



## Article

# Pedagogy of nation: A concept and method to research nationalism in young children's institutional lives

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## Abstract

In our current context, researching how young children encounter and inhabit the nation among diverse people is ever-more important. In societies free of conflict, the nation operates beneath the surface, therefore, it is difficult to study. By bringing together the perspectives of 'everyday nationalism' and 'cultural pedagogy', I develop the concept of 'pedagogy of nation' to focus on and account for various didactic means through which young children learn to inhabit the nation and to further explore everyday nationalism.

## Keywords

Cultural pedagogy, diversity, everyday nationalism, institutions, socio-material practices

## Introduction

Very young children encounter and negotiate different ideas and practices of nationalism, performances of national identity and feelings for the nation in education settings (Benei, 2008: 96; Leonard, 2012; Mavroudi and Holt, 2015; Millei and Imre, 2015; Zembylas, 2010). This is not surprising since in institutional spaces, the state seeks to re/assert the primacy of national community in its citizen's thinking, beings and feelings, for example, through national history or geography curricula, or in the running of everyday life framed by national policies that harmonize, set normative frameworks and limits on how life unfolds (Bonikowski, 2016). If tensions arise in the negotiations of identities, for example, in everyday conversations, nationalism is usually absorbed by existing institutional practices in stable, modern democracies (Bonikowski, 2016: 429). At other places

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and times, such as in unstable political regimes, times of crisis or during times of social transformation, underlying nationalism can crystallize and lead to heightened national awareness and, for example, to separatist or anti-migration politics. Due to our current context of populism and rapidly shifting politics to the right that rely on these crystallized and highly potent forms of nationalism, to know more about how the nation becomes young children's 'second nature' (Fox, 2017: 35) in institutional spaces and in settled times is ever-more important, but as yet we know little about it.

In everyday life, the nation often operates 'just beneath the surface, underpinning the social order without requiring, or even permitting, much tinkering' (Fox, 2017: 26). Nationalism wanes into the fabric of everyday life, it is 'unseen, unheard, unnoticed; this kind of nationalism operates off the radar. It's everywhere, yet discernible nowhere' (Billig, 1995; Fox, 2017: 27). Due to its nature, it is difficult to explore everyday nationalism, but it is present in mundane and embodied practices, such as driving (Edensor, 2006), dish washing (Linde-Laursen, 1993) or shopping (Skey, 2015). In institutional care of young children, everyday nationalism takes its shape in daily schedules, priorities laid on certain values, or embodied practices of eating, dressing and celebrations, in language use, such as mandating the national language for migrants or 'speaking' in skin colour (Srinivasan, 2016), or in mundane play (MacNaughton, 2001). In her exploration of Finnish preschool culture, Lappalainen (2006: 103), for example, reveals how governance of time is an important part of 'a national pedagogy' to shape migrant parents' behaviour. In an everyday struggle between professionals and families, the ability to follow timetables and 'promptness became defined as a Finnish national virtue' (p. 104). In these practices, the nation is reproduced as the taken for granted order of things and way of life that children participate in.

Everyday nationalism recounts the continuity of the everyday re/production of national frameworks through countless situated activities (Edensor, 2002). It focuses on 'how relatively consistent sense of self, place, and time is (re)produced through routine habits, taken-for-granted symbolic systems and familiar material environments' (Skey, 2011: 35). These activities often appear as internalized and naturalized habits, where the nation 'operate[s] mindlessly, rather than mindfully' (Billig, 1995: 38). While proponents discuss the multiple ways and forms in which everyday nationalism operates, and point to socialization to describe how knowledge, practices and feelings come to be internalized also signalling an educative process (see more in Fox, 2017), they rarely interrogate through what actual processes, experiences, relations and situated activities this educative process takes place or pay attention to the educative elements and forces present in everyday encounters.

In this article, I offer a new concept – *pedagogy of nation*, which helps orientate research to this educative process in identifying its elements and forces in pragmatic research. I also spell out the relations between teaching and learning (pedagogy) the nation that points then to how intentional pedagogy can or needs to be. In conceptualizing pedagogy of nation, the form of pedagogy I draw on operates as a 'cultural relay' to re/produce culture in general without necessitating the presence or relying only on human teachers (Watkins et al., 2015). I add to pedagogy the postscript 'of nation' to signal the scope or agenda of these educative encounters. 'National pedagogy' has been coined by Tuomaala (2000) to describe intentional teaching practices in pre/schools, through which

an imagined and homogeneous national community is forged, referencing Anderson's work (1991; see more in Lappalainen, 2006). In 'national pedagogy' the emphasis is on the formation of individuals through intentional educational practices, such as teaching the curricula or hidden curriculum by a teacher. In the concept of 'pedagogy of nation' that I develop here, less explicit and non-intentional but still educative encounters, incitement of a will to learn in children, and non-human teachers (such as the environment), spaces and emotions are also included, as I outline below.

I develop the concept of 'pedagogy of nation' by drawing on Watkins (2011, 2015, 2017), Wetherell (2015) and Ahmed's (2004) work. Since my interest is to outline what educative processes learning the nation entails, I rely more on Watkins's work that focuses on cultural habituation, and teaching and learning relations. All these authors emphasize the role of an other (human and non-human), space, relations of bodies in place, and emotions and affect shaping the individual and the social, which all also have a prominent role in educative processes that I outline below. While one could argue that these educative processes mark all aspects of life, with this concept I single out those that are related to nation. First, however, I briefly outline the existing literature, studying how the nation is present in children's lives. Then, I develop the concept of 'pedagogy of nation' to explore educative processes related to nation. To follow, I introduce three events observed as part of an ethnographic study with 4 and 5 year-old children, and through their analysis I further develop this concept, at the same time demonstrating how this concept can be operationalized as a method for the exploration of everyday nationalism.

## **Children perform the nation**

The largest body of work with regard to how children relate to the nation is located in the cognitive developmental paradigm (Scourfield et al., 2006a). From psychological studies, we know that many children already know some of their countries' national symbolic emblems, such as flags, the national anthems and so on by 5–6 years of age (Barrett, 2007). Children's approaches towards national groups are varied and with time they become more positive or negative, or ebb and flow (Barrett, 2007). Psychological studies explore attitudes, prejudice and stereotyping in individual children and identification with in-groups or out-groups.

Young children (even as young as a couple of years old) mobilize these identifications and representations of nation and use those in their everyday life to include and exclude (e.g. Beneï, 2008; Burman, 2008; Cheney, 2007; Coles, 1986; Habashi, 2008; Hart, 2002; Leonard, 2012; MacNaughton, 2001; Scourfield et al., 2006a; Srinivasan, 2016; Stephens, 1995; Zembylas, 2010). In these identifications, children draw on a variety of constructs of 'nation' and 'nationality', and their intersections with race, class, gender, religion, language, land and other cultural markers. In societies divided by internal cultural and ethnic divisions and conflicts, signifiers of the nation often become valorized by children who creatively use those as symbols of superiority, exclusion or oppression to be resisted and subverted (Beneï, 2008; Habashi, 2008; Hart, 2002; Leonard, 2012; Zembylas, 2010). These studies powerfully demonstrate the ways in which children take up, resist and reshape imaginaries of the nation and form dynamic subjectivities within the complex geopolitics enveloping their daily lives.

Shifting away from the ideational field of nationalism, research also explores how nationalist discourses and practices are reproduced and performed in everyday contexts (Antonsich, 2015; Jones and Merriman, 2009; Skey, 2011, etc). They explore bodily practices, materialities, rhythms, emotions and affectivity (e.g. Anderson, 2009; Antonsich and Skey, 2016; Closs Stephens, 2016; Edensor, 2002, 2006; Huijsmans and Lan, 2015). These studies illustrate the context-specific ways in which individuals, groups, or institutions engage in reproducing the nation through transient processes where national times and practices performed in varied ways. How young children perform and feel the nation in stable democracies and during settled times is only explored by a small body of research (see for example, Lappalainen, 2006; MacNaughton, 2001; Srinivasan, 2016; Waniganayake and Donegan, 1999). Lappalainen discusses the importance of Lutheran celebrations, where intersections of race and gender in celebratory practices play a large role in the re/production of the nation in the preschool. Srinivasan (2016) and MacNaughton (2001: 48–49) contextualize their studies as a part of the post-colonial and post White Australia policy period and shows how for children race–colour do matter, they take Whiteness as desirable, otherness as exotic and the dark ‘Other’ as fearful, thus recreating the institutional culture of White Australia within their everyday preschool encounters.

These studies richly demonstrate that children have knowledge about, re/produce, identify with and have emotions for the nation, their own national community and the Other. The very processes through which young children inhabit and learn the nation, how they come to associate with, form sensibilities and emotions towards the nation, and what roles educative processes play in those remain less interrogated. I propose the concept of ‘pedagogy of nation’ to help explore these processes.

## **Pedagogy of nation**

For my agenda here, I understand nationalism as practice that involves people’s thinking, acting and feeling. In this view of ‘everyday nationalism’, nations are made real and meaningful to people in social interactions in local places of everyday encounters (Brubaker, 2009; Skey, 2011). ‘Everyday nationalism’ conceives the nation as a process that continuously reinvents itself adjusting to changing circumstances of the social, political and economic world. National forms of knowledge, practices and emotions are embedded in institutional settings and coordinate, sustain and naturalize particular notions and experiences of the world (Skey, 2011). In these spaces, as Skey (2011) explains, a ‘relatively consistent sense of self, place, and time is (re)produced through routine habits, taken-for-granted symbolic systems and familiar material environments’ (p. 35). Skey (2011), by extending Billig’s (1995) notion of banal forms of nationalism, refers here to routine habits. Operating at a habitual level, everyday nationalism, if acquired, socializes, shapes the individual, in knowledge, embodiment and feelings. I am especially interested here in the process of acquisition, and its pedagogic aspects. A pedagogic aspect is always present in socialization, even if the individual learns by herself in a self-directed way, trying to act as others do in situations (Watkins, 2015). The others’ performance carries a pedagogic aspect. Any type of learning also requires the engenderment of the students’ own will to learn (Watkins, 2015). This will to learn can also be an

object of pedagogy ‘by the input and direction of an other’ (Watkins, 2015: 25). This kind of pedagogy and its didactic means I find productive for the examination of how children learn the nation. Through a will to learn and with repetition, knowledge, acts or feelings become embodied and habituated, and they require less conscious attention from the individual (and pedagogic intervention), unless modification is required.

Didactic means in this pedagogy includes the teaching enacted by human or non-human others, and as I discussed above, also those that incite the learner for teaching the self. For example, as children learn to navigate national times (see Lappalainen, 2006), the explicit instruction of the teacher can include the passing of knowledge, showing techniques to help keep time, offering reasoning, demonstrating behaviour that children imitate. At other times, songs, symbolic objects or cheers can serve as didactic elements, all form a part of human didactic. Non-human didactic can also be present, such as a schedule in pictures on the wall, or the available places and spaces to do or not do certain activities in, which help teach children to shape their own behaviours. Thus, the physical environment in institutional settings also carries non-human didactic means. Their object–human relations can thus also promote learning that might complement acts of the human teacher (Watkins, 2011, 2015, 2017). *Human and non-human didactic means* function as a continuous directive, or corrective, within the social space. Habituation acquired in one space can spill over to other spheres of life allowing common dwelling (Watkins, 2015). Thus, learning and keeping national times in preschool can spill over to the home, for example, as children become hungry and request snacks at the same time as they usually would eat in preschool.

In learning, *mimetic elements* of habituation are also highlighted by Watkins (2015). In mimesis, not simply repetition but variations are also produced, allowing innovation alongside transmission, thus opening other possibilities. Variation marks the location of the transformative potential of human and non-human didactic. Object–human relations also carry pedagogical force through which the iterative process can be aided and/or altered. For example, objects carrying symbolic meanings can serve as reminders for repeated actions if placed at a strategic place, such as in the situation below, camping chairs in the outside preschool area remind children to enact a BBQ invoking an Australian lifestyle.

*Emotion and affect* can also work as didactic means. For Wetherell (2015: 147), affective activity is a form of social practice. Wetherell (2015) explains that ‘affective practice is a moment of recruitment, articulation or enlistment when many complicated flows across bodies, subjectivities, relations, histories and contexts entangle and intertwine together to form just this affective moment, episode or atmosphere with its particular possible classifications’ (p. 160). Affective practices can differ in scale as they vitalize a subject, or families and small groups, or as they are being distributed in communal celebrations or in collective moods. For example, the teacher can enlist her patriotic feeling or create an affective atmosphere to incite a child’s will to learn information or attune the child so she exhibits certain behaviours (see also affective atmospheres as part of everyday nationalism, e.g. Closs Stephens [2016] or Merriman and Jones [2017]). The flow of affect is located in the teacher’s body, such as gestures, eye gaze, exclamations or self-talk, but also within the flow of ordinary life. Affective attunement in the flow of ordinary life combines with social and cultural processes that orientate us in our interactions.

Different spatialities connect and bring with them temporal regularities that help individuals to orientate with moral orders of a given place and coordinate activities across particular locales. Space also 'locates' identities, as Massey (2005) explains: 'we cannot become without others. And it is space [bodily and social] that provides the necessary condition for that possibility' (p. 56). Space also allows individuals to experience themselves as unitary and stable entities, in this case, as national subjects. Spaces and micro-spaces themselves can relay pedagogic forces, they can craft the body, hence their pedagogic effect, by promoting different forms of embodiment. Watkins, as an example, describes the 'bodily incorporation' of the proper use of steps in schools (lining up, keeping to a side, etc.), which becomes automatic with time, a bodily know-how promoting communal dwelling in larger communities as well. Shifting bodies, animate and inanimate, and social, psychological and climatic dimensions (atmospheres) compose an '*interiority*' of space referring to the space's quality (Watkins' [2011] '*interiority*' is different from '*interior*', also in this notion space is not bounded, it has relations with other spaces and is always in the making, which understanding is based on Massey's notion of space [2005]). In the 'pedagogy of nation', the interiority of space plays a crucial role in habituating and teaching children's bodies and actions. For example, the rhythm of life (slow, fast, changing) or the allowed level of noise in preschools carry didactic means.

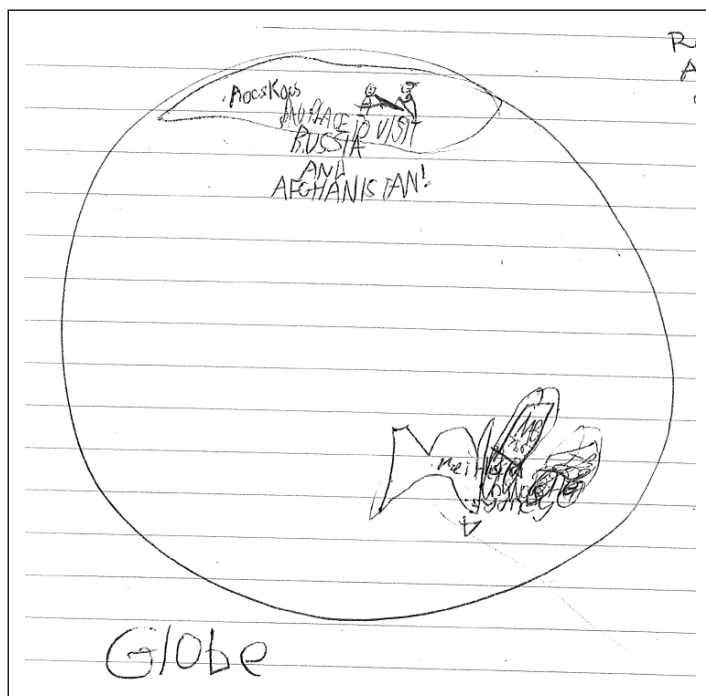
The concept of *pedagogy of nation* is thus composed of the following elements: (1) human and non-human didactic means (including mimetic elements), (2) emotions and affects and (3) interiority of space. In the next section, I offer three examples to illustrate and further develop the concept of *pedagogy of nation*, and also demonstrate how it can be operationalized as a method to research everyday nationalism in children's institutional contexts.

## Operationalizing 'pedagogy of nation'

The project that these examples are drawn from aimed at research nationalism in young children's lives by moving beyond children's 'sense-making', expressed beliefs, values and feeling. Ethnographic observations sought to foreground the everyday life of children when they were *doing things* as a part of the flow of life. The study took place for 18 months in an Australian preschool during 2013–2014. A focus on 'sense-making' orients the observer to human participants (Sørensen, 2013). When situations are considered through a socio-material perspective, human and non-human bodies are viewed as 'intimately situationally entangled' (Sørensen, 2013: 118). The researcher's focus shifts to coinciding events where the material and social coexist and interplay. As Sørensen (2013: 118) explains, focusing on socio-material processes 'highlights 'doings' in contrast to 'sense'', shifting the attention towards the situation and its processes. Applying this principle, it became possible to observe how humans and non-humans, spaces, feelings and affective relations congeal situations that together create socializing relations and environments for children.

### *Russia, a bad place to visit*

Lucas and I are sitting by the table outside on the preschool's veranda. He draws a globe while I listen (Figure 1). He draws Australia, New Zealand, the sea separating them and a



**Figure 1.** War in Russia and Afghanistan.

car: 'I am drawing a car in Newcastle. I draw my pup's car in Newcastle'. He continues the drawing by moving to the top of the circle representing the globe. 'I just put the cities there and the places where the cities are'. He writes letters while also pronouncing their sounds, then says 'Mocow, Moscow'. As I could not understand what he said I ask: 'I don't know about that place where is that?' 'That is in Russia'—Lucas responds. 'Aha, that is Moscow'—I realize. 'They fight in Russia, there are people fighting in Russia'—says as he draws two stick figures (maybe fighting): 'People fight in Russia and Afghanistan and other places'. Lucas turns his face towards me, erects his body so he looks taller and gives me a meaningful smile. 'Really'—I exclaim with surprise. His body is in full concentration as he writes on his map: 'BAD PLACE TO VISIT RUSSIA AND AFGHANISTAN!' 'Do you know what the writing says?'—he asks. "What?" His face lights up as he turns towards me: "Bad place to visit". "Bad place to visit"—I repeat. "Bad place to visit Russia and Afghanistan"—he repeats with a raised tension in his voice. "Bad place to visit Russia and Afghanistan because they are fighting there"—I repeat with excitement. He continues the writing with full concentration as I ask: "Do they fight in Australia?" 'Nee'—with a disaffected tone of voice and not even looking at me, just shaking his head. As he finishes the drawing, he withdraws his body from the desk and turns to me with a smile on his face and says in an excited tone of voice: "See there is an exclamation mark!" and he points to it. He is raising both arms, then he shakes them while shouting out with a frightened but smiling face: 'Bad place of Russia where they gloody [bloody?] scared!!!' Then he turns away to look at what others are doing behind him.

Lucas seems to reproduce earlier experiences while drawing the world map, including his pup's (father's) car in Newcastle, almost as if diametrically opposed with Moscow on the globe. His drawing thus carries *mimetic elements* that reproduce earlier behaviours. Lucas often sits with the map at home and teaches himself countries, their contours and locations. Studying his world map and carefully drawing it, a world divided by nations is learnt. Calling it 'pup's car', he expresses his emotions towards his father and the place where his father lives and his car is parked. Lucas mostly lives with his mother close to the preschool located at a distance from Newcastle, because their parents are separated. He often visits his pup who shares with him a passion for maps and countries of the world. As they sit together, *human didactic elements* (explanation, repetition) and *non-human didactic elements* (world map he uses to learn nations and the maps he draws to represent those through his knowledge and feelings about them), and *emotional elements* (fear mixed with excitement about war) are present in their teaching and learning the nation.

In the observed situation, as he draws Russia, locates Moscow and writes the sentence, he contrasts his cosy experience of Newcastle with that of stirring Russia and Afghanistan where people fight. In Newcastle, his self-identification is provided by his location within the family context, and Moscow is a place represented by public discourse. These places for Lucas have accumulated 'specific sets of cultural markers that give them their distinctive "symbolic shape": home and family, distant and war (Scourfield et al., 2006b: 579). His voice fills with excitement and fear, which emotions he attaches to be in those distant places. People fight there, it is a place where people are very scared. Fear seems to be embodied by him as he performs it. While in Australia, he feels secure, it is a peaceful and safe place, a place of no worry or fears, hence his relaxed body position. In his presentation of Russia and Afghanistan, no cultural 'other' appeared, rather he projected a sense of his own self (being scared if he was there) onto these distant places (see more in Scourfield et al., 2006b). The shared excitement of father and son incites Lucas to learn about nations, including his home, and this learning also includes emotional elements, learning how to feel about one's nation. As Wetherell (2015) explains, '[w]hat comes into view, in other words, is the human work involved in being emotional and being affected, in parsing and categorizing affective states, and the exquisite, highly complex intersections between body states, methods of registering and describing these, and the context (p. 146) ... A (affective) practice is an assemblage for now which draws on past assemblages and influences the shape of future activity' (p. 147).

In the *interiority of space*, at home and in the preschool, we feel in common – father and son, and Lucas and researcher – as we are being scared in Russia and safe in Australia. The negative attachment to Russia and Afghanistan produces a positive attachment to Australia and its people. The shared visceral response of being scared creates a collective 'us', and by adapting Ahmed's (2004) observation, *[t]ogether we ... [are being scared] and this ... [fear] is what makes us together* (p. 26). In the interiority of space human and non-human means, mimesis and emotions assemble as a pedagogy of nation. Lucas learns, mimics and also teaches the nation to me, the researcher. In the next example, not a person but a group of children are learning the nation.



## Aussie Easter

Morning group time on the mat is a period facilitated by the teacher while the children arrive at preschool. In this morning group time, children discuss how they will spend their Easter. Some children travel to the bush where they will camp, some stay at home and go for a picnic and some go to stay in a hotel. As children's attention shift away, the circle time is drawing to a close with a song. The teacher puts on the song *Aussie Easter* that accompanies the book authored by Colin Buchanan and John McIntosh. A seemingly unfamiliar song for the children, sung in a country style, the song is about the Easter long weekend, hot in the bush, the chocolate eggs melt in the back of the UTE (small truck). It is about picnic, cricket and the chorus goes: 'Aussie Easter Oi! Oi! Oi! Aussie Oi! Easter Oi! Aussie Easter Oi! Oi! Oi!' The teacher sings along and at the chorus she lifts up her hand, erects her body and elevated by the spirit of the song joins loudly the chorus. An excited wave runs through the room. The other teacher in the circle remains in her position. The one sitting behind the group at a small table continues to write her notes about what is taking place. Some children lift up their hands as in a football game cheer. Children are animated to different extents. Some join in with the teacher singing, others have a puzzled look on their faces, some turn to me showing how they cheer with a smile, while others pay no attention. Yet again others cannot strike the same pose. They try to mimic the force of the movement, better and better to resemble the pose and expression of the teacher while they cheer: Oi! Oi! Oi! Later in the day the children asked the teacher to sing the song again.

*Aussie Easter* is about a quintessential and stale Australian story full of stereotypical tropes, such as the UTE, picnic or cricket, representing an Anglo-Australian myth and the 'informality, classlessness, and love of the natural that typifies "Australia"' (Bradford, 1995: 112). Animated possibly by her patriotic emotions arising as she is singing and acting the song, the teacher loudly cheers with voice and movement. The demonstration of cheer is the *human didactic mean* that spring children into imitation. Together with the movement and cheer, the teacher is also teaching a way of expressing feelings for the nation. Through repeated iteration and *mimesis*, some children are getting better and better in performing this patriotic act. Others seem to relate to the song and cheering in diverse ways: with ignorance, surprise, lack of practice, uninterest or being preoccupied. The song coming from the CD player, as a *non-human didactic mean*, and the *emotional atmosphere* it creates together with the teachers' cheers, incite the children to learn. Later, they want to sing and act again.

The performance of the *Aussie Easter* song carries a significant pedagogic force with its Australian symbols, the UTE, cricket, the bush, cheering the expression, the rhythm and rhymes of the song, the teacher's excitement and cheering. The *interiority of space*, created by the bodies of children and teachers settled close together, helped carry this force, children's bodies were caught up together in this performance, even if some remained unaffected. While singing this song, the song and seemingly unfamiliar actions could not configure a homogeneous group within this space. Performing the *Aussie Easter* song in sync would require more iteration it seems, repeated instruction to guide 'the orchestra before and during the performance' (Watkins, 2017: 4). This form of orchestration together with the non-human didactics of symbolic objects, cheers and emotions might bring the performance together but *mimesis* would also depend on

various forms of learning. This situation illustrates that the *Aussie Easter* song does not possess intrinsic national qualities. Its potential to teach children, to bind children's bodies together and to learn to feel for the nation, emerge out of interactions and relationalities in the interiority of space as they generate affects and incite children to learn. In these configurations, the pedagogy of nation has a special role. In the next example, a more conscious pedagogy of nation is enacted by the teacher.

### *The Wheels on the Holden*

During morning group time the teacher sits down and asks children to sit in a circle and come close to each other so they are able to give each other a hug. Children's bodies are tightly connected in a circle. The teacher explains: 'This is a song about going for a ride and we are going all over the place. In this song there are some Indigenous words, and two of those words are "jarjums" (children) and "moogle" (naughty), do you know what they mean?' One child responds: 'Naughty'. 'In this song you can really do some naughty things, be silly. To be moogle we could "prrrr"' (the teacher pushes her tongue out and blows a raspberry and puts her hand to her nose, her thumb connecting to her nose palm stretched out). The children burst out into a long loud laugh and start to imitate. Children listen with expectation to the song titled *The Wheels on the Holden* written by Aunty Wendy's Mob. The sound of didgeridoo and a simple melody fills the air. The teacher sings to accompany the CD player. The children move their arms in a circle in unison, then cuddle each other, smiling and giggling as they try to follow the teachers' moves. Their gazes travel and they make eye contact with each other but often shift back to the teacher's movements. After listening to the song, the teacher calms the children, their bodies relax from their shared poses.

To celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the *Growing Up Strong* CD and the performance of the *The Wheels on the Holden* song<sup>1</sup> is developed in consultation with Indigenous communities. The teacher has brought this song with the purpose to reflect Indigenous cultures as a part of her efforts to promote inclusion, an inclusive nation. Being Australian has been defined in racist and sexist terms as early settlers battled with the hostile land and Indigenous peoples, and later, as a part of immigration policies sought to build a 'white nation' through what is popularly known as White Australia policies (Castles et al., 1987; Hage, 1998). Around the Bicentenary celebrations taking place in 1988, there were strong attempts to redefine Australia and what it means to be Australian. The reframed national ideology promoted a multicultural identity for the nation pointing to the need for reconciliation and a need to recognize diversity. As Castles et al. (1987) summarize, the political line of these celebrations was that 'we must be multicultural to be national' (p. 3). From the 1990s, Australia is characterized by notions of plurality and hybridity, and cultural difference is seen as constitutive of Australian national identity (Turner, 1994). Despite this reframed ideology, older, racist and sexist notions of Australianness are still strongly present. As Srinivasan (2016) based on her study in an Australian preschool demonstrates, 'race' and 'colour' classifies the national subject even at a very young age. She continues, even today the 'ownership of national identity is not available for all children', which has an 'impact on the identities of those children who are 'brown'' (Srinivasan, 2016: 25). Since the 1990s, Australian governments repeatedly aspired to build social cohesion through reconciliation, attempts of

these are present in early education policies and practices (MacNaughton and Davis, 2001; Sumsion and Grieshaber, 2012). The current national curriculum for young children, *Early Years Learning Framework* (AGDEEWR, 2009), upholds diversity and reconciliation as important ideals and supports practices for inclusion. The teacher in this example intentionally enacts this practice to create an inclusive setting.

Apart from the *human didactic means*, questioning, demonstrating, explaining, and acting and inviting children to be silly, *non-human didactic means* also help enacting this performance, such as the tones and rhythms of the song, the circle of bodies, giggles and eye contacts between the children, together create a special pedagogic configuration. Children's bodies move with and towards each other, they enjoy singing and acting the song. With their synchronous acting, joyous singing, touching and hugging each other, an *emotional atmosphere* is produced in the *interiority of space* and a collectivity emerges. Indigenous and White bodies emerge as a collective through their harmonized moves, cuddles and feelings as they sing and act on. The emergent collective is seemingly unaffected with longer histories of contact shaped with perceptions of Indigenous others as the origin of danger and as long histories of racism in Australia ingrained that in its citizens (Ahmed, 2004; Taylor, 2014). Having children being present from all lineages – Indigenous and several other cultural backgrounds – failed to invade children's bodily territory. They seemingly created positive associations and remained unaffected by negative attachments. Spaces of everyday life shape how people make sense, consume and resist various knowledges and how people experience nationalism on an everyday basis and in their identity formation (Jones and Merriman, 2009). In this event, through her intentional pedagogy of nation, the teacher has managed to reshape dominant discourses and experiences of Australian nationalism.

From a discursive reading, however, it is also important to point out how Indigenous children were positioned in this performance as 'naughty'. Although it might be that the 'silliness' of the performance carried pedagogic efforts, at the same time it also positioned Indigenous children especially, but all children, as silly. Putting this aside, the human and non-human didactic means of this event, its affective elements and performance might offer some ways in which to enact a pedagogy of nation where instruction focused on creating positive attachments to Indigenous peoples and an ideal of and feelings to an inclusive nation emerge. This kind of explicit human and non-human didactic means together with the production of space and emotions might help to break the hegemony of the Whiteness of Australian nationalism in preschools illuminated by MacNaughton (2001) and Srinivasan (2016).

## Further research

As the above examples illustrate, the concept and aspects of *pedagogy of nation* offer productive ways to think about and analyse everyday institutional practices. It also helps to refocus the researcher's attention from children's sense-making to complex processes through which the nation is re/produced in everyday life. Working with this concept, the researcher is able to systematically identify the didactic participation of human and non-human actors, the quality of spaces, emotions and affects in socialization processes through which young children learn the nation. Proponents of everyday

nationalism contend that it is difficult to discern and explore the nation in settled times. Everyday nationalism often only becomes visible when ‘breaches of ordinary but otherwise unspoken rules of social intercourse’ take place (Fox, 2017: 31). These breaches, as Fox (2017) explains, most often occur at the edges of the nation, such as at geographic national borders, or on political edges, when migrants breach taken for granted rules and norms. Breaches also appear at the temporal edges of the nation, at times when new nations are being formed and new histories, new cultures, symbols and practices emerge, or at times when children inhabit the nation by learning who is ‘we’ or ‘us’ as national subjects and how they feel at home within their nation (Fox, 2017). The concept of pedagogy of nation offers a tool to make the ‘hard to notice’ everyday nationalism visible as it gets hold of children’s bodies in educational institutions, private or public spaces. With this method, research can further explore how through iterative processes forms of sociality emerge and experiences sediment in children to make the nation anew in mundane encounters.

In the above illustrative situations, the nation has not yet always gained significance for children, or at least not through the symbols, songs, objects, sentiments and emotions performed. Exploring how children inhabit and learn the nation – as banal as learning and discussing about the world or singing a song through which forms of sociality arise, emotions learned and attachments are formed – is a significant agenda. It helps to understand how collective dwelling in the nation emerges in children with its ethical and moral relations. These relations, however, are often exclusive in lines of racial, ethnic or religious divides. Learning more about the processes through which children habituate the nation, offers entry points where intentional pedagogies of nation can be enacted. Through these explicit pedagogies, relations can be reshaped towards a more inclusive ideal and everyday form of nationalism, such as the one emerged during the performance of the Indigenous song. National ideologies and sentiments remain strong in public discourses. When discourses of the nation as a mono-cultural entity are associated with migration (past or present), the coexistence of the nation with diversity often appears as problematic or undesirable in public discourse (Antonsich and Matejskova, 2015). In this context, researching how children encounter, inhabit and learn the nation in their everyday life among diverse people is ever-more important.

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## Note

1. (<https://www.auntywendysmob.com/home>) This song is from a CD that was produced by an Indigenous singer and released specifically for early childhood educators to help them introduce Indigenous culture into their preschool settings.

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