> It is this process which he sees as explaining the link between state and culture, and how education becomes a tool of nationalism in the sense that it legitimates culture as well as violence.

members of one community. For them, this embodied form of cultural identification is used to distinguish “us” from “them” thereby contributing to defining different nations. For Anderson (2006) and Gellner (1983), the presence of a shared standard language is a crucial element of nationalism because it allows people to connect with one another across long distances; in this way, nations can be imagined, history can be recorded, and nationalism can be articulated. As for Hobsbawm, he maintains that the national language became the universal language for members to communicate with each other through public education which, in turn, helped to catalyze imagining the community as nation. The role of national language as articulated by Smith is one of laying the foundation of ethnic community, on which the nation is built.

Of the four authors whose work has been outlined, the role of political consciousness is most strongly emphasized by Smith (1991) who maintains that nationalism reflects, at its core, political ideology with cultural principles. Anderson (2006) also is sympathetic to this notion, writing, “Nation-ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness (p. 135). In line with this idea, Hobsbawm (1992), as well, suggests that nationalism emerges from political requirements to adapt to social and technological development and that it helps to legitimate political powers over the community. Gellner (1983), in line with the others discussed here, asserts that nationalism immersed itself in politics as it functions to justify political legitimacy.

Despite the commonalities discussed above, when it comes to the issue of the origins of nation, Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Smith proceed along different paths. The first three of these individuals place an emphasis on technology and modernization, suggesting that modernity, together with the rise of new classes and global migrations profoundly influenced traditional society forcing nation-states to find new ways of uniting members. For Anderson, print-capitalism is a key factor in the rise of nations in the sense that it promotes vernacular language and a

conception of simultaneity that makes it possible for people to imagine themselves as related to other people, generates a sense of public sphere, and set the stage for the rise of the nation. Gellner as a proponent for modernity theory, likewise claims that nation is the outgrowth of industrialization, which requires mobile and intelligent workers. For him, nationalism serves to overcome cultural barriers and to integrate a mobile population into one united community. Hobsbawm (1992) echoes Anderson's idea of nation as imagined, claiming that it is constructed ideologically. According to him, the emergence of imagined communities in Europe was the outgrowth of social and political changes.

By contrast, Smith (1991) views the emergence of nations as a product of reconstructing history and public participation. He asserts that nation was not invented by nationalism, and was manifest in pre-modern ethnic groups. In his view, nation is a contemporary form of ethnic community in modern society that is based on ethnic ties and which incorporates capitalism, citizenship, popular participation and mass culture. According to him, the function of nationalism in the modern world lies in its capacity to restore collective identity and to bind people to one community.

Based on the arguments outlined above we can conclude that national language, public or vernacular culture, profoundly influence nationalism and national identity insofar as they define daily routine, construct shared economic and political experience, provide social values, and reproduce nation through cultural symbols. Ethnic ties, a sense of belonging to communities, and technological development also are significant to the formation of national identity and nationalism.

#### **1.4 Popular Culture, Everyday Life and National Identity**

Television as a kind of image language can exert influence on the formation of nationalism. To

this end, Gellner (1983) expounds upon the role this medium plays in the formation of nationalism. He argues that it is the existence of the medium rather than the message it carries that generates the central idea of nationalism that only languages and the way to communicate matters in industrial society. Without the ability to understand medium, one is excluded from communities.

According to Hall, Held and McGrew (1992), Hall and du Gay (2011), the construction of national identity is discursive insofar as the construction process is embedded in folk stories, common histories and images. Building on this notion, Lita & Cho (2012) note that media presentation influences and forms people's perception, cultural values and identities. Slater (2007) also confirms that media exposure helps to maintain specific identity. Based on the findings of a survey investigating the effects of televised campaign ads on the public during 2006 re-election campaign of Texas governor Gerber, Gimpel, Green and Shaw (2011) conclude that despite strongly affecting people's political opinions, the effect of television advertising is generally short-lived. In their survey of the relationship between media consumption and national identity in five countries, Haggard & Yao (2016) concluded that information from mass media contribute to the construction of national identity in terms of facilitating national language and national sentiment. They also note that, by informing the national landscape such information familiarizes people within the community and contributes to the imagination of the community.

Dhoest (2004, 2007) suggests three ways in which media can contribute to the construction of national identities: (i) nations take advantage of organizing media to provide shared culture to people; (ii) nationalists avoid imposing national identity to people by explicitly depicting nations; and (iii) genres do not limit the promotion of nationhood, for even soap operas can contribute to its formation. This is noteworthy because it implies that the everyday diffusion of national identity via media communication channels functions invisibly. This is precisely what makes studying the

relationship between national identities and TV series programming a worthwhile endeavor.

According to Price (1995), the first era of broadcasting traces back to World War I, with governments realizing its potential as a tool for influencing public opinion and fostering national identity. Price pointed out that states took control of broadcasting system by imposing various restrictions including licensing and censorship. As he claims, by the early 1950s governments in North America were using television as a means of disseminating national policy, national law and national news that, in turn, supported conceptions of the state and national identity. During the period of McCarthyism, the US government exerted power on the control of television stations to an unprecedented extent to purge the expression of non-mainstream ideas (Price, 1995). Television, according to Price, projected official views to support conceptions of the state and has long been taken as an instrument for reinforcing national identity. Propaganda that was incorporated in television programming was, and continues to be, exploited as an important way of reinforcing nationhood (Dowd, 1951; Price, 1995; Barseghyan, 2003; Wang, 2012). In the words of Price (1995) “even in a world exploding with information, there is a role for government-funded public broadcasting system that will enrich and help to define and reflect the national identity” (p. 4-5).

As Edensor (2002) explains, in contemporary times, any identification of national culture cannot exclude cultural productions including pop stars, fashion designers, film, television producers, sports stars and popular cultural practices such as dancing. To this end, Edensor contends that popular culture is plays a central role in forming and maintaining people’s identity. This is not to deny the existence of traditional culture. Rather, it means that popular culture is integrating traditional cultural elements such as ceremonies or museums. In this way, the division of traditional cultural and popular cultural becomes ambiguous. Popular culture itself grows into popular version of traditional culture. In other words, traditional cultural becomes the resource

from which popular culture draws strength.<sup>9</sup>

One of the many ways in which popular culture is manifest is via popular genres of fiction and television programming that appeal to both young and the old. Embedded in these television images, national identity can be represented and experienced every day. As Edensor (2002) points out this type of daily media content is produced in the public sphere, within which people can be connected to each other through shared interests. The ever-changing nature of culture means that the national identity embedded within this content also is dynamic, representing itself through images, lyrics, poems, discourses, ideas and all other cultural elements. This staging of nation operates at a mundane level, which grounds national identity in common sense.

The relationship between television series and national identity has been highlighted for years (see, for example, Abu-Lughod, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Tufte, 2000; Porto, 2011). Dhoest (2004, 2007), for instance, argues that by representing and producing discourse about the nation television series act as a storyteller, myth-former and source of images, devoted to the formation of national identity. Castelló (2009) likewise emphasizes television as “the most powerful tool of ‘national’ images” (p. 306). In so doing, he identifies television series, in particular, as a crucial site to define national identity. Nonetheless, questions remain about the ways and processes through which television series reinforce national identity. As communities have their own channels, they have access to interpret their own diversity, which may impair the formation of a united national identity (Castelló, 2009). Another related concern pertains to cultural imperialism. The popularity of imported programming can challenge national identity (Bignell, 2010; Gillespie,

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<sup>9</sup> The perceived threat of popular culture to national identity, and American popular culture in particular, is a common refrain from state and non-state actors around the world (see, for example, Galtung, 1971; Morris, 2002; Nordenstreng & Varis, 1974; Schiller, 1969; Sepstrup, 1989).

1995; Roussou, 2000). While Straubhaar (1991) came up with the concept of cultural proximity to explain people's preference for local television programs, together with the belief that audience are active viewers rather than passive receivers (Bignell, 2010), whether national programs can defeat imported programming and reinforce national identity continues to be a source of debate.

In Billig's (2010) examination of the relationship between national identity and everyday life he posits that national identity is not a "primordial tie" (p. 7). According to him, states are comprised of ideological behavior and beliefs. In this sense, states are historically constructed rather than existing naturally. Therefore, he views national identity as a dynamic phenomenon that is reproduced in routine and mundane life activities. In other words, national identity is not merely conception, but also a form of living. In this sense, nation and nationalism can be reproduced every day through beliefs, habits and practices.

Rather than focusing on the so-called national movements such as revolution or independence war, Billig concentrated on more detailed daily flagging of nationalism. For Billig (2010), "nationhood is near the surface of contemporary life" (p. 93), which is signified by using first-person plural, such as "we" and "us" and which serves to remind people of nationhood routinely and discursively in everyday life. Put simply, "banal nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted" (Billig, 2010, p. 93). Cultural products such as TV programs or songs, national newspaper, a president's speech, national flag waving outside on the building and the advocacy of national language can all inform nationalism unconsciously with familiar and continual representation of daily routine. Starting with the national flag, Billig asserts that it is not merely a symbolic representation of the nation-state but also indicates loyalty towards the nation state. In his view, even flags appearing on television or in magazines, operate to remind people the myth of nation states. He also posits that traditional events such as national day or New

Year celebrations also serve as exemplars to enact extra national emotions insofar as they break daily routine and allow people to immerse in the aura of nationhood. Likewise, common sense, according to Billig, sustains national identity by transmitting disciplinary discourses that underpin the nation state to members. Put simply, the essence of Billig's argument is that the daily routines that people often take for granted operate to remind people of nation, sustaining collective memory of nationhood. It is in this way, he posits, that nationhood becomes a natural and unforgettable concept in people's minds.

Edensor (2002) echoes Billig (2010) observations about the influence of everyday life activities on national identity, writing, "national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interactions, habits, routines, and practical knowledge." (p.17). According to him, daily routines and patterns of life contribute to the formation of national identity insofar as the daily performance of unreflective actions ensures the consistency of common values and norms grounded in a nation's history. These activities, in turn, strengthen the concept of nationhood, becoming in his view as significant as history in the formation of national identity.

Drawing from Billig's and Edensor's arguments, we can conclude that images imply nationalism through cultural symbols and cultural events such as national flag, national history and national celebration. Even the action of watching a TV series as part of one's daily routine can be accounted as a process of strengthening and maintaining national identity since it identifies us as a nation enjoying this entertainment. Building on the preceding discussion about the interactive relationship between national identity and mass media, we now turn our attention to how national identity is constructed and maintained through daily life with reference to television series programming.

### **3. Methodology**

In order to illustrate the contemporary level of understanding about how TV series foster national identity, the researcher conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) of research investigating the relationship between these two variables. Although SLR is well established as a means for scoping available evidence in evidence-based disciplines such as medicine, public health, education or clinical trials (Segundo, R.M.C., & Santos, C.A.S., 2014), in the field of media and communication studies it is a relatively new technique for undertaking empirical studies (Volk, 2016; Rowley & Keegan, 2017).

Klassen et al (1998) define SLR as “a review in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those identified are then appraised and synthesized according to a predetermined and explicit method” (Klassen, Jadad, & Moher, 1998, p700). SLR is a comprehensive analysis framework that adopts “an iterative review procedure and search strategy” (Roehrich, Lewis, & George, 2014, p2). The objective guiding this approach is “to improve the quality of review process by synthesizing research in a systematic, transparent and reproducible manner” (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003, p3). Compared with traditional literature review method, SLR is objective, systematic and replicable (Cook, Mulrow & Haynes, 1997; Parris & Peachey, 2012; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). As noted by Kitchenham (2004), this technique is well-suited for summarizing “all existing information about some phenomenon in a thorough and unbiased manner ... in order to draw more general conclusions about some phenomenon than is possible from individual studies, or as a prelude to further research activities” (p 3). Given the diversity of views about the relationship between TV series and national identity,

conducting a systematic literature review is an appropriate manner of investigating this issue.<sup>10</sup>

For this study the eight-step approach for conducting systematic reviews set out by Okoli and Schabram (2010) was used. The steps are as follows:

1. Purpose of the literature review: Central to any study is the formation of research question, identifying the purpose of the research.
2. Protocol and training: This step is required for researchers who are more than one person. It is not necessary in this research, since there is only one researcher.
3. Searching for the literature: This step involves comprehensive research of all potential relevant literatures.
4. Practical screen: This step is known as inclusion and exclusion, meaning that researchers need to select studies for further examination and eliminate irrelevant studies.
5. Quality appraisal: This step involves detailed examination of the studies from last step and identify all studies that will be included in research.
6. Data extraction: Reviewing all identified studies and extract applicable information for analysis.
7. Synthesis of studies: Analyzing information from last step.
8. Writing the review: reporting the findings and conclusions.

The articles used were obtained from three databases: EBSCOhost; GALE; ProQuest. These databases were chosen because they are accessible through the University of Ottawa library, they allow for logical expression of key words to identify related articles, and they are general sources for communication and media studies.

The logical expression of key words used in the search listed consisted of: (television or TV series or TV programs or TV drama or TV propaganda or TV broadcasting or TV fiction or Internet) And (national identity or nationalism or nationhood or national building). In order to make the initial search returns more relevant and manageable, basic criteria for inclusion in the sample entailed requiring the articles to be from peer reviewed journals and published in English

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<sup>10</sup> This said, the limitations of SLR cannot be overlooked. As noted by (Klassed et al 1998), one of the difficulties with this approach is the inability to include all potential relevant studies in the review, and to account for variations in the quality of the literature included in the sample.

after the year 2000. The rationale for using the year 2000 as a benchmark rests in the notion that the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 evoked a heightened sense of nationalism globally. In the United States, national identity and solidarity were immediately and increasingly expressed after 9/11 (Li & Brewer, 2004). National flags were displayed on streets and the USA PATRIOT ACT was passed in the next year.

The initial search identified 1900 articles. Of these, 1000 were excluded due to irrelevance to subject area and/or because of duplicate returns based on the titles. The criteria for exclusion were:

- i. do not address television context
- ii. do not discuss national identity in any level
- iii. discuss reality shows or films<sup>11</sup>
- iv. focus on only one specific human rights such as gender role or feminism<sup>12</sup>

The abstracts and introductions of the remaining 900 articles were reviewed to identify the presence of the following inclusion criteria, which address the relationship between national identity and TV series to a more detailed level.<sup>13</sup>

- i. Explore TV series with cultural identity in the sense that culture is an important part in the construction of national identity.
- ii. Engage political identity in the discussion of national identity considering their close relation
- iii. Focus on the construction of nationalism, national characteristics or national image in TV series

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<sup>11</sup> Reality shows were excluded for three reasons. First, the audience they reach is less compared with other TV series (Nielsen, 2017). Second, reality shows usually revolve around one specific theme, which is not as inclusive as other TV series. Third, they were produced for entertainment function rather than ideological construction. Films were also excluded because compared with TV series, their influence is discursive. Moreover, their narrative is more international rather than national compared with TV series.

<sup>12</sup> General human rights usually categorize people based on their gender or illness instead of their nationality, which sets the analysis within the framework of transnational communication.

<sup>13</sup> These criteria were chosen based on the elements identified by scholars in the literature review.

This screening process resulted in 56 articles being retained for further analysis. By taking a closer look at the full texts of these articles, twenty-four articles were chosen for the final review.

To specify the process,

- i. Two articles were excluded due to unavailability to the full text. Requesting the articles through interlibrary loan was deemed to be an option that was too time consuming to track down articles that may or may not have been pertinent to this study.
- ii. Seventeen articles were removed from the review because they were not based on detailed content analysis of nationalism manifest in specific TV series. The focus of this grouping of articles centered on such things channel’s production system, program strategies, institutional and organizational barriers, audience interview, national broadcasting policy, theory analysis, popular culture in general, and history of national television market.
- iii. Ten articles did not deal with the relationship between TV series and national identity. Instead they examined professional analysis of television programs, production process, international television market export, and history of human rights movements, which is exemplified by its focus on cooperation between scripter, director, producer and actor, budget and editing; export and import market, market quota and profit; critical analysis of feminism, LGBT social movements and gender relations, character representation in TV series.
- iv. Three articles were eliminated because they dealt with film-based mini-series, or reality television

The remaining 24 articles were included considering their comprehensive research into the relationship between national identity and framework, narratives, content of TV series.

In order to map the landscape of the selected articles, the study location was collected. The breakdown was as follows:

Europe (N=12)	Brassard, Jeffrey (2012)
	Corner, John & Richardson, Kay (2008)
	Joy, Stuart (2014)
	Peacock, Steven (2011)
	Williams, Rebecca (2011)
	Peacock, Steven (2009)
	McElroy, Ruth (2013)
	Blandford, Steve & McElroy, Ruth (2013)

	Adriaens, Fien & Biltreyst, Daniel (2012)
	Tobin, David & Neville, Patricia (2001)
	Larrea, Carlota (2012)
	Zambon, Kate (2017)
North America (N=6)	Sharp, Sharon (2011)
	Harrington, Ellen Burton (2007)
	Peacock, Steven (2009)
	West, Emily (2002)
	Griffin, Jeffrey L (2008)
	Byers, Michele (2011)
South America (N=1)	Porto, Mauro (2011)
Asia (N=3)	Cao, Qing (2010)
	Nguyen-Thu, Giang (2014)
	Perkins, Chris (2010)
Oceania (N=3)	Joyce, Robin (1999)
	Grech, John (2001)
	Fresno-Calleja, Paloma (2016)

Douglas Kellner (1980) defines genre as accepted rules in organizing materials into different categories. In this research paper, the term genre is used to refer to a type of content, and serves as the basis upon which the data analysis is organized. This is because genres transcend borders and are not bound to distinction nationalisms. In terms of genres, the composition of the sample was: drama (N=5), comedy (N=5), Sci-Fi (N=1), History (N=5), political fiction (N=2), and crime (N=3), horror (N=2). One article in the sample was a comparison of television series<sup>14</sup> remakes in different countries. It focused specifically on examining manifestations of different nationalisms. A detailed breakdown of the articles included in the sample is provided below. It is organized by genre as this approach facilitates an analysis based on the ideas set out in

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<sup>14</sup> Television series according to Kompare (2006) adheres to conventions involving program length, air time, genre and frequency of viewing. In this research paper, the criteria to select television series includes not a film, minimum three episodes and not a reality television show. This is because films generally do not exert constant propaganda on people, and reality shows usually do not involve continuous and common theme.

Section 2. The breakdown also identifies the Anderson nationalism type best reflected by the individual articles. That rationale for identifying the latter is that geographic taxonomy aligns with the geographical diversity covered by the articles in the sample.

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Series Title</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Major Themes</b>	<b>Type of Anderson Nationalism</b>
<b>Politics</b>	Brassard, Jeffrey (2012)	<i>Master and Margarita</i>	Russia	Cultural memory; Economy	official nationalism
	Corner, John & Richardson, Kay (2008)	<i>The Amazing Mrs. Pritchard</i>	UK	Political structure; Feminism; political values; political people;	European(vernacular) nationalism
<b>Sci-fi</b>	Sharp, Sharon (2011)	<i>Star Trek: Enterprise.</i>	USA	Nostalgia; Collective memory; Multiculturalism; Technology	American nationalism.
<b>Crime</b>	Joy, Stuart (YEAR)	<i>Line of Duty</i>	UK	Social anxiety; Bureaucracy; Social order; National security	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Harrington, Ellen Burton (2007)	<i>CSI: Crime Scene Investigation</i>	USA	National security; Social anxiety; Bureaucracy; Science; social order;	American nationalism
	Peacock, Steven (2011)	<i>Wallander</i>	Sweden	Social anxiety; Bureaucracy; Social order; National security	European(vernacular) nationalism
<b>Horror</b>	Williams, Rebecca (2011)	<i>Torchwood</i>	Wales	National concerns; Politics; Cultural markers;	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Peacock, Steven (2009)	<i>Riget</i>	Denmark	National concerns; Cultural markers; Community construction;	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Peacock, Steven (2009)	<i>Kingdom Hospital</i>	USA	National concerns; Romanticism; Cultural markers;	American nationalism
<b>History</b>	McElroy, Ruth (2013)	<i>The Promise</i>	UK	Narrative; Collective memory	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Blandford, Steve & McElroy, Ruth (2013)	<i>Story of Wales</i>	Wales	Narrative; Collective memory	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Cao , Qing (2010)	<i>the Rise of the Great Powers</i>	China	Narrative; Collective memory	official nationalism
	Fresno-Calleja , Paloma (2016)	<i>Here to Stay</i>	New Zealand	Narrative; Collective memory	European(vernacular) nationalism
	West, Emily (2002)	<i>the Heritage Minutes; Canada: A People's History</i>	Canada	Narrative; Collective memory	European(vernacular) nationalism
<b>Drama</b>	Joyce, Robin (1999)	<i>A Country Practice</i>	Australia	Collective memory; Social concerns; National achievements	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Grech, John (2001)	<i>Seachange</i>	Australia	Collective memory; Social concerns;	European(vernacular)

				National achievements	nationalism
	Adriaens, Fien & Biltereyst, Daniel (2012)	<i>Sara</i>	Belgian	Collective memory; Social concerns; National achievements	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Tobin, David & Neville, Patricia (2001)	<i>Raw</i>	Ireland	Collective memory; Social concerns; National achievements	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Porto, Mauro (2011)	<i>Patria Minha; O Rei do Gado</i>	Brazil	Collective memory; Social concerns; National achievements	Colonial nationalism
	Nguyen-Thu, Giang (2014)	<i>Hanoians; The City Stories</i>	Vietnam	Collective memory; Social concerns; National achievements	Colonial nationalism
<b>Comedy</b>	Griffin, Jeffrey L (2008)	<i>The Office</i>	USA	Stereotypes; Social concern; Shared culture	N/A
	Larrea, Carlota (2012)	<i>What a Week</i>	Spain	Stereotypes; Social concern; Shared culture	European(vernacular) nationalism
	Zambon, Kate (2017)	<i>Turkish for Beginners Everybody Loves Jimmy</i>	Germany	Stereotypes; Social concern; Shared culture	N/A
	Perkins, Chris (2010)	<i>Nodame Cantabile</i>	Japan	Stereotypes; shared culture	Colonial nationalism
	Byers, Michele (2011)	<i>Little Mosque on the Prairie Trailer Park Boys</i>	Canada	Social concern; Shared culture	European(vernacular) nationalism

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The discussion in this section presents the key findings to emerge from the sampled articles, and is structured in accord with the genres of the television series examined.

Two articles analyzing nationalism through the lens of politics were identified from the review: Russian series *Master and Margarita* and British series *The Amazing Mrs Pritchard*. The former is an adaptation of the most popular anti-authoritarian novel in Russia. It tells the story of the devil's visit to Moscow where he observes social and individual lives in Soviet Union. According to Brassard (2012) *Master and Margarita* is "one of the most prominent examples of the ideological reconstruction of cultural memory on television (p.152)." *The Amazing Mrs Pritchard* tells a story of a new female British political party founded by a supermarket manageress who comes to power (Corner & Richardson, 2008).

Although both of the series were political in their orientation, they project opposite perspectives towards politics. Brassard (2012) contends that the *Master and Margarita* ostensibly serves as a camouflaged critique of the Putin administration's authoritarian tendencies while foregrounding the economic accomplishment it has achieved since his coming into power in 2000. In his analysis Brassard (2012) explores the role of cultural memory in the articulation of nationalism. Noting its comparison of material deprivation and economic inequality in Soviet times to rising living standards in contemporary Russia, Brassard criticizes the series for directing peoples' attention away from political structure while focusing on economic progress to evoke national pride among people. He also decries the series' complementary portrayal of the Russian secret police as seeking to pacify political concerns about authoritarianism in Russia. These observations lead Brassard (2012) to assert that a close relationship exists between this TV series and Russian national identity insofar as the program is embedded with official national discourse

that serves the Putin view of Russian national interests.

*The Amazing Mrs Pritchard* more directly engages political themes than *Master and Margarita*. (Corner and Richardson (2008) suggest it expounds on politics in three ways:

- Political structure is oriented towards the electoral system, institutional settings and international relations (for example, military operation in Iraq and Iran; the relationship with the European Union);
- Political values involving concepts of democracy, honesty and transparency (for example, media relation; corruption);
- Political people, which refers to people who are in power.

According to Corner and Richardson, feminism also is engaged in the discourse of nationalism in a manner that it is articulated as the nation “us” against the politicians “them.”

Corner and Richardson (2008) also emphasize the correlation between TV series and national identity, claiming that the involvement of issues on the real public agenda functions to establish a positive alignment between audience and the government. To this end, they contend that the populist ideological message embedded in *The Amazing Mrs Pritchard* is intended to generate a recognition of present political administration and bring the interplay of political culture with everyday life into question.

Although neither series directly refers to national identity or nationalism, they present politics as a primary role in the construction of national unity and national sentiment. To put each of them in Anderson’s four types of nationalism, *Master and Margarita* resonates with the official nationalism in the sense that its objective lies in the justification of imperial power over the territory. And *the Amazing Mrs Pritchard* is a representation of European nationalism which features the idea of populism. Populism in the series, as Corner and Richardson note, is referred to as reflecting popular will against elite values in terms of politics and aiming for popular support.

In the reviewed articles, only one science fiction program was identified as engaging with

American national identity: *Star Trek: Enterprise*. According to Sharp (2011) this series informs American national identity through the feeling of nostalgia. This sentiment, he argues, is embodied by the representation of collective memory, multiculturalism, technological progress and military operations. Sharp contends American national identity is grounded in the rediscovery of national myths and national history. Hence, in this series the involvement of design of space station, aircraft, American national flag, and NASA spacesuits in the series reminds people of the United States in the time of space race by reiterating a national myth of conquering spatial and social frontiers which, in turn, serves to connect American past with present and future.

As for multiculturalism, Sharp argues that it is manifest through the casting of a multicultural crew and white captain; a narrative enabling the series to resolve the issue of social difference, racial hierarchy and religion fundamentalism. He maintains, that this utopian image of American multicultural national identity helps to evoke national pride and national confidence that articulates a specific conception of nationhood. Sharp further points out that the technological progress signified by iconic images of Apollo astronauts, the first footage on the Moon, also connects technological progress with a strong American national identity insofar as they recall a national past and empower viewers by fostering hope in the American future. He likewise, interprets the war between human and alien as an analogy for American military operations against terrorism that reinforces a clear distinction between us and them, while simultaneously identifying American national identity and military operations as being connected with pursuing peace and protecting planet Earth.

Ultimately, Sharp is critical of the series for failing to deal with the ways in which issues of social difference in the post-9/11 period have impacted national identity discourses in the United States. Drawing from his analysis, we see that in this series imagined community is perpetuated

through reiterating national myths, propagandizing nationhood, and affirming national unity in the face of global terrorism. This effort to restore and reinforce national confidence by exploring themes associated with the country's past resonates with Anderson's description of American nationalism.

Three articles in the sample deal with notions of national identity through the medium of crime stories. The series are: (i) *Line of Duty*, which is based in Britain, and tells the story of a police officer's investigation of an inspector (Joy, 2014); (ii) *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, which is centered around a team of criminal investigators based in Las Vegas (Harrington, 2007); and (iii) *Wallander*, a Swedish series about a struggling middle-aged detective (Peacock, 2011).

Each of these articles report that the TV series they respectively examine engage with national identity through themes of social anxiety, bureaucracy, social order, and national security. Social anxiety revolves around identity anxieties and issues of social equity. For instance, Joy (2014) observes that in *Line of Duty* scenes showing globalization trends such as transnational terrorism and economic integration serve to reflect contemporary challenges to notions of citizenship and traditional identity. He also notes that the series portrayal of working class identity reflects social inequities brought about by capitalism in a manner that plays on social anxieties about the poor being linked with crime.

Harrington (2007) finds that in *CSI* social anxiety tends to be associated with issues of gender and transsexual identity. He argues that in this series national identity is articulated through the propagandizing of heteronormative identity. Peacock (2011) observes that the social and political issues represented in *Wallander* are embodied by crimes in such a way that the Swedish nation as a whole is represented as a victim. He further notes that the series subjects the Swedish welfare system to the criticism of compromising national interests to capitalism. It is precisely this

perspective, he argues, that draws people to concentrate on national development and to care about the fellow members of the nation.

These researchers find the theme of bureaucracy to be characterized through police procedure, abuse of power, institutional indifference, police inefficiency and corruption. These tropes are reportedly used in each series to orient viewers' attention towards national concerns. Likewise, the political discourses articulated in the series were found to invite people to participate in political procedures. For example, in *Line of Duty* one observes critiques of public service institutions for failing to support those in need (Joy, 2014). Joy also notes that the failure of police operation in the series is constructed to align the audience with the police insofar as it locates the audience in the position of police who follow police procedure. In *CSI*, the efficiency of the investigators affirms the return to order and justice, as well as offering assurances of stability for society (Harrington, 2007). In *Wallander*, the investigation of corruption combined with officers' commitment to community raise questions of social responsibility and draw people to consider of national policy (Peacock, 2011). Across all three series crime is presented as disrupting a social order that is restored with the arrest of criminals and the upholding of justice.

The theme of national security links with issues of terrorism, immigration, religion and xenophobia. The sense of "us" is reiterated in the war against terrorists who are represented by others and immigrants. This trope works to confirm national unity and to evoke a sense of national sentiment among domestic audiences. For example, Joy (2014) notes in *Line of Duty* terrorism is closely tied to the use of Muslim and ethnic stereotypes. The function is to justify, as Joy remarks, national policy on terrorism. Harrington (2007) observes that through management of individual crimes in *CSI*, national security is reassured. Scenes of immigrant workers in *Wallander*, as Peacock (2011) remarks, show the sentiment of xenophobia, presenting immigrants as invading

and undermining national solidarity.

In addition to the above themes, Harrington (2007) identifies science as being given a significant emphasis in *CSI* in a manner that reaffirms national identity. He even proposes that the portrayal of the science of DNA in the series serves to diminish terrorism-related identity anxieties by representing science and technology as tools for clearly identifying individuals. It is through this technology, Harrington remarks, that America is re-secured and national identity is strengthened.

Joy (2014) concludes that crime series mirror national concerns and reflect the social and institutional framework through which social problems are represented, and thus help to articulate a sense of imagined community. Harrington (2007) draws the conclusion that the national identity is presented as in the quest for justice in society and affirmed through the management of individual criminal cases. Peacock (2011) closes his discussion by pointing out that contexts articulated in *Wallander* are politically immersed, raising questions about the local and global, the private and public, and national characteristics.

The three crime series in the sample engage with national concerns and broad socio-political frameworks that both propagandize national ideology and articulate nationhood. Viewers are encouraged to reflect on problems happening within national borders, the result of which is a maintaining of imagined community. British nationalism and Swedish nationalism as represented in *Line of Duty* and *Wallander* respectively carries the characteristics of vernacular nationalism described by Anderson in the sense that they access nationalism from the viewpoint of populism, criticizing existing institutional dynamics, and indicating future ways for national development. American nationalism in *CSI* likewise echoes Anderson's American model insofar as in the series, national confidence, myths, and independence promoted through the guise of science and

technological development countering threats of crime and terrorism.

The sample also contains three articles that report on horror series that address issues of national identity: (i) the Welsh series *Torchwood* which revolves around detectives dealing with aliens and monsters in Welsh countryside (Williams, 2011); (ii) the Danish series *Riget* (Peacock, 2009); and (iii) the American series *Kingdom Hospital* (Peacock, 2009). The former and the latter both tell the story of supernatural phenomenon happening in a hospital.

The common themes identified in the authors' analyses of national identity are national concerns and cultural markers. In the Williams's (2011) and Peacock's (2009) articles, national concerns were identified as revolving around the position of the nation in the world, and how the nation chooses to move into the future. This type of portrayal encourages people to reflect on the nation and themselves and in doing so contributes to generating a sense of nationhood.

Williams (2011) reports that in *Torchwood*, national concerns are manifest in the division between city and countryside. He observes that in this series countryside is depicted as impoverished, uncultured, and technologically inhibited. This stands in stark contrast to the scenes of skyscrapers and prosperity in city. For Williams, this division alludes to ever present tensions between Wales and the U.K. It is this discussion, he notes, that closely ties the series with the issue of national identity. For Peacock (2009), *Riget*, elucidates Danish national concerns over national collectivism, with the latter presented in the series as being compromised by globalization, regionalization and, especially, pan-European community. In line with these concerns, he finds that in *Kingdom Hospital* American national concerns revolve around the United States' role on the global stage.

In terms of national culture, both the authors refer to its engagement with national identity by encapsulating national language, national history and popular culture. According to Williams

(2011), in *Torchwood* national language is given special emphasis in distinguishing the national us from them insofar as rural Wales differentiates itself from the urban in the language and accent – i.e., the ruralised Welsh speaking community, and city dwellers English-speaking. In *Riget*, national culture is represented through people’s interactions, the musical score, and the national infrastructure; all of which functions to construct distinctive Danish community (Peacock 2009). Likewise, in *Kingdom Hospital* American national culture is represented by national brands, popular culture, and popular celebrities. This, Peacock notes, raises questions about popular culture being the principal signifier of cultural identity.

Williams (2011) also reports politics being mentioned in *Torchwood* insofar as corruption, selfish officials, and institutional imperatives are presented in a manner that is contradictory to the representation of nationhood and Welshness. Peacock (2009) explores national identity in *Riget* through the lens of community construction, which refers to physical and spiritual connection between people. He finds that physical connection including embrace and greeting signals encouraging the development of unity in the community. Meanwhile spiritual connection characterized as the communication between physical bodies and ghosts explained by Peacock as connecting Denmark’s past and present. In *Kingdom Hospital*, romanticism engages with moral perfectionism, self-reflection, self-education in a manner that, Peacock claims, contributes to the discussion of American nationhood and national identity. For example, the transcendentalism of oneself expressed by the wounded artists in the process of creation is interpreted by Peacock as leading people to reflect on America itself. Peacock also notes that individual experience is linked with the nation to encourage consideration of national soul, to restore national faith and to rejuvenate national spirit.

Both authors confirm the close relationship between the horror series they analyze and

national identity. Williams (2011) proposes that *Torchwood* engages people to think about the meaning of being British and Welsh, offering an opportunity to construct and critique the issue of national identity. Peacock (2009) concludes that *Riget* concentrates primarily on national concerns, working to maintain national identity under the threat of Europeanisation. He sees *Kingdom Hospital*, on the other hand, as focusing on global contexts so as to raise questions about America's role in the world and true American spirit in a manner that seeks to consolidate national identity.

With regard to horror series, the horror itself comes from concerns rooted in people's minds. It reflects on social problems in a terrifying way so as to draw people into considering the nation itself. Welsh and Danish nationalism as presented in the series focus on local community and speaking for the people. This resonates with vernacular nationalism. From Peacock's observation, we can find characteristics of American nationalism embedded in global vision as showed in *Kingdom Hospital*.

Five articles examining national identity through history series were also in the sample: (i) *The Promise*, which tells of the operation of the UK in Palestine after World War II (McElroy, 2013); (ii) *the Rise of the Great Powers*, which is a Chinese series examining the rise of nine powerful countries in the world – Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, the USA and Japan (Cao, 2010); (iii) *Story of Wales*, which focus on exhibiting national artefacts (Blandford & McElroy, 2013); (iv) *Here to Stay*, which concentrates on the history of integration of diverse minority communities into New Zealand (Fresno-Calleja, 2016); (v) *the Heritage Minutes*, which give one minute lessons about key moments and people in Canadian history, and *Canada: A People's History* introduces Canada's entire history (West, 2002).

In analyzing national identity and nationalism, the authors of these five articles engage with themes of narrative and collective memory. According to West (2002), narratives endow national

events with national significance because the ideological force rooted in narrative organizes history in a way that accounts for peoples' contribution to the nation. Blandford and McElroy (2013) note that in the *Story of Wales* narrative is combined with national artefacts and national achievements to lend credence to the Welsh history. They observe that the narrator in the series is Welsh-speaking, conveying the significance of historical artefacts such as the presentation of the first Act of Union document, which established the relationship between Wales and England. For Blandford and McElroy such objects, as well as accounts of the wealth from the past, raise the question of being Welsh and of the construction of Wales.

*Here to Stay*, the historical series analyzed by Fresno-Calleja (2016), focuses on the contribution of different ethnic groups to New Zealand society. He notes that each episode starts by combining archival footage with a recounting of the history of early minority immigrants; a journey filled with racism and discrimination. The journey is directed to the present achievements, where all people despite ethnicity live in harmony or as Fresno-Calleja refers to it, unity in diversity. Narrative also is central to Cao (2010)'s analysis of *the Rise of the Great Powers*. What he finds particularly striking is the series' substituting of the historical narrative of 'China as victim' in relation with western countries, with a focus on constructing a positive image of the west. To this end, the series attributes the successful rise of western nations to the interplay between strong political leaders and the rule of law. According to Cao (2010), the presenting of strong political leaders as central to achieving nation success, can be interpreted as a means of justifying an authoritarian polity in China. Cao also notes that despite the rule of law being presented in the series as a key facet of modernization, it is rarely mentioned in reference to constraining leaders from abusing powers, or in reference to upholding democratic ideals. The use of narrative in this manner, Cao points out, functions to ensure the political legitimacy of the Chinese polity and places

an onus on economic growth.

McElroy (2013)'s examination of *the Promise* centers on narrative in the telling of Britain's contested imperial history. Central to this series are two protagonists, a soldier who was deployed to Palestine in 1945, and his granddaughter who travels to Palestine with his grandfather's diary in present-day. This narrative connects the past to the present with transforming images between Israel as a conflict zone and the Israel the granddaughter meets through images of the holocaust, the concentration camps and the present society. Taken together, these images serve to draw people into considering the truths of history and the validity of British military operation in this area.

In the *Heritage Minutes* and *Canada: A People's History*, narrative presents itself through journalistic storytelling and multicultural perspective to provide credible and direct accounts of history (West, 2002). West claims that the narrative used organizes historical events based on their contributions to the construction of contemporary Canada in a manner that directly connects the country's past to its present. In so doing, the narrative offers a sense of national destiny and helps to ensure continuity of the imagined community. West (2002) describes collective memory as connecting people to each other, enhancing national cohesion and maintaining nationhood. To this end, the series centers on national events, national heroes and national grief to evoke national pride, to ignite people's responsibility and unity towards the nation. West claims that the evoking of collective memory in this manner induces people to carry on with the obligation to further national destiny.

Collective memory also is manifest in the *Story of Wales* with the throwback on Tudor dynasty. This scene according to Blandford and McElroy (2013) draws people to think about the Welshness of the past, a time that was seen as a great Welsh triumph by people across Wales, and raise the question of the contestable nature of Welshness. In contrast the *Rise of the Great Powers*

chooses to ignore facets of collective memory such as the Opium war and unequal treaties with western countries. Instead it underlines western countries' venture to acquire wealth and power (Cao 2010). According to Cao, this approach serves to bolster national confidence and justify national policies as chasing national rejuvenation. As for the use of collective memory in for *Here to Stay*, Fresno-Calleja (2016) contend it is used in a manner that cultivates national identity through the reference to the construction of multiculturalism in New Zealand. They further argue that incursion into the demographic changes and personal suffering over the past decades, in contrast to the present New Zealand society, tends to articulate the importance of diverse ethnic communities and functions to propagandize the hardship of achieving unity in diversity – i.e., all ethnic groups in New Zealand share one same identity as “New Zealander”. McElroy (2013) suggest that in *the Promise*, collective memory is played out through the WWII footage of such things as piles of corpses, desperate survivors, and the inhumane treatment of Jews by British soldiers. He maintains that these images challenge the perfect morality of Britain and ignite people's reflection on the past and present society, generating a sense of national responsibility.

In sum, the authors of these history-centric five articles confirm the close relationship between national history, national identity and nationalism. Blandford and McElroy (2013) confirms the role of national history in the construction of national identity, crucially when the legitimacy of the government is under question. Welsh history, considered by Blandford and McElroy as a story of change, functions to entail the nation to get confidence and move on. Fresno-Calleja (2016) argues that despite working to promote national identity among a vast audience through the depiction of different communities' integration and contribution of immigrants to New Zealand, the ethnic stereotypes manifest in *Here to Stay* undermines the effect of this effort. This said, McElroy (2013) acknowledges that *the Promise* contributes to debates on national identity

by drawing people into considering truths of histories while evoking the responsibility towards the nation, which articulates imagined community. According to Cao (2010), national history offers a site for contestation over national development issues and manipulates mass support for present political administration and polity. Meanwhile West (2002) proposes that national history is crucial to the unity of Canada in the sense that it grapples with the issue of separatism that haunts Canada for years. He also contends that the representation of national achievements is expected to elicit national pride and to mobilize people to act in national interests.

Historical series can be an endeavor of the government to construct national history in national interest. It serves to provide unity and motivation to the nation when its polity comes under question. To the end, national moments and national heroes are organised in their contribution to the nation today, through which the destiny of the nation is produced. This chronological narrative defines people as descendant of the imagined community in order to hold every person accountable for the continuity of the nation. It is in this way that national history is remembered, the imagined community is articulated, and national identity is strengthened.

Welsh nationalism as presented by Blandford & McElroy (2013) takes on characteristics of European nationalism with its preoccupation on national development from the perspective of national intellectuals. New Zealand nationalism as described by Fresno-Calleja (2016) can also be categorized as vernacular nationalism in the sense that it involves with national concerns about multiculturalism, a phenomenon referred to in Anderson's explanation of European nationalism. Chinese nationalism as set out by Cao (2010) corresponds with official nationalism as it acts towards the will of the governments. British nationalism as manifest in *The Promise* and interpreted by McElroy (2013) tends to respond to vernacular nationalism in the way that it rediscovers national past that was barely referred to in the national discourse. This past draws

people to reflect on the nation and national spirits it claims to uphold. Canadian nationalism resonates with European nationalism in the sense that it focuses on mining the national past to interpret the present and concentrate on the national us.

Six articles in the sample dealt with national identity and nationalism as manifest in drama series. They are: (i) *A Country Practice*, which describes the daily life of people living in a small town in Australia (Joyce, 1999); (ii) *Seachange*, which tells the story of a divorced woman who finds a new life for herself in a coastal Australian town (Grech, 2001); (iii) *Sara*, the story of a young Flemish woman who strives to succeed in the fashion industry (Adriaens & Biltereyst, 2012); (iv) *Raw*, which depicts a group of people working in an Irish restaurant (Tobin & Neville, 2001); (v) *Patria Minha*, the story of a Brazilian couple who returns to Brazil after having lived in the United States, and *O Rei do Gado* which presents two Italian families in Brazil (Porto, 2011); and (vi) *Hanoians*, the story of an army couple with their daughter living in Hanoi, and *The City Stories* which involves the story of family conflicts around an old colonial house (Nguyen-Thu, 2014).

One common theme across all six articles is collective memory. The underlining rationale for emphasizing collective memory is the notion that national identity is advanced through the articulation of common values and cultural practice. For instance, Joyce (1999) and Grech (2001) suggest this is exemplified in *A Country Practice* and *Seachange* insofar as both series present Australian culture through stereotypes and multiculturalism. Joyce (1999) notes that in *A Country Practice*, images of familiar symbols such as natural disasters, farms, animals, games, romance, fashions, families help to evoke typical impressions of Australian society and to articulate Australian-ness. Joyce (1999) also mentions that the series portrayal of people in a small town with courage to stand up for the weak serves to construct typical sense of Australian community. Grech (2001) contends that the use of natural disasters, the representation of a multicultural

community and immigrants, as well as the conventional notions of expressing emotions in *Seachange* functions as both a reminder of collective memory of Australian society and social codes, and to facilitate the construction of national identity.

Adriaens and Biltreyst (2012) suggest that in *Sara* cultural symbols, national stereotypes and traditional culture are presented as mechanisms for exploring Flemish identity. They maintain that national stereotypes such as mentality and morality contribute to constructing imagined community and promoting discourse of national identity. To this end, Adriaens and Biltreyst (2012) argue that the producers of *Sara* draw on familiar symbols Flemish life and situations including Flemish language, Flemish names, national landscape, Flemish actors, national products, and beauty standards to enhance national identity by portraying a credible image of Flemish life and community. In his examination *O Rei do Gado*, Porto (2011) observes that collective culture as represented in this Brazilian series revolves around the traditional political culture of mistrusts towards politics and politicians. Tobin & Neville (2001) likewise find that in *RAW*, Irish community is informed and represented through the use of cultural stereotypes of both Irish and foreigners. They identify three clear examples of this. First, the portrayal of non-Irish characters as silenced others or as symbols of seduction and transgression. Second, the contrast of soft Irish masculine to the immigrants' hegemonic masculine. Third, the portray of all homosexual characters as non-Irish immigrants. Together, these elements create dichotomy between us and them, thereby reiterating Irishness. Nguyen-Thu (2014) notes that in *Hanoians* the nostalgia for virtues and heroes of Vietnam War recalls the collective memory of the past in an effort to criticize contemporary politics, while in *The City Stories* Vietnamese nationalism is embedded in references to traditional spirits and ethics. The traditional spirits, referred to as distinct oriental culture, functions to bolster confidence in national culture, and to justify political and economic policies

of the nation in the time of capitalism.

Other national identity and nationalism themes identified in the six articles dealing with drama series are rooted in the portrayal of social concerns and national achievements. Joyce (1999) suggests that the manner in which the issue of disabilities is raised in *A Country Practice* serves as a means of engaging people in public discussion and political participation. Adriaens and Biltreyst (2012) argue that despite its objective of shying away from class difference so as to promote an image of Flemish society with which everyone can identify *Sara* actually generates a hegemonic discourse of Flemish society that is signified by middle-class values. Porto (2011) observes that both *Patria Minha* and *O Rei do Gado* focus on the unequal social and economic structures and involve discussions about social campaigns to fight poverty, and social movements by marginalized groups. Porto (2011) suggests that this enables the two series to function as a public space where people engage in political agenda and contribute to social reforms. Porto (2011) further contends that by representing national development in Brazil and a renewed national identity, a sense of national confidence is evoked towards the future of the country. Tobin & Neville (2001) focus on the cosmopolitanism of Irish society, pointing out that by promoting a modern, multicultural, secular, liberal image of Irish society, Irishness is endowed with new representations.

In conclusion, Joyce (1999) proposes that by focusing on stereotypical Australian characteristics, *A Country Practice* offers audiences an Australian-ness with which everyone can identify. Grech (2001) likewise maintains that *Seachange* engages conventional social codes by articulating a sense of who we are, writing that reflections of everyday reality helps to promote the sense of national identity. According to Adriaens and Biltreyst (2012), the banal nationalism present in the portrayal of Flemish society in *Sara* aims to enhance Flemish national identity. For them, the symbolic images involved in the series entail general identification with the intended

audience in a way that contributes to constructing discourses of imaged community. Porto (2011) remarks on the effects of symbolic representation in evoking the sentiments of national identity in Brazil insofar as national identity is negotiated and constructed through reference to common experience of social life. Tobin and Neville (2001) likewise comment on the symbolic representation of Irish life in *RAW*, criticizing the series for reducing multiculturalism to a process of othering that, in turn, functions to propagandize the national 'us'. Nguyen-Thu (2014) concentrate on collective memory in informing nationalism, acknowledging the role of popular television in the formation of national belonging in the two Vietnamese series.

Banal nationalism is the most cited model that was used by authors in addressing the construction of national identity in dramas. All the articles identified in the review engaged with symbolic representations of the cultural, political, social and natural experiences of the nation to remind audiences of everyday life. Daily routines, social interactions, social conventions comprise collective memory of a community. These representations become the landscape on which nationalism is reconstructed, renegotiated and reiterated in the TV series examined by the articles in the sample. Among the six drama-centric articles reviewed, Brazilian and Vietnamese nationalism carries obvious characteristics of colonial nationalism brought about by Anderson in the sense that both involved comparisons with western countries to approve national achievements. The portrayals of Flemish, Australian and Irish nationalism tended to feature European nationalism since they focus more on national concerns, national future, and seeks for general support from people.

There were five articles in the sample addressing national identity within the frame of comedy. The TV series examined in these articles are: (i) *The Office*, depicts lives of employees in an American company (Griffin, 2008); (ii) *What a Week*, focuses on Basque life (Larrea, 2012);

(iii) *Turkish for Beginners (TfA)* and *Everybody Loves Jimmy (AIJ)* portray lives in Turkish-German families (Zambon, 2017); (iv) *Nodame Cantabile*, is the story of a group of Japanese musical students with a German conductor in an orchestra in Japan (Perkins, 2010); (v) *Little Mosque on the Prairie* tells the story of Muslim community residing in the small town in Canada, and *Trailer Park Boys* deals with the lives of young men living in a trailer park in Halifax (Byers, 2011).

Among the five articles, four authors engage the theme of stereotypes in the examination of national identity. On one hand stereotypes appeal to audiences in the sense that they meet peoples' expectations. On the other hand, stereotypes function to highlight the dichotomy between us and them, to differentiate us from them and to promote identification with a specific community. As Griffin (2008) observes with regard to *The Office*, stereotypical references to employees of color, peoples' accents, and peoples' appearances are all used as resources for humor. Larrea (2012) notes that in *What a Week* Basqueness is portrayed through the depiction of stereotypes of Basque people as being simple, hardworking, serious, professional and brave, who speak Basque language, enjoy Basque cultural products and dress. Larrea contends that this broad portrayal of Basqueness, which ranges from peoples' cultural tastes to individual characteristics, marks an effort to contribute to constructing Basque national identity. According to Zambon (2017), the description of Turkish people in *AIJ* as being rebellious, conservative, hegemonic masculine and religious are typical stereotypes of Turkishness. He is critical of this depiction because it fails to evoke national identity among minorities while reinforcing and naturalizing differences between groups. Perkins (2010) notes that in *Nodame Cantabile*, Europe is casted as traditional, cultured, serious and professional whereas the image of Japan is one of relaxing, freestyle and filled with popular culture. In addition, he also observes that the version of Japanese life portrayed in the series with its

traditional Japanese food and wine, casual clothes, and packed streets stands in stark contrast to European life characterized by traditional French food and wine, suits, spacious western style house. This contrast according to Perkins serves to highlight cultural boundary and provide audience with national identification.

The themes of social concern and shared culture are examined by four of the comedy-focused articles in the sample. Embedded in these themes are the cultural difference between nations. The reflection on real society, as well as the attitude and actions of people towards specific events articulates national ideology and reminds people of the community in which they live. American social concerns are evident in references to race, sexual harassment, and a national health plan in *The Office*. According to Griffin (2008) the latter contributes to distinguishing between the American and British versions of the series. He also points out that the descriptions of national landscape, language differences, beauty standards, multiculturalism, popular culture references, and business corporations in the series works to underscore American culture and to reinforce American identity.

As noted above, Larrea (2012) points out that in *What a Week* Basque national identity is constructed through the articulation of social concerns and common culture. The former is mentioned through references to localized events including political and economic situations, public service, education system and housing. The latter is manifest through the portrayal of everyday life (i.e., food, fashion, language, social changes) in a manner that contributes to the enhancement of nationhood. According to Zambon (2017), in the case of Germany, social concerns center on religion and gender roles. He observes that concerns about religion focus specifically on Islam. Whereas in *AlJ*, the portrayal of Muslim departs from the prevailing picture where they are related to terrorism, extremists, warmonger. On the contrary, they are characterized as secular,

modern and normal religion practitioners, who value intercultural negotiation with woman. This depiction, according to Zambon, offers an opportunity for a majority of Germans to participate in the intercultural communication, as well as providing the minority with the possibility of identification and to promote national integrity. As for Japan, Perkins (2010) notes that the Japanese-ness is manifest through national landscape, social life and common values, which differentiate its community with other communities. In the case of Canada, social concerns are represented through the reference to racist history, religion identity, white supremacy, class conflicts between the poor and the rich (Byers, 2011). Byers contends that it leads people to reflect on Canadian-ness, raising the question of the formation of the community.

Based on the analyses presented above, it seems plausible to conclude that comedy series play a role in the construction of national identity. According to Griffin (2008), the remaking of *The Office* by Americanizing the workplace, characters, conversations underscores the enhancement of national identity insofar as the narrative tropes used reiterate national discourse, national culture, and national values. These discourses build up a sense of close relationship with fellow members in the community and thus articulate the sense of imagined community. Larrea (2012) maintains that *What a Week* projects the modern view of national identity by reflecting on Basque social changes under the influence of globalization. Zambon (2017) praises *TfA* and *AIJ* for providing a chance for intercultural understanding between Germans and minorities, and also appreciates their efforts towards the integrity of German society. However, he criticizes the use of stereotypes as humor resource, arguing that this irony highlights racial difference, and contributes to alienating us from them, which restrains the minority from fostering national belonging. Perkins (2010) concludes that in *Nodame Cantabile*, the representation of the western as otherness in contrast with Japanese-ness highlights cultural difference and national boundaries, which also

operates to confirm national belonging. Byers (2011) remarks that both *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and *Trailer Park Boys* reiterate the notion of Canadian-ness through the inclusion of marginalized region and people while covering over issues of colonization, white supremacy and racial discrimination.

From the way these authors explore national identity in comedies, we can surmise that most humor in the examined programs comes from stereotypes of nations. Such scenes are often intertwined with everyday situations including food, relationships, fashion and communications. Such tropes, the authors claim, operate as reiterations of nationhood and imagined community. It is through the constant reference of ordinary life that national identity is maintained and articulated.

Basque nationalism as propagandized in the series tends to echo with Anderson's notion of European nationalism insofar as it features populist ideologies that stand for the interests of ordinary people. Japanese nationalism reflected in the series carries characteristics of colonial nationalism defined by Anderson in the sense that it constrained the assessment of Japan within the comparison with western countries to confirm recognition and to build up confidence. This constant juxtaposition implies Japan's colonial mind. Lastly, Canadian nationalism presented in the series resonates with vernacular nationalism proposed by Anderson, since it covers issues that the nation wishes to forget, and simultaneously features the narrative of national integration. In terms of America and Germany, their series fail to produce distinguishable nationalism that fits into any nationalism type suggested by Anderson.

## **5. Conclusion**

The meaning and significance of national identity has been debated among scholars for years. Apart from tending to be associated with warmongering, its strength lies in creating bonds of unity

among members and enacting voluntary behaviors of citizen (Li & Brewer, 2004). This research paper began by asking about contemporary understanding of the ways in which TV series foster national identity. Based on the foregoing discussion, the following answers can be offered:

Firstly, the contribution of TV series to the formation of national identity is upheld by the evidence advanced in the twenty-four studies comprising the research sample. TV series offer people with a public sphere of sorts in which the issue of national belonging and national identity can be presented, discussed and reiterated. Although there are various ways of representing the national community in TV series, all the representation described in the sampled studies function to strengthen nationhood and national identity. The themes identified in the systematic review as being used by authors in their analysis of the construction of national identity in TV series falls into categories concluded by Anderson (2006), Smith (1991), Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) and Billig (2010). As already indicated in the findings, different genres engage with different themes in the authors' analysis of national identity. Collective memory and shared culture reiterated by Anderson, Smith, Gellner, Hobsbawm and Billig are themes that were found to be most widely referred to in the case analysis. Other themes identified by Anderson, Smith, Gellner, Hobsbawm and Billig including social structure, social organization, social change, economic progress, politics and popular culture are also applied in the case analysis.

Secondly, authors of different genres access national identity from different perspectives. In this regard, the analysis of history series focus more on recalling collective memory to remind people of the continuity of the community, while dramas concentrate more on banal nationalism through depiction of daily routines to promote the conception of imagined community. As for comedies, authors find out that they take advantage of stereotypes to further consolidate the dichotomy between "us" and "them". Meanwhile, the interpretation of horror, crime and political

series primarily are concerned with national concerns and national security aiming to legalize national policy and consolidate the legitimacy of the government.

Thirdly, as the findings suggest that the understanding of the construction of national identity in TV series follows the path of Anderson (2006), Smith (1991), Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) and Billig (2010). However, through the systematic review, the importance of narratives and production of TV series, including narrators, characters, sequence of plots, storylines, also becomes evident. The latter endow TV series with different leverage to promote national identity.

Fourthly, in terms of Anderson's four types of nationalism, it is difficult for them to fit in each nation state in the sense that the factors identified by Anderson are products of an earlier time. With the development of technology and globalization, new media and new situations have arisen, challenging traditional ways of communicating and notions of identity. This new situation entangles with political and social organization and changes the way to define nation in the new era.

This said, it must be acknowledged that the findings of this major research paper are limited by the cases available to the researcher. The cases sampled focus on only a few episodes of the series, which might overlook other factors that flag national identity. Despite this limitation, almost half of the cases are from Europe countries. No TV series from African countries were engaged in the paper. This reduces the breadth of the analysis of nationalism in nation-states.

TV series are not the only way through which national identity is propagandized and enhanced. And, the construction of national identity is more than merely the presence of cultural symbols of one nation within the narrative of the society. The complex nature of nationalism requires in-depth analysis, and external factors such as political, economic and social reality must

be taken into account.

With regional and international conflicts spring up worldwide, nationalism will continue to be reserved as an important way to evoke national sentiments against other countries in defense of national interests. The issue of nationalism remains resolutely at the forefront of communication study.

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