should be loyal to the French flag and that colonial rule is perfectly reasonable.

For Barthes, the function of myth is to make particular concepts seem natural, because then they will not be contested. Our job as media critics is to remove the impression of naturalness by explaining how the myth is constructed, and show that it promotes one way of thinking while seeking to eliminate all the alternatives. The analysis of myth is political, and the key concept in this analysis is "ideology," which means a way of perceiving society in which some political ideas (like colonial rule) appear self-evidently natural and right. Barthes proposes that myth in contemporary Western civilization serves the ideological interests of a particular social class, the bourgeoisie, who own or control the industrial, commercial, and political institutions of the developed world. It is in the interests of this class to maintain the stability of society, in order that their power and wealth remain unchallenged. Existing power relations might sometimes be maintained by force, but it is most effective and convenient to maintain them by eliminating alternative ways of thinking. This is done by making the current system of political beliefs, the dominant ideology, seem commonsensical, and necessary.

Ideologies can be changed. It is no longer common sense, as it once was, to think that black people are inferior to whites, that women are inferior to men, or that children can be employed to do manual labor. But media mythologies still support ideologies naturalizing consumerism and acquisitiveness, economic and gender inequality, and environmental degradation. Analyzing contemporary myth in the media can be difficult because current ideologies are made to seem commonsensical. We still need the powerful semiotic methodologies embedded in media studies for half a century (Fiske and Hartley 1978; Fowler 1991; Hartley 1982; Seiter 1992; Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis 1992).

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Nation
Melissa Aronczyk

The nation is a container for ideas about identity and culture, borders and boundaries, common descent and shared history. In its deictic form—"we" the nation—it is rhetorically powerful, alluding to a sense of collective values and goals. When hyphenated to the state, it takes on a formal connotation, bringing to mind government infrastructure and economy. Nation has a normative dimension: we all "ought" to belong to one, or at least have roots in one; and these origins are seen to define us—and to define who does not belong.

In its cognate form—nationalism—it is used by turns in a positive sense, such as in the context of claims for autonomy and self-determination; and in a negative sense, as a label for antagonistic behaviors and exclusionary practices. The distinction is sometimes a matter of standpoint: "we" are patriotic while "they" are nationalist. Regardless, the nation is still regularly used as a metaphor for home, and for this reason it occupies a powerful place in our social imaginary.

Contemporary media studies has an ambivalent relationship with the idea of nation. Many have diagnosed it as being in ill health, pointing to symptoms of its demise in an era of global media, mobility, and migration (Appadurai 1990; Couldry 2012; Morley 2000). Work in this vein attends to the ways media processes and content now circulate unbound from national frameworks. This perspective is heightened by the seeming placelessness and anonymity of the Internet and social media platforms. Such vastly expanded potential for

communication and connectivity across the limits of the nation prompts visions of a cosmopolitan mind-set, according to which we are citizens of the world and not beholden to the standards or regulations of any given nation (Beck 2013).

Others look instead to the ways the nation continues to matter in a transnational media landscape. For example, Terry Flew and Silvio Waisbord (2015, 622) argue for the relevance of national media systems in a "convergent media order." Not only do media corporations tend to be less transnational than corporations in other industries, they explain, but many local audiences (including national audiences) still strongly prefer locally produced content over global formats (Straubhaar 2007). Another example is found in the ways that media coverage of global events—from financial crises to health pandemics—reflects national frameworks of reference and appeals to national audiences (Beck 2013; Rantanen 2012). It is not just that national media systems design content to appeal to national audiences; media regulation and policy are developed and enforced in national contexts. "Global media production networks continue to rely upon a range of enabling support structures provided by nation-states that range from communications infrastructure and tax incentives to labor laws and the policing of copyright" (Flew and Waisbord 2015, 628).

Too often, such debates pit the national against the global, as if one had to win out over the other. The key, rather, is to see the national and the global as mutually reinforcing concepts that overlap in everyday media practices. Take, for instance, the recent explosion of "K-pop" music and "K-drama" TV shows outside Asia. This cultural content manifests particular ideas of Korea and Koreans even as it is transformed through its global circulation (Ju and Lee 2015). K-media is promoted as part of the country's distinct national identity by the South Korean government, but it is influenced and re-created by fans outside Korea at global festivals like KCON, held annually in places like California and Abu Dhabi (Ofek, Kim, and Norris 2015).

To study a phenomenon like the nation in the context of media studies, we can look at the ways that the idea of nation functions as a *resource*: that is, as a style of talking and thinking and acting that informs how people understand the world, even—or perhaps especially—in local, transnational, or global contexts. This is what Craig Calhoun (1997) means when he refers to the nation as a "discursive formation," or what Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000) mean when they call the nation a "category of practice." The nation is not a thing but a set of contingent and ongoing processes that actors mobilize for diverse purposes in a range of contexts.

Some work adopts this perspective by focusing on how the nation is "performed" (Taylor 1997), "narrated" (Bhabha 1990), "visualized" (Tawil-Souri 2011), or "invented" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992) in different media texts, from literature to reality television to Internet domain names (Szulc 2015). Marie Sarita Gaytán (2014) explores, for example, how early twentieth-century *comedia ranchera* folk songs and the American press constructed a stereotypical version of Mexican identity that celebrates machismo and tequila drinking. Others have sought to document how devices like currency, maps, and passports (Anderson 1991); sites like museums, monuments, and architectural structures (Aronczyk and Brady 2015); and events like national commemorations, song contests, and sports competitions all work as media to produce or legitimate the nation (Baker 2008).

This does not mean, of course, that these national images are uncontested. Media texts that claim to represent the nation can be ideologically driven, tightly controlled, or even violent spectacles (e.g., Apter 1999; Taylor 1997) designed to "de-nationalize" populations that do not seem to fit into the dominant image. If such

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discourses are meant to stake claims about what a given nation's values and populations should look like, they can also ignite debate, resistance, or counternarratives about what a given nation "is" and how it should be represented. Counterhegemonic narratives invoking the idea of nation are also used to emphasize cultural allegiances that function independently of territory, such as black nationalism or queer nationalism (Berlant and Freeman 1994).

One of the paradoxes of globalization is that it produces the desire for cultural difference, often expressed in national terms. This is true not only for citizens but also for consumers. Consider, for example, the ways in which nations compete for global tourists and investors by developing media campaigns that promote their distinctive national culture and heritage (Aronczyk 2013), or how commodities like wine and watches are marketed to consumers all over the world via national symbols (Bandelj and Wherry 2011). Even if those products don't actually originate in the countries being invoked, national origin is a powerful package to generate symbolic and economic value.

In a highly influential definition, Benedict Anderson (1991) calls the nation an "imagined community." "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6).

Seeing the nation as an "imagined" community does not mean that it's all in our heads. More than merely about the imagined dimension of community formation, these works balance subjective or ideational understandings of nation with material factors. Scholars working in this vein observe the nation both in terms of the claims made in its name (cultural, political, economic) and in terms of the ways these claims are institutionalized and stabilized.

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Network
Marina Levina

At its most descriptive, the network is defined as a singular and hierarchical entity, a radio or television network responsible for transmitting messages to the audience. Increasingly, however, the term "network" has become an analytical tool embedded in global culture and information technologies, and their multitudes of connections, messages, and topographies. For instance, there is "the terrorist network," a seemingly concrete entity that proves to be a hard-to-define enemy; "a social network," a mediated forum for sharing personal information and cat videos; and finally "network" as a way of life and a cultural norm, a connectivity in perpetuity (Levina and Kien 2010). This network is decidedly not hierarchical, but is not outside of relations and systems of power (Levina 2014). In fact, these relations are probably the best way to understand what it means to live in an always-mediated network environment made possible by media and information technologies. The network is best understood as a topography that organizes everyday experiences in terms of sociality and relationality.

In his influential work, Manuel Castells attributed the rise of the network society, and, with it, a new system of power relations, to the emergence of global capital and information technology in the mid- to late twentieth century. Therefore the network was not a wholly revolutionary force, created in opposition to existing power structures, but rather an inevitable consequence of the evolution of global capitalism, or

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