UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

University of Bath

Everyday Nationalism: Constructivism for the Masses*

J. Paul Goode, *University of Bath*

David R. Stroup, *University of Oklahoma*

Objective. We argue that the "everyday nationalism" approach is both useful and necessary for improving existing constructivist approaches in the comparative study of nationalism and ethnic politics. *Methods.* A meta-analysis of existing studies reveals pervasive conceptual and methodological problems of contemporary constructivist approaches. We consider the implications of replacing individuals or groups with ethnic or nationalist practices as units of analysis. *Results.* Everyday nationalism promises to address the gap between constructivist theory and the methodological individualism of existing studies. This approach proceeds from ethnographic observation and utilizes methods reliant on observing societal interaction or relational meaning making for verification. We illustrate such a research strategy using examples of nationalist legitimation in authoritarian regimes and the ethnicization of economic development. *Conclusion.* The everyday nationalism approach promises to overcome the shortcomings in much contemporary constructivist work. The potential for developing qualitative data sets of nationalist or ethnic practices further promises to complement constructivist insights.

Over the last 25 years, the comparative study of nationalism and ethnic politics in the social sciences witnessed something of a renaissance. A new generation of scholars advanced research agendas concerning nationalist mobilization (Beissinger, 2002), ethnic parties and patronage (Chandra, 2004), ethnic institutions (Posner, 2005; Lieberman, 2009), ethnic conflict and civil wars (Varshney, 2002; Wilkinson, 2004; Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, 2010), and democratization (Snyder, 2000; Stroschein, 2012). In decisively breaking with primordial assumptions about ethnicity and nationality as a function of descent, this new literature formed creative linkages with related work on social movements, social and political institutions, social psychology, cognitive science, and international relations. This intellectual ferment found infrastructural support for scholarship in the founding (and revival) of new academic journals, scholarly organizations, degree-granting programs, and inclusion in standard disciplinary curricula. Yet the depth and success of these efforts also cast into sharp relief the gaps, omissions, and opportunities in the field: in brief, the masses remain something of a mystery.

That the study of ethnic and nationalist politics would be challenged by the incorporation of mass society into analysis is surprising, given the widespread scholarly acceptance of the constructivist paradigm. In broad terms, constructivists hold that power is both ideational and material, and that interests and identities are constituted through intersubjective

meanings, in turn created through varieties of social interaction. Constructivism thus bears a holist rather than an individualist ontology in which context necessarily precedes agency (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). Early constructivists in the study of nationalism focused on the roles of modernity and the state in fleshing out the shape and sense of nationhood (Anderson, 2006; Deutsch, 1966; Gellner, 1965; Hobsbawm, 1992; Smith, 1998). In his famous formulation, Anderson (2006) describes the nation as a product of changes in dynastic and religious authority and the spread of vernacular languages through print capitalism, resulting in communities whose members imagine the nation to be both finite and sovereign. However, as social scientists pushed past questions of ethnic and national origins to attempt generalizations about the uses and manipulations of identity, their analyses retreated to forms of methodological individualism in focusing on elites, ethno-preneurs, and individual agency. Correspondingly, the constructed nature of identities became bound to state and political institutions as regulating the conditions for actors to challenge or manipulate identity categories to achieve mobilizational or distributional outcomes. However, the concern for modeling and explaining individual (elite) decision making has meant that the responsiveness of ethnic masses to elite cues (or, for that matter, their relationship to the origins of those cues) is largely inferred from political outcomes or from survey data. The actual processes of meaning making and the exercise of vernacular power that are constitutive of social identities remain veiled, with the result being that there is an uncomfortable silence concerning large questions that are common objects of ethnic and nationalist politics and that are of central and perpetual concern to the social sciences.

If the academic study of nationalism has so far succeeded in converting masses into agents and ethno-preneurs, it is time to consider how one might reverse the process. In order to put the masses back into the picture, we argue that constructivist approaches would benefit from further development of the "everyday nationalism" approach. This approach focuses less on elites and institutions than on the quotidian practices by which ethnic and national identities are elaborated, confirmed, reproduced, or challenged. In the first part of this article, we discuss four distinct problems faced by existing approaches to ethnic and nationalist politics: the invisibility of dominant ethnicities, an inattentiveness to legitimation, an excessive institutionalism in explanations, and the persistence of methodological nationalism. The second half of the article suggests ways that an everyday nationalism approach can address these problems, using the examples of nationalist legitimacy in authoritarian regimes and the ethnicization of economic development. Finally, we address the range of benefits of such an approach for extending our understanding of ethnic and nationalist politics, including the potential for developing qualitative databases of ethnic and nationalist practices for comparative analysis.

Blind Spots, Gaps, and Gaffes in Constructivist Approaches

While the "constructivist turn" produced useful insights about the nature of ethnicity, it remains vulnerable to blind spots and shortcomings often associated with the study of nationalism and ethnic politics. We identify four distinct challenges faced by constructivist studies today. First, the current state of the study of nationalism displays a certain degree of intellectual path dependence in remaining principally focused on ethnic minorities, minority ethnic mobilization, and accommodating ethnic minorities. By contrast, ethnic majorities are surprisingly understudied. This is perhaps a consequence of the tendency to associate ethnic politics with ethnic diversity.[1] These objects of study are determined in

---

[1] As discussed in the contribution to this issue by K. Marquardt and Y. Herrera.

part by real-world demands—including ongoing attempts to manage ethnic relations in Afghanistan and Iraq, or to describe the rise of separatist movements in Scotland, Quebec, and Catalonia—and partly by the field's theoretical consensus that constructivist approaches are most appropriate for analyzing ethnic change and nationalist politics. These approaches all share a common structural feature in their selection of cases as each deals with conditions of ethnic diversity. This might also be seen as a function of the "constructivist consensus" in the field insofar as constructivist approaches understand ethnic identity as a particular set of social phenomena that bind individuals to groups, conjure convincing attachments to "groupness," and observe interactions across ethnic boundaries (Brubaker, 2004; Chandra, 2012; Eriksen, 2002; Wimmer, 2013). Rather than treating ethnic identities as independent variables, constructivist approaches problematize identities as ever-changing outcomes, constrained by the range of available identity repertoires and varying principally in terms of the frequency and speed of change.

The field's focus on accounting for changes and modalities of ethnic identities therefore presumes social worlds in which minorities and majorities reflect distributions of, and differential access to, discursive and material power. For social scientists who study ethnic politics and nationalism, minority ethnic movements are easier to identify and observe precisely because they seek to expose inequitable power relations and to mobilize support through frames of injustice. To the extent that the existing literature addresses ethnic majorities, it tends to do so with reference to relations with (or accommodation of) ethnic minorities. In rare instances, it focuses on intraethnic conflict over the definition of group boundaries or the content of group identities.[2] For the majority of the field, however, ethnic majorities tend to fade from view, forming more of a background condition that structures minority ethnic politics (Kaufmann, 2004).

A related factor that tends to obscure the politics of ethnic majorities involves the persistence of the distinction between civic and ethnic nations in the literature. This distinction has its origins in the 20th-century study of nationalism, most often attributed to Kohn's ([1994] 2005) examination of Western and Eastern varieties of nationalism and later by Michael Ignatieff's *Blood and Belonging* (1993). In brief, civic (or sometimes "political" or "territorial") nationalism defines national loyalties in terms of the state's territory and institutions. National identity is rendered as a matter of choice, exemplified by Renan's ([1882] 1994) claim that "the nation is an everyday plebiscite." This aspect of choice and the apparently neutral means of identifying the nation in terms of territory and institutions also collapse the distinction between nationality and citizenship, nationalism and patriotism, and state and nation. As a result, "civic nations" are portrayed as inherently inclusive, tolerant, and pluralistic.

By contrast, "ethnic nations" are defined by primordial ties—most often in terms of (perceived) common descent or kinship. Ethnic identity is not a matter of choice. Individuals do not define their national identities in relation to state institutions and territory. Rather, ethnic nationalists define individuals as irretrievably national, depriving individuals of choice and demanding that state institutions empower ethnic groups and recognize them as autonomous or sovereign nations. Ethnic nationalism is, therefore, understood in opposition to civic nationalism in presenting a form of national identification that is exclusive, intolerant, and tends toward authoritarian politics.

The civic-ethnic distinction is more an artifice of academic reasoning than lived experience. Virtually every country today enshrines a civic definition of the nation in its

---

[2]Millier-Idriss (2009), for example, examines how German national identity is contested across generational lines.

constitution or institutionally in the form of citizenship and naturalization policy. This in-stitutionalized categorization of the nation nevertheless runs counter to citizens' day-to-day experience in which ethnicity and ethnic understandings of the nation are constantly (if unevenly) activated. In other words, civic and ethnic concepts of the nation exist alongside one another—nobody experiences the nation as wholly civic or ethnic—while the degree to which people find them meaningful may be a matter of historical contingency, relational dynamics, or political opportunity. As Yack suggests in his well-known critique of Ignatieff, the embrace of civic definitions of the nation may blind one to the extent to which ethnic identification operates beneath the level of awareness:

> It may have been easier to establish a liberal democratic regime in East Germany by integrating it into an already functioning and wealthy liberal democracy such as the Federal Republic. But this option was not offered—or even contemplated by the Federal Republic to the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia or Poland or any other former Communist state. How can one explain the peculiar form of East Germany's transition from Communism without invoking the prepolitical community of shared memory and history that tied West to East Germans, a sense of community that led the former to single out the latter for special support and attention? (Yack, 1996:199)

Others argue that civic understandings of the nation reflect the outcomes of prior identity struggles, such that state institutions tend to privilege the victor's (typically the majority's) identity and interests as patriotic and universal rather than ethnic (Marx, 2003). The recognition of minority identities and interests as "ethnic" is, therefore, a reflection of power imbalances that pit minority claims grounded in ethnic particularity against the ethnic majority's putatively universal interests and categories of identification. Under such circumstances, attempts to cultivate "civic" (nonethnic) understandings of the nation in state practice as a means of accommodating ethnic minorities fundamentally miss the point.

Perhaps more worrisome is that the persistence of the civic-ethnic distinction shifts the focus of analysis to ethnic minorities while concealing the nationalist politics of ethnic majorities. The difficulty is that nationalism may become difficult to distinguish from sim-ple majority rule in democracies when majority ethnic or nationalist appeals are rendered as patriotism. In effect, the burden of observing ethnic majority nationalism is shifted to minority ethnic actors, who must demonstrate power imbalances and expose the conflu-ence of state policy with discriminatory majority ethnic interests. To the extent that this articulation is possible in relatively free and open regimes that extend legal protections and representation for minorities (or, at a minimum, the potential for obtaining such protections), it is far less likely to be observed in closed, authoritarian regimes in which representative bodies are rubber stamps and the open expression of minority ethnic interests and identities as distinct from that of the ethnic majority is closely monitored, ritualized, or even suppressed. In this important sense, one might add that the civic-ethnic distinction not only distracts attention from the operation of majority ethnic interests in the state, but it also shifts attention away from the influence of regime type on ethnic relations and the majority's nationalist politics.

Second, there has been little development in the study of nationalism in the Gellnerian sense as a doctrine of political legitimacy (Gellner, 1983). The current state of the art focuses not so much on nationalism as on ethnicity and ethnic politics, with constructivist approaches converging on the ways that individuals choose among identity repertoires, how those repertoires are institutionalized, and how ethnic boundaries or the sense of "group-ness" change. Nationalism is related to these aspects of ethnic politics only insofar as it is understood to be an "ethnic" nationalism—that is, related to ethnic boundaries or

identity (Chandra, 2012; Wimmer, 2013). More often than not, this means that the study of nationalism is limited to ethnic minorities rather than the (seemingly) "nonethnic" nationalism of contemporary ethnic majorities. In turn, the relationship of nationalism to legitimacy and legitimation of the state is framed as a historically specific question, connected with either the "golden age" of nationalism in the 19th century, the aggressively racist and fascist regimes of the early-to-middle 20th century, or the wave of anti-colonial and anti-Soviet movements of the middle-to-late 20th century. What these periods have in common is the self-conscious mobilization of the nation as a vehicle for claiming self-determination or defending sovereignty.

But nationalism does not stop at independence. If nationalism serves mobilizational purposes in the drive for self-determination and sovereignty, it also serves as a crucial source of legitimation for new regimes after mobilizational cycles (Barrington, 2006). New incumbents who ride to power on the back of nationalist movements must continue to claim to fulfill their obligations to the nation. To the extent that nationalist goals become indistinguishable from the state's interests, domestic and foreign policies of incumbents become rendered as patriotic or simply state-oriented (Breuilly, 1994:390). Certainly, there is awareness of nationalist actors' grievances concerning illegitimate distributions of power, but analysis of ethnic politics following independence or regime change remains principally focused on mobilization rather than legitimation. The classic works on ethnic outbidding concern attempts by ethnic parties and politicians to mobilize ethnic voters (and especially to mobilize ambivalent nonvoters to become ethnic voters) in postcolonial states (Horowitz, 2000; Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). The more recent work on voting and patronage follows in this tradition as well (Chandra, 2004; Koter, 2013; Posner, 2005). Studies of subnational politics in Russia predominantly focus on mobilization among ethnic republics (Gorenburg, 2003; Giuliano, 2011; Lankina, 2004; Treisman, 1997). By contrast, Snyder and Gagnon explore nationalists' strategies for keeping post-Communist publics *demobilized* to limit the extent of democratization (Gagnon, 2004; Snyder, 2000).

With few exceptions, there is little in the literature that addresses the relationship among nationalism, domestic political regimes (particularly authoritarian regimes), and legitimacy (Greenfeld, 1992; Mackerras, 2010; Goode, 2012). The extent to which nationalism serves to legitimate domestic political regimes is elided, perhaps, because we are more likely to interpret ethnic majorities' orientations toward state and regime in terms of patriotism. Given the pejorative connotation often attached to nationalism as separatism or a variety of extremism, it is not surprising that ethnic majorities would valorize their own nationalist appraisals of state and regime. If this is the case, however, treating nationalism as patriotism is to commit the error of treating categories of practice as categories of analysis (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:4–6).

Third, constructivists have been so preoccupied with explaining changes in ethnic identities and their interpretation of culturally constitutive practices in terms of institutionalized ethnic categories that they risk becoming a branch of institutionalist theory. This proclivity was found already in seminal constructivist works, including Anderson's famous account of the roles played by state institutions such as the census in consolidating national identities or social institutions such as the museum in codifying national histories (Anderson, 2006). The surge of interest in the "new institutionalism" in the social sciences in the 1990s played an important role as well (Harty, 2001). This was particularly evident in the many postmortems of Soviet ethno-federalism and its legacies in Europe and Eurasia (Brubaker, 1996; Bunce, 1999; Leff, 1999; Roeder, 1991). It continues in the study of ethnic parties

and patronage. As a result, models of change in ethnic identities closely parallel models of institutional change (for instance, see Mahoney and Thelen, 2010).[3]

The inheritance of institutionalized categories and repertoires continues to loom large in contemporary constructivist works. For example, Chandra's (2012) effort to bring coherence to constructivism posits that individuals choose identity categories (or combinations of identity attributes) that are available for activation. These attributes are determined partly by descent—that is, those attributes that an individual visibly possesses—and by institutional recognition. Hence, identities do not change so much as they are activated by individuals in a variety of combinations. However, identity repertoires (understood as the full range of available attributes or categories) change either by way of genetic change (slowly), or by way of institutional change through the designation, recombination, or reclassification of "operative" categories. The link between the ways individuals activate identities and changes in operative repertoires is asserted but never explained, leaving one to guess at the mechanism linking them together (Chandra, 2012:133). At root, then, Chandra's approach remains moored to institutionalist accounts even as it attempts to sidestep them and focus on individual agency.[4]

Constructivists' focus on explaining ethnic *change* has also meant that there are far fewer works that examine or seek to explain ethnic structures or the *stability* of national identities (Wimmer, 2013). No doubt this privileging of ethnic change in constructivist analysis owes a debt to the theoretical premise that identity is social-interactional and inheres in perceived and institutionalized difference. In this sense, constructivists continue their decades-long argument with primordialists and perennialists that ethnic and national identities are neither fixed nor premodern, long after primordialists and perennialists evolved into ethno-symbolists.[5] This focus and insistence upon the essence of identities as malleable and changing may be essential to understanding the emergence of constructivism and the intellectual history of the study of nationalism and ethnic politics, but arguably it also prevents constructivism from advancing beyond these basic observations concerning ethnic origins (that almost nobody disputes today).

In addition to this basic theoretical aspect, the focus on institutional dynamics to explain changes in identities may also be related to the demands and opportunities for observing change. Institutions and especially their organizational manifestations provide a wealth of opportunities for gathering data about identity categories—or, indeed, for gathering data about the ways states gather data.[6] And yet the gathering of such data tells us little about those identity categories that are stable and unchanging other than the banal conclusion that they are "institutionalized," or that such categories are resistant to change because they are institutionalized, or even that the frequency and speed of changes in identity categories are so slow as to be imperceptible.

Finally, the study of nationalism remains haunted by "methodological nationalism," insofar as it starts with (or assumes) known outcomes in the form of nations or ethnic identities that also serve simultaneously as units and levels of analysis (Wimmer and Glick

---

[3]Alternatively, it has focused on de-institutionalized processes of ethnic mobilization, conflict, and violence, drawing chiefly on insights from the social movements and contentious politics literature. But in this literature, ethnic identity is often reduced to little more than a resonant frame.

[4]To the extent that constructivist theories of nationalism remain tied to institutionalist approaches, they also tend to draw from cases that feature relatively open institutional environments that involve ethnic parties, voters, affirmative action policies, immigration, power sharing, or patronage. There are far fewer cases of studies of nationalism that examine authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes.

[5]On ethno-symbolism, see Smith (2009) and Grosby and Leoussi (2007).

[6]Examples of state-directed collection of data on ethnicity include state census, issuing internal passports that note the bearer's ethnicity, mandating that citizens register as members of ethnic groups, tracking immigration data as a proxy for ethnicity, or cataloging and categorizing ethnicity.

Schiller, 2002). This tendency also manifests in the ongoing slippery usage of terms such as "nation" or "ethnicity" and the temptation to refer to nations or ethnic groups as if they were unitary actors (Barrington, 1997; Breuilly, 1994:404–20; Connor, 1978; Millard, 2014). Both manifestations point to the ongoing hold of a "Herderian" ontology of a world inhabited by ethnic groups (Wimmer, 2013:16–43; Drakulic, 2011).

Fixating on the nation as both an outcome of nationalism and a unit of analysis runs the risk of turning scholars into unwitting nationalists. Believing the nation to be the essential building block of global society may lead scholars of nationalism to support indirectly the claims made on behalf of nationalist movements, or to advance the same normative claims made by nationalist movements that all nations *ought* to possess their own state. Such methodological nationalism potentially results in scholarship that promotes or justifies irredentism, partitioning, or fragmentation, or that simply obscures the scholar's own nationalist convictions (Brown, 2000).

More importantly, methodological nationalism blinds scholars to a plethora of theoretically interesting questions. Focusing solely on nations in this fashion leads scholars of nationalism in comparative politics to look inwardly at singular cases rather than exploring the cases of transnational or global significance. Methodological nationalism is ill suited for the examination of issues external to the nation-state (Beck, 2000). In this sense, nationalism scholars trail their peers in other disciplines—particularly in sociology and international relations—in their ability to problematize and observe the influence of identity in the face of increased global interconnectedness. For instance, constructivist scholars in international relations have produced studies that explored the importance of transnational communities in influencing the establishment of human rights regimes over the last 20 years (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse-Kappen, Ropp, and Sikkink, 1999). While these transnational forces also exert influence on matters related to identity, nationalism scholars rarely consider their impact beyond the borders of a particular state.

Further, by privileging nations as a unit of analysis, and focusing on nations as the outcome of nationalism, scholars may fail to observe phenomena that do not intersect or overlap with formal, state institutions—such as religion or economic markets—that exert significant influence on the process of identity contestation and ethnic boundary making. Here, too, political scientists engaged in the study of nationalism and ethnicity trail behind their counterparts in other disciplines. An emerging literature in the disciplines of cultural geography and anthropology assesses the influence of the tourism industry or ethnic branding on the content of ethnic identities (Oakes, 1998; Wood, 1998; Azarya, 2004; McCrone, Morris, and Kiely, 1995). Likewise, some scholars in the field of religious studies examine the use of public religious rituals or street festivities to simultaneously map ethnic and territorial boundaries (Orsi, 1985; Sciorra, 1999; Tweed, 1999; Dickson, 2009). These analyses do not use the nation as their unit of analysis, nor do they attempt to describe the nation as an outcome. These studies do, however, investigate practices that are crucial to the process of boundary making. In focusing on nations as both units and outcomes, scholars of nationalism within comparative politics pass up opportunities to break new theoretical ground and investigate previously unexamined aspects of ethnic politics.[7]

In sum, the present study of nationalism and ethnic politics suffers from four interrelated problems: the almost singular focus on ethnic minorities (and inadvertent perpetuation of

---

[7]In this area, however, there has been productive movement within constructivist approaches that focus on ethnic cleavages or individual activation of ethnic identities. Wimmer's (2013) study of ethnic boundary making and ethnic boundary-shifting strategies is an important contribution in this regard, particularly for its self-conscious efforts to distinguish between ethnic and nonethnic boundaries.

the civic-ethnic distinction), the neglect of legitimation as a function of nationalism, the dominance of institutionalist accounts of changes in identity, and the ongoing influence of methodological nationalism. To this list, one might add that the distinction between nationalist and ethnic politics is conceived less in terms of conceptual relationship and more in terms of their orientation to the state and the status quo. Nationalist politics emerges as a "noisy" form of contentious politics that punctures the daily routines of ordinary life: nations are forged and states claimed through minorities' contestation of existing, unjust power structures; nationalist frames for mobilization challenge status quo power relations rather than justify them; nationalist repertoires inhere in the ways states institutionalize identity cleavages and erect opportunities or barriers to their activation; and nations are realized through mobilization rather than preceding it. By contrast, ethnic politics relate to the mundane and routine aspects of politics that do not challenge the state. Increasingly, scholars use the term "ethnicizing" in place of "nationalist" to describe action undertaken in the name of one's claimed ethnicity for the transformation of public goods (or rights, or power) into ethnic goods.

Everyday Nationalism as a Research Strategy

As an approach working within a Bourdieuian approach to social classification, "everyday" ethnicity and nationalism offers additional opportunities to envision ways to disaggregate groups in terms of quotidian practices (Brubaker et al., 2006; Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008a). The approach does not necessarily compete with the institutionalist or contentious modes of constructivism discussed above so much as complement them by providing guidance concerning ethnic structure and stability. The crucial methodological move in this approach involves utilizing ethnographic observation for the classification and observation of ethnic practices. The corresponding practical difficulty, of course, is that such analysis is time and labor intensive, often requiring prior language training and immersion in the field. Beyond these practical concerns, the contextual richness of such approaches inevitably fails to satisfy critics who desire a more individualist methodology that either posits ethnic groups and nations as actors (or as outcomes), or that focuses on individual agency to the exclusion of (or prior to) group loyalties and emotional attachments.

One way of overcoming such objections without abandoning ethnographic fieldwork is to replace individuals or groups with ethnic or nationalist *practices* as units of analysis. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008a) identify common varieties of practice (talking, choosing, consuming, performing), yet the identification and elaboration of individual varieties of practice are usually the goal of analysis rather than the starting point for comparison. Instead, one might utilize the identification of varieties of nationalist practice as the beginning of analysis, examining their modalities across a set of structurally similar cases. Disaggregating varieties of nationalist practices makes sense where sites for observation already bear historical and institutional similarities. One might argue that adopting practice as a unit of analysis risks decontextualizing nationalism to the point of unintelligibility (Smith, 2008), though this is mainly a problem if case studies are understood in the clinical sense (as specific countries or groups) rather than instances of theoretical phenomena (George and Bennett, 2004).

In terms of theory building, the advantage of such an approach is found in the potential to observe the political relevance of certain varieties of practice in relation to structural configurations. For instance, it is well established that nationalist waves are characterized by modular nationalist practices and spread among countries with relatively similar institutional structures (or political regimes).[8] While the goals of nationalist contention may be

---

[8]The classic work in this vein is Beissinger (2002).

couched broadly in terms of justice, democracy, or sovereignty, the frames and repertoires that characterize a successful wave of nationalist mobilization nonetheless persist within new states or regimes as sources of legitimacy even if they are no longer recognized as "nationalist." Yet contentious practices thus transformed into legitimating practices remain modular in form and conceivably remain comparable among new states or regimes. In this fashion, examining nationalist practices as units of analysis rather than individual nationalist actors or nations-as-groups enables the study of the persistence of nationalist practices beyond mobilizational cycles, permitting observation of their roles as legitimating (rather than contentious) practices. Such an approach would also address the critical gaps in constructivist studies of nationalism discussed above: explaining the apparent stability of identities and theorizing their relationship to varieties of political regimes in a way that can incorporate ethnic majorities while bypassing the civic-ethnic distinction. A further extension of such an approach might be to explain the apparent reemergence of nations after periods of statelessness in terms of the persistence of nation-defining practices on a quotidian level.

To be clear, this approach does not exclude the roles played by institutions and nationalist politicians. It shares with the "contentious" varieties of approaches a sensitivity to the fundamental and ever-present role of power imbalances in configuring identities and their strategic articulation. It departs in that the nation does not cease to exist when it is not activated or mobilized; rather, it persists through a variety of quotidian practices. After all, as Wedeen (2010) reminds us, "there is never nothing going on." As noted above, however, a self-conscious focus on deep contextualization and a perceived resistance to generalization are likely to limit the appeal and utility of the approach for social scientists interested in theory building.

To push past this self-imposed limit on the study of everyday nationalism, the focus of investigation must shift from observing and identifying nationalist practices to linking those practices with broad (generalizable) classes of political phenomena. In what follows, we propose a way this might be achieved, and simultaneously address the issues raised in the first part of this article, by orienting the study of everyday nationalism to a pair of large issues: dominant ethnicity and authoritarian legitimacy, and ethnic boundaries and economic development.

Studies of authoritarianism have only recently started to look beyond material and coercive bases of authoritarian rule to consider ideational sources of stability and legitimacy (Goode, 2012; Dukalskis and Hooker, 2011; Levitsky and Way, 2012; Mellon, 2010; Murzakulova and Schoeberlein, 2009; Razi, 1990; Sil and Chen, 2004). In identifying sources of legitimacy for authoritarianism, there are finite types or categories of legitimacy (Zelditch, 2001) even if the nature of legitimacy and legitimating claims are irretrievably specific to a state's history. For regimes that came into existence as a result of nationalist mobilization, legitimacy is connected to the ways that mobilizational frames become institutionalized and structure political discourse—especially in the immediate period following independence, though this effect may decay or mutate over time and with each change in leadership. For example, where frames of "injustice," "nation," and "democracy" are effective in mobilizing opposition and establishing new regimes, successors are obligated to justify and orient policy around the legitimating foci of "justice," "nation," and "democracy." Over time, however, the repertoire of legitimating claims may diminish to "justice" and "nation" after formally democratic institutions are established and constitutionalized. Still later, or perhaps in the course of leadership change, "justice" may be converted to "security" or "order" as a legitimating claim as new incumbents seek to protect political and economic gains while staving off opposition challenges. Crucially, "nation" as a source of,

or claim to, legitimacy cannot be so easily replaced by new incumbents, except perhaps by manipulation of the concept's boundaries to render it indistinguishable from "citizenship."

One can further envision the logic by which categories of legitimacy change in new regimes in terms of the political behaviors and obligations they impose. If new regimes are brought to power by way of mobilization framed in terms of "injustice," "nation," and "democracy," then elites and citizens, alike, are obligated to act to protect minority rights in ways consistent with defending the majority's sovereignty. If legitimating claims involve "democracy" and "nation," then the implied behaviors may include voting or other forms of civic involvement in politics understood as a national duty. By contrast, legitimating claims involving "order" or "security" and "nation" may obligate citizens to forego direct participation in politics or to delegate participatory roles to the regime's agents (construed as a national duty) or to accept (and act upon) the characterization of potential threats to the regime as threats to the nation (Connor, 2002). Alternatively, "injustice" and "nation" as legitimating claims may not entail protections for minority rights and, instead, may entail assimilation or even persecution of national minorities.

While the range of legitimating claims made by authoritarian regimes may be relatively easy to identify and track, it is much more difficult to determine the extent to which legitimacy-seeking succeeds. The first stage of the methodological strategy for linking everyday nationalism with authoritarian legitimacy would entail identifying the varieties of state-sponsored or "official" nationalist claims with citizen practices in daily life and across various policy domains. In general terms, the varieties of behaviors and orientations that legitimate and sustain authoritarian rule may include the following: rejection of individual autonomy or displacement of subjectivity in politics; political delegation or inaction; rejection of civil society and the free press; rejection or vilification of political opposition or political alternatives to the incumbent regime; depoliticization or hollowing out of national and subnational governance; toleration of corruption; politicization of justice, or the diminution of social and political rights.[9] Of course, this is not an exhaustive list, but one may reasonably expect the various combinations of behaviors and orientations to vary systematically in accordance with types of authoritarian rule.[10] It is not difficult to identify the behaviors and orientations that regimes consider appropriate. States generate a wealth of public artifacts that stylistically and explicitly situate governments in relation to citizens and vice versa (Barros, 2005). These may be observed by a variety of fieldwork techniques (ethnography, interviews, participant observation) or even methods that do not require fieldwork (content, discourse, or narrative analysis) for those already possessing fairly extensive knowledge of a region.

The second stage involves examining the extent to which individual citizens replicate and invest meaning in regime claims through daily practices. Citizens may engage in behaviors that outwardly appear to legitimate authoritarian rule in terms of national identities, but they may also innovate, manipulate, or creatively rationalize the meanings of those behaviors. Practices that legitimate authoritarian rule in one social context may become ironic or subversive in others. Consider the example of public displays of patriotism. Spontaneous displays of patriotism (outside of official holidays) might appear to legitimate

[9]As one may gather from this list, select behaviors or orientations (such as tolerance for corruption) may also be present within democratic or pluralist regimes. This is a strength of the approach insofar as it recognizes that authoritarian practices are often present within, and actively subvert, established democracies. A crucial distinction may be that such practices are understood as unjust and they are countenanced in daily life only as long as they are not publicly exposed.

[10]On varieties of authoritarian rule, see Linz (2000), Brancati (2014), Geddes (1999), and Linz and Stepan (1996).

authoritarian regimes, yet such practices as wearing clothing with patriotic symbols and slogans may serve a variety of social purposes other than demonstrating support for the regime. For some citizens opposed to the regime, displaying one's patriotism may serve as a form of social camouflage. Alternatively (or perhaps simultaneously), such displays may be deeply yet covertly ironic for one's immediate friends and family. Still others may display historical symbols of patriotism because they are kitschy and fashionable rather than some deep affective tie to the regime. For those who are politically ambivalent, patriotic displays may simply serve marketing purposes in ways that contribute to ritualized observance of the regime's legitimacy (Wedeen, 1999). Finally, all of these practices may appear to contribute to a generalized sense of patriotic observance and ritual that the state can mobilize at crucial times (Billig, 1995). Yet they may also impose a silence and conformity upon the majority that could easily be mistaken for regime support by conjuring the image of a united and patriotic public—an image that evaporates precisely at the moment that it is required in a meaningful, noncoercive way.

There is no substitute for ethnographic observation for divining shifts in these practices across social contexts. Interviewing or social media analysis may be tempting ways to divine the meanings of social practices where researchers lack the time and material resources to conduct ethnography, though methods that focus on a specific context or category of social interaction only capture one dimension of practice and—more crucially—are less capable of identifying and interpreting dissimulation. To the extent that interviewing involves interaction with an outsider, for instance, respondents may be more likely to adopt, try out, or simulate positions that would not ordinarily be available in daily social settings. Consequently, interviewing may actually capture meanings associated with practices that are not relevant to legitimation and, instead, may be prone to observing practices and interpretations that seem to undermine regime legitimacy. Of course, experienced interviewers can manipulate the setting and content of interviews in such a way as to compensate for potential dissimulation.

Employing a lens of everyday nationalism also allows observers of ethnicity to explore areas of inquiry traditionally neglected by the mainstream literature on ethnic politics. A focus on nationalist or ethnic politics as contentious politics overlooks the often subtle and slow-moving influence that market forces and economic development exert on ethnic boundaries. Indeed, economic development can exert a transformative force on ethnic boundaries, and, in turn, economic interests are shaped and influenced by culture and identity (Hall, 1997; Herrera, 2005). While works that treat ethnic identity instrumentally assess how economic resources and public goods may become a source of ethnic competition (Bates, 1974; Franck and Rainer, 2012), and institutionally focused studies explain how economic initiatives or modes of resource distribution may become ethnicized (Lieberman, 2009), these accounts do not consider the ways that economic forces shape ethnic identity on a daily basis. In observing what Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008b) refer to as the "micro-interactional moments," which maintain ethnic boundaries in quiet times, it is possible to assess attitudes and behaviors—particularly those related to habits of consumption and performance—that are taken for granted, coded, or deliberately obscured.

The intersection of economics and ethnicity occurs in a number of ways. Often, economic development programs partner with large-scale programs of infrastructure modernization and development.[11] Canonical modernist accounts of the rise of nationalism draw attention to the ways that attempts by central authorities to modernize the state exert a transformative

---

[11]The link between authoritarian control and infrastructure programs has been explored in great detail in Scott (1998).

effect on ethnic identities. In these accounts, extending the public goods of modernity to all corners of the state results in cultural standardization (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992). Standardized dialects, legal systems, and economic practices travel along the new highways, rail systems, and power grids that connect all parts of the state to the center (Deutsch, 1966; Weber, 1979; Scott, 1998, 2009). These projects allow for the consolidation of state authority as well as the solidification of a common national identity.

The state is not alone in influencing ethnic boundaries through economic means. The private sector also influences ethnicity, particularly as the reconfiguration of ethnic boundaries displaces traditional sources of authority and creates demand for cultural consumption. The market shapes and influences the practices of "ethno-preneurs," who sell ethnicity as a commodity (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009). In order to meet the demands of the market and cater to the preferences of consumers, ethno-preneurs may alter, change, or in some instances invent entirely new ethnic practices (Xie, 2010). For instance, ethno-preneurs may promote ethnic tourism as a crucial means of subsistence for groups threatened by economic development at the same time that it reduces ethnic identity to caricature and perpetuates the group's exclusion from the benefits of modernity. In this way, market competition may exert just as much influence over the contestation and content of ethnic identity as political or cultural forces, though often in ways unintended by elites who seek to profit from exploiting ethnic boundaries.

Operationalizing the kinds of practices that link economics to ethnicity presents a particularly thorny challenge for researchers, as consumer habits are less outwardly political than other types of behaviors. The first stage of conceptualizing the relationship between economic and everyday ethnic practices involves linking ethnic content with quotidian economic behaviors, including the following: buying exclusively domestically manufactured products; buying brands identified or associated with one's own ethnic group (e.g. kosher or halal products, ethnic food items, etc.); supporting tariffs to protect against imported goods; refusal to hire foreign laborers; refusing to patronize foreign-owned businesses or restaurants; boycotting companies or products that outsource jobs to other states; boycotting brands or chains that are perceived to be "unpatriotic"; opposing development projects that endanger local historic or cultural landmarks, or alter traditional social structures; supporting public works programs to restore or preserve historic or traditional landmarks; boycotting brands or products deemed to be culturally "inauthentic" or appropriating traditional cultural motifs; engaging in cultural or heritage tourism; consuming exclusively nationalist print, televised, or online media; engaging in ethno-preneurship or opening a business that sells commodified or branded ethnic goods.

Each of the practices above represents an area in which matters of consumerism or development allow for citizens to reproduce or invoke feelings of ethnic belonging. The second stage of our inquiry assesses the meanings citizens invest in these daily practices. Asking respondents simple questions about their interactions with their neighbors, the content of their grocery shopping lists, choices in television viewing, or cherished holiday traditions may yield valuable insights about how the nation is understood, and experienced, by average citizens (Edensor, 2002; Caldwell, 2002).

Discerning the ethnic significance of consumer practices requires great care, as the motivations expressed for making such choices may vary considerably. Take, for instance, the example of a consumer deciding which brand of clothing to purchase. A consumer who refuses to buy products manufactured abroad, and purchases solely domestic goods may be standing on principle as an economic nationalist determined to support the nation. However, such choices may also be made out of convenience or necessity, as the domestic products may be cheaper than imported ones. Further still, the choice may simply reflect

the consumer's personal preference in style. Likewise, this choice may be chalked up to mere indifference, as any brand will do, regardless of its national origin. Finally, any of these stances may be relevant, becoming activated and observable within different social (ethnic) contexts. Hence, demonstrably "buying American" is meaningful in social context for those seeking to bolster their credentials as good Americans (say, for immigrants attempting to assimilate, or for members of a demographic majority running for office).

Ethnographic observations provide the researcher with the contextual cues to discern which explanation is most likely. They also allow an outside observer to detect the ethnic significance that underlines social actions. Observations of community meetings, local marketplaces, cultural performances, overheard conversations between patrons at local restaurants, or the gossip of friends gathered in public spaces provide researchers with insights about the relationship between market and ethnicity within a community.

In addition, researchers may find that conducting interviews is required in order to get respondents to unearth the otherwise unspoken motivations that lie beneath their economic preferences. Making careful use of interview questions is pivotal in decoding the meaning of these practices and understanding their ethnic significance. Researchers must be cautious to avoid failing into one of the most common traps of studying ethnic politics: that those who go looking for ethnic behavior will assuredly find it. In particular, questions must be careful not prime respondents with ethnic answers. Adopting a posture of deliberate naivety may allow researchers to circumvent such obstacles.[12] The respondent, in an effort to teach or inform the interviewer, may reveal previously obscured information that holds ethnic significance. Requesting that a shopper identify and describe the items in a supermarket shopping cart may lead the respondent to point out products that are associated with a particular ethnic group, or indicate how certain items are subject to ethnic branding. Asking vendors of ethnic goods to explain the cultural significance of the items they are vending may yield similar results. Merchants may note differences between the item's original ritual or cultural use and its current commodified form, enabling further inquiry from the researcher about how market demands have transformed traditional cultural practices.[13] Alternatively, asking respondents to construct timelines of changes within their communities, or in their daily routines, may provide insight into the structure of the content and contestation of ethnic boundaries, efficiently linking the types of practices perceived to maintain or activate these boundaries (Berdahl, 1999; Brubaker et al., 2006; Jones and Merriman, 2009). Accounting for the disruption of such daily routines by the forces of the state, the market, or both, may lead respondents to reflect on the adaptation or change of ethnic boundaries in the face of environmental changes.

Equally, the absence or lack of such ethno-national idioms may also prove just as valuable by revealing the limitations or shortcomings of branding or marketing the nation. Triumphant propaganda may declare that the construction of a subway line, highway, national museum, or stadium fulfills the dreams of a nation,[14] but examining whether or not citizens describe economic development using nationalist tropes or purchase domestic

---

[12]A number of volumes devoted to the challenges of fieldwork in authoritarian states discuss the usefulness of this tactic—notably Solinger (2008), Goode (2010), and Henrion-Douncy (2013).

[13]Of course, in these circumstances the interviewer's identity becomes relevant. A position of deliberate naivety depends upon the respondent's perception of the interviewer as an outsider who must be educated about the meaning and significance of cultural items, and thus, the respondent's own culture. In this sense, the interviewer does not prime the respondent by asking pointed questions about ethnicity, but rather allows the respondent to divulge details relevant to ethnicity through his or her attempts to educate the interviewer. Where the interviewer is perceived as an insider, utilizing such strategies may not be possible.

[14]At the groundbreaking ceremony for Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts in 2004, then Chinese Minister of Culture Sun Jiazheng famously remarked that the construction of the $512-million theatre "fulfilled the longstanding dream of the Chinese people" (Zhang, 2004).

brands in displays of economic nationalism provides greater insight into whether the glory of the nation is effectively conveyed through concrete and steel, and whether citizens are moved by appeals to economic nationalism.

Verification and Generalization

The third stage of a practice-oriented approach involves verification. Focus groups may be useful as a verification strategy for capturing focused social interaction around common stimuli, especially when moderated by a local or native interviewer. Interaction between participants serves a cross-checking purpose; claims that find wide agreement among participants may be treated as having greater credibility, whereas differences of opinion between the members of a focus group may be illustrative of competing explanations, or important differences in perspective. Field experiments may also be useful for verification in connecting practices with expected behaviors and orientations, though these may be more difficult to organize in authoritarian regimes.

If a limitation on "everyday nationalism" approaches is the difficulty of generalizing from contextually and historically specific sites, it may also be useful to imagine how one might gather such observations for inclusion in a qualitative database on the legitimation of authoritarian rule, or the influence of economic markets on ethnic identity. The key to such a move would be to embrace decontextualization as virtue. Certain dimensions of practice will be isomorphic with regard to regime type or market. One presumes that similar types of authoritarian regime will seek similar forms of legitimation. This assumption draws from the burgeoning literature on formal institutions (and especially the role of legislatures) among authoritarian regimes (Boix and Svolik, 2013; Brancati, 2014; Gandhi, 2010; Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009; Magaloni, 2006). There are also likely to be shared regional characteristics that produce similar claims to legitimacy, particularly where new governments emerge from a single, sustained regional wave of mobilization. Similarly, successful branding of ethnicity in one community may serve as a template that other communities attempt to follow. In this sense, communities may attempt to copy or replicate a particular form of stylization, or incorporate local ethnic commodities into the same market as those communities that have profited from the sale of ethnicity. Patterns may emerge in what types of cultural practices are stylized or produced as logos. Indeed, cataloging such practices in such a fashion may prove a useful means to identifying transnational or globalizing forces that replicate them.

One may therefore rely upon the ubiquity of state and economic institutions as a means to standardizing observations of social interaction without substituting institutional observations for interactional observations. Whereas the constructivist literature emphasizes the role of institutions in shaping and defining ethnic and national boundaries, they are also sites for social interaction that elaborate, challenge, or transform their meanings and significance. Secondary and higher education are not just quintessential modernizing forces, but also crucial sites for talking about, choosing, consuming, and performing the nation (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008a; Fox, 2004). Similarly, marketing firms, advertising, and tour agencies provide opportunities to observe ways that the nation is performed, chosen, and consumed (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009; Caldwell, 2002).

As a verification strategy, organizing field observations in terms of practices and common institutionalized sites suggests an opportunity to compare quotidian nationalist practices (i) in relation to the regime's or market's representations to determine their congruence with daily practices and (ii) across multiple authoritarian regimes or markets to sort context-specific from isomorphic ethnic practices. Once observations are organized in this fashion, it becomes possible to highlight context-specific practices and to consider their

TABLE 1

Linking Practices, Methods, and Mechanisms

Categories of Practice	Methods	Observed Mechanisms	Implications
Talking and Performing	Ethnography Content analysis Discourse analysis	Top-down invention Bottom-up (re-)constitution	Framing Legitimation Contention
Choosing and Consuming	Interviews Focus groups Participant observation	Incentivization Routinization	Distribution Socialization Organization

salience in part or in concert with generalized nationalist practices. Moreover, organizing data in such a fashion potentially makes them available for secondary analysis by linking practices and methods with causal mechanisms and their theoretical implications (see Table 1). Hence, one could move toward theory building by working from observation of nationalist practices, to linking practices with causal mechanisms, to considering their implications for social or political action. Alternatively, one could utilize these data for verification by working "backward," starting with posited theoretical explanations to specify observational implications, linking them to causal mechanisms, and finally to inspecting nationalist practices for confirming or disconfirming evidence.

Observing and recording nationalist practices in this fashion may be further useful for methodological triangulation.[15] Unlike traditional survey research or interviews, observing practice is less vulnerable to the problem of preference falsification (Kuran, 1995): instead of attempting to divine individuals' privately held beliefs at the moment of questioning in order to infer societal preferences and orientations, the aim of a practice-oriented approach is to observe categories of social interaction as regular, meaning-making action. For instance, individual interviews may be useful for suggesting a range of meanings that individuals are likely to invest in categories of action in relation to nationalist idioms (for instance, what it means "to be a patriot" or "to honor the nation"). Observing nation-oriented practices may then confirm and elaborate the claims made by respondents in interviews: How much choice do individuals have in honoring the nation? How do various observable and deliberately public means of honoring the nation feature in daily interactions as a way of sustaining differences between majority and minority peoples and justifying differential access to power? Practice-oriented observation may also complement existing event data concerning framing and mobilization by elaborating how identities resonate as mobilizational frames— not just for protest but perhaps more crucially for understanding participation in pro-regime demonstrations (Adams, 2010; Wedeen, 1999). Likewise, observing the ways that ethnicity is performed or sold may highlight the ways in which the majority fetishize or exoticize minorities and sharpen the lines that separate them (Gladney, 1994). Thus, practice-oriented observation may help to identify and enumerate the reservoir of cultural traits and tropes commonly drawn upon and invoked by marketers and governments alike when constructing the image of the nation in advertising or propaganda.

---

[15]Though it is worth noting that successful triangulation depends on a common understanding of what constitutes an observation or case across methods, with multiple methods being brought to bear on the same components of explanation rather than being used in sequence (Ahmed and Sil, 2012).

Conclusion: Bringing the Quotidian Back In

After considerable gnashing of teeth concerning the uncertain utility of constructivism for producing useful insights and generalizations (Chandra, 2001; Fearon and Wendt, 2002; Motyl, 2010), scholars focused their energies on accounting for the dynamics of identity change, diversity, and conflict. Advances along these fronts benefited from the range of available data sets that measure various forms of ethnic, linguistic, religious, or cultural diversity, and stimulated newer projects to address their shortcomings. However, ethnic change, conflict, and diversity continue to dominate the constructivist research agenda. Likewise, nationalism continues to be studied as a contentious form of politics, bound to (if not defining) eventful or transformative moments in history (Beissinger, 2002:11–34; Sewell Jr., 1996). In turn, the distinction between contentious and routine politics sustains the conceptual distinction between nationalist and ethnic politics. To the extent that the field remains focused more on minorities, conflict, and diversity, than on the dynamics of dominant ethnicities, it risks perpetuating a distinction between civic and ethnic nations—in turn, reflecting and reproducing power imbalances between majority and minority ethnicities. In treating ethnicity and nationhood as frames or resources for mobilization, the field loses sight of their legitimating roles during the "quiet" periods of daily life that define the vast expanse of vast time-space outside of (comparatively rare) cycles of contention (Goode, 2012).

When existing studies do address routine politics, they either offload the explanatory functions to institutional dynamics or situate agency within an institutional context. The privileging of data that are meaningful in an institutional perspective means that the state's institutional practices often define the relevance of ethnicity in analysis. Meanwhile, ethnic practices outside of formal institutions (including those that challenge the day-to-day relevance of the state's categorization) potentially go unobserved.

Finally, methodological nationalism continues to influence research designs and the production of knowledge about ethnic politics and nationalism. Its effect is most visible where the state's categorization of identity serves as the font of data and observations concerning the salience of ethnic and national identities. It is easy to miss the fluid relationship between ethnic or nationalist practices and other varieties of social boundaries, eliciting an unintentionally static representation of ethnicity or nationality outside of contentious politics. More subtly, all scholars of identity politics confront the thorny issue of how to keep "ethnicity" and "nation" as *categories of practice* distinct from the terms as *categories of analysis*, lest researchers of nationalism unwittingly become nationalists by reproducing nationalist ontologies in their research.

In light of these concerns, we argue that the everyday nationalism approach provides a useful complement and corrective: first, by replacing groups and individuals as units of analysis with the practices that reproduce, challenge, confirm, and create social identities on a quotidian level; and second, by focusing on social interaction rather than state institutions as constitutive of ethnic boundaries. Doing so allows us to reconnect constructivism with large-scale social and political processes, such as the sources of authoritarian legitimacy or the ethnicization of economic development. Further, focusing on quotidian practices enables us to view these processes from the bottomup. Rather than portraying ethnic or national identities as the outcomes of top-down processes or elite decisions, an everyday nationalist approach describes how the vast majority of people conceive of, and interact with, ethnic or national identities. Beyond these suggestions, there are a number of additional benefits yielded by an everyday nationalism approach.

First, assembling observations in terms of social practices may prove useful observing the ways that transnational tropes link domestic and international politics. To the extent that a common, replicated set of market practices commercialize or commodify ethnicity, the absorption of those practices into local idioms potentially reveals a great deal about the banalization and instrumentality of ethnicity. Alternatively, the ability to recognize and track such practices may prove fertile ground for theorizing about the ways that market interactions activate and transform ethnic boundaries, or challenge various jurisdictional and territorial boundaries. If such implications were implicit in deeply contextualized and site-specific works in anthropology (Barth, 1998), the advantage of the approach advocated here is the *decontextualization* of practices for the organization of observations and comparing across cases. Decomposing ethnicity and nationhood into ethnic practices further opens up possibilities for identifying points of overlap among ethnic practices and nonethnic community boundaries (religious, educational, generational, and so forth). In this fashion, adopting ethnic practices as one's unit of analysis may facilitate understanding of the mechanisms by which one form of community boundary is activated as an ethnic boundary and vice versa.

Second, constructivists often point out that explaining the stability of identity categories is just as important as explaining change, though most tend to focus on the latter. Yet if contentious politics approaches make a valuable contribution in explaining how identities change through mobilization, the absence of mobilization or the lack of institutional change does not explain the stability of identity categories. An everyday nationalism approach lays the groundwork for understanding the stability of identity categories, as well as their relationship to political stability in terms of the interaction of regime with ethnic practices (rather than treating political stability as simply an interlude between periods of contention).

Third, an everyday nationalism approach reminds us of the importance of vernacular understandings and voices in elaborating and attaching meaning to ethnic boundaries. Constructivist approaches—especially those concentrating on state institutions—emphasize the role of elites in crafting and recombining identity repertoires with distributional and mobilizational consequences (Marx, 1998; Adeney, 2008). However, elites do not have carte blanche to endlessly invent new identities and they are subject the same socialization processes as ordinary citizens in their youth and education. Understanding what ordinary citizens do with ethnic and national identities through their daily practices arguably provides a more accurate guide to the repertoires available to elites than categories institutionalized by the state, as well as a firmer sense of why citizens respond to certain varieties of ethnic cues rather than others. Close examinations of everyday nationalist practices may reveal why some legitimating claims succeed while others ring hollow, or why citizens regard some ethnic brands as "authentic" while viewing others as "fake" or commercialized. In other words, vernacular understandings of ethnicity are both necessary for, and necessarily prior to, their manipulation by ethno-preneurs (Smith, 2011; Whitmeyer, 2002).

Finally, everyday nationalism as an approach brings constructivism back to its roots in locating ideas and meaning making as sources of power emerging through social interaction. Insofar as existing approaches focus on causal processes located at the intersection of institutionalized ethnicity and individual agency, they conform to an individualist ontology that tends to reify rather than problematize social categories like ethnicity, race, or religion. This tendency is reinforced through the ongoing use of existing data sets that treat social identities and attributes as if they exist independent of the contexts in which they were produced.[16] The approach advocated here suggests short- and long-term solutions for the challenge of relating constructivist ontology to methodology. In the short term,

---

[16]On the problem relating methods to ontologies, see Bevir (2010), Hall (2003), and Hay (2008).

ethnographic observation may supplant large-*n* statistical analysis early in the research cycle as a means of generating and considering research puzzles. Over the longer term, the development of comparative practice-based data sets promises to yield similar benefits to the existing use of large quantitative data sets without the risk of smuggling methodological individualism into constructivist analysis.

REFERENCES

Adams, Laura L. 2010. *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Adeney, Katharine. 2008. "Constitutional Design and the Political Salience of 'Community' Identity in Afghanistan: Prospects for the Emergence of Ethnic Conflicts in the Post-Taliban Era." *Asian Survey* 48(4):535–57.

Ahmed, Amel, and Rudra Sil. 2012. "When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism— Or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(04):935–53.

Anderson, Benedict R. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. London / New York: Verso.

Azarya, Victor. 2004. "Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity." *Current Sociology* 52(6):949–67.

Barrington, Lowell W. 1997. "'Nation' and 'Nationalism': The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science." *Political Science & Politics* 30(4):712–17.

———. 2006. *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial & Postcommunist States*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Barros, Robert. 2005. *Secrecy and Dictatorship: Some Problems in the Study of Authoritarian Regimes*. Available at ⟨http://www.concepts-methods.org/paperxs_download.php?id_categoria=2&titulo=Political%20Methodology&id_wp=36⟩.

Barth, Frederik. 1998. "Introduction." Pp. 9–38 in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Bates, Robert H. 1974. "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 6(4):457–84.

Beck, Ulrich. 2000. "The Cosmopolitan Perspective: Sociology of the Second Age of Modernity." *British Journal of Sociology* 51(1):79–105.

Beissinger, Mark R. 2002. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berdahl, Daphne. 1999. *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bevir, Mark. 2010. "Meta-Methodology: Clearing the Underbrush." Pp. 48–70 in Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry Brady, and David Collier, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.

Boix, Carles, and Milan W. Svolik. 2013. "The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships." *Journal of Politics* 75(02):300–16.

Brancati, Dawn. 2014. "Democratic Authoritarianism: Origins and Effects." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17(1):313–26.

Breuilly, John. 1994. *Nationalism and the State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brown, K. S. 2000. "Would the Real Nationalists Please Step Forward: Destructive Narration in Macedonia." Pp. 31–48 in Hermine G. DeSoto and Nora Dudwick, eds., *Fieldwork Dilemmas: Anthropologists in Postsocialist States*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2004. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers, and Frederick Cooper. 2000. "Beyond 'Identity.'" *Theory and Society* 29(1):1–47.

Brubaker, Rogers, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, and Liana Grancea. 2006. *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvania Town*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bunce, Valerie. 1999. *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caldwell, Melissa L. 2002. "The Taste of Nationalism: Food Politics in Postsocialist Moscow." *Ethnos* 67(3):295–319.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1):87–119.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2001. "Symposium: Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics." *APSA-CP* 12(1):7–25.

———. 2004. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Headcounts in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Available at ⟨http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/cam032/2003048458.html⟩.

———, ed. 2012. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity, Inc.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Connor, Walker. 1978. "A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a . . . " *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1(4):377–400.

———. 2002. "Nationalism and Political Illegitimacy." Pp. 24–50 in Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*. New York: Routledge.

Deutsch, Karl W. 1966. *Nationalism and Social Communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dickson, Rory. 2009. "The Tablighi Jama'at in Southwestern Ontario: Making Muslim Identities and Networks in Canadian Urban Spaces." *Contemporary Islam* 3(2):99–112.

Drakulic, Slobodan. 2011. "Academic Nationalism." Pp. 17–38 in Trevor W. Harrison and Slobodan Drakulic, eds., *Against Orthodoxy: Studies in Nationalism*. Vancouver, WA: University of Washington Press.

Dukalskis, Alexander, and Zachary Hooker. 2011. "Legitimating Totalitarianism: Melodrama and Mass Politics in North Korean Film." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 44(1):53–62.

Edensor, Tim. 2002. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2002. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Fearon, James, and Alexander Wendt. 2002. "Rationalism vs. Constructivism: A Skeptical View." Pp. 52–73 in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, 1st ed. London: Sage.

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 2001. "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 4(1):391–416.

Fox, Jon E. 2004. "Missing the Mark: Nationalist Politics and Student Apathy." *East European Politics & Societies* 18(3):363–93.

Fox, Jon E., and Cynthia Miller-Idriss. 2008a. "Everyday Nationhood." *Ethnicities* 8(4):536–63.

———. 2008b. "The 'Here and Now' of Everyday Nationhood." *Ethnicities* 8(4):573–76.

Franck, Raphael, and Ilia Rainer. 2012. "Does the Leader's Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa." *American Political Science Review* 102(2):294–325.

Gagnon, V. P. 2004. *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gandhi, Jennifer. 2010. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*, reprint. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gandhi, Jennifer, and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. "Elections Under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12(1):403–22.

Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:115–44.

Gellner, Ernest. 1965. *Thought and Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Giuliano, Elise. 2011. *Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia's Republics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gladney, Dru C. 1994. "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities." *Journal of Asian Studies* 53(1):92–123.

Goode, J. Paul. 2010. "Redefining Russia: Hybrid Regimes, Fieldwork, and Russian Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(04):1055–75.

———. 2012. "Nationalism in Quiet Times: Ideational Power and Post-Soviet Electoral Authoritarianism." *Problems of Post-Communism* 59:6–16.

Gorenburg, Dmitry P. 2003. *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Available at ⟨www.loc.gov/catdir/description/cam031/2002031584.html⟩.

Greenfeld, Liah. 1992. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Grosby, Steven Elliott, and Athena S. Leoussi. 2007. *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hall, Peter A. 1997. "The Role of Interests, Institutions, and Ideas in the Comparative Political Economy of the Industrialized Nations." Pp. 174–207 in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics." Pp. 373–404 in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Harty, Siobhan. 2001. "The Institutional Foundations of Substate National Movements." *Comparative Politics* 33(2):191–210.

Hay, Colin. 2008. "Political Ontology." Pp. 78–96 in Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Henrion-Douncy, Isabelle. 2013. "Easier in Exlie? Comparative Observations on Doing Research Among Tibetans in Lhasa and Dharamsala." Pp. 201–19 in Sarah Turner, ed., *Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Socialist Asia*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Herrera, Yoshiko M. 2005. *Imagined Economies: The Sources of Russian Regionalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1992. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Horowitz, Donald. 2000. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Ignatieff, Michael. 1993. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Jones, Rhys, and Peter Merriman. 2009. "Hot, Banal and Everyday Nationalism: Bilingual Road Signs in Wales." *Political Geography* 28(3):164–73.

Kaufmann, Eric P. 2004. "Dominant Ethnicity: From Background to Foreground." Pp. 1–12 in Eric P. Kaufmann, ed., *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*. New York: Routledge.

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kohn, Hans. [1994] 2005. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*. Social Science Classics Series. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Koter, Dominika. 2013. "King Makers: Local Leaders and Ethnic Politics in Africa." *World Politics* 65(2):187–232.

Kuran, Timur. 1995. *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lankina, Tomila. 2004. *Governing the Locals: Local Self-Government and Ethnic Mobilization in Russia*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Leff, Carol Skalnik. 1999. "Democratization and Disintegration in Multinational States: The Breakup of the Communist Federations." *World Politics* 51(2):205–35.

Levitsky, Steven R., and Lucan A. Way. 2012. "Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(04):869–89.

Lieberman, Evan S. 2009. *Boundaries of Contagion: How Ethnic Politics Have Shaped Government Responses to AIDS*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Linz, Juan J. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Linz, Juan J., and Alfred C. Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mackerras, Colin. 2010. "Tibetans, Uyghurs and Multinational 'China': Han-Minority Relations and State Legitimation." Pp. 222–42 in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, eds., *Chinese Politics: State, Society and the Market*. New York: Routledge.

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Ann Thelen. 2010. *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, Anthony W. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2003. *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McCrone, David, Angela Morris, and Richard Kiely. 1995. *Scotland the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Mellon, James. 2010. "Myth, Legitimacy and Nationalism in Central Asia." *Ethnopolitics* 9(2):137–50.

Millard, Gregory. 2014. "The Jealous God: A Problem in the Definition of Nationalism." *Ethnicities* 14(1):3–24.

Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. 2009. *Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany*. Duke University Press.

Motyl, Alexander J. 2010. "The Social Construction of Social Construction: Implications for Theories of Nationalism and Identity Formation." *Nationalities Papers* 38(1):59–71.

Murzakulova, Asel, and John Schoeberlein. 2009. "The Invention of Legitimacy: Struggles in Kyrgyzstan to Craft and Effective Nation-State Ideology." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(7):1229–48.

Oakes, Tim. 1998. *Tourism and Modernity in China* (Routledge Studies on China in Transition; 6). London/New York: Routledge.

Orsi, Robert A. 1985. *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Posner, Daniel N. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rabushka, Alvin, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1972. *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Political Instability*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.

Razi, G. Hossein. 1990. "Legitimacy, Religion, and Nationalism in the Middle East." *American Political Science Review* 84(1):69–91.

Renan, Ernst. [1882] 1994. "Qu'est-Ce Qu'une Nation?" Pp. 17–18 in *Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Risse-Kappen, Thomas, Steve C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 1999. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations 66. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Roeder, Philip G. 1991. "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization." *World Politics* 43(2):196–232.

Sciorra, Joseph. 1999. "'We Go Where the Italians Live': Religious Processions as Ethnic and Territorial Markers in a Multi-Ethnic Brooklyn Neighborhood." Pp. 310–41 in Robert A. Orsi, ed., *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

———. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sewell Jr., William H. 1996. "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology." Pp. 245–80 in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Sil, Rudra, and Cheng Chen. 2004. "State Legitimacy and the (In)significance of Democracy in Post-Communist Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56(3):347–68.

Smith, Anthony D. 1998. *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2008. "The Limits of Everyday Nationhood." *Ethnicities* 8(4):563–73.

———. 2009. *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2011. "National Identity and Vernacular Mobilisation in Europe." *Nations and Nationalism* 17(2):223–56.

Snyder, Jack L. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 2008. "Interviewing Chinese People: From High-Level Officials to the Unemployed." Pp. 153–67 in Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen, eds., *Doing Fieldwork in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Stroschein, Sherrill. 2012. *Ethnic Struggle, Coexistence, and Democratization in Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Treisman, Daniel S. 1997. "Russia's 'Ethnic Revival': The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order." *World Politics* 49(2):212–49.

Tweed, Thomas A. 1999. "Diasporic Nationalism and Urban Landscape: Cuban Immigrants at a Catholic Shrine in Miami." Pp. 131–54 in Robert A. Orsi, ed., *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Weber, Eugen Joseph. 1979. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2010. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13(1):255–72.

Whitmeyer, Joseph M. 2002. "Elites and Popular Nationalism." *British Journal of Sociology* 53(3):321–41.

Wilkinson, Steven. 2004. *Votes and Eviolence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation–State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks* 2(4):301–34.

Wood, Robert E. 1998. "Touristic Ethnicity: A Brief Itinerary." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(2):218–41.

Xie, Philip Feifan. 2010. *Authenticating Ethnic Tourism*. Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publishing.

Yack, Bernard. 1996. "The Myth of the Civic Nation." *Critical Review* 10(2):193–211.

Zelditch Jr., Morris. 2001. "Theories of Legitimacy." Pp. 33–55 in John T. Jost and Brenda Major, eds., *The Psychology of Legitimacy: Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Zhang, Aijing. 2004. "Culture Ministry Says it Has Considered the First Round of the National Theatre Performance Issues [Wenhuabu cheng yijing zai kaolu guojiadajuyuan de shoulun yanchu wenti] *People's Daily [Renmin Ribao]* February 12. Available at ⟨http://www.people.com.cn/GB/wenhua/22219/2335431.html⟩.