

Nationalism and media

Call for papers

An academic conference to be held
in Antwerp 5-7 April 2022

www.nationalismand.media



University
of Antwerp



Introduction

The 31st Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN) will take place 5-7 April 2022 in Antwerp (Belgium), in cooperation with National movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe (NISE), the University of Antwerp, and Ghent University. This year's theme will be nationalism and media.

Call for papers

For as long as nationalist movements have existed, ideological pamphlets, historical novels that constructed a romantic national past to visual arts and hashtags such as #maga on Twitter have instrumentalised media. Next to disseminating explicit nationalist messages, media (printed press and visual arts included) also play a role for nationalism by making national symbols and discourses part of everyday life. By continuously providing representations of the nation and by presenting the world as a world of nations, media help to naturalise nationalism.

Since Karl Deutsch's *Nationalism and social communication* (1953/1966), many studies of nationalism and national movements have pointed at the role of media. Most famously, in *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson emphasized the importance of 'print capitalism' in the emergence of modern nations. The growing distribution of newspapers, magazines, books and other print media facilitated language standardisation and literacy and through that to the development of a collective consciousness and the formation of an imagined community.

The so-called 'second Gutenberg revolution' (early 19th century) rendered printing considerably faster and cheaper, eventually putting the 'mass' in mass media. This was salutary for national movements, often lacking the infrastructure that modern states possessed, and facilitated their global development. Global reach and very low costs associated with social media today provide

platforms not only to national movements aspiring to state-building, but also to fringe ultra-nationalist groups without access to mainstream media.

While media can contribute to the construction of nations, media are also formed by nations, since nations often determine the institutional and legal frameworks within which media operate. For the study of nationalism, the question is then whether this media dissemination coincides with a nation, or rather reaches another community.

Studies on the organization of media usually depart from a top-down approach, without taking into consideration the active roles that audiences take up in making meaning. The 'everyday nationhood' concept complements these studies by proposing a bottom-up approach, focusing on the place 'ordinary' people give to the national through their media consumption and their own production of media content. As a consequence, social media have unifying and dividing effects on nation building as through them competing definitions of modern nationhood come to the fore.

Despite the consensus about the idea that media are important for nationalism, this relationship is rarely explored in depth. How exactly can we understand the relationship between different forms of both media and nationalism? What are the common characteristics and the differences between different geographical and political contexts? How did the relationship between media and nationalism evolve? Given the enormous growth of media in late modern and contemporary history, has its importance for nationalism grown accordingly? And how did the rise of transnational (social) media and user generated content media affect nationalism?

This conference is intended to cover cases from all parts of the world and welcomes papers based on different theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, and from different disciplines and fields, such as history, media and communication studies, political science, sociology, linguistics and literature. The conference will take

place in person, at the University of Antwerp. However, certain timeslots will be reserved for online sessions, in order to facilitate the participation of scholars who would otherwise be unable to travel to Antwerp, and to encourage scholars from outside Europe to participate. Requests for a place in the online sessions should be clearly indicated when submitting an abstract.

Themes

Possible themes include:

- Revisiting media and nationalism theories;
- Media and nationalist propaganda;
- Media and banal nationalism;
- Media and everyday nationalism;
- Media and national indifference;
- New media and nationalism;
- Media, nationalism and gender/sexuality/class/age/ethnicity;
- The representation of nations in media;
- The role of media in naturalizing the idea of a ‘world of nations’;
- Media as sources for nationalism research;
- Social media and nationalism as a part of civil societies and public spheres
- Competing definitions in both visual and literary media
- Media, education and nationalism

Abstracts

Abstracts may contain proposals for individual papers, entire panels and workshops. Abstracts are to be submitted before November 15th 2021 at <http://nationalismand.media/abstract>.

All abstracts will be peer reviewed before final acceptance.

We will let you know whether your abstract has been accepted in January 2022.

Conference organizers

The conference is organized by ASEN (asen.ac.uk), NISE (nise.eu), the University of Antwerp's Departments of History, Literature, and Communications Studies (uantwerpen.be), and Ghent University's Departments of History and Communications Studies (ugent.be).

Contact

If you have any queries, you can contact the organizing team by email at hello@nationalismand.media or by telephone and WhatsApp on +44 78 85 99 16 33.

We look forward to welcoming you to Antwerp.