Feeling American: Spatialising Emotion, Embodiment and Affective Atmospheres in the Emergence of Everyday National Identities

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Abstract

Studies on nationalism have recently seen a critical engagement with the flesh, the emotional and the affective. This more-than-representational approach has shifted thought towards real, lived experiences within the everyday, conceptualising national identities as processual and emergent through encounters and performances. This thesis develops ideas of emotional nationalisms and affective atmospheres, whilst showing how young people's bodies negotiate national identities. It pulls together work on young people's geopolitics, with wider discourses on belonging to the nation, and calls for more embodied understandings of national identities.

This thesis draws on 11 months of ethnographic research in Bellingham, WA, USA. During this time I volunteered at a church youth group in the area. The research draws from 21 interviews and 2 small group discussions with students, aged 16-18, alongside auto-ethnographic research diary excerpts made during the research process.

There are three ways that this thesis contributes to this emerging body of work on the more-than-representational nation. Firstly, it considers the emotionally subjective nature of national identities, thinking carefully about how feelings of belonging and connection are developed and shift as bodies grow, move and embody space. Secondly, I argue that national identities are fleshy and come into being through their embodiment and performance as bodies take-on, re-shape and make-tangible their feelings of belonging and connection to nations. I disrupt normative and taken-for-granted notions of national identities by demonstrating the ways in which national identities can be interrupted and re-shaped by bodies and through atmospheres. Finally I consider the spatiality of national identities, thinking through how scales intersect and work together to shape one another, affecting how national identities are felt and come into being. This thesis shows how messy, diffuse and intimate national identities are, pointing to the need to think more carefully about their emotionally subjective nature and their emergence within and through affective atmospheres.

Dedication

For my dad.

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I would like to thank my dad and my mum for being my role models, biggest encouragers and support. Without them I would not have finished this. I'd like to thank my husband for his patience as I spent time writing and researching, sacrificing time and money to complete it. Thanks to all the participants in Bellingham. Without your time and energy this research wouldn't have been possible. I loved getting to hear your stories and do life alongside you for this period of time. I am grateful. Thanks also to my supervisors Matt and Alison, who dealt with numerous Skype challenges, were eternally gracious and patient, encouraging me and pushing me to always improve. Thanks to Dan Pursley and Christian Lindbeck, for caring enough about my character and my dreams to let me pursue this, giving me space within the church to work, investing in me, trusting me with the members of your church, and letting me use the resources at the church. Thanks to Becca and Lloyd Johnson, and Toni and Jason Sims for housing me, caring for me as I battled homesickness, supporting me through dad's illness and truly becoming my American families. To my friends here in the Pacific Northwest, I'm grateful to have had you cheering me on throughout this process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introducing the study

Nationalism has long been understood as a social construct, yet studies into nationalism have hey regularly worked to naturalise the nation state and suggest nationalism as historically inevitable (Edensor, 2002; Closs Stephens, 2013). Furthermore, whilst research has considered how nationalism is reproduced within the everyday (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011), through objects (Raento and Brun, 2005), popular culture (Dittmer, 2010), discourses (Hyams, 2002) and bodies (Gagen, 2004; Grabham, 2009), it has more recently been argued that remaining in a representational framework creates a singular and linear understanding. In doing so this creates a normalised understanding of national identities, missing alternative forms of national belonging, such as multiple national identities or a rejection of national identities (Closs Stephens, 2013; 2016; Lyons, 2018). Nationalism's constant (re)production in the banal and through both the hot and mundane has equally been well documented (see Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Jones and Merriman, 2009). There is, however, a lack of consideration in regards to the affective qualities and the emotional embodiments of national identities, asking how they are navigated through an agglomeration of components and across multiple spatialities; it is important to consider the multiple tonalities and varying intensities of nationalism (Closs Stephens, 2013; 2016). This thesis seeks to explore how national identities are felt, encountered and performed by young people in the city of Bellingham, Washington, USA. It is interested in exploring the ways in which the wider collective narratives of national identities are both (re)shaped and performed through the intimate embodiment and negotiations of national identities at the site of the emotionally subjective body. In doing so it adds depth to the growing body of literature which underlines the emergent and processual nature of national identities, made real through sensing and moving bodies in the everyday.

1.2 Location context

From July 2016 to June 2017 I lived in Bellingham, WA, USA, a town situated 90 miles north of Seattle and just 20 miles south of the Canadian border (see figures 1 and 2 below). Bellingham fits within the stereotypical belt of strong liberal leaning communities dotted along the main west coast highway, Interstate 5 (I5 can be seen in figure 2 as the red line), finding similar political and social persuasions as the

neighbouring cities of Seattle and Portland, or further south still, San Francisco and Los Angeles (Woodward, 2011) (see figure 2). Surrounded by the mountains of the Northern Cascades, the Canadian Coast Mountains and the Olympic Peninsula, Bellingham sits in-between the 10,781ft high Mt Baker and the Puget Sound, looking out onto the San Juan Islands and beyond to Vancouver Island and Canadian waters (see figures 3 and 4).

Figure 1: Map of United States of America, with Bellingham marked by red star. (**http://ontheworldmap.com/usa/usa-political-map.html**)

Figure 2: Map of west coast of America, Bellingham indicated by red star (top). Map of Washington state, Bellingham indicated by arrow (below) (https://www.welt-atlas.de/map_of_west_coast_usa_7-246 ; http://ontheworldmap.com/usa/state/washington/)

Its geographical and geological location are important to note as they play a strong role in the identity and atmosphere of the town. In part, this local culture has been shaped over its history, being founded much later in American history in 1889, the physical geography of the area, with the highest snowfall in the contiguous US meaning that snow-sports are popular, its proximity to Canada, the social politics of the area, and the presence of Western Washington University. The mountains in Canada can often be seen from Bellingham (see figure 5). It is well known as a town that prioritises outdoor activities and environmental sustainability, whilst also politically shaped by the self-declared liberal, “hipster” culture, fighting for equal rights, local coffee and beer, and independent shopping. Critically, whilst often being described by residents as a city of subdued excitement, and perhaps unpatriotic and not passionate, Bellingham residents are proudly local, passionate and defensive about their Bellingham culture, geography and environment.

Figure 3: Mount Baker sits above the clouds, towering above the coastal city of Bellingham (photo taken by author from Orcas Island)

Figure 4: Sunset over the San Juan islands as seen from Samish Hill in Bellingham (photo taken by author)

Figure 5: Canadian coastal mountains seen in the distance from Galbraith Ridge in Bellingham (photo taken by author)

Washington state has an interesting history in comparison to many other states. Being founded later than most states in the USA in 1889, it was distanced from national politics and unexplored for a huge period of America's history. Indeed, the civil war and many of those culturally defining moments in the United States of America's history had already come to pass before the Western states had even been formalised. Now home to some of the largest corporations in the US, Boeing, Amazon and Microsoft work to influence the population of the Pacific Northwest, employing highly-skilled, highly-educated, and highly-paid workers (Woodward, 2011).

Bellingham was chosen as a key site for this research for multiple reasons. Firstly, the contacts present in this location enabled access to participants and a deeper level of communication with those participants. It enabled me to stay and research alongside the same group of participants over an extended period of time, uncommon to the majority of research in this area. Secondly this location was chosen specifically because it was not a location that sits within one of the perceived polarised areas of the highly patriotic, like Texas, or the globalised, like New York City. Bellingham is known as a city of 'subdued excitement'; it isn't overtly patriotic or globalised but provides a very banal and everydayness to the study of national identities. Still, it does have important characteristics. Its proximity to the international border with Canada, is important to note, and therefore the 'otherness' mixing in regularly with the everyday lives of residents in Bellingham. Secondly, Washington state has an agricultural aspect to it, being the largest producer of raspberries in the USA and a producer of apples. This agriculture draws in seasonal migrant workers from central and southern America, adding a large Hispanic population to a predominantly white area. Finally, Bellingham is an affluent area, with large disparities between the wealthy and poor, attracting educated workers who commute to multi-national businesses in Seattle like Boeing and Microsoft. These are all important things to consider and shaped this thesis.

1.3 Political and cultural context

1.3.1 The 2016 Presidential Election

A critical element within this research was the surrounding geopolitical context. As the research was interested in exploring narratives of the nation and feelings of national identities, it was important to understand what was going on in the world

during this research as it influenced the participants and the interviews. In November 2016 Donald Trump was elected as the President of the United States of America in one of the most shocking, dramatic, emotional and geopolitically fascinating elections in the USA (Berenson, 2016). His election was not without controversy, and the fall out of his election was huge, with investigations into collusion with Russian agencies (BBC News, 2018b), multiple drastic executive orders (Zoppo et al., 2017), investigations into his personal affairs (Luckhurst, 2018), and ultimately, a divided nation (Gershon, 2017). The 2016 election and 2017 inauguration provided the contextual framework and geopolitical climate of this research project. Avoiding the election was impossible as it worked its way into the everyday through TV commercials, casual conversations in the grocery store, signposts and billboards lining the streets and structured school lessons through influencing debates, projects and assignments. Critically, the 2016 election created a polarisation within the USA about what being an American was. Trump's campaign was laden with images and ideas of what it meant to be an American and how he was going to "Make America Great Again" (Nader, 2017). During the research, participants regularly discussed the election, how it was portraying America to other countries, what they thought about the different candidates, and how it was making them think about what it meant to be an American. The 2016 election contextualised much of this research and its emotive, nationalistic nature cannot be ignored.

In Trumps first few moments as President, he was quick to put through many executive orders and bills. An executive order is a directive issued by the President of the United States. It does not require approval from Congress and they are not easily overturned. A bill is a proposed legislation that must be enacted into law through its approval by Congress - the House of Representatives and the Senate - and finally the President of the United States. Indeed, one of the bills that caused much outrage and controversy following Trump's election was the end to the DACA bill. DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and is an American immigration policy that relates to the the children of illegal immigrants. It was implemented by the Obama administration who, towards the end of its term, began the extension of this to cover other groups of illegal immigrants known as 'dreamers'. The DACA bill meant that children of immigrants could defer deportation and become eligible for work and study permits in the U.S.. On September 5th 2017, the Trump Administration announced it would be ending the DACA bill, which would ultimately

allow the deportation of children illegally brought into the US by their parents (BBC News, 2017a; 2018a). The majority of those impacted by the scrapping of the scheme are from Mexico and other Latin American countries (BBC News, 2017a; 2018a). This decision of the Trump administration caused uproar as it was suggested Trump was targeting a certain portion of the population, namely children and hispanics (Shear and Herschfeld Davis, 2017). The revoking of the DACA bill was just one of the many executive orders and policy changes ordered by Trump's administration that told a specific narrative of what being an American was or, perhaps more clearly, what it was not. Bills and legislation such as these seemed to have a greater outworking than other bills in the past, perhaps because of the emotive nature of Trump's election and his approach to governing, which was often seemingly dramatic and overt. The DACA bill, among others, is important to note here as these policies had an outpouring onto the population and were interpreted, considered and protested by participants. The young people in this research were not ignorant to the wider geopolitical narratives, and these narratives had an impact on their own encounters with their national identities, and the ways in which they felt, understood and performed their Americanness.

1.3.2 The NFL and the National Anthem

In late 2016, a major discussion in the US media emerged over the actions of an American football player, Colin Kaepernick, who sat during the national anthem before a football game in protest of the unequal treatment of people of colour in the USA (Payne, 2016; Wyche, 2016). His protest sparked fierce debate, with some calling this action unpatriotic and offensive, some suggesting it was an attention-seeking exercise linked to fears of being dropped from the team, and some even (falsely) claiming it related to his conversion to Islam (Boren, 2016; Peter, 2016a). Following the end of the 2016/17 season, Kaepernick struggled to get signed (Carpenter, 2017) and questions of whether this related to his ability as a footballer, or his 'unpatriotic' actions is debatable (Altman and Gregory, 2017). Kaepernick is not alone in being subject to criticism due to the performance, or 'doing' of the national anthem. American gymnast, Gabby Douglas, was criticised for not placing her hand over her heart during the medal ceremony for the team gymnastics event at the Rio Olympic Games (Nolfi, 2016). Kaepernick's actions inspired a number of other athletes in 2016 who followed his actions in support of him and the cause he was trying to promote, these included Megan Rapinoe (United States Women's National

Team soccer player), high school football teams and various other football players from the Miami Dolphins, Seattle Seahawks and Kansas City Chiefs (Associated Press, 2016; Mather, 2016; Walker, 2016). In the 2017/18 season, the protest returned with more tenacity and a heated and intense debate within American culture more widely emerged, caused in part by President Trump's calling for players who knelt to be fired by the NFL (Altman and Gregory, 2017).

The actions of these athletes, the Presidential Election and various other bills implemented during Donald Trump's first term in office are all noted here due to both the media storm each of these things created, and the implications that they had on this study. The surrounding geopolitical context of this research is key and must be understood as they each had an impact upon the conversations with students, ideas brought up by the students, and the ways in which they thought about their national identities.

1.4 Research questions

The research questions I set out to consider were:

1. How do young Americans embody and navigate national identities within the everyday and across different spaces and atmospheres?
2. How do the human, non-human, tangible and intangible affect the geopolitical imaginations of these young people and their experiences of fear, danger and belonging?

1.5 Summary of study

The research process involved 11 months of ethnographic and auto-ethnographic data collection, as I compiled a research journal and embedded myself in the culture of the Bellingham. Participants were recruited through the youth group at which I volunteered every week. I was involved in the Sunday evening events, small groups during the week, and other social events during the year. This meant that the sample comprised of predominantly white, Christian participants, from mostly middle class families. The sample represents a small portion of young people within Bellingham, and the situatedness of this group impacted the ways in which national identities were felt, studied, expressed and embodied, something that is pulled apart within the thesis through exploring the emotionally subjective nature of feeling American. Participants took part in multiple semi-structured interviews across the 11 months, as

well as two different group activity and discussion sessions. The data was collated, transcribed and analysed using a coding framework (Appendix A) as the research progressed, identifying key themes and exploring them in more depth.

This project was interested in how young Americans in Bellingham, Washington, USA, embody and navigate their national identities within the everyday and across different spaces and atmospheres. It sought to explore how these young people encountered and understood their sense of belonging within America and the ways through which they performed this identity at the scale of the intimate. The research project advances understandings of national identities by bringing into productive conversation work on the affective atmosphere of the nation and young people's geopolitics. Its focus on young people aims to fill a void in studies of nationalism, and political geography more widely, which has tended to neglect young people's voices. It is important to study how young people come to know, encounter, perform and re-work their national identities alongside other aspects of their identities, such as gender, age and faith. It also helps to provide a more nuanced and emotionally engaged exploration of national identities. Indeed, this study was interested in thinking through the emotional aspects of belonging to the nation and feeling American. It aimed to give voice to lived experiences of national identities and to their stories of encounter and embodiment. In doing so, it seeks to counter a predominantly distanced discourse on national identities, and reveal the multi-faceted, emergent and processual nature of national identities.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The thesis has seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. Chapter two sets the theoretical framework for the thesis. It considers and critiques the existing literature on national identities, before exploring embodiment, emotional subjectivity and affective atmospheres. In doing so, it outlines the utility of approaching national identities through these three conceptual frameworks. Chapter three is the methodology, explaining the study in depth, unpacking the research methods and reflecting on positionality and researcher subjectivity. The following three chapters are the empirical chapters. Chapter four is about the becoming of the nation, thinking through notions of belonging and attachment, as well as nuances surrounding the multiplicity of national identities and their emergence through atmospheres. Chapter five focuses upon the performance of national identities, by looking at the

performance of the national anthem. It explores the emotionally subjective nature of national identities and thinks more carefully about the fleshiness of national identities through looking at rhythmic moving and performing of the nation by bodies. Chapter five also underlines the interruptible and individually subjective notion of national identities by thinking through how national identities can be disrupted through their performance. Chapter six looks at the space of the school and practices of national identities within that atmosphere. It argues that national identities are emergent as bodies learn what being a ‘good’ American looks like, feels like and does. It also considers the learning and performing of the Pledge of Allegiance, a school-specific practice and embodied ritual done every morning in relation to the flag. Chapter seven draws the thesis to a close, providing a summary of how it adds original thought to research on national identities, and thinking through how research might move forward.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Through tracing the shifts in approaches to nationalism, this literature review seeks to explore these studies, looking at the dominant conceptual frameworks and how these differing approaches can lead towards a more nuanced study of nationalism. Section 2.1 will consider the classical, historical accounts of Gellner (1983), Smith (1986; 1991) and Anderson (1983). Following these accounts, I will then discuss the move away from the origins of nationalism, to considering how nationalism is (re)produced and maintained in the present, structuring imaginations of the political and nation state through Billig's (1995) banal nationalism. Whilst Billig's work was radical and noted a shift in how nationalism was approached, it is not without critique. Moving on to section 2.2, I will look at the importance of the body and embodiment in studies of national identities. By considering "everyday nationalism" (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011) this review will look in more depth at predominant studies on national identity, and argue for the importance of exploring embodied national identities. Section 2.3 will then shift to think through the impact of the emotional turn in geography, unpacking how studying emotions can provide a more in-depth understanding of how national identities are felt, experienced and performed through encounters within the world. The final section, 2.4, will think through how wider theoretical shifts towards the more-than-representational (Lorimer, 2005) and affective have impacted the study of nationalism through ideas of affective atmosphere. Finally, the literature review will conclude by considering how the intersections of the body, emotions and affective atmospheres provide a strong theoretical framework for unpacking national identities as multiple, emergent and emotionally subjective, brought into being through everyday feelings, doings and encounters across space.

Critically, this research draws on important research from Sumartojo (2017), Closs Stephens (2015), Militz (2016) and Lyons 2018), it sits within these debates on the more-than-representational nation, thinking through the affective and emotional understandings, encounters and performances of Americanness through the stories of young people. Young people have often been looked over within research on the nation, and this research brings into productive discourse studies on national identities and childrens geographies. Young people are developing their sense-of-self and navigating their conceptions and experiences of belonging. As they grow up they

are searching for identity and independence, whilst influenced by their everyday life, relationships and geography. Indeed, this research sees young people as having a valuable political voice, and as critical components of feeling, doing, performing and understanding the nation.

2.1 The Nation

2.1.1 Historical and categorical approaches to national identities

Social constructivist approaches have dominated approaches to nationalism, with the nation being understood as an imagined construct, developed over a linear historical time frame (Closs Stephens, 2013). Throughout the 1980s, much research focused on the establishing of nations and nationalisms, where they came from, how they developed and who was included and excluded. Many of the key authors such as Gellner (1983), Anderson (1983) and Smith (1986) formed the now familiar debates of good/bad nationalism, or ethnic/civic nationalism, choosing to focus on historical and categorical approaches to nationalism, which in turn, whilst arguing for the constructed nature of nationalism, also seem to produce the nation and nationalism as 'real', assumed and historically inevitable (Closs Stephens, 2013). In order to fully unpack this idea, it is important to look at what these bodies of work comprise, and how they have influenced studies on nationalism.

> *"Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1983:1).*

Gellner's leading statement is clear; nationalism is directly related to the sovereignty and harmony of the nation state. His main focus throughout his book "Nations and Nationalism" (1983) is modernity and the way in which nationalism is invented through the trajectory of modernisation. Gellner offers an organised and linear understanding of both nations and nationalism, providing little room for disorder and messiness. He provides an analysis of the development of nationalism and how its origin lies in a particular moment in history, with the invention of the nation following the invention of the state. Modernity was a time of developing 'high cultures' when the nation was cultivated, established and disseminated, with official histories being produced in order to standardise a homogenous culture or unit to which people identify (Gellner, 1983; Edensor, 2002). Throughout the book, he traces the shift from the Agrarian age to modernity and argues that affiliations to cultures have changed

alongside modernity. Identity was not as fixed or singular as it became during modernity and, therefore, he suggests that before modernity people could feel attachments to multiple cultures and groups. He argues that the standardisation and homogenisation of culture that developed with the creation of the state meant that cultures became distinct rather than multiple and disorganised, producing these cohesive groups of nations to which ethnically homogenous groups of people identified. As Closs Stephens' (2013:21) analysis of his work states, Gellner subscribes to the idea that "persons and communities must be understood as autonomous and absolute entities", which is problematic in itself. Gellner does account for one of these issues by suggesting that there will always be more national claims than states, meaning that within the territory of a singular state, there may be multiple claims of national identity and therefore a struggle between these groups. Gellner's work argues, then, that nationalism is something created and cultivated, yet, at the same time, it is "presented as historically inevitable and politically necessary" (Closs Stephens, 2013:19). His focus upon the homogeneity and singularity of culture as a bounded and absolute entity to which people have a single attachment takes for granted the role of national identities and does not necessarily consider the more complex spatiality of nationalism and the potential for a multiplicity of national identities.

Anthony Smith (1986; 1991) suggests that Gellner's arguments about the invention of the nation is limited through contesting that some elements of nationalism are rooted in a much deeper history within ethnic communities, or the term he uses, "ethnies". Smith combines both the idea of a constructed nation with the view of the nation as a natural phenomenon. He suggests that ethnies provide the cultural frameworks that Gellner suggests are invented, and it is through these pre-existing cultural frameworks, that nationalism is constructed and performed. Smith's perspective works to provide the familiar us/them, insider/outsider binary (Edensor, 2002). There are many issues with this approach, such as the idea of authentic/inauthentic nationalism or national identity and the suggestion that nationalism can be pinpointed back to a specific moment in history and a specific group of people (Closs Stephens, 2013). It is also the case that both Smith and Gellner suggest the inevitability and natural endurance of nationalism, providing little room to resist it or provide alternative narratives in the future (Closs Stephens, 2013). As Edensor (2002) suggests, Smith focuses too much on the tangible, spectacular and historical rather

than the popular, everyday and taken for granted. Shifting a focus to consider the everyday enables a more realistic consideration of how the nation is understood and experienced by people and how nationalism endures beyond the spectacular, in the day-to-day.

Moving away from Gellner's terminology of invention, Anderson (1983) instead suggests imagination is key in the formulation of nationalism. He argues that a nation is imagined as a limited, sovereign, community and, rather than suggesting that nations are inevitable, he encourages an investigation into the factors that enable this imagination (Closs Stephens, 2013). Anderson approaches the nation as a socially constructed community, with a "deep, horizontal comradeship" (1983:7), rather than a natural unit or entity as suggested by Gellner and Smith. One of the key arguments in Anderson's imagined community is around the use of newspapers and print media in developing this idea of community and the nation (Edensor, 2002). This move to consider how the nation is disseminated and maintained across different spatialities is different to Gellner and Smith's work, which largely remains focused upon the historical beginning of nations and nationalism. Anderson locates nationalism within the everyday, not focusing on the spectacular, the traditional or linear classifications (Edensor, 2002). Utilising the scale of the everyday and the visibility of the nation, he argues, creates a more common sense and reflexive understanding of nationalism. Whilst acknowledging the more progressive and useful nature of Anderson's 'imagined communities', Edensor still suggests that these more classical and historical approaches to the nation are limited; "their conception of culture is rather undynamic" (2002:2). These classical accounts often make relatively reductionist statements and linear, uniform, assumptions about culture, the nation and national identities, creating a discourse that is rooted more in answering 'what nationalism is' rather than questioning how it is (re) produced, navigated, embodied and experienced in everyday lives (Brubaker, 1996; Edensor, 2002; Closs Stephens, 2013; Skey and Antonsich, 2017). Moving on from these historical and classifying accounts, I will consider the work of Michael Billig and 'banal nationalism' (1995), looking at how he builds upon this work by beginning to focus on unpacking how the nation persists and is flagged daily in the lives of citizens.

2.1.2 Banal nationalism

The concept of banal nationalism has influenced a plethora of studies on nationalism and is one of the dominant approaches to conceptualising nationalism. Writing in 1995, Billig is critical of the ways in which nationalism has become synonymous with violence or radical movements and is located on the periphery of society. He states that studies of nationalism overlook it within Western nation-states and also tend to fixate on these moments of 'hot' nationalism – moments of crises, which cause passionate displays of nationalism. Billig argues that it is not just these crises which create nationalism, but it is through a daily reproduction and flagging of the nation where beliefs, habits, assumptions, representation and practices are (re)produced. He highlights the neglect of these more mundane, banal aspects within nationalism, and states,

> *"Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition" (Billig, 1995:6).*

Retaining nationalism's reliance on the territorial integrity of the nation-state, Billig moves away from discourses surrounding good/bad, ethnic/civic and historical-categorical accounts of nationalism to instead suggest that studies of nationalism need to focus less on what national identity *is*, and more on *how* and *why* people remember their national identity. Billig asks, what does it mean to have a national identity and how does it affect our thinking about others, the world and ourselves? Banal nationalism looks at the reminders of national identity which are flagged through the everyday; the mundane ways of thinking about 'us' and 'them' which become so numerous and familiar that they are forgotten or ignored. In this process of forgetting in order to remember, Billig contends that nationalism is naturalised within people's everyday lives, "turning background space into homeland space" (1995: 43). However, the term banal does not suggest benign, as Webster (2011:4) comments,

> *"banal nationalism reproduces the state and means that a reservoir of emotion is attached to it, one that can be easily tapped and rapidly mobilized"*

Webster (2011) goes on to demonstrate how this “reservoir” was relevant following 9/11 and the build up to the Iraq invasion in providing support for government action. As Bush tapped into and mobilised this nationalism by using nationalist discourses and reminding citizens of their national identity, he was able to gain support for his proposed military intervention in Iraq (Webster, 2011).

One of the key areas that emerged through building upon banal nationalism has been a deeper consideration into the way objects and ‘things’ work to (re)present and translate ideas of national identity (Raento and Brunn, 2000; 2005; Edensor, 2002). Raento and Brunn (2000; 2005) trace the way postage stamps within Finland represent and reflect the independence movement in the 1900s through the depiction of key events, people, places and achievements that, they argue, work through the banal everyday to subconsciously impose the collective idea of ‘us’. Similarly, Leib (2011) considers how these quiet reminders of nationalism are ever present in the everyday as he highlights national, regional and state representations displayed on license plates in the USA. The images and language displayed on license plates work to not only (re)produce ideas about that place, but also create a reminder of the person’s attachment to that place (Sculle and Jakle, 2008; Leib, 2011). Billig’s banal nationalism considers language as well as material objects in producing a habit of thought surrounding the nation and belonging within that nation. As Billig himself states,

> *“Banal Nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted, and which, in doing so, enhabit them. Small words […] offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making ‘our’ national identity unforgettable.” (1995:93)*

Banal nationalism expresses a move towards explaining the endurance and reproduction of nationalism and has been one of the most influential pieces of work in recent studies on nationalism. It is, however, not without critique and limitations. The following section will move to consider some of the limitations of Billig’s banal nationalism and explore the introduction of everyday nationalism, as well as shifts to consider the body and emotions in national identity.

2.1.3 Everyday nationalism

As an influential foundation to research on nationalism, Billig's (1995) banal nationalism has been highly critiqued and explored, specifically in the edited book *Everyday Nationhood* by Skey and Antonsich (2017). Many of these critiques have aimed to push forward the concept of banal nationalism in order to think through the interactions between the banal and the hot moments of nationalism, and to also consider the practices and intangible mechanisms at work in shaping the senses of being-in-the-world. In this section I will consider the turn to everyday nationalism (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell, 2014).

Firstly, Jones and Merriman (2009) have suggested that, through attempting to move away from the 'hot' nationalistic moments and discourses, banal nationalism tends to separate out the banal and the hot as distinct, rather than as informing one another. Instead, Jones and Merriman propose an everyday nationalism, which seeks to suggest a move beyond categories of hot and banal to focus upon "the everyday contexts within which nationalism is reproduced" (2009:165). As Benwell (2014) expands, nationalism is both relational and fluid; it is not a constant, fixed idea but something that evolves, shifts and is performed, relating to age, gender and ethnicity. Everyday nationalism works to highlight the multiplicity of nationalism and differential embodiments, considering multiple spatialities and the various practices and bodies that impact nationalism at different times. Indeed this has seen an increase in the focus upon the nation as evidenced through everyday practices and spaces, such as sport (Bairner, 2009), art (Bryant, 2015), the domestic (Storm, 2016), school and education (Carrier, 2013; Benwell, 2014; 2016) and the intersections of the local and national (Antonsich, 2016; 2018a). Jones and Merriman's (2012) later work also begins to draw on ideas relating to assemblage and the more-than-representational through considering different components, such as road signs, and spacetimes (McCormack, 2013), thinking through how they impact nationalism, something that is also encouraged by the work of Closs Stephens (2016) and Militz (2017).

Indeed one critique of Banal Nationalism, as articulated by Militz (2017), is the lack of exploration into how these mechanisms, the signs, symbols, and 'things' of banal nationalism work to shape our sense-making of the world. Billig's work also lacks an engagement with people, thus making it is necessary to explore the ways in which nationalism becomes embodied, performed and embroiled in emotional power-

relations within the everyday (Militz, 2017). Considering nationalism as an everyday process, practiced and made real through moving and sensing bodies, builds upon banal nationalism by suggesting something less distinct and bounded. By destabilising the taken-for-granted, and indeed the banal and hot nature of nationalism, it is possible to begin to think through national identities as multiple, embodied and spatially dynamic, encountered through the site of the body and therefore open to resistance and disruption (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Benwell, 2014; Militz, 2017). Everyday nationalism also works to attend to human agency and ordinary people's perspectives and experiences, considering a more complex and messy understanding of nationalism (Antonsich, 2016), something that this research seeks to unpack.

Everyday nationalism is not the only attempt to further Billig's banal nationalism. Whilst Jones and Merriman (2009) and Benwell and Dodds (2011) are trying to move away from the language of hot/banal, suggesting that the distinction is blurry and really, indistinct, Paasi (2016) and Christian et al. (2016) have slightly differing approaches. Paasi (2016) suggests that the notion of independence is a form of discourse and performance that can bring together the hot and banal and trace hot moments within the banal and mundane. He argues that the idea of independence is often related to a notion of hot nationalism and ethno-nationalist and religious movements, yet, he contends that through considering how independence is located within the everyday and banal, it is possible to see the "contested terrain" (Paasi, 2016: 9) of independence as not a hot moment but something that, once achieved, endures within the geopolitical landscape of a nation. It is through independence, he argues, that nationalism is seen as more dynamic, moving between the hot and banal and within different spatialities (Paasi, 2016). One issue with this idea is that it still assumes that national identity relates to gaining or fighting for independence. It locates nationalism and the formation of a nation in a specific moment or event in a nation's history, similar to ideas displayed by Gellner and Smith discussed earlier in the paper. The danger, then, of using this idea of independence is that nationalism becomes intrinsically linked to a specific moment or movement and becomes a fixed, singular idea, providing little room for both understanding people's feelings and experiences of nationalism, and resisting nationalism.

A second attempt to draw together the hot and banal has come from Christian et al. (2016) in their paper on sexual violence in the U.S. military and colleges. Christian et al. (2016) critique the concept of everyday nationalism by suggesting that whilst everyday nationalism does pay attention to the fluidity of hot/banal intersections, shifting away from the terminology of hot and banal mutes how certain practices and experiences of nationalism are engaged with. Their argument revolves around the idea that the banal and the hot must be weaved into an inseparable single complex. In doing this, they argue that it is possible to fully expose

> *"how certain forms of deeply hot violence are depoliticized through their banalization […] and how things that are recognized as hot (e.g. war) are maintained through processes that are deemed banal" (Christian et al., 2016: 66).*

Christian et al. (2016) also make an important point about the lack of gendered, intimate and emotional considerations within discourses of nationalism. Their suggestion that only specific, state centred and state informed fears are considered and mobilised (e.g. fear of terrorism, fear of war) is nuanced and provides an interesting point of departure for future studies (see Pain 2009; 2010; 2014). This research from Christian et al. (2016) is useful through its consideration of the intimate aspects of the nation, as well as drawing on real life experiences and voices, something that again is seen as critical in this research and vital for understanding how national identities come to exist and persist. However, by retaining the binary of hot/banal, as they suggest, there still remains a definite distinction between the two, and shifting towards the everyday provides space for the blurry, messy and complex aspects of national identity that do not fit neatly into either of these categories or an agglomeration of the two.

Also working to think through the more intimate, embodied and everyday nation is Dittmer's (2005) extensive writing on the representation of the nation through comic books and national heroes, where Dittmer points to the embodied nature of national identities. Dittmer's work also adds to the body of work on both nationalism and everyday geopolitics through considering how these cartoons, comics, film adaptations and characters construct dominant discourses of geopolitical 'realities', locating America's role in the world through its storylines and narratives (Dittmer,

2005). He analyses how the language used and the national identities of the heroes and villains prescribe specific characteristics and identifications to certain locations, for example, a "'war-mongering' Europe and a 'peace-loving' America" (Dittmer, 2005:629). Dittmer (2005) explains how through understanding identity as a performance, these characters work to symbolise American identity and its continual (re)construction. Through these nationalist superheroes, Dittmer explains that they become powerful by their unnoticed diffusion in the everyday and work to reflect not just how nationalism is thought about, but experienced too (2011). These prescriptions add to the workings of insider/outsider binaries and negotiations of the public and private within work on national identities, something also seen later in work on Russian patriotism (Goode, 2017) and co-ethnic migrants in Greece (Pratsinakis, 2017). This work has also influenced further shifts to the affective and more-than-representational nation from authors such as Dittmer (2015; 2016), and also Militz (2017) and Lyons (2018). Everyday nationalism needs to consider how the nation is experienced intimately and through bodies, drawing on lived experiences and thinking through how different scales and spaces intersect.

What is clear through these bodies of literature is that banal nationalism is an excellent starting point when thinking through ideas of national identities, but still does not provide enough scope for pulling apart its complexities, multiplicities and nuances. As stated earlier, banal nationalism represented a significant shift within studies of nationalism to consider the (re)production and constant reminders of nationalism through the banal, mundane and taken for granted. Each approach above has highlighted missing areas of consideration and to fully explore understand the nation there must be more done to begin to carefully unpack embodied, emotional and affective aspects of national identities. Billig's concept of forgetting and remembering the nation through the everyday has led to questions of how popular culture is used as a method of translating ideas of community, nationhood and belonging as well as specific gendered understandings of the nation (Edensor, 2002; Dittmer, 2005; 2011; 2013a; Dittmer and Larsen, 2007). Whilst different in their critiques and approaches, it is clear throughout the work of Dittmer (2005), Christian et al. (2016), Paasi (2016), Jones and Merriman (2009) and Militz (2017) that building on Billig's banal nationalism must involve a deeper consideration of the bodies, practices and taken-for-granted aspects of national identities. The intimate and embodied have been missed within conceptualisations of the nation and are

necessary to consider in order to more fully understand how feelings of nationalism and national identities are reproduced and have real world affects on being in the world. This research intends to give voice to experiences, allowing an acknowledgement of alternative narratives and thinking more carefully about how forgetting to remember is made real through the movements and rhythms of sensing bodies. In the next section I will therefore consider the conceptual framework of embodiment in greater depth, and think through how a focus upon embodied national identities allows a more nuanced and peopled understanding of national identities.

2.2 Embodiment

The concept of embodiment considers identities as constant performances that are brought into being through doings, encounters and emotions, entangled in power relations and centralised around the body (Cresswell, 2006; Mollett and Faria, 2013). It emphasises embodied practices, emotions and affective encounters in the (re)constituting, understanding and expressing of identities. Emerging through feminist critique, which sought to place the embodied subject at the centre of research, the body has slowly become more significant within geographical and political geography work (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Mountz, 2017). Critically, using a more-than-representational framework seeks to explore how bodies actually experience and exist within spaces, refocusing the body in a more-than-discursive manner to think about the ‘fleshiness’ and emotionality of bodies, and therefore thinking through how this constitutes and shapes identities (Pain and Smith, 2008; Dixon, 2016). Ideas of encounter and a focus on bodies are core aspects to embodiment and will be explored here in more depth, tracing their emergence alongside narratives of national identities. Often literature on embodiment has tended to focus heavily on identity, and the ways in which identities are made real or known through bodies and their ‘doing’ or the performing of them (Gökariksel and Secor, 2014; Andrucki, 2013). In order to fully consider what embodiment is and does, it is key to realise how the term is used beyond the realm of identity and the multi-scalar nature of it. More recently, work has explored the embodiment of practices, such as security practices (Adey et al., 2013), and the embodiment of concepts, like the border (Mayer, 2004; Amoore, 2006) or even the embodiment of the nation, with the nation being constructed on and through bodies (Mayer, 2000; 2004; Gagen, 2004; Grabham, 2009).

Embodiment, then, is where something, usually (but not exclusively) the body, takes on an abstract, intangible ‘thing’ and displays it in a tangible and specific way. More often than not, embodiment relates to some kind of performance or reproduction of an idea, concept or atmosphere. Rooted in feminist theory, these expressions of embodiment are understood to be both spatially and temporally specific as they provide a frame for understanding and demonstrating the pluralism, dynamism and multiplicity of usually linear and singular ideas such as the border, gender or race. Through exploring how these things are embodied, reproduced, performed and experienced, it is possible to pick apart the constructed and multifaceted nature of these ideas, allowing for a deeper consideration of how everyday lives and encounters are felt, experienced and transmitted across varying spacetimes (McCormack, 2013). With important moves in feminist geopolitics towards acknowledging that the state works at the level of the body and the intimate, it is key to begin to unpack everyday doings and embodiments across multiple spatialities (Olson, 2013). A focus on embodiment works to utilise and address these feminist engagements with individual subjectivities and concerns with power, bodies and scales within the everyday (Cahill, 2007).

Thinking through ideas of embodiment and how it relates to national identities draws out many questions. Critically, this thesis will demonstrate the entanglement of embodiment, emotional subjectivity and affective atmospheres, noting their utility in exploring and conceptualising national identities. By unpacking the concept of embodiment this thesis highlights questions surrounding the cognitive embodiments of identities and the performing of identities that resist or disrupt normative, taken-for-granted, or presumed identities. Thinking through embodiment opens up the possibility to more widely explore the multiplicity of performances and feelings that work to shape and affect how national identities are felt, performed and made real. Indeed this is critical as this research intends to unpack lived experiences and the ways in which national identities and national belonging come to exist and be felt, or are made real as bodies move through and encounter spaces and other bodies. Embodiment demonstrates the intimate, subjective and situated nature of national identities, enabling the consideration of national identities as emergent and intimate, yet entangled in wider narratives, and belonging to many. Initially this review will consider how embodiment relates to notions of performance, drawing from the more-than-representational by thinking through how encounters with other bodies, things,

spaces and atmospheres shape the performances and doing of identities. Following that I will focus upon bodies, alluding to later discussions on subjectivity and the vital role of bodies within the concept of embodiment. I will talk about the role of emotions and fleshiness, and consider how these ideas blend together to provide a framework for exploring how national identities are understood, embodied and performed in both tangible and un-though-of ways.

2.2.1 Performance

Embodiment is interwoven with ideas surrounding how bodies engage, do, think, speak and act in relation to emotionally subjective identities and the world or spaces surrounding them. It is key, then, to unpack how identities are considered and approached through notions of performance, and to do so requires thinking through both performativity and more-than-representational perspectives. Performance and performativity both think about the ways in which bodies bring their identities into being through doings, thinkings and imaginings. They consider identities as unfinished and constantly becoming, working recursively with wider surroundings, and critically affecting how identities are embodied.

Performativity has its roots in speech-act theory, with Austin (1962) suggesting that the utterance of words is what brings things into being or action. Later, through the work of Judith Butler (1990; 1993; 1997), performativity became conceptualised as a framework that argues that identities, and later spaces, are brought into being through iterative and citational processes, performed on the body (Gregson and Rose, 2000). It provides an approach to unpacking identity that assumes a subject that is abstract from lived experience, historical and geographical specificity (Butler, 1990; Nelson, 1999). Performativity understands the body as a medium upon which identity is scripted and enacted through citational processes (Mountz, 2017), therefore, it suggests there is “no pre-given identity from which actions follow but rather [that] identities are constituted in and through action” (Nayak and Jeffrey, 2011:292). Performativity has been used in multiple spheres of geographical research as it brings with it many advantages, such as the ability to unpack homogenised and hegemonic identity norms, arguing identities as not fixed, but always in process (Kitchin and Lysaght, 2003). Research on identity and bodies within geography has often been critiqued as tending to homogenise and bound groups, using a presupposed subject or identity, even when acknowledging the

socially constructed nature of it (Kuus, 2007). By utilising performativity, identity is then understood as not only a social construction but as something that states, groups and individuals ‘do’ rather than ‘are’ (Kuus, 2007). It understands subjects as not pre-given but in process, continuously enacted and brought into being through citational and iterative processes (Weber, 1998), with no performer behind the performance. Performativity is therefore a powerful tool for unpacking taken-for-granted and naturalised identities that are assumed to be pre-determined or pre-existent, such as the state or nation, and reworking them to reconceptualise the implications that identities have upon the imaginations of spaces and bodies (Weber, 1998; Rose-Redwood and Glass, 2014; Gregson and Rose, 2000).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, approaches to the nation state and nationalism have long considered it a social construct that does not emanate from a specific moment or group, but is constantly reproduced (Anderson, 1995; Billig, 1995). The nation is seen as something that is performed, imagined and done through bodies, discourses and things (Mayer, 2004; Edensor, 2002). Considering the state and nation through a performative lens means that “the identity of the state […] does not pre-exist performative expression of the state, including sovereignty” (Weber, 1998:92) and therefore, by exploring how practices of sovereignty are produced, performed and naturalised, we are able to gain a more nuanced understanding of the nation and state (Kaiser, 2014). Performativity shifts the focus of study onto enactments that bring an identity into being rather than the subject itself. In relation to the human subject and national identity, Kuus (2007) argues that a performative lens can destabilise normative ideals surrounding identity claims and think through how these identities are animated and made real. If we are to see the nation and the geopolitical as beyond something pre-existing, we can approach it from multiple scales and consider where and how it is being brought into being or performed (Kuus, 2007; Williams, 2014). Critically, then, when thinking about the nation, performativity pulls apart the static and fixed notions surrounding nationalism and national belonging, rendering them as relational rather than pre-determined (Benwell, 2014). Performativity also suggests a focus upon our own enactments rather than other people’s enactments.

By maintaining the focus upon the individual as bringing their own identity into being discursively, however, performativity often misses the manipulation of identity from

other bodies or things. Indeed, Mayer (2004) alludes to this in her discussion of the nation in relation to gendered violence, highlighting the power relations at work in manipulating ideas of national and gendered identities through the experiences of rape as a weapon of war. In doing so, she locates the nation on the site of the body and explores the way in which the characteristics and ideas of the nation are (re)produced both through and on the body. It becomes important, then, to think about the differential enactments of identity by not only the singular body but also by encounters with other bodies and things. If we are to unpack how identities are processual and emergent, having an awareness of other people and things as being co-productive and constructive of identity is important and leads us to consider aspects of agency, something neglected by Butler (1990). Nelson (1990:332) summarises this here by stating,

> *"performativity ontologically assumes an abstracted subject […] and thus provides no space for conscious reflexivity, negotiation or agency in the doing of identity. This point is crucial for geographers because spatially embedded, intentional human practices often lie at the center of our inquiries into identity and space."*

Nelson (1990) is suggesting that, whilst a useful tool in many ways, performativity lacks the acknowledgement of the intentionality and agency of the bodies and things that are working in relationship with one another to produce and perform identities. It is important, she argues, to consider agency and reflexivity as it ascribes value to the power of spatiality, and how the negotiation and experiences of space can affectively shape or disrupt the doing and feelings of identities. If performativity is limited through its understanding of agency and intentionality, it is appropriate to think about the more-than-representational shifts in geographical research, specifically how the more-than-representational considers performance and embodiment. Indeed, the more-than-representational argues that performativity maintains a predominantly discursive nature, not focusing enough on the embodied practices that work to shape and capture the real workings of everyday life (Nayak and Jeffrey, 2011; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Rose-Redwood and Glass, 2014).

Embodied practices are central to the concept of performance, thinking carefully about how the affective and emotional shape the ways in which identities, spaces

and objects are encountered, and performed, by, through and on the body. Indeed, performance takes the fleshiness and movements of bodies seriously, considering how they exist within a milieu of components that affectively shape the way bodies come to be. The main differences that distinguish performativity and performance lie within the concepts of agency and intentionality (Dittmer and Gray, 2010). Bodies need to be understood as situated within knowledge, practices and affects, suggesting a more dynamic conceptualisation of bodies and spaces (Crang and Thrift, 2002; Murdoch, 2006). A more-than-representational perspective argues that embodiment and performance exceed the purely discursive elements of performativity as identity exists beyond discursive and symbolic representations (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Embodiment and performance are felt (both emotionally and haptically) and experienced through encounters with other components such as objects, skin colour, spaces and feelings (Haldrup et al., 2006; Grabham, 2009). Performance recognises the intangible and subjective nature of identity, arguing against a pre-determined or naturalised understanding but considering agency and the emotionally subjective, situated embodiment of identities (Dittmer and Gray, 2010).

For performance, agency is de-centred from the body and means that the non-human and intangible are no longer something that are used in order to enact, but have agency in order to perform, disrupt and alter identities, often working with other bodies and objects through “a multiplicity of relations that connect humans both to given spaces and to other humans” (Murdoch, 2006: 16). This means that human, non-human, tangible and intangible ‘things’ have the capacity and potentiality to affect one another through encounters and different spatialities, both unintentionally and intentionally (Dittmer, 2014). We can consider then, how objects situated in and through certain spacetimes (McCormack, 2013) become imbued with meaning and affective qualities that then materially impact the (re)construction of identities such as national or religious identity (see Puar’s (2007) work on the Sikh turban’s affective relationship with normative American identity and “mistaken identities”). The concept of performance enables an exploration of national identities as being taken onto the body, and (re)produced through the body in multiple and emergent ways, shaped by their encounters in space. Performativity suggests an unconscious ‘doing’ or embodiment, whilst performance gives space for both conscious and unconscious actions, affectively driven by and entangled with intangible and un-thought-of rhythms

and emotions, working to express and reconstitute identities through embodiment. This idea of strategy and intentionality is useful for thinking through how we can unpack the ways in which embodiment expresses identity alongside the reconstitution and reproduction of it. Vincent et al. (2012: 278 emphasis added in original) state,

> *"Performance thus emphasises **embodied practices** which are strategically mobilised and ritualised for the purpose of constructing and expressing belief"*

Critically, Vincent et al. (2012) locate embodied practices as both strategic and central to the understanding of performance and identities. The non-human openness of time-space allows us to unpack how the embodiment of identities or things can work to build normative ideas across multiple and diffuse spatialities, considering how things are experienced, embodied and encountered, affecting normative identities and ideas. Dewsbury et al. (2002) highlight this when they discuss enactment through materials, movements, shapes and gestures that are more-than-representational and are more progressive registers of experiences.

Shifts to the more-than-representational also highlight the inter-weaving of encounters and bodies when thinking about embodiment, arguing that performativity focuses too much on the "visible, textual, symbolic and interpretive aspects of bodily identity" (Gagen, 2004: 420). Gagen (2004) states that whilst performativity questions the naturalness of identities, the relationship between the body and identity is always seen as performative and therefore misses the discontinuities of this relationship within different spaces and contexts. Instead, the more-than-representational seeks to think about how bodies experience and exist as they move through spaces, understanding the pre-cognitive aspects of everyday life and embodiment (Thrift, 2007). It challenges the body as the central mechanism through which social identities are naturalised (Gagen, 2004). Specifically, the more-than-representational looks at the encounters, emotionality and movement of fleshy bodies when it considers embodiment (Haldrup et al., 2006; Grabham, 2009; Gagen, 2004; Dixon, 2014). It refocuses the body in a more-than-discursive manner and thinks about how the 'fleshiness' of a body itself can work to constitute identities, whether that is through the scanning of whole bodies to reveal insecurities and unknowns at an

airport (Amoore and Hall, 2009) unpacking how the nation is traced through markings on the skin like skin colour and prosthetic limbs (Grabham, 2009) or how physicality and bodily strength is illustrative of national character in muscle fibres (Gagen, 2004). Embodiment relates to encounters within different spaces, scales and levels of intimacy that are intensely personal and experienced within the everyday (Gökariskel and Secor, 2015). Encounter is also an important aspect of embodiment and performance. Encounter has been defined by Wilson (2016: 14) as "meetings where difference is somehow noteworthy … a focus on *the doing* of encounter reveals an interest in the momentary enactments and rhythms of difference". Wilson (2016; 2017) is clear to highlight the necessarily ambiguous, affective, emotive and sensuous nature of encounter. Encounter, then, is an important idea when thinking about how the body connects with and is shaped by the other things, bodies and places it comes into contact with or exists within. It contextualises experiences and links to the concept of embodiment by asking how, why and in relation to what does this embodiment come into being through its performance. Encounter also helps explore the relationality between bodies and the nation by working within the concept of affective atmosphere, which will be explored in more depth later on.

Thinking about embodiment through a more-than-representational lens enables us to pick apart material, affective experiences of spaces through the body and asks how atmospheres and objects, as well as bodies, can impact how identity is (re)produced, experienced and encountered. Embodiment provides a frame for pluralism and multiplicity, exploring the entanglement of bodies within atmospheres, and accounting for encounters with complex and unseen things like feelings, emotions and moods that can work to impact how identity is felt and therefore embodied within different spatialities and times (Gagen, 2004).

2.2.2 Bodies

The second core aspect to embodiment is that of the body. Geographers have been slow to study the body and have been heavily critiqued for ignoring its importance in geographical research (Mountz, 2017). Feminist geography has been critical in bringing forth a focus upon the body (Moss and Dyck, 2002) and more recently this has moved into political geography research, where several scholars have made the body and its experiences central to their study (Fall, 2006; Hyndman, 2007; Fluri, 2011; Dixon, 2014). Importantly, bodies are messy and differential (Longhurst, 2001)

and therefore, in order to attend more fully to the body within the political and national spheres, it is useful to maintain this messiness, allowing it to speak into the research in loose and multiple ways (Mountz, 2017). This section will explore the body and how it has been understood and conceptualised through studies on embodiment, and will highlight three main aspects. Initially it will consider the emotional body and experiences of being in the world, thinking through how bodies, emotions and encounters come together within this concept of embodiment in order to usefully explore how bodies are shaped and move through space. Secondly I will consider the fleshiness of bodies, drawing from the work of Gagen (2004) and Dixon (2015) who consider the haptic and fleshy nature of bodies within the world and use embodiment in a more literal sense to explore how the body exists as an affective component. Thirdly I will consider moving bodies and draw on the work of McCormack (2013), highlighting intersections between embodiment and affective atmospheres.

Simonsen (2012:12) is useful for tying together ideas of encounter, emotions and embodiment. She argues for “the primacy of encounters, of bodily encounters in all their complexity…and experienced otherness”. She embeds her theoretical debates within empirical examples, which seek to demonstrate the subjectivity and spatiality of both encounter and experience, and also highlights how they are intrinsically embroiled and charged with emotions. Emotions themselves are understood as performances. Simonsen (2012) suggests that our making sense of the world is reliant upon, and comes through encounters between bodies and something else, whether that be the environment, matter or other bodies, which are all active agents themselves and are animated, communicative and performative. Through these encounters, particularly between multiple bodies, she argues that slippage, reflexivity, creativity and agency emerge as affective capacities, that work to shape the embodiment of emotion and the performance of the self. Simonsen builds upon the more-than-representational as she argues for the coming together of affect and emotion through this “phenomenal body” (2012:17). Her work is critical in developing an approach that maintains the notion of agency, and thus the possibility of rupture, unpredictability, failure, and ambiguity. This connects with the above ideas from Wilson (2016) and also that of McCormack (2013), who suggests that the body’s encounters, practices and rhythms, have more to do with disorder and interruption, than order. Simonsen (2012) prioritises the phenomenal and lived body as central to

our understandings of being-in-the-world, and depicts social life as experiential, embroiled in affective encounter. It is embodied through the agentic and emotional body, and emergent, laden with potential, reflexivity and anticipation as bodies move through, shape and are shaped by spaces and atmospheres around them. Emotions and affect are therefore critical components of understanding and exploring bodies, yet require much more attention in grounded and situated work. Specifically, research on the nation and embodiment has often remained somewhat distanced from exploring the emotional, real life narratives and performances of people's being-in-the-world. Emotions are the lens through which we see and encounter the world, therefore making them vital to research on national identities. As Simonsen (2012) suggests, emotions do not exist on their own but are experiential and entangled with affective capacities and specific contexts. Indeed, the body is a vital component within emotions and embodiment, and its capacity as an agent must be explored further.

Understanding embodiment and performance through this more-than-representational lens, is to see the body as existing within a greater milieu of components, affecting and shaping one another as they collide within the messy atmospheres of everyday life. The more-than-representational focuses on

> *"how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions" (Lorimer, 2005: 84).*

Understanding bodies as a more-than-human entity within a complex agglomeration of bodies and things has been present within geopolitical discourses for a while, especially within the work of Louise Amoore (2006; Amoore and Hall, 2009; 2010). In Amoore and Hall's work on the biometric border (2009; 2010), they consider how the body is reduced down beyond what might be considered its 'human' element to a fleshiness and material capacity as it is read, processed, profiled and screened as a method of security prediction and prevention. This work looks at the coming together of the human and non-human in more-than-representational ways to consider how the body is securitised, linking to ideas of how bodies move through space in certain

ways, both affecting and being affected by the material and non-human surroundings. Drawing on assemblage and affect, Amoore and Hall (2010) talk about ideas of interruption, performance, enchanting objects and moods when thinking about how bodies interact with and embody the border and the concept of security. Dixon's (2015:14) research into the 'fleshiness' of life is also worth mentioning, as she considers "disassociated flesh" through unpacking the geopolitical significance of human, yet inhuman 'things' such as stem cells, bones, touch and emotional encounters between bodies. She argues throughout for the value of understanding the material conditions through which these fleshy bodies are made (in)tangible, expressed, felt and fit within wider geopolitical narratives (Dixon, 2015). Further to this, Dixon (2015) argues that the material has real implications for the encounters and affective capacities of bodies, linking this in to ideas of state 'norms'. In her chapter on bodily flesh she refers to the work discussed earlier from Amoore and Hall (2009) but pushes this further by suggesting a lack of attention to "corporeally disassociated flesh" (Dixon, 2015:59). This type of flesh is one that is removed from the physical body and moved across the border, often in the form of stem cells to be developed for *in vitro* fertilisation or other medical procedures. She considers how this links to the gendered and sexed body, and the power relations that relate to this material. There are some aspects to her work that are important, such as highlighting the overlooked and taken-for-granted aspects of the body itself or her focus on touch as intimate and embodied, yet affective. It does, however, tend to remain *dis*embodied in its lack of engagement with personal narratives and experiences. Dixon fails to consider what the bodies she engages with and theorises think or experience. By missing the voices of people, her work tends to remain distanced and somewhat ungrounded. The ironic *dis*embodiment of 'embodied' research is present often from both a more-than-representational and feminist perspective, with the flesh and body being centralised yet ignoring, or missing, the critiques and voices of those whose bodies they belong to. Belonging and identity are messy and multiple, and in order to fully unpack these nuances it is key that we listen to people's experiences and senses, much like the work found in Militz (2016) and Lyons (2018).

Further to this, a variety of authors have begun to take seriously the fleshiness of embodied and emotional experiences of the nation, by considering the material and more-than-representational (Haldrup et al. 2006; Dittmer, 2014; 2015; 2016; Funnell and Dodds 2015a; 2015b). In particular, Haldrup et al. (2006:179) discuss "sensuous

geographies of Otherness", something also evident in Gagen (2004) and Grabham's (2009) work where they conceptualise the nation as being inscribed and enacted on, or through skin and muscles. This 'sensuous geography' which looks beyond representational understandings of bodies towards a more affective and haptic understanding of them, is becoming more important and relevant in geopolitics. Gagen (2004) and Grabham (2009) discuss how the nation is represented and how it is embodied through the haptic and sensuous materiality of the body. This work draws on the body but looks at how bodies 'flag' the nation and work to (re)produce ideas of nationalism. Bodies are something which cannot be separated from the nation and therefore produce narratives surrounding ideas of the nation and national identity, something Grabham (2009) considers whilst discussing how the nation is flagged through skin and through race. Both Grabham (2009) and Gagen (2004) suggest the importance of bodies as markers of national identity and how bodies are crucial in understanding both belonging and the performance of social identities, such as nationalism. Gagen (2004) specifically draws on non-representational theory to think through how embodiment of national identity goes beyond Billig's mainly representational approach to nationalism, to become associated with movement, gestures and acts of the body, an important idea in this thesis.

This sensuous and fleshy approach to the nation can also be seen by tracing the work looking at James Bond (Funnell and Dodds, 2015a; 2015b) and in Dittmer's analysis of Captain America (2013). Through looking at the physical characteristics of the actors selected to play James Bond, Funnell and Dodds' (2015b: 124) work on the "fit body" sees the body as material, and whilst it is considered as representative of a certain type of masculinity and also of a form of Britishness, they argue beyond a representational understanding of it, thinking about how it moves, encounters and touches objects, other bodies and spaces. Similarly, Dittmer's work on how Captain America and national heroes work to (re)construct national identity also begins to consider the gendered aspect of the nation and consider the role of the body within national identity (2013a). The relationship between gender and the nation has been investigated through the lens of banal nationalism by a few authors (Hyams, 2002; Mayer, 2004; Henry and Berg, 2006; Amarasingam et al., 2016), suggesting that specific languages and discourses often used to describe the nation within everyday and mundane situations have worked to produce "gendered visions of national identity" (Koch, 2011:500). (Gender itself is a loaded concept that this literature

review does not have the scope to consider fully, however see Mayer (2000; 2004) for further work unpacking the complexities of the intersections of gender and the nation). Through taking a more-than-representational approach, embodiment must consider the non-human and intangible, unpacking the agency that alternative 'things', like spaces and objects, have and how they work to affect the body and flesh in very real ways. A more-than-representational approach also provides emotions with agency and considers the affective role they play upon the spaces, bodies and identity.

Whilst the authors above begin to analyse the fleshy and embodied meaning making of the nation, their analysis lacks a consideration of how nationalism is actually taken on, performed and understood by people. Whilst these examples provide good, critical analysis of how nationalism persists and is (re)produced in the everyday, they still do not account for the messiness and complexity of national identity, considering how it is experienced differentially across different times and spatialities, with varying intensities and tonalities. When considering national identities, there is a significant lack of research that considers the significance of the body, its movements and rhythms and emotionality in relation to the experiencing and (per)forming of national identities. Importantly, then, there is a need to give voice to these bodies, especially when considering the entanglement of moving and feeling bodies with spaces and atmospheres. In order to explore national identities and belonging in more depth, analysing this entanglement whilst hearing the voices and stories of those involved is critical for developing a better understanding of how national identities become shaped, embodied and performed through the moving body as they are felt and encountered across spacetimes.

2.2.3 Conclusion

Central to the idea of embodiment is the body itself, putting a focus upon experiences, performances and the (re)production of identities within different spatialities. Unpacking lived and felt experiences, tracing the changing intensities and spatialities of identity is therefore critical when approaching national identities and its subjective and emergent nature. Embodiment provides a way to account for alternative, resistant and differential understandings of identities such as national identity, moving away from dominant categorisations and fixed spatialities in which these identities are assumed to be embodied, experienced and (re)produced. We

can begin to look at the way space plays a role in both affecting and being affected by identities, shaping how national identities are made manifest in unassuming and multiple spatialities. Similar to debates on hot/banal nationalism, it is important to unpack how the nation is felt in intense moments and events, and also in the mundane, everydayness of life, where national identities are felt and embodied in different ways. Atmospheres, which will be discussed in section 2.4, work alongside ideas of embodiment of national identities, translating affects onto the body in felt ways, across geographies and spacetimes, reworking the taken-for-granted spaces in which national identities are often located and limited to, and thinking through the varying tonalities of lived national identities in the everyday.

National identities are intrinsically related to and performed through the body, yet not limited to that scale, impacting how the body moves through, experiences and affects different spaces. Embodiment and performance allow a conceptualisation of the body as existing within a swirling mass of feelings, things, intensities, bodies and spaces, which must be acknowledged and picked apart in order to think through how national identities are felt and articulated. The body, then, is vital to understanding socio-spatial relations. Considering embodiment enables a picking apart of material, affective experiences of spaces through the body and asks how atmospheres and objects, as well as bodies, can impact how identities are (re)produced, experienced and encountered. Embodiment provides a frame for pluralism and multiplicity, exploring the entanglement of bodies with atmospheres, and accounting for encounters with complex and unseen things like feelings and emotions, that can work to impact how identity is felt, and therefore embodied within different spatialities and times (Gagen, 2004). It highlights the scale of the body in the exploration of national identities and points to a plurality of national identities. This research addresses the gaps in research on embodiment and national identities by prioritising individual, emotionally subjective and embodied narratives of national identities, and considering how the encounters with other components such as the built environment, different objects and atmospheres, affects that embodiment and reproduction of identity.

2.3 Emotional Subjectivity

Recent work from authors such as Closs Stephens (2013; 2016), Botterill et al. (2016), Wood (2007; 2013;), Faria (2013; 2014) and Sumartojo (2016; 2017) have

pointed towards the need to consider emotions and feelings within conceptualisations and explorations of national identities. They argue that a turn towards the emotional and affective works to highlight the multiple and diffuse nature of national identities. It locates the nation at the scale of the body and in the everyday, still seeing the nation as emergent through the banal, but working to go beyond the representational. In doing so it explores how national identities are processual, shaped through the complex entanglements of the intimate and collective, the emotive yet mundane, the everyday and the event, and the intersubjective and relational. Emotional subjectivity considers these "intersubjective entanglements" (Botterill et al., 2016: 132), approaching the construction of identities as occurring in relation to encounters with other bodies, things and spaces, and acknowledging the way that individuals are positioned variably according to their situatedness. Lived and experiential, emotional subjectivity attends to the nation as an "always-already" (Sumartojo, 2017:199) aspect of our everyday lives, that is brought into being through our bodily movements and encounters across and through space. The nation is inherently felt and made sense of through daily rhythms and motions, emergent through the banal and mundane doings and encounters of everyday life (Closs Stephens, 2016; Sumartojo, 2017). Emotional subjectivity, then, suggests that our sense of being-in-the-world is entangled in relational, emotional and processual qualities; that our individual subjective identities shape our everyday encounters, emotions and performances of 'self', as well as our perspectives of people, spaces, and the atmospheres that we move through. Using emotional subjectivity to approach national identities allows a more nuanced and considered conceptualisation of national identities as tied to feelings of attachment/detachment, (non)belonging and intimacy/distance. In itself, emotional subjectively affectively disrupts the simplicity and linear conceptualisations of national identities and acknowledges the complexity and multifaceted nature of them (Faria, 2013). Specifically, I highlight the overlaps between emotional subjectivity, affective atmospheres and embodiments, demonstrating their utility as a conceptual framework for unpacking embodied feelings and performances of national identities, as they emerge and are made tangible through moving bodies and everyday notions of belonging.

To fully explore and understand the concept of emotional subjectivity, it is necessary to trace its roots in feminist political geography, which critically brought to light the need to ground research in the everyday, at the scale of the body, considering how

emotions, embodiment and everyday performances are important. The next section considers the emergence of emotional geographies literatures from feminist geography. Following that I will discuss three key aspects of emotional subjectivity: embodiment, situatedness, and the more-than-representational, demonstrating them as central elements to framing and exploring national identities. Finally I consider ideas of belonging and its intersections with emotional geographies.

2.3.1 Emotional political geographies

The emergence of feminist political geography came as a pushback to the male dominated, top-down approach to geographical thought that had dominated the subject (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2001; Dyck, 2005). It sought to move away from what it saw as large-scale, sweeping narratives, and instead focus in on the grounded, everyday, embodied and under-represented voice (Hyndman, 2001; 2003). For many, this involved listening to the voice of women, but also acknowledging the authenticity of voices from children and young people, ethnic minorities, and other social groups that had been widely ignored (see Massaro and Williams, 2013). Feminist political geography places a high importance on acknowledging and exploring the situatedness of bodies, both of the researcher and the participant, and considers how positionality affectively shapes our subjective encounters. Situated knowledge not only explores the ways in which our bodies shape and are shaped by this making sense of the world and being-in-the-world, but talks of the specificity of place and considers how spaces exist to affectively shape identities and geopolitical concepts (Fluri, 2009; 2011; Cahill, 2007; Hörschelmann, 2008; Hopkins, 2009; Hiemstra and Billo, 2017). Subjectivity, then, is a critical aspect to feminist thought. Along with the focus on situated knowledge, feminist political geography seeks to ground research within everyday experiences. Feminist political geography argues that there are intersections between the everyday and local, national and global scales, which are worked out and shaped through bodies, revealing the role of spatiality and emotions upon both the performances of identities and wider global and national narratives (Hyndman, 2003; 2004; Pain et al., 2010; Williams, 2011). Through focusing on bodies, not only do feminist political geographies tend to disrupt and deconstruct taken-for-granted workings of power and categorisations within the everyday and across specific bodies, they also allow space for emotions and feelings to be considered as having power and the capacity to shape and affect bodies, spaces and atmospheres (Pain, 2009; Hörschelmann,

2008; Nicely, 2009). Importantly the scale of the everyday also points to the little things of life (Thrift, 2000), highlighting how mundane and un-thought-of rhythms can greatly enrich understandings of concepts such as national identities and geopolitics (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Dittmer et al., 2011).

Finally, feminist political geography diminishes the boundaries between public and private (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2004), seeking to examine how spaces are "affected by and reflected in embodied practices and lived social relations" (McDowell, 1999:35). Since the call from Dowler and Sharp (2001) to locate geopolitical thought in the everyday, embodied experience, much work has considered the body and the everyday (see Katz, 2007; Pain et al., 2010; Hörschelmann, 2008), and there have been many other areas of study that have emerged that take the body seriously as a site of geographical interest, such as intimate geopolitics (Pain and Staeheli, 2014; Pain, 2015), everyday geopolitics (see Dittmer and Gray, 2010), alter-geopolitics (Koopman, 2011) and a reshaping of military geographies (Enloe, 2000; 2007; Woodward and Winter, 2007; Williams 2011). Important to this research is a diverse body of literature on emotional geographies and geopolitics, which offers the opportunity to rethink conceptualisations of the self-in-the-world and ideas such as national identities (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Faria, 2013; Benwell; 2017).

> *"Emotional geographies tends to prioritise the socio-spatial dimensions of emotions rather than the singular experience of place that had been considered in past paradigms" (Dittmer, 2011: 190)*

Emotional geographies marked a shift in geographical research to focus upon not only embodiment and subjectivity, but also a recognition of affective entanglements with emotion. In doing so it explores how emotions mark experiences and spaces, and how spaces and experiences are brought into existence themselves, being made sense of by emotions. The recursive entanglements of emotions, bodies and spaces are complex, each affecting one another in coming to be. Most often this body of work is traced back to the 2001 article by Anderson and Smith. In this piece they argue that emotions are central to the construction and experience of the social world, existing as a critical component of the lived experience (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Williams, 2001; Neu, 2000). They state that emotions play an important part in

the being, doing and encountering of the self-in-the-world. Whilst Anderson and Smith (2001) seek to layout the emotional void within geographical research and set out an agenda towards exploring, or indeed simply acknowledging, the workings and interplay of emotions and space, Davidson and Milligan's (2004) editorial is useful in discussing the key elements and frameworks for emotional geographies. They highlight the body, the relationality of emotion, and the sense-making of space as important aspects of understanding the affective capacities of emotions.

Emotional geographies centralise the body as the "site of emotional experience" (Davidson and Milligan, 2004: 523). Thus, the body becomes a key site of research and an important component in understanding wider narratives of social life and space. Emotions are felt, experienced, shaped and performed at the site of the body, which itself is emplaced in specific contexts (Pain, 2009; 2010; Simonsen, 2012). In de-stabilising assumptions about emotions, emotional geographies and geopolitics instead views emotions as embodied sensations, situated and contextual, emergent and processual, and unable to be fully known or understood (Simonsen, 2007; Conradson and McKay, 2007; Pain and Smith, 2008). Emotions transcend and blur scales, as can be seen in work from Hopkins (2007) and Hörschelmann (2008), who consider the workings of emotion through the intersections of the local and global. As mentioned in the earlier section in 2.2.3, Kirsten Simonsen (2007; 2012) draws attention to this when she calls for research to take seriously bodily experiences of emotions and affects. Indeed there have been discussions surrounding the coming together of affect and emotion within research, which will be unpacked later in this chapter.

Emotional subjectivity and embodiment work together to shape how we understand our sense-of-self and how we understand space, for example, in coming to "feel at home" (Simonsen, 2012:16). We can see the blending of emotion and affect as Simonesen discusses the embodiment, performance and spatiality of emotions. Thinking through embodiment and emotions, then, also draws our attention to the performed and relational nature of emotions, pointing towards a more-than-representational understanding of 'doing' life and negotiating the self-in-the-world. Emotions are a form of living meaning, expressed through actions and bodily gestures. The everydayness of these gestures, rhythms and moving bodies is important to consider, particularly in the way that they affect and are affected by the

way spaces, moments and bodies are sensed in both fleshy and intangible ways. Emotions are relational, formed through the interweaving of body, mind and flesh. Davidson and Milligan highlight the affective entanglements between emotions, space and bodies, stating that,

> *"Emotions matter. They have tangible effects on our surroundings, and can shape the very nature and experiences of our being-in-the-world. Emotions can clearly alter the way the world is for us, affecting our sense of time as well as space. Our sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we feel." (2004: 524)*

Not only, then, do emotions play an important role in shaping our sense-of-self, they also somewhat influence our sense-of-space. Emotions are understandable and made tangible through the context of specific spaces, and simultaneously, spaces are made sense of through emotions and feelings. This relationship between emotions, bodies and spaces is also described helpfully by Simonsen (2012) when she discusses emotional spatiality and the phenomenal, lived body as spatial and temporal. As alluded to earlier when thinking through embodiment, Simonsen draws on work from Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Lefebvre (1991), conceptualising the body as always in process and emergent, situated in space and time, perpetually engaged with the world and (per)formed through its expressive capacities and encounters. Critically she explains,

> *"inhabiting space involves a dynamic negotiation between what is familiar and unfamiliar, such that it is still possible to incorporate new impressions dependent on which way we turn and what is within reach. These impressions shape the body as well as the 'inhabited' space, such that* ***the body*** *[…]* ***produces itself in space and simultaneously produces that space****" (Simonsen, 2012: 19, emphasis added by author).*

It is these entanglements between emotions, bodies and spaces that emotional geographies seeks to pull apart and explore. Emotions are ways of interacting and encountering the world; they are relational qualities, shaped by our own subjectivities and spatialities, deeply intimate yet publicly in-between as our own fleshiness is

intertwined with that of the surrounding world (Simonsen, 2012). Emotions are not simply expressed or created through the body, but can be external too, seeking to sweep up and grasp bodies as we experience them through specific atmospheres and moments (Closs Stephens, 2016). Bodies move and are moved by emotions (Simonsen, 2012), something seen in chapter five where I consider the movements of bodies to national rhythms, in accordance with their feelings and emotional connections. The moving of bodies through space is a critical component in coming to understand fully the nuances of identities and the inseparability from spatiality. Bodies and spaces exist and come-to-be alongside one another, shaping and affecting each other through these entanglements, and through the relational nature of emotion. The focus here on moving bodies, performance and the atmospheric points to the more-than-representational and indeed, the theoretical ties between emotional geographies and the more-than-representational are made clear in the edited book, *Emotion, Place and Culture* (Smith et al., 2009).

Pain's (2009; 2010; Pain and Smith, 2008) work on the turn to an emotional geopolitics was significant in moving towards an understanding of emotions, particularly fear, as being lived and practised. Drawing on feminist geographies and emotional geographies, Pain (2009) critiques previous considerations of emotion in geopolitics as being approached discursively and from a disembodied, global scale. Her papers (2009; 2010) provide an excellent commentary and critique on how fear, and emotion more widely, has been grappled with across the history of the social sciences. Vital to the development of emotional geopolitics, Pain (2009) argues for a situated and embodied analysis of emotions, such as fear, by arguing for the spatial, subjective and temporal nuances of emotions. She discusses the need to research "ordinary people's emotions" (2009: 472), moving beyond taken-for-granted and distanced narratives. Critically, Pain (2009) points again to the affective and more-than-representational nature of emotions, with affective geographies helping to provide a deeper understanding of how emotions might move (Pain and Smith, 2008). Finally, Pain (2009: 478) highlights the situated and scalar nature of emotions, stating,

> *"we might see emotions not just as blank canvasses, waiting to be affected by wider events and relations, but as situated, historicised and relational - already formed and always changing"*

Embodiment is then a critical component in emotional geographies and Pain's work (2009; 2010) exists within a plethora of literature that explores the fleshiness of emotions and the everyday entanglements with performing and understanding the sense-of-self (see Longhurst, 1997; 2001; Dixon 2014; 2015). Clearly, Pain (2009) highlights how emotions are processual in themselves, located within specific contexts, both historically, spatially and relationally, and brought into being through their embodiments and performances. The acknowledgement of emotions as situated is valuable when applying emotional subjectivity as a conceptual framework, and allows for a more nuanced understanding of how and why emotions shape our being-in-the-world.

A second core aspect to emotional subjectivity is situatedness. Within emotional subjectivity, there is an acknowledgement of positionality as having the capacity to shape and affect the ways in which emotions are felt, embodied and performed, thinking through how this in turn works to impact conceptualisations of the self-in-the-world. Botterill et al. (2016:126) state that "individuals are positioned variably", and that emotional interactions help form, and are formed by, the uniquely situated nature of personal geographies (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Emotional subjectivity allows a more nuanced conceptualisation of the process of (re)constructing identities in relation to the self and other (Kinnvall, 2006). Critically, emotional subjectivity disrupts the taken-for-grantedness of both positionality and the intersectionality of identities when considering emotion and feelings of belonging. Botterill et al. (2016) demonstrate this through unpacking ideas of security and belonging among young Scottish bodies. Considering "intersubjective entanglements" Botterill et al. (2016:132) argue adds a greater level of depth to understanding how bodies navigate, engage with and embody everyday geopolitical moments and securities. Critically, in acknowledging the role of situatedness in understanding the self-in-the-world, it builds upon the call from feminist geography to explore and tell the stories of voices that had been subjected to silence in the history of the discipline. This can clearly be seen in the emergence of a vibrant sub-field of children's emotional geographies, which has placed the voices of children and young people at the centre of research focus (see Skelton, 2013; Benwell and Hopkins, 2016; Mills, 2013; 2017; Benwell 2017). In different ways, children's emotional geographies seeks to reflect on the stories of young people's everyday emotional and relational encounters in the

world, asking how these specific encounters shape and affect the performance and embodiment of the self, as well as engagements with the 'other' (Botterill et al., 2017).

Emotional subjectivity, then, makes possible the unpacking of national identities as things that are made sense by, and through, the situated and emotional entanglements of bodies, spaces and things. The multiplicity and intensely individual nature of national identities becomes evident, arguing for national identities as emergent and processual. Faria (2013) suggests the idea of thinking through the lens of emotional nationalisms, arguing that nationalism is tied up in feelings and emotions, which in turn are critical in the production of the self. She suggests that this renewed focus upon the body and emotions allows a deeper understanding of how nationalism and feelings of belonging are shaped through encounters, attitudes and moving bodies (Faria, 2013). Emotional nationalism allows for a conceptualisation of national identities that understands different bodies as encountering and feeling the nation in varying intensities and ways across spaces and moments (Faria, 2014). Past work on the nation has considered emotion to an extent, for example debates surrounding the hot and banal (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Paasi, 2015; Christian et al., 2015), but often this has focused upon the extreme, violent or 'hot', moments of nationalism, or the banal everydayness of the nation, as explained earlier in the chapter. There is a need to think through these ebbs and swells of national feelings and moods that come to affect and shape the ways in which bodies encounter, embody and perform national identities (Closs Stephens, 2016). Considerations of everyday emotional subjectivity within studies of nationalism and national identities is limited, although vital work from Faria (2013; 2014), Wood (2007; 2012), Sumartojo (2014; 2016; 2017) and Closs Stephens (2016) has begun to point towards and fill this need for an emotional and embodied understanding of national identities. These authors underscore the ways in which considering emotions and situatedness brings a greater awareness of the ever shifting and processual nature of nationalism and the nation. They demonstrate the embodied nature of the nation and argue for research into the messy and complex entanglements between the private/public, bodies and the wider nation, and the vitally important spatiality of moving and sensing bodies. The majority of this work has come from a more-than-representational framework and it is important to acknowledge then the theoretical ties of the affective and atmospheric with emotional subjectivity.

Emotional and affective geographies are often separated as two distinct accounts, with emotions seen as embodied and affects as more impersonal (Thien, 2005; Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Pain, 2009). These debates have been prominent within literature over the past number of years (see Thien, 2005; Ash, 2015; Wetherell et al., 2015). Critically, I wish to draw on the paper from Williams and Boyce (2013:896) who attend to this debate by clearly underscoring affects and emotions as distinct yet "deeply entangled aspects of everyday life". Williams and Boyce (2013) highlight the embodied nature of emotional and affective experiences, acknowledging how the situatedness of different bodies enables a deeper understanding of the ways in which bodies experience and encounter the world through both emotion and affect. Emotions and affects have to be lived and made (Williams and Boyce, 2013; Pain and Smith, 2008). Emotions move between and through bodies, spaces and atmospheres, coming to be through specific encounters, gestures and movements, and working to both affect and be affected by space. Drawing affect and emotion together, Anderson (2009), McCormack (2013) and Edensor (2015) provide useful commentaries on the utility of emotion and affect, suggesting that affective atmospheres are a way to unsettle the distinction between emotions and affects. Anderson (2009:80) suggests that atmospheres are "impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal", meaning that the messiness and somewhat fluid and abstract nature of atmospheres provides a useful framework for conceptualising everyday encounters and performances of the self-in-the-world. Approaching national identities through the lens of affective atmospheres means that national identities are unpacked at the scale of the body, through everyday encounters while taking seriously the emotionally subjective and affective nature of national identities. It allows for alternative narratives of national identities and belongings to emerge, going beyond assumptions of pre-existing identities and nations, and implying that feelings of national (non)belonging can be related to more than just the familiar studies of memorials, text books and flags.

Earlier work on emotional geographies was slower to consider emotionality in relation to objects and the more-than-representational nature of the material, however more recent work has begun to consider the affective entanglements of emotions and things, and how emotions, objects and the built environment also play a role and hold affective capacities in shaping space and identities (see examples in Sumartojo,

2014; 2016; Waterton and Dittmer, 2014; Pink, 2005; 2009; 2013; Pink and Mackley, 2016). Often this work has come through a focus on commemoration or sensory geographies, and adds a critical component when thinking through the role of emotion on identities and social life. Here, this thesis seeks to add to this increasing body of work on affective atmospheres of nationalism, explored in section 2.4, through exploring the entanglements of bodies, atmospheres and emotions within the emergence of feelings of national identities and belonging. By focusing more intently upon the bodily experiences and encounters within diffuse atmospheres, this research adds to this body of work by centralising these experiences and understanding the intimate and personal emergences of national identities. It takes seriously the role of emotions and the body when thinking through how a sense of (non)belonging to particular nations is felt and performed through everyday rhythms and encounters. In doing so, this allows for the multiplicity and messiness of national identities to be seen and understood, allowing a disruption of the neat categorisations of national identities, and thinking through how national identities are in fact processual, intensely intimate, and yet belong to a collective. Critically, affective atmospheres means that emotions are both affected by and affect ideas of belonging (Puar, 2007). Emotional subjectivity, then, builds a more nuanced, critical and embodied understanding of national identities, taking seriously the narratives and experiences of bodies in the everyday world. It prioritises an understanding of moments of encounter as key to the emergence of national identities and explores the complex and messy entanglements of bodies, spaces, emotions, affects, and objects in order to unpack the multiple and diffuse nature of feelings of national belonging and identities.

2.3.2 Belonging

Davidson and Milligan (2004) highlight the relationship between emotional geographies and ideas of belonging and communities, drawing on work from Valentine and Skelton (2003), Bowen (2001) and Bain (2003), but also pressing the need for more work to explore these nuances. Emotions are a key element of belonging, which itself is messy and vague as a concept (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Knott, 2017). To Wood and Waite (2011: 207), belonging is “a dynamic emotional attachment that relates individuals to the material and social worlds they inhabit and experience”. Already this definition highlights the plurality of belonging through considering how bodies can belong and be a part of multiple worlds, perhaps

asking the question of how these forms of belonging can shift in relation to those worlds. The concept of emotional subjectivity, then, implies an engagement with feelings of belonging through its entanglement with notions of identities. It explores the ways a body comes to feel a sense of belonging, and the varying scales that are wrapped up in emotions and embodiments. To consider emotional subjectivity must be to address the dominantly disembodied narratives surrounding national identities and affective atmospheres, of which both concepts remain relatively un-peopled at times. It is also important then to think about how social and material worlds can have specific spatialities attached to them. Belonging is a process that emerges and shifts through encounters and in relation to its contextual framework; it exists and is (per)formed through atmospheres, highlighting the multifaceted nature of belonging. Examples of this shifting nature of belonging can be seen in Closs Stephen's (2016) work on the London 2012 Olympics, where national belonging seemed to intensify for a period, being shaped by a multitude of affective components working within a national atmosphere. Equally work from Fekete (2004) on religious dress in France and its relations to the nuances of feeling and sensing both belonging and non-belonging works again to demonstrate the plethora of components and moments that shape the dynamism of belonging. Thirdly, and key when thinking about emotional subjectivity, is the emotional nature of belonging (Wood and Waite, 2011). Wood and Waite, 2011 suggest the role of emotional qualities in coming to feel a sense of (non)belonging, whilst also underlining the need for further research in the area. Belonging is something that is experienced and shapes how people embody and perform their being-in-the-world (May, 2011).

Key to understanding belonging is unpacking how bodies negotiate emotions and feelings, both consciously and unconsciously, shaping this being-in-the-world. Critically it is necessary to consider the emotionally subjective nature of belonging through thinking about how multiple senses of belonging are negotiated and intersect across various spaces and scales (Wood and Waite, 2011). Notions of belonging have implications for both studies of citizenship and national identities (Percy-Smith, 2010; Mills and Waite, 2017). Knott (2017) suggests that studies of national identities require greater attention at the scale of the body, considering how individuals make sense and come to (per)form feelings of national belonging. National identities can then be understood as emergent and multiple, shaped through situatedness and emotional encounters through atmospheres. Explicit considerations of belonging and

national identities have been lacking (Antonsich, 2010; Skey, 2011) and this thesis seeks to add to this body of literature through grounding understandings of national (non)belonging through the in-depth exploration of people's real-world encounters with the nation and feelings of belonging.

Thinking about belonging and the nation leads to questions surrounding 'who' belongs and ideas of insider/outsider boundaries (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010). Insider/outsider dynamics have been explored, often considering how these work to create "hierarchies of belonging" (Skey, 2014: 327) and highlighting the dynamic nature of belonging as being a performed 'doing' and feeling, whilst also demonstrating the tangible power-relations that work alongside ideas of belonging (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Knott, 2017). However,instad of staying within this dichotomy of either/or, insider/outsider, we must instead ask how belonging exists as multiple and fluid within and across those categories; belonging is not simply belonging or not belonging, but is contextually determined and fluid across bodies, spaces and atmospheres. Indeed, this thesis asks these questions and intends to give greater attention to grounded narratives, considering the emotionally subjective and affective nature of the doings and articulations of national belonging (Wood and Waite, 2011). Belonging is in itself a process, shaped as bodies move through and within atmospheres and becomes embodied in relation to emotional subjectivity and spatio-temporal contexts. It is critical for studies of national identities and nationalisms to unpack how feelings of belonging are and become enmeshed within national identities, giving voice to personal experiences and stories. In doing so this addresses concerns with a lack of grounded and embodied researching, prioritising the validity of the individual voice and disrupting normative, linear narratives of belonging to the nation (Knott, 2017).

2.3.3 Conclusion

Beginning by unpacking its roots in feminist geographical thought, this section has highlighted the three main elements of emotional subjectivity: embodiment, situatedness and the affective. In doing so it demonstrates how emotions are relational in their embodiment, drawing together the body, spaces, things and feelings. It also demonstrates the need to explore narratives and experiences of national identities at the scale of the body, through hearing and articulating under-represented voices, taking seriously tangible encounters with the nation, occurring at

and through the site of the body. Emotional subjectivity underlines the need to understand and acknowledge how other aspects of identities, such as age, affect and play a role in shaping national identities. Through unpacking emotional subjectivity, notions of belonging are underlined and demonstrated as a key component, specifically when approaching ideas of national identities. Considerations of emotions have lacked attention yet remain an important part of how bodies negotiate, feel and (re)produce their national identities through the workings and rhythms of the moving and feeling body in the everyday.

The turn to take emotions and subjectivity more seriously within geographical and geopolitical research is important to unpack as it highlights the relational nature of emotions and the ways in which feelings and emotions affectively shape and are shaped by entanglements with bodies, things, spaces and atmospheres. Emotional subjectivity draws together embodiment, atmosphere and encounter, seeking to focus upon the body and understand the recursiveness of emotions as they shape and are being shaped by subjective bodies moving through and encountering multiple spatialities. Through disrupting taken-for-granted notions of national identities, it pulls apart narratives in order to look beyond the representational and ask how the nation is felt, encountered, embodied and performed, and how this demonstrates the more complex and messy nature of national identities. Emotional subjectivity also allows the nation to be explored at the scale of the body, through performances, feelings and movements. It helps to show the complexities of feelings of belonging, demonstrating the unfinished and emergent nature of national identities, and explores the ways in which national identities are made tangible in dynamic and multiple forms.

2.4 Affective Atmospheres

Recent shifts to the more-than-representational and the affective has encouraged research to look beyond the representational and consider how an agglomeration of components works to affect and be affected by these objects and images, shaping how national identities are understood, embodied and performed (Closs Stephens, 2016; Dittmer, 2014; Militz and Schurr, 2016). Whilst much of the work on the nation seeks to map out the relational, and more dynamic aspects of nationalism, considering differential experiences and variations, it still retains a certain neatness and linearity to the nation, something it tries to remove itself from. Considering how

objects, images, bodies and language are “discreetly contributing to forms of shared solidarity” (Edensor, 2002:104), is an important aspect of understanding national identity and whilst previous work does focus on these important areas of national identity, it is limited through its consistently representational conceptualisations. It tends to see the nation as fluid in its understanding, creation, dissemination and perception, but keeps it as a static, bounded and taken-for-granted entity that does not have the scope to consider the real complexity and messiness of national identities. As Militz and Schurr (2016:8) state, affective nationalism builds upon everyday and embodied nationalism to emphasise the “importance of the multiplicity of bodies and encounters in flows of constant becomings”. This affective nationalism considers how nationalism is felt, emerging through encounters that are momentous and mundane; it traces the tonalities of nationalism and acknowledges differential embodiments and experiences of the nation (Militz and Schurr, 2016).

The affective and more-than-representational have begun to filter into work on nationalism, with Wood (2012) considering sound and music, and how that can have an affective response, working to perform and (re)produce national identity. More recently, Closs Stephens (2016) introduced the concept of affective atmospheres of nationalism, discussing how the nation is felt through multiple and diffuse atmospheres or moods, shaping the performance and embodiment of nationalism, and arguing for the nation as spatially dynamic and coming to be through encounters of bodies, spaces, objects and atmospheres. This idea of affective atmospheres of the nation has also been built upon by Sumartojo (2017), Bruce (2014) and Lyons (2018), however much more work is necessary in order to explore these ideas in more depth. Through considering the affective and intangible, I, alongside authors such as Closs Stephens (2013; 2016), Wood (2012) and Sumartojo (2017) suggest this more-than-representational approach can build upon the critical aspects of studies of everyday nationalism and work to provide a much more nuanced understanding of the varying spatialities and tonalities of national identity and how it is experienced.

Due to its limited use, particularly in relation to the nation, it is important to understand the conceptual framework of affective atmospheres. Initially I will consider the emergence of the idea of atmosphere through tracing the work of Böhme (1993), before explaining its emergence in wider geographical thought,

highlighting Anderson (2009), Stewart (2011) and McCormack's (2014) work. Following that I will consider the experiential notion of affective atmospheres, thinking through how emotionality and embodiment intersect within ideas of atmosphere, and contextualising affective atmospheres through unpacking examples of how these approaches have been used to explore national identities in different ways. I argue that the messy and vague nature of affective atmospheres enables a closer and more real exploration of how feelings of national identities are intimately felt and embodied by emotionally subjective bodies, shaped by their encounters with spaces, bodies and things. Finally I will consider critiques of affective atmospheres before explaining the relevance and importance of them in coming to understand national identities as emergent, processual and constantly coming to be through sensing and moving bodies.

2.4.1 Emergence in geographical literature

The concept of atmosphere is usually traced back to the work of philosopher Böhme (1993) who explores atmosphere, or ambience, as a "concept and experience of the in-betweenness of subject and object in which the emotional and sensory experience are central" (Bille et al. 2015: 32). His definition of an atmosphere is purposefully vague, stating the difficulty in conceptualising what and 'where' an atmosphere is but highlighting their material and embodied nature. Indeed, as Bissell (2010) has argued, atmospheres should not be thought of as a 'thing' themselves but as a diffuse, relational materiality, which is sensed by bodies (McCormack, 2013). Breaking down the word 'atmosphere', Böhme (1993) picks apart the term to think about how atmosphere is a spherical tendency for a 'quality' to fill a 'something', enabling us to probe how something, or somewhere is encapsulated in an atmosphere. He considers atmospheres as something intrinsically related to bodies and things, moving towards conceptualising them as existing within a set of affective relations between multiple components. Atmospheres are seen to fill space with tones or feelings, yet are indeterminate in their nature through the complex agglomeration, or "constellation", of people and things existing in a situation and space (Bille et al., 2015: 32). Importantly, Böhme's (1993) work draws upon both the spatiality and materiality of atmosphere. He highlights the diffuse nature of atmospheres, ambiguous in their location, yet spatially enveloped or surrounded. This paradox begins to draw out one of the complicated tensions of atmospheres as they are something with a specific spatiality, in which bodies and things can be

immersed, or enveloped, yet they are also diffuse and dynamic in that they radiate across and through bodies and places, varying in intensity and geography (Böhme, 1993; Anderson, 2009). Anderson (2009), following this, argues that atmospheres exceed that which they emanate; they are affective qualities which go beyond the assembling of components they exist among and cannot be reduced to that from which they emerge. Thus, the concept of affective atmospheres has developed. Atmospheres also sit between the subject and object, "they require a subject to apprehend their ephemeral and evolving presence but also emanate from the multiplicity of human and non-human entities present" (Adey et al., 2013: 301). Geographers have worked to develop the concept of atmosphere further and the following section explores how they have used the concept to focus upon embodied, emotional and affective aspects of the concepts, applying it across scales and situations to explore the spatiality of lived experience.

Geographers have sought to explore how atmosphere can be utilised in order to unpack the sense of place making and lived experience (Pink and Mackley, 2016; Sumartojo and Stevens, 2016). Specifically, the work of Ben Anderson (2009) has been significant in impacting the conceptualization of atmospheres, and he explores them as a means to reflect upon affective experience. Atmosphere, to Anderson (2009: 78) is entangled with both affect and emotion; it is a "something" that exists as a vague collective of affects, yet felt intensely personally and remarkably. A key aspect to exploring atmosphere is the idea of relationality. Atmospheres emerge from encounters between "people, materials and other elements of the environment of which they are part (e.g. air, light, warmth, scents)" (Pink and Mackley, 2016: 176); encounters and relationships continually work recursively to affect atmosphere and contribute to their emergence, shape and endurance, whilst simultaneously affecting the bodies and 'things' within this assemblage of space (Pink and Mackley, 2016). Atmospheres are always happening in process and informed by the properties of the components within the atmosphere, each with varying affective capacity (McCormack, 2014). Crucially, then, lived experience and bodies cannot be separated from work on atmosphere as embodied practices are intrinsic parts of the emergence, sustenance and dissolving of atmospheres (Sumartojo and Stevens, 2016). As Anderson (2009: 79) argues, atmospheres are "perpetually forming and deforming … as bodies enter into relation with one another"; atmospheres cannot be made distinct from lived experience as they are always in the process of being

reworked within these lived experiences, out of which feelings, emotions and affects can become a part of the constant emergence of atmosphere.

Importantly, atmospheres blur the conceptual distinctions between emotion and affect (Anderson, 2009). Affect is seen as an impersonal set of flows through bodies, things and spaces (Thrift, 2008) whilst emotions are understood as personal embodiments, that are subjective and situated (Simonsen, 2012). Debates surrounding affect/emotion have sought to argue how affects, as distinct from the cognitive body, can be encountered, experienced and felt (Thien, 2005; Anderson, 2009 Pile, 2010). Atmospheres are a way to explore the theoretical contestations surrounding bodies, cognition and the re-presenting of emotions and affects (Pile, 2010) as atmospheres belong to distinct and wider situations yet are felt on a personal and embodied level (Anderson, 2009). They blur the distinction between the object and the subject as they linger between both, being affected by and affecting the bodies that make up these atmospheres (Anderson, 2009). Atmospheres “lay the ground for the sensuous and emotional feel of a place” (Bille et al., 2015:31). Kathleen Stewart (2011:452) suggests that atmospheres are a “lived affect – a capacity to affect and to be affected”, a sensory, emotional, bodily attunement to something that influences a way of living, becoming and performing. An atmosphere is not passive or active, but sits in the middle and must be understood as experiential and relational. Simonsen (2012) also draws on the idea of affective space as being something we are emotionally engaged (or attuned) to and something we can be swept up by/in during these encounters of bodies, materialities and spatialities. For Simonsen (2012), the experiential dimension of social life is important; the movement of bodies through spaces works to determine its meaningfulness, simultaneously shaping bodies and spaces. This means that it is important to take everyday, lived experience seriously, exploring embodiment, encounters and emotions within affective space.

If atmospheres are relational, coming into being through encounters and being embodied and affected through lived experience, we must also think about their spatiality. As stated earlier, atmospheres are seen to have a complex spatiality. For Rauh (2012: 25),

"atmospheres must have something to do with spaces and temporality, something to do with the intrinsic qualities of materials, and something to do with experience".

Space, understood as fluid, processual and performed, is a key aspect of atmosphere. Indeed, atmosphere is characterised by feelings that emerge from specific spatialities and material environments (Hillary and Sumartojo, 2014). Hillary and Sumartojo (2014) argue that the concept of affective atmosphere enables a way to understand how space is experienced and performed differentially, unpacking the relationships and encounters between bodies, materialities, the built environment and the intangible. Importantly, drawing on Duff (2010), they contend that the experience of space needs to be thought of as something inherently lived, embodied, emotional and also practiced through a perceiving body, drawing upon both the discursive elements of meaning-making and the more-than-representational affective qualities in a space that work to bring it into being. Atmosphere, then, should not be understood as a definitive thing itself but as "a field of moving materiality that registers differentially in the perpetual affordances of sensing bodies" (McCormack, 2008: 415). The body becomes an important sensory tool through which atmospheres are registered and can also be shaped through the subjective and differentially felt embodied practices within these affective spacetimes (Hillary and Sumartojo, 2014; Militz and Schurr, 2015; Pink and Mackley, 2016). Senses, movements and emotions are key when considering atmosphere and often work in this area has explored how light, sound, smells and touch affect the 'feel' of a place, thinking through how these sensory experiences can be constructed but are also affected by the subjective bodies within that space (Sumartojo, 2014; Edensor, 2015; Pink and Mackley, 2016).

2.4.2 Experiencing atmospheres

Having considered the conceptualisation of atmospheres and how they are defined, this section looks to explore the experience of atmosphere and the emergence of affective atmospheres in relation to nationalism. Specifically, it will consider the sensing body and emotions, working to disrupt taken-for-granted and utopian understandings of national identities, and suggesting that affective atmospheres provides a space to explore alternative narratives of national identities and belonging. This section also considers the spatiality of affective atmospheres and suggests that

the concept allows for the transmitting of feelings and affects across multiple and differential spatialities. According to Bille et al. (2015: 35), atmospheres must be conceptualised as “a spatial experience of being attuned in and by a material world”. This definition draws attention to the affective nature of atmospheres as a spatial assemblage, which is felt on an embodied level (Sumartojo and Stevens, 2016). It does, however, seem to suggest a downward relationship from an atmosphere to the body, implying that atmospheres pre-exist the body being present, and not necessarily accounting for the individual subjectivity that is brought to the atmosphere, affecting the embodiment and also having the capacity to affect the atmosphere itself. Perhaps one of the challenges and questions that this points towards is, does an atmosphere exist if it is not lived or experienced? To what extent is an atmosphere dependent upon a cognitive body moving through it? Sumartojo (2014) discusses this as she argues for atmosphere as relational and co-constituted, made real through actions, movements and embodiment, drawing on bodies and things as being central to ideas of atmosphere. She states, affective atmospheres

> *“condition our collective experiences of space, and with which we engage through our spatial practices […] mixing the symbolic and material with the non-representational and experienced, they emerge as a result of human activity in specific environments” (Sumartojo, 2014:62).*

The affective capacity of bodies, materials and other things in shaping atmospheres is not ignored and specifically the work of McCormack (2008; 2013; 2014) does much to highlight the messiness of affective atmospheres, exploring the dynamic materiality of atmospheres. To McCormack, experience is not static or stable, it is a processual transition that does not precede itself, but is performed and created through it and the temporal relations within (2013). He argues that affective atmospheres cannot be reduced to only the emotional experiences of sensing, moving bodies -bodies accounting for not only a human body, but also other ‘things’- but must be considered relationally as an agglomeration of components working together and affecting one another. The presence, or absence, of specific bodies is something that is contested within some areas of literature and will be discussed later on when thinking through some of the critiques of affective atmosphere. Notably, though, much literature that is working to use affective atmosphere as a conceptual

framework, is using it in order to explore how senses and experience make places meaningful and the ways in which atmosphere works alongside bodies, materials and spaces to affect movement, memory (Sumartojo and Stevens, 2016), feelings of security (Adey et al., 2013) and ideas of national identity (Closs Stephens, 2016), centring the cognitive body as the focus of analysis.

Like much work on the more-than-representational, affective atmosphere is interested in the rhythms, movements, feelings, affects and senses of lived experience that go beyond the discursive but do not remove the value of the representational within spatial assemblages (Lorimer, 2005; Bille et al. 2015). It allows us to explore why something, or somewhere, 'feels right' (Pink and Mackley, 2016), or how "feelings of and for things draw us into affective relations" (McCormack, 2014: 14). Affective atmospheres make space for the resistant, the alternative and the unexplainable, requiring research to take seriously the relationality of everyday encounters and experiences, thinking through the affective capacities of connections and attunements between bodies, spaces and materials. This offers a way to explore why or how certain things become significant or trivial to different moving bodies and the ways in which this affects the performance of identity and experiences of spaces within the everyday (Geoghegan and Woodyer, 2014). Affective atmospheres do not suggest a lack of consciousness where a body becomes swept up and loses its cognitive ability and rationality, indeed it is the idea that certain bodies and things enter into a type of relationship that has an intensified affective and emotional relationship. A body's feelings for 'something' makes the relationship more meaningful to that person, therefore potentially shaping the way they move, encounter and experience spaces and atmospheres (Woodyer and Geoghegan, 2012). Atmospheres interweave the affective and emotional, showing how, whilst distinct, they are not separate (Simonsen, 2007). As stated earlier, within atmospheres the distinctions between feelings, emotions and affects becomes blurry and complex (Anderson, 2009), and the ambiguity does not render the concept weak, but means we can more thoughtfully unpack the relationships between and the becoming of space, bodies and things (Bille et al., 2015).

Closs Stephens (2016) suggests that through the idea of affective atmosphere, we can look critically at how people feel more or less attached to a nation, thinking through how nationalism exists with varying intensities and within different

spacetimes (McCormack, 2013). She argues that discourses surrounding nationalism have previously failed to address emotions and, when they have been addressed it is often through linking emotion to a particular group of people (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Pain, 2009; 2010). This groupist ontology not only works to reinforce particular dominant narratives surrounding that group but it also marks a step back towards the more historical accounts that emphasised the group/community basis to national identity, unintentionally reinforcing a fixed, linear, authentic and inevitable nationalism. Closs Stephens (2013; 2016) has suggested that attending to the affective considers the swells of intensities that pass between and through bodies, working to both unpack the production of group distinctions and also resist them. It is also argued that affective atmospheres build upon everyday nationalism as it reads material objects as active and lively agents (Closs Stephens, 2016). The idea of an agent is important as it indicates a move beyond the representational to something more, where objects become actants (Latour, 2004), something that can both be affected by and affect other components (Bennett, 2010). Approaching the nation as an agglomeration of components and attending to the affective is important as,

> *"it also implies that national feelings and affects can stick to many different kinds of objects, materials and bodies – far beyond the familiar examples of flags, monuments and memorials offered in most studies of nationalism" (Closs Stephens, 2016: 11).*

Atmospheres draw together affect and emotion and also the macro and micro scale, considering how impersonal and collective, macro scale situations become felt on a personal, emotional and embodied level (Anderson, 2009). It recognises that the nation is something intangible, yet felt in real and tangible ways, through things, bodies, atmospheres and spaces.

Not all atmospheres are positive or enjoyable and they are experienced differently by different bodies and in certain spatialities, making clear the importance of understanding subjectivity and embodiment. Closs Stephens (2016) asks how certain dominant atmospheres can be resisted or shaped through bodies, things and movements. As atmospheres are something seen as constantly progressive and performed, then alternative narratives must exist. In order to explore this idea of resisting an atmosphere, it is useful to draw upon two examples that centre on the

nation and ideas of nationalism. For some time, Closs Stephens (2013) has questioned the naturalness and persistence of the nation as the taken-for-granted scale of the political. Through her critique she has argued that there needs to be a shift to consider how the national collective is formed through encounter, defying a group-based or community based ontology and arguing for contingent and multiple identities within a space. In her 2016 article, Closs Stephens turns to affective atmospheres to begin to unpick the idea of the nation and consider how this conceptual framework may allow the resistance of nationalism and the exposure of unwritten narratives and encounters with nationalism. Importantly, she argues how treating the nation as an affective atmosphere develops a relational understanding of national identity, as something that is felt and experienced at a sensory level through a nebulous of things, bodies, spaces, rhythms, memories, swells, ties, feelings, emotions and affects. As she states,

> *"I use the idea of national affective atmospheres as an opening for engaging with the ways in which national feelings touch us, take hold and become infectious: how they are felt through bodies but surpass any individual body. How, then, might such seemingly 'banal' feelings – moods that we simply 'go along with' – be identified as always already political and as laden with power and resistance?" (Closs Stephens, 2016: 183-4)*

Affective atmosphere highlights the importance of an inhabited account of nationalism, naming the need to consider how a nation exists through moving bodies within certain spaces and time; moving and sensing bodies are in part generative of an affective imagined community, performing spaces and making something intangible, palpable (McCormack, 2013). The nation is not something that is merely seen and represented, but it is something that is felt and experienced, suggesting feelings of national belonging do not precede 'being', 'feeling' and 'encountering' the nation but are made through these emotional entanglements (Closs Stephens, 2016). Closs Stephens argues, then, that national identity is more than symbolic, but rather becomes through temporally and spatially specific encounters in which their 'essence' sticks to objects, bodies and materials, with multiple meanings and carrying their own affective capacities. The value, then, of considering the nation as an affective atmosphere, is that it accounts for the shifting feelings and tones of national

identity that cut across spaces and times; it allows us to consider why feelings of belonging shift depending on the specific spacetimes we encounter and how the subjective body experiences the nation in different ways. National identities exist as a lingering atmosphere which bodies both affect, and are affected by in different ways. If bodies are able to affect the atmosphere, Closs Stephens (2016) argues this means that bodies can reconstitute and resist the dominant conceptualisations that naturalise the idea of a pre-existing nationalism. Through the examples of creative practices and alternative scales of encounter through the urban, she suggests it is possible to disrupt the atmosphere of the nation by thinking of different structures of feeling and attachment that do not rely upon the dominance of the nation as the only model of community and existence (Closs Stephens, 2013; 2016).

Toni Bruce (2014) also explores this through her work on the emotional spaces of nationalism and sport. She considers the ways in which bodies can disrupt what she describes as the "national myth" (Bruce, 2014: 34). Through exploring the emotional negotiations of belonging within national rhetoric, Bruce argues that this can reveal the nuances of national identities contending that national identities are specifically relational, fluid and informed through encounters. Drawing on Wetherell's (2012) piece, Bruce suggests that emotion is a way of meaning-making that is embodied and affective in practice, coming into being through relations and encounters. Importantly, approaching national identity through the more-than-representational allows the complexities of it to be studied, unpacking feelings of belonging to the nation and disrupting dominant narratives. Ultimately, it is important to think about how spaces and identities are made meaningful and how belonging comes into being through both the affective capacities of a space and also through the performance of identity within that specific spacetime. If an affective atmosphere is characterised through intense feelings, co-constituted by encounters between materials, bodies and spatial elements, then how do our experiences both work to generate these atmospheres and shape our feelings of belonging and connection to a wider body or space?

Another aspect of atmosphere relates to absence and presence as often literature discusses an atmosphere as being present. Bohme says atmosphere is "the reality of the perceived as the sphere of its presence … in sensing the atmosphere s/he is bodily present in a certain way" (1993: 122). This points to the need to think through

how interruptions and the absence of assumed or taken-for-granted atmospheres exist and work within wider narratives of identities and belonging. How do we approach atmospheres without generalising them as a carefully constructed or orchestrated 'thing'? In a sense, drawing again on Closs Stephens (2013; 2016) and Hillary and Sumartojo (2014) is useful as they begin to address this debate through exploring resistant and alternative narratives. Their explorations of creative practices as a means of expressing these alternative narratives to hegemonic ideas suggests how atmospheres can be interrupted or shaped. This can also be seen in Hillary and Sumartojo's (2014: 216) article on street-art and atmosphere in Melbourne, where they discuss the importance of art as a means of "defining unique urban atmospheres". They explore how atmospheres can shape bodies and experiences through sensory embodied capabilities, which can be a response to an affective atmosphere (Hillary and Sumartojo, 2014). Notably, creative expression as a means to exploring atmosphere is highlighted as a useful method as it engages many senses and relies on a coming together of bodies, materialities, spaces and the built environment to shape emotional and intensely personal experiences of spaces. This idea of resisting national narratives will be explored in this thesis in more depth and exemplified through looking at alternative practices of performing the national anthem and using atmospheres to narrate or contest taken-for-granted nationalist discourses. These interventions suggest the value of questioning how creativity can play a role in both shaping and being shaped by atmosphere, affecting our understanding concepts such as the nation. Again, this highlights the experiential nature of affective atmospheres and probes another question: if atmospheres are experiential in their existence and do not pre-exist their encounter, to what extent can they be designed before they come into being?

Earlier, the question of a body being physically 'present' in an atmosphere in order to experience it was brought into consideration. Does a body have to be present within an atmosphere in order to experience it and for it to exist? For McCormack (2013), affective atmospheres can emerge between bodies that are not in the same geographical location. McCormack discusses the transmitting of affective atmospheres through commentating. One of the tensions that exists here is the idea of re-presenting something more-than-representational; does commentating involve a re-telling or a representing of something that is happening and can it transmit the atmosphere across space? McCormack (2013) argues that commentating is not the

same as representing an event as it is imbued with its own affective capacities that exist within the telling and rhythms of its performance.

Commentating involves enacting and being taken up by the rhythms of affective atmospheres (McCormack, 2013). Media transmissions of events and nations "bleeds into other fields of affective potentiality" (McCormack, 2013: 135); the media can capture and translate the atmosphere of an event through the performing of it in the home, making known other and new affective capacities. For example, when thinking about a sporting event, McCormack (2013), and Closs Stephens (2016) talk in detail about how the media translated the atmosphere of an event into homes and across space, becoming evident through things such as the wearing of certain clothing (national shirts and colours), flagging of homes, the involvement and claiming of specific hashtags and the re-performance of body symbols such as Mo Farah's 'M'. They argue that media transmissions "semiconduct" (McCormack, 2013: 136) affective atmospheres. Closs Stephens uses the example of the BBC in semiconducting the Olympic Games through their live blog updates and encouragement of participation in hashtags, photo uploads and other material enactments of "feelings of national togetherness" (2016: 187). It was not just about representing what went on, but translating the feel of the event and working to participate in the 'happy feelings' of the games (Closs Stephens, 2016). McCormack (2013: 138) describes commentating as something that brings together bodies, the affective, the material and also distance of space:

> *"Commentating involves taking up, and being taken up in, the rhythms and refrains of affective spacetimes: it relies on the capacity to affect and become affected by the movement of bodies; and it is enacted as an ongoing elicitation of the virtual as the sensed anticipation of what might happen."*

The body, then, does not have to be located in the midst of the event to experience the atmosphere of that place and, importantly, the idea that atmospheres are translated across scale, from a local event to a national feel, is key in unpacking the ways in which the national feelings are dynamic and have these varying tonalities (Closs Stephens, 2016). Similarly, McCormack makes an argument for the affective force of images and moving images, which takes them beyond being simply

representational; “moving images work by engaging the materiality of affect, perception, and sensation as much as they do by presenting particular narratives or scripts” (McCormack, 2013: 143). This is important to note as it enables a conceptualisation and approach to national identities that thinks through how national identities are translated and transmitted across space, with varying intensities. It also encourages a greater depth of analysis of the affective transmissions of national moods and feelings, exploring why national identities feel differently in different spaces or times. Conceptualising national identities as emergent through atmospheres therefore accounts for the messy and dynamic nature of national identities as both shaping and being shaped by their simultaneous belonging to a distanced collective and the intimately subjective.

2.4.3 Critiques and post-humanism

Affective atmospheres are not without critique. Indeed, they are often seen as ambiguous and vague, unhelpful and to be avoided (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2016). A series of critiques have come from a post-humanism perspective where they argue that the body has been over-relied upon and that there must be a greater consideration of the material elements within affective atmospheres (Ash, 2013). Attending to a question asked earlier, these approaches argue that there does not need to be a human present for an atmosphere to exist. Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2016: 156) contends that “an atmosphere does not need utterances or even other human presences in order to emerge”. Ash (2013) has also contributed to debates surrounding the necessity of a cognitive body within an atmosphere, arguing for the generation of atmosphere through the communication between non-human entities. He argues that objects do not need a human presence in order to have the capacity to create an atmosphere; the presence, or absence, of certain objects in a space and the encounters between those objects can shape how time appears within that spatial atmosphere. For example, he uses wind passing over a rock to demonstrate how time may appear to move slowly, or a phone on a desk demonstrating the solidness of wood (Ash, 2013). The question to respond to that, however, is, how it appears to whom? To the rock over which air is passing? To the wood upon which the phone rests? In response to the earlier question, Ash quite clearly claims that “atmospheres can exist without human beings” (2013: 24).

More recently, Jones and Merriman (2012) have argued for the conceptualisation of the nation through the idea of a network, drawing on actor network theory. Building on their research on bilingual road signs, they suggest that road signs act as a node within a complex network that works to form a nation (Jones and Merriman, 2012). Through considering a nation as “relational and networked spatial aggregations of humans and objects” (Jones and Merriman, 2012:938), they argue that this provides a key site for the interrogation of the idea of a homogenous nation. In a sense, they take the concepts of performance, materialities, relationality and spatiality to consider how nations are understood and experienced in varying moments and locations (Jones and Merriman, 2012). Their paper pulls these varying components into what could be loosely interpreted as an assemblage. An assemblage, as considered by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), seeks to consider the coming together of objects, bodies, events, happenings, atmospheres, utterances, signs, concepts and ideas, things that have often formed the basis of studies on nationalism as shown in the previous section. What is missing in these previous literatures, though, is the unpacking of the messy, affective aspects of nationalism.

This post-human materiality emphasises the role of objects within affective atmospheres, and whilst the non-human is important to consider, I would argue, alongside Simonsen (2012) that phenomenology does much to weave together the subject and the object. Simonsen (2012) gives three main points in moving forward and attempting to address post-humanism critiques of socio-spatial understanding. Firstly, she describes social life as experiential and subjective. Secondly, approaches must consider the non-human and human and be open to the other as equivalent. Finally, agency is to be considered as agentic capacity, which emerges through the intertwining of the human, material and atmospheric. This is relevant to the concept of atmospheres because it re-iterates the importance of the encounters between both bodies and the non-human entities working within this agglomeration of components through which atmospheres emerge and affect. Whilst Ash (2013) critiques current conceptualisations of atmospheres as only exploring how they impact the emotions of humans, he does conclude by stating that these non-human perturbations should be explored in order to more fully understand the implications of atmospheres to humans. So whilst an atmosphere may be able to exist beyond a human’s existence within it, it fully comes into being through the encounter within it.

2.4.4 Moving forward with atmosphere

This section has worked to explore some of the key ideas that contribute to the understanding and conceptualisation of affective atmospheres. In doing so, it has highlighted the importance of the experiential, which has methodological implications for how we study affective atmospheres and the way place is embodied and made meaningful. By drawing on examples from Bruce (2014), Closs Stephens (2016) and Hillary and Sumartojo (2014), the utility of the creative has been demonstrated as a useful tool in exploring how spaces and atmospheres are encountered, shaped, resisted and embodied. From this we can draw five main conclusions. Firstly, atmospheres are relational, informed by (and informative of) encounters between an agglomeration of components, each with affective capacities that spill over and cannot be reduced back to a singular emergence. Secondly, atmospheres are spatial in their existence; they can "emerge between bodies at distance" (McCormack, 2013: 122) and, whilst being vague and diffuse, are also felt on an intensely personal and specific level, leading us to make a third conclusion. Experience, emotions and senses are central to ideas of atmosphere. It is through experience that we can begin to fully explore both the concept of 'place-making' and also the continual emergence, transformation, resistance and deforming of atmosphere. Fourthly, atmosphere is intrinsically related to ideas of affective materiality and works to form the backdrop of the everyday. Finally, atmosphere provides a framework that blurs the conceptual divides of discursive/non-representational, affective/emotional, material/immaterial and subject/object (Edensor and Sumartojo, 2015).

Whilst ambiguous, vague and difficult to analyse, affective atmospheres are useful simply due to their sensed and tangible nature within spaces. They offer a way to connect people, things and places through their non-bounded condition; atmospheres are diffuse yet distinct, absent yet present, distant yet embodied. These tensions that exist within the concept of atmosphere bring together the material and immaterial as well as the subject and object (Bille et al., 2014). They provide a critical bridge when considering space as "affects, sensations, materialities, emotions and meanings are all enrolled within the force-field of an atmosphere" (Bille et al, 2014; Edensor, 2012 in Edensor and Sumartojo, 2015: 253). When considering shifts to the more-than-representational, applying atmosphere as a frame of analysis enables a deeper understanding of how bodies, things, the affective and the emotional work together to impact how space is (per)formed and encountered, providing a way to

explore the contestations, resistance and reconfiguration of spaces within the everyday lived experience. Affective atmospheres build upon everyday nationalism and takes it further to think about the ebbs and flows of national identity and how bodies and objects work together to both (re)produce, challenge and resist ideas of national identity (Closs Stephens, 2016). Attending to the affective allows us to think in more depth about how nationalism is experienced, embodied and reproduced in the everyday, accounting for the tonalities of nationalism, which work as an assemblage of components assuming “different intensities at various moments and localities” (Closs Stephens, 2016: 11). Considering the nation through affective atmospheres opens up space for alternative nationalisms, such as those who reject all forms of national identity and those who associate with multiple nationalisms (Lyons, 2018). It attends more carefully to the nuances of nationalism and belonging, being sensitive to varying spacetimes and embodiments, and exploring its intersections with other identities, such as religion and age.

2.5 Conclusion

National identities have been approached and explored in numerous and shifting ways, influenced by turns to feminist and emotional geopolitics, which have enabled a much wider body of research, expanding to consider different aspects of national identities. Whilst this research has been useful and is indeed growing (see Skey and Antonsich, 2017), there is much more to be done in order to fully explore the personal stories and encounters of national identities and how national identities shift and move across space and time. I have demonstrated here the need to centralise the body within research on the nation, listening to the voices of those who have perhaps been marginalised or un-heard, and taking seriously the ways in which individual subjectivities, such as age and religion, and spatially dynamic encounters have an affective capacity in shaping the feelings, doings and embodying of national identities. Indeed, this points to three main concepts; embodiment, emotional subjectivity and affective atmospheres. Through unpacking the overlaps of these concepts and considering the ways in which these concepts have previously been engaged with, this literature review has underlined the usefulness and need for these concepts in pushing forward research on national identities.

Approaching the nation through a more-than-representational lens arguably enables us to look more closely at “the ‘doings’ of national identity” (Wood, 2012: 211),

thinking through the coming together of bodies, emotions, things and spaces. Crucially, the work of Wood (2012), McCormack (2013) and Closs Stephens (2013; 2016) forms key building blocks within nationalism by moving to resist nationalism as a defining, structural and singular category but rather considering its ebbs and flows, varying tonality and spatiality and its experience; national identities are a 'doing' within the everyday, which encompass an agglomeration of components, both the tangible and intangible, emotional and the affective. Drawing on the concepts of affective atmospheres, embodiment and emotional subjectivity allows an unpacking of how nationalism endures, is experienced and can be resisted. Combining embodiment, the more-than-representational, emotional and everyday geopolitics, affective atmospheres invites "an attentiveness to the different tonalities and intensities of nationality" (Closs Stephens, 2016: 1), allowing a more fluid and critical conceptualisation of how national identity is felt within multiple spatialities. In doing so, this conceptual framework builds upon everyday nationalism and takes it further to think about the ebbs and flows of national identity and how bodies and objects work together to both (re)produce, challenge and resist ideas of national identity (Closs Stephens, 2016). This literature review has demonstrated the need for a greater analysis of the nation at the scale of the body, unpacking real-world encounters, performances and re-articulations of national identities, exploring how entanglements with the emotional and affective shape, and indeed disrupt, taken-for-granted notions of national identities. In a body of literature that remains still relatively un-peopled, this research begins to fill this gap by exploring the spatially dynamic, emotionally subjective, embodiments of national identities in young Americans from Bellingham, Washington, USA. It asks how national identities are felt within everyday landscapes and through moving and feeling bodies, taking seriously the varying tonalities of national identities that occur and are felt as bodies encounter diffuse and multiple affective atmospheres.

Chapter 3: Methodology

From July 2016 to June 2017 I moved to Bellingham, Washington in the Northwest corner of the United States of America, in order to volunteer at a church youth group aimed at 11-18 year olds. The specific location of Bellingham was chosen primarily due to a series of connections I had made with the pastor of the youth group there, which provided access to participants and the ability to move and live in the area for an extended period of time. This chapter will initially discuss the research context, exploring the importance of the location, participant recruitment and the research process, before going on to discuss ethical considerations and each research method in more depth. Following this I will briefly talk about analysis. The final section will consider my positionality as a young, British woman living in the USA and interacting with these students, thinking through the benefits and challenges of my identity and presence in the research process.

3.1. Research Context

3.1.1 Location

The Pacific Northwest culture in Bellingham has a heavy influence on the population and atmosphere of the area. Bellingham was an important location choice as it does not fit into the stereotypical imagination of big, bustling American cities, and its geography and culture provides an interesting way to explore the 'normal' American experience. Indeed, this research is interested in these more mundane and everyday embodiments and experiences of Americanness and, whilst being self-proclaimed by participants as a less patriotic location than others in America, it is fiercely passionate about local identity and still hosts a spectrum of people and identities that shape understandings of Americanness. This location was important for accessing these unassuming and different understandings, adding a different type of depth to research often centred on the patriotic or extreme right (Gagen, 2004; Dittmer, 2008; Dittmer and Sturm, 2016). Existing research into nationalism and national identities has rarely considered the feelings of national identities in relation to the collisions of multiple scales such as the state with local and bodily identities, all of which intersect and affect one another.

Secondly, and most importantly, the research project was based in Bellingham due to contacts I had developed through a mutual friend with a local church in the area and

its youth pastor. This connection was established in mid-2015, and developed as the research preparation continued. Eventually the connection with the youth pastor provided an opportunity to move to Bellingham and work with the youth group of the local church over the space of the year, investing in the lives of the young people and asking them to consider participating in my research project. The youth pastor ensured initial access to participants, but also allowed a quicker development of trust and relationships with them, as well as opening up other networks to utilise and snowball from. I met the youth group in March of 2016 on a visit to establish research plans and logistics, and in July I was able to connect with participants and begin to build relationships with the students. Whilst the contact helped me access participants, it also allowed a depth to the research as participants shared more intense and deep information across the research period, due to the character reference the contact provided. This was also one of the important outcomes of spending a long period of time in Bellingham and investing myself into the youth group as much as possible and in congruence with ethical considerations.

3.1.2 Participants

Being connected into the youth group provided access to around 75 young people, between the ages of 11-18. The research focused, however, upon high school students, who were aged 16-18. It is necessary to acknowledge from the beginning that this sample draws from a majority Christian, white and affluent population, which does impact upon the voices and narratives explored in this thesis. Whilst there is not space in this thesis to explore the racial and gendered nuances in depth, it is important to acknowledge their existence and influence. The racial profile of this group of participants means that the geopolitical context, events and their encounters with the nation are shaped in a specific way, perhaps demonstrating some colour-blindness and certainly giving a different set of responses to perhaps those of a different race. Their religion may also have shaped their responses, especially when considering the entanglements between faith, patriotism, the Republican Party and understandings of American history. 21 interviews were conducted and two small group sessions with 18 people took place. A biographical information sheet of participants can be seen in appendix B. Beyond this, innumerable informal conversations and meetings with students took place over the 11 months. Volunteering with the youth group meant that I saw the students at least once a week at their youth group meetings on Sunday evenings and often there would be times

during the week at small group or social events that I could also connect with them. There were three main contact zones: the church space, what I am calling the 'local space' and intimate home spaces. Local spaces include various parks, and one specific coffee shop near one of the high schools which proved to be a key site in engaging with students on an informal basis alongside the formal interviews, as many students spent time at this site doing homework or socialising. Although encounters in other places occurred, these are the primary sites in which the young people spend the majority of their time outside of school and are therefore seen as being critical in the (per)forming of their identities and encounters with other bodies (Nayak, 2017). It is also important to note how interview locations were chosen and this will be explained in greater depth later in the chapter.

This research recognises the importance of subjective, emplaced and embodied identities, and pushes back against tendencies to categorise identities. Whilst understanding commonalities, it looks to give voice and space to the nuances within identities, exploring the narratives, embodiments and constant re-articulations of these identities through stories and expressions of bodies in space. Critically, this research values the idea of emplacement, questioning the spatial significance of positionality and emotional subjectivity (Mukherjee, 2017; Whitson, 2017). The voices of the young people in this research are all seen as equally important and revealing in their expressions of their identity, playing a key part in how national identities are conceptualised, researched and understood.

3.1.3 The research process

The first two months of July and August 2016 focused on developing strong relationships with the students and undertaking ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research. These relationships were built by my attendance at their summer youth program and working hard to get to know students. I looked to identify key influential students and spent time with them at the youth meetings, smaller group social events at parks and the lakes, and then through one to one meetings. Having built relationships, 11 initial interviews were conducted in September and October alongside continued ethnography. In November, following the Presidential election, two group discussions with 18 people were undertaken. December and January were focused on analysing and processing this initial set of data collection through a coding framework (appendix A), thinking through the best way to move forward and

allowing time to ensure I explored topics that were relevant but also directed by the students' interests. In February and March I conducted a further 10 interviews, various informal discussions and ethnographic research. In May, final research interviews were conducted with participants.

In April 2017 I attended the AAG in Boston, MA, and, following that I was joined by a friend and we visited Philadelphia and Washington DC. Whilst this was seemingly not 'official' research, the time spent here and conversations with both my friend and other people, sometimes participants over text and social media, was an important ethnographical moment. These two weeks were spent engaging with and learning about US history, as well as encountering current US geopolitical power in the form of the White House and President Trump's administration. These encounters were heavily influenced by my own identity as a non-American and a researcher of US identity. My experiences on the East Coast affected the way I experienced US nationalism and how I thought about it. One example of this would be visiting historical sites on the Freedom Trail in Boston and witnessing how Americanness was being described and portrayed by guides, information boards, the tourists visiting and the friend I was with. Indeed, the conversations I had with my friend, a 27 year old female from Washington state, were hugely influential as she questioned and prompted me to navigate my feelings towards American nationalism, ideas of exceptionalism and my own Britishness. The conversations with her on the East Coast filtered into conversations back in Bellingham with participants, especially when exploring ideas of what being an American looks or feels like. I include these moments and some reflections from this trip in the research because, following on from Whitson (2017), it is critical to explore how our emotionality and subjectivity as researchers works to shape our experiences of the research, our interactions with participants and also the analysis of the data. Researcher reflexivity is important, and my experiences of American nationalism on the East Coast were not particularly positive, often finding myself feeling uncomfortable or even angered by the ways in which I was experiencing nationalism. The emotional moments stirred in me through these encounters and through the conversations with my friend affected my views on American national identity greatly as I was made aware of pre-existing ideas that I had about American pride and the embodiment of nationalism. It is important not to negate the influence my presence as an outsider, a youth leader and a researcher

may have had on the data collected. Researcher positionality, reflexivity and power relations are discussed in section 3.5.

My role within the youth group meant that I attended the youth group meeting every week and also helped a small group during the week. Being committed to the youth group and invested in the lives of these young people meant that the relationships that were built during the research provided both an ease of access to participants, but also a much deeper insight into their everyday lives. The extended ethnographic research also meant that I saw them outside of formal interview or research settings, and was able to notice aspects of their everyday lives and un-thought-of moments in more natural ways. Seeing the participants, often more than once a week, built strong relationships and whilst the research was not always the topic of conversation or the purpose for the interaction, it meant that the research project remained more prevalent in their thoughts and was not simply on their mind when we met to talk about it. Having this frequent interaction helped participants be more considered about their practices and to explore some of the more un-thought-of and natural parts of their lives. One participant would often engage regularly in informal conversations that related to the research. It would not be uncommon for her to snapchat me pictures of her US history homework and tell me about her thoughts on her national identity in relation to that. She would also tell me quite often that she had been thinking about things relating to my project. These kinds of interactions would be impossible without the in-depth, longitudinal commitment of ethnographic research. Examples of these informal moments are explored in more depth on page 75. Being a part of their daily lives enabled the development of authentic relationships and made data collection easier to conduct whilst producing greater depth and a more nuanced set of information; participants wanted to share their stories with me, understanding that I was interested in their voice and their opinions, and not always simply stating what they felt they should say.

Alongside the structured eleven months of research, and the select group of participants, it is key to note that mundane, casual conversations about US identity happened often, both with the participants, but also with friends, acquaintances and strangers of all ages whom I encountered in my daily life. These conversations were usually reflected upon in my field research diary, screen shot from my phone or snapchat, and then processed. These conversational interactions were difficult to

record at times and were often not directed at all by myself as the researcher. Many conversations came about when people asked about the topic of my research, with them proceeding to share their thoughts on it. During and following the presidential election, people's knowledge of my research topics also meant that I was sometimes viewed as somewhat of an 'expert' or 'insider' into the election, and this meant that people would regularly ask for my opinion on what was going on. These questions following the election regularly produced feelings of discomfort or anxiety, making me once again aware of my otherness in the situation and in the national context too. My encounters with bodies, both participants and non-participants shaped my own experiences of national and local identities, as well as having an influential role on other people's experiences of their identities.

3.2 Research methods

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

At the beginning of the research process I was introduced to the whole youth group in my role as researcher and my purpose of being at the group was made clear. Potential participants were then given information booklets before being invited to a session where I explained my research in more detail. I also used a private Facebook group to invite people to take part and remind participants about upcoming interviews and group activities. Parents were informed of my presence in the youth group and the purpose of my research. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to participants. The data was stored securely throughout and pseudonyms were given to all participants (Hopkins, 2010). Every participant was given an additional information sheet (appendix C) and signed a consent from (appendix D), ensuring the clarity of the aims and objectives of the research and the intentions of the researcher. There were opportunities throughout the entire research process to leave the research and to ask any questions. Following transcription participants were offered the opportunity to read their transcripts and request to have data removed from the set. The results of the research were also fed back to those participants who wished to see it.

3.2.2 Multi-method approach

As indicated above, three main research techniques were used in this research project to collect useful, in-depth data; interviews, ethnography and discussion groups. In order to approach the more-than-representational and transitional nature

of youth identities, it was beneficial to utilise multiple methods (Punch, 2001), as well as feminist methodologies, which prioritise the voice of participants and recognise issues of subjectivity and reflexivity (McDowell, 1992; Dyck, 1993; 2002; Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Hyams 2004). These methods provided an opportunity to unpack ideas of triviality and significance and allowed each participant to engage in more self-directed contributions to the research (Geoghegan and Woodyer, 2014; Woodyer and Geoghegan, 2012). This more self-directed approach meant that there was a greater potential for participants to select the details and topics that were meaningful to them and their personal understandings of the nation, focusing on the movements and doings of their identity (Pain, 2004). Indeed, using more participant-driven approaches to the interviews and discussion groups enabled participants to engage more directly with the data being produced, developing a sense of ownership and connection to the project (Kesby, 2007). This was valuable in terms of the practical carrying out of research with young people, but also when exploring more complex or abstract concepts such as lived experiences and everyday practices. Multiple methods over an extended period of time worked to explore these distinct, yet specifically interrelated, aspects of young people's everyday lives, complementing each other in order to resist singular representations and narratives (Kesby, 2007; Langevang, 2007; Bushin, 2007).

There are a plethora of methodologies and techniques that are appropriate for research into the more-than-representational (Vannini, 2015). I would situate this research approach alongside that of Anderson and Ash (2015) who discuss how research on the more-than-representational does not need to be limited to these specific methodologies but can be explored by regular methods. Anderson and Ash (2015) highlight the value of ethnographic research when investigating affective atmospheres, something that was beneficial in this research. Using ethnographic methods approaches taken-for-granted practices and performances within the everyday, working to unpack lived experiences and embodiments (Woodyer, 2008; Latham, 2003). Ethnography, along with more self-directed interviews and group discussions, also meant that in this research the material, sensuous and intangible were considered carefully, through exploring participants' affective capacities and encounters within space. Combining ethnography, which explored and thought through some of the more nuanced and taken-for-granted notions of everyday life, with interviews meant that themes picked up during ethnographic research could be

unpacked alongside the participants. It allowed myself as the researcher to have a better grasp and understanding of some of the things that participants discussed or talked about. Living in the culture meant that the experiences of participants were also, in part, some of my experiences; I was exposed to similar media storms, the atmosphere of the space and events that took place. This does however demand more creative approaches and a repositioning of the researcher's role within the project; researching from a more-than-representational perspective means being interested in the performances (Woodyer, 2008), the 'doings', the encounters, the rhythms and the 'speakings' of national identities. Therefore, researching alongside participants can highlight these encounters and rhythms of everyday life, exploring how identities come into being and are embodied. It is also important to consider the embodied participation within the practice of ethnography, or what Sarah Pink (2009: 25) calls "emplaced ethnography", combining interviews, group discussion methods and ethnography in a way that highlights the multi-faceted and affective nature of encounter and embodiment. Crucially, this research also draws on Butler's (2007: 367) argument for "sensory, self-reflective and embodied methodologies", considering how creative practices, focusing upon both the bodies of the researcher and participants, can provide more in-depth and critical engagements with everyday life.

Through combining this range of methods, it is important to think of this research as a process through which each method was intended to build upon the other, telling the stories of the participants in multifaceted ways. The participants' stories and experiences are central to this research, and it was therefore necessary to shift the power and direction of the research to them, recognising each story as valuable and helping to consider their personal narration of embodiments, encounters and productions of national identities. Embedding myself in the research environment, building strong relationships through my involvement in the youth groups, and combining interviews with ethnographic research enabled me to develop trust and rapport with the young people, encouraging them to participate further in the research (Punch, 2012; Tickle, 2017). I will now explore each method in more depth.

3.2.3 Ethnography and auto-ethnography

Ethnographic participant observation and auto-ethnography are important methods that allow the researcher to attempt to avoid the controlled nature and power

relations often found within more structured and discursive approaches such as interviews or oral histories (Megoran, 2006; Crang and Cook, 2007). Ethnography has been expressed as a means of gaining a better and more naturalised understanding of something through the embedding of the researcher into the culture (Malinowski, 1922; Crang and Cook, 2007). Through taking an ethnographic approach, this research acknowledges the messiness of encounters and embodiments, unpacking the situated production of knowledge and understanding. By embedding myself in the culture and world of my research participants, over time I was able to see the value of ethnography as systems, styles of thought, ways of thinking, practices and values unravelled and became less obscure and more understandable. I was able to unpack why certain concepts and values were seemingly so important and trace them back to historical events or cultural modes of thought. It was significant, especially when unpacking how national identities come to be performed and embodied, to think through and encounter the banal and everyday expressions of this, often in unthoughtful ways and manners.

Equally, by understanding ethnography as a more reflective practice, it is possible to open up these questions of encounter and entanglement (Pink, 2009), considering the becoming of space and the affective qualities that both circulate and are produced/productive of experience. Importantly, they allow the researcher to become embedded within the affective capacities of the rhythms and movements of everyday life. As Williams (2015: 4) states, participant observation allows “access to the sensuous nonverbal ways of knowing and embodied lines of communication that emerge in fleeting acts of performance”. Engaging in long term fieldwork is also useful when thinking about these spaces and temporalities of the everyday as it “enables ethnographers to live in the same environment as their research participants, experiencing the sensory rhythms and material practices of that environment” (Pink, 2009: 66). In this sense, if space and identity are understood to be components, affectively intertwined and simultaneously bringing one another into being (Simonsen, 2012), then it is important to explore space by being present within it and encountering it beyond a representational or discursive method.

Ethnography, then, allows the researcher to be embedded into the everyday life of participants, and in the case of this research, I was able to live alongside participants as they navigated different spaces and times in their life. Merriman and Jones (2017)

consider this through the idea of rhythmic spaces and refrains. These rhythms and refrains could be the routes and journeys that are undertaken and become banal or routinised within the everyday, but have specific understandings and attachments associated with them. Ethnography allowed me as the researcher to take up these rhythms and participate in some of them with the students in the research. Being present, feeling and sensing spaces and moments alongside participants over a long period of time was especially invaluable when thinking about the ebbs and flows of national feelings, and the ways in which they are embodied, felt and performed. National feelings can be brought into being through encounters with specific affective spaces and practices, that can be banal and routinised yet significant and meaningful (Merriman and Jones, 2017). These spaces and rhythms of everyday life can be more difficult to explore through structured and semi-structured interviews as they may seem so 'un-thought-of' that they are difficult to recall. Being and moving through those spaces with participants, then, is a useful practice and experience to gain a deeper insight as national identities move across bodies and spacetimes. Equally, being present in the lives of these young people made their stories and lives central to the research process and viewed their opinions, experiences and embodiments as both valid and valuable (Tomson, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Tickle, 2017). Through personal and embodied accounts, this research aimed to unpack the becoming of national bodies through momentary and enduring encounters with bodies, objects, spaces and atmospheres (Militz and Schurr, 2015).

Ethnography has its disadvantages and critiques. In part these critiques tend to relate to the subjectivity of the researcher and their meaning-making, as well as the representation of space (Clifford, 1986; Megoran, 2006). However, the emergence of emotional and feminist geographies has done much to expand the amount of self-reflexivity and consideration of power relations in all aspects of qualitative research. Specifically, auto-ethnographic approaches do much to translate the personal experiential and emotional relationships between the researcher and researched, considering affective and sensory understandings and encounters with the world (Spry, 2001; Ellis, 2009; Haldrup 2017). Auto-ethnography is itself an embodied practice, and therefore is useful for unpacking ideas of the emotional, embodied, and often un-thought-of, everyday (Spry, 2001). Observing my own emotions and performances throughout the research was an important aspect that added another layer of understanding to the research (Bondi, 2012; 2014; Askins, 2009). Auto-

ethnography also meant I could reflect on the power relations between the researcher and researched, and emotional-subjectivity. It allowed me to think about the ways in which the spaces, atmospheres and bodies that we encounter and engage with in the daily and mundane moments of life become taken-for-granted, yet hold a significant power in relation to our sense-of-self and being-in-the-world. My personal encounters with forms of national identities added a depth to the research through the natural-ness and taken-for-grantedness of their performance. I was able to pick up on these things due to my position as an outsider and as different. Throughout the research I kept a reflective research journal, in which I commented upon these observations, encounters and also the ways in which my own experiences of self and practices and performances moved, shifted and developed over the research period.

This research draws upon social and cultural geographers' use of ethnographic participant observation, such as Crang (1994), Katz (2004) and Nayak (2003) and auto-ethnography (Haldrup 2017; Spry, 2001; Ellis, 2009). These literatures use ethnography to both explore and underscore the importance of everydayness within geographical research, and understand the messiness of the embodiment, emergence and performance of the self-in-the-world. Indeed, the use of ethnography and auto-ethnography can be a challenging research method to implement as the openness of the method allows for changes to the direction of the project, as was experienced in this research. Often these changes related most to current geopolitical events that surrounded and contextualised the research, shaping the conversations and culture I experienced. These geopolitical moments include the Presidential election and inauguration in 2016-2017 and debates surrounding the national anthem in the NFL, both of which are discussed in greater depth throughout the empirical chapters. In order to engage fully with ethnographic methods I carried my research diary on me at all time and regularly took notes as I observed practices and performances around me. Living with an American family helped me to see the normal day-to-day engagements that people participated in, such as reading certain newspapers, watching certain news channels, and meant that I could also begin to do those things. Learning about the places and spaces where participants spent their time was also an important aspect of the ethnography, and then choosing to locate myself there, observing my surroundings and the comings and goings of participants.

3.2.4 Interviews

In total 21 semi-structured interviews took place followed by multiple informal conversations through texts, snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and face-to-face discussions about the research and the topics discussed in the formal interviews. Figure 6, below, shows two examples of snapchats that were sent from one of the participants as she went about her daily life and considered the research topics we had discussed. After sending the images we were able to talk about these items in an informal setting and I recorded notes in my research diary. These kinds of encounters happened throughout the research and often became prompts for further interviews or discussions.

Figure 6: Examples of images sent by participants throughout the research process (permission given by the participant)

Individual interviews can provide a greater depth and understanding than other research methods, gaining a thicker description of experiences and participants' stories (Hopkins, 2007b; Nicely 2009). Prior to the interview a plan was drawn up with loosely structured questions that aimed to explore ideas of national identities and take participants on a journey to unpack how they understood, embodied and felt

their national identity. The interviews drew upon surrounding current events, such as the kneeling of NFL players and the Presidential Election, to elucidate answers and contextualise their experiences of the self-in-the-world. Indeed, the questions were designed in such a way to be able to follow participants' answers and pursue the topics they explained as most relevant to their own story. The semi-structured interviews comprised, therefore, of a selection of general, probing questions and topics that I hoped to explore, which allowed the participants to direct the flow of the conversation more naturally. It also meant that participants were more likely to discuss the topics that mattered most to them, rather than being dictated by the researcher. Interviews varied in length but on average lasted for 60 minutes.

The location of the interviews were determined by participants, most choosing a popular local coffee shop located near one of the main high schools. This choice of location was significant because it was an everyday space for the participants and was somewhere they felt comfortable and had an emotional connection to. On one occasion whilst I was conducting an interview, three other participants came into the coffee shop and stopped to chat with myself and the person in the interview. Initially I was frustrated at the interruptions but was then encouraged to explore the implications of these encounters to the research, thinking through how the space of the coffee shop was significant in these students' everyday lives and the people that they encountered there were critical in their 'normal' life, where their identities are being shaped and cultivated. One participant chose to meet me at her home, which was an intimate and personal space to her. It is interesting again to think through the importance of the home and how this played a role on the interview. Certainly, in this case, Abigail was much more relaxed and comfortable in her own home, perhaps also being reminded of things from her home that were significant parts of her identity, and also considering the ways in which the physical site and space of the home shapes the performance of her identities (Blunt, 2005; Blunt et al., 2007).

On two occasions, walking interviews were used. Participants chose where to meet and where we would walk. The aim of walking interviews was to allow the participant to self-direct the research into a space that was significant or meaningful to them. Walking through a space together therefore moved beyond a re-telling or re-presenting of a space or experience, and enabled a shared physical encounter and movement through that space with the participant (Hall et al., 2008). This method

was a way to connect past experiences, memories and feelings to a present moment and encounter, considering the sensory and felt moving within and through spaces, beyond simply the discursive (Butler, 2007). It also allowed me to move through significant spaces and atmospheres that were working to shape the respondent's experiences of everyday life and the performance of their identity. Critically, moving through spaces that participants chose and marked as important in the (per)forming of their identities, both consciously and sub-consciously, was an important part of the more-than-representational research process and learning how to 'feel' alongside participants.

One of the walking interviews with Olivia was interrupted by the incredibly loud sound of a train passing by a few feet away. This interruption was initially frustrating as it caused me to lose my thought process and caused the interview to go off on a tangent for a while. Upon reflection, however, the sound of the train is an iconic and specific one in Bellingham, and the conversations surrounding this moment were not useless, but provided an unforeseen insight, whilst also relaxing the participant and giving her time to gather her thoughts. Hall et al. (2008) discuss soundscapes and the practice of sound-walking, showing an awareness to the role of sounds in the experience of everyday spaces (this could be extended to other sensory qualities too, such as smell). Importantly they note how being in specific spaces and experiencing them with participants can work to open up new avenues and topics within conversations.

The value of developing a rapport or relationships with participants is useful when thinking about more sensitive topics, but it can still take a while to encourage participants to discuss more personal or intimate ideas. Being emplaced in a specific, meaningful space and being alert to the surrounding sensory qualities can work to enable deeper conversations, as was evidenced with Olivia. It also places value on the geography of the encounters, allowing the researcher to consider how the spatiality and atmosphere of the encounter are significant in the (per)forming of emotionally subjective and spatially dynamic identities (Whitson, 2017). When thinking about the voices of young people, it is important to note that sometimes key ideas were found beyond the words that were spoken; often that which was unspoken demonstrated their thoughts and feelings in a more overt way. Part of researching the more-than-representational means thinking through how body

language, tonality of voice, actions and the un-spoken hold meaning and can be unpacked. These types of communications were evidenced often across the interviews and ethnography and were noted down as they became apparent. Unpacking the non-verbal and thinking beyond what the participants spoke was greatly benefitted by the relationships that were built up over time. Getting to know the participants and their friendship groups gave me a deeper insight into how they speak and conduct themselves. There were also other times where their friends would suggest or talk to me about the other participant, for example informing me that one of them had been to a Trump rally, something perhaps the participant would not have told me straight out but helped me to understand her perspective and background more.

Ethnographers have shifted to focus upon the concept of embodiment, allowing agency to move from the mind onto the body; the body and senses have agentic capacity within experiences (Pink, 2009). It is not simply about a discursive recounting, but about a felt, sensory experience and encounter in space. This focus upon the sensory can also help to work across temporalities as being within a specific space can act as a reminder of past encounters, or memories, as discussed by Butler (2007). As Woodyer (2008: 354) states, “an experience is not there for the taking, but is provisional, open to potential, coming into being through us, through our enactment in and of the world”; experience is not pre-discursive but becomes as we do. An emplaced and embodied approach to interviews and ethnography also works to consider the role of space and the environment upon experiences (Pink, 2009). It seeks to understand experience as “accounting for relationships between bodies, minds and the materiality and sensoriality of the environment” (Pink 2009:25); spaces and environments become components in which lived experience can be affected by and also have an affect capacity, and both sensory ethnography and walking interviews provide useful tools for pulling these ideas apart. Walking through and being in these environments and spaces with participants was useful for exploring these lived experiences and encounters. Indeed, methods such as walking interviews could be increasingly beneficial when exploring the more-than-representational and thinking through how to consider topics like the everyday and un-thought-of.

3.2.5 Group activities

Two groups of students, ages ranging from 16-18 gathered and participated in two group discussions, lasting around 60 minutes each. The first group involved 7 students, the second involved 11 students. Drawing on research from Kesby (2000), Ansell et al. (2012) and Botterill et al. (2016) participatory diagramming and mapping (see figure 7) was used in order to enable young people to both lead and direct discussions, but also to begin to explore difficult or taken-for-granted ideas through a more reflective and practice based approach. The first part of the group discussion involved small group diagramming, answering five questions I had written on the board, and discussing them in groups whilst creating diagrams to express their thoughts. Each group then shared these with the wider group, encouraging the discussion of these ideas and also the possibility for alternative narratives and opinions to emerge. As the respondents were friends, there were limited issues relating to not participating or talking. Secondly, each person in the group was then asked to do a body identity map, thinking through their individual identity and what it meant to them to be an American. Alongside this, they were asked to think of specific moments in time or places that they go to where they feel American or have a particular memory in relation to their national identity. These personal body maps were then used to guide part of the individual interviews that followed the group discussion. Importantly, these methods recognise and encourage the agency of participants and begin to even out the relationship between the participants and researcher; it “helps them to express their ‘voice’ without necessarily requiring them to ‘speak’” (Kesby, 2000: 425).

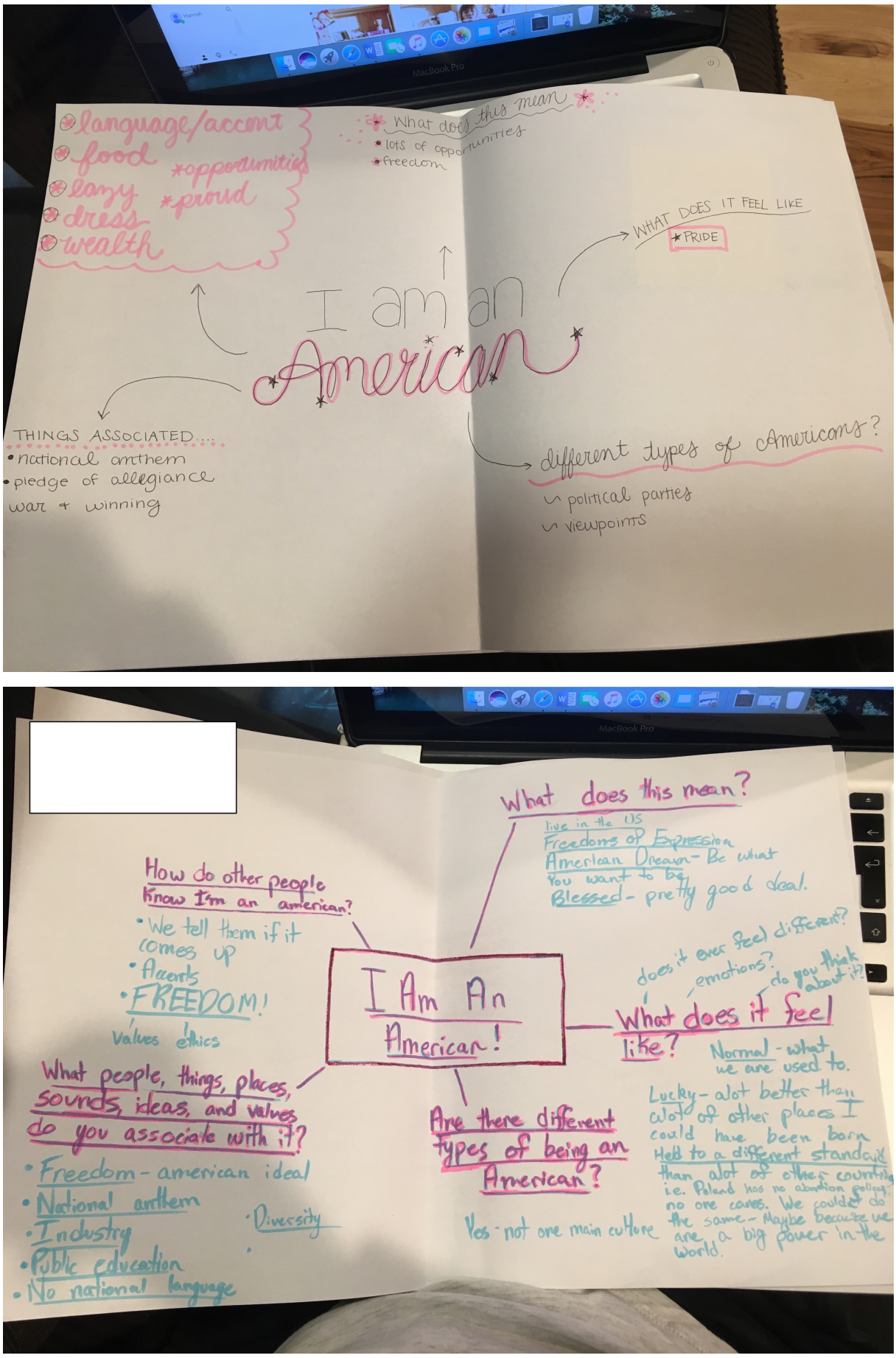

Figure 7: Example of diagrams made by participants in group discussions

Research with young people can be usefully approached through more self-directive methods, as this encourages participation and free expression of their ideas and everyday encounters (Young and Barrett, 2001; Ansell et al., 2012). Participatory diagramming was therefore useful in getting the young people thinking about the spatiality and temporality of their identities. Through mapping and diagramming they began to explore their day-to-day lives and the spaces that they go to, unpacking encounters and thinking through their identities in these spaces. These activities existed as an initial exploratory probe into their everyday experiences in order to build on this information through other research methods such as walking interviews and even ethnographic research within those contexts and atmospheres.

More recently, with the rise of more participatory approaches, the use of auto-photography has also become more common (Johnsen et al., 2008; Antonsich, 2016). Auto-photography is seen as useful in examining how participants understand and encounter their worlds, uncovering the spaces that may not have been seen as important or significant to the researcher, but are to the participants. In an attempt to shift the power and direction of the research away from the researcher and onto the participants, auto-photography can be an empowering technique that works to carefully investigate the nuances of everyday lived experience (Johnsen et al, 2008). Photographs, then, can act as incredibly useful resources, produced by the participants to assist in the 'telling' and performing of their everyday lives (Latham, 2003; 2004). In his exploration of everyday nationalism, Marco Antonsich (2015) used photography and photo-elicitation with young people in Italy. Participants were asked to take 10 photographs of spaces, things, people or acts that, to them, represented Italy and being Italian. The photos were used to prompt much deeper conversations and the writing of a short personal life story relating to their lived national identity. Antonsich (2015) describes the method as being moderately successful and demonstrates the value of using it alongside other methods. Of course, auto-photography has its own problems, especially surrounding anonymity of those photographed and logistical problems (Johnsen et al., 2008). However, it has the potential to be a useful exploratory tool, which grounds the research within the participants' everyday and normal lives.

In a time and generation where Instagram and taking 'selfies' is quite banal and almost a routine and rhythmic quality to everyday life, auto-photography was thought

to be a simple method to employ and encourage, not asking much more of the participants beyond their usual practices. Utilising social media with a connected generation of young people also seemed like an invaluable way to explore and document life histories, practices and encounters. It was, however, more challenging than anticipated to get students involved in taking part in auto-photography. In future research this could be a useful tool if students engage with it, however for this research, auto-photography and journaling was attempted but did not produce enough data to be successful or fully analysed. This could be because of the busy lives of the students, with sports, school and other activities. The method also may not have worked because it is much more participant driven in its intention and commitment. Students found it easy to come to an interview or discussion group and then leave, but a research journal or auto-photography requires more thought throughout their everyday life. It could have been better if I had set clearer targets for the students or if I had followed up more consistently about these photographs and journal entries. Those who did send photographs on occasion were sporadic and the photos were then discussed informally as illustrated earlier in this chapter. Whilst no formal data was necessarily gained from these participatory activities of auto-photography and journaling, important insight which influenced future conversations and ethnography, was gained.

3.3 Analysis

Interviews and discussion groups were recorded and then transcribed following the session, with additional observations added at that point or reflected on in my research diary. Throughout the research I kept a research diary with ethnographic and auto-ethnographic notes. The data was then analysed through a coding framework (appendix A) designed by the researcher and using NVivo (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This coding framework enabled themes and concepts to be pulled out and, by using an emic approach, the data was allowed to speak for itself. Using an emic approach was helpful as it used the research as the starting point and applied the theoretical concepts and themes following the interpretation of the data, meaning that the data was able to speak more accurately of the participants' experiences (Lett, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

3.4 Positionality

3.4.1 Field diaries

As discussed throughout this methodology, attention must be given to subjectivity and positionality (Holt, 2004; Delanty, 2009; Laurie, 2010). Holt (2004) usefully explores the ethical complexities of doing research with children and explores how empowering research relations were navigated between the adult and child. She attempts to trace how her experiences, position and subjectivity shifted throughout the research project in order to think more carefully about the partiality of accounts and knowledge, as well as how her identity as a researcher impacted the research. A useful way to navigate this may be to take up Punch's (2012) calls for researchers to compose and reflect upon research diaries in the field. Composing a research diary enabled me to not only reflect on the research process and data within the field, but was also critical following the completion of the data collection. The research diary was useful primarily for two reasons. Firstly, composing a research diary meant that I was careful in considering my own position and partiality, as I reflected on my emotions and experiences throughout the research. It made me aware of how my position changed across time and space, as well as highlighting the way my own personal embodiments of my national identities shifted as my body moved through and encountered specific spaces and bodies. Secondly, it allowed me to have a richer contextual framework for events and moments within the data collection, which could have been missed without this reflective piece (Punch, 2012; Benwell, 2016). Due to the length of the research process much can be forgotten in this time and therefore, the research diary was invaluable during the writing up of the thesis. Having the diary enabled me to jump back into moments during the research and trigger memories, thoughts and feelings from those cultural experiences, interviews or moments.

Researcher's field diaries are often critiqued for not being available to participants, making the researcher still distanced and removed (Woodyer, 2008). Throughout the research I shared parts of my own research diary and thoughts with participants in order to reduce the distance between us (Woodyer, 2008). Sharing aspects of my own research diary also may have given examples for the young people to take inspiration from and it could also enable a more critical reflection on positionality and the progress of the research (Punch, 2012). Equally, however, my sharing may have influenced what participants thought I wanted to hear, affecting how they spoke and

shared information with me. It is also important to think through the implications of what I chose to share, as my diary entries were influenced by my own feelings and ideas about current events, Americanness and my identity. Certain entries could have directed conversations in particular ways or included information I was not comfortable sharing with participants, therefore my openness was actually very intentional and specific. As a researcher I aimed to situate myself and make myself accessible and transparent throughout, trying to engage the participants and make them feel part of the research rather than seeing them as a concept to unpack (Woodyer, 2008).

3.4.2 Reflections from the field: navigating my subjectivity

Researcher positionality and situation are key considerations within this research. As a young Christian woman it is important to acknowledge how the performance and embodiment of my own identities, through worshipping, learning, speaking and moving in the presence of the participants, as well as the constant encounters and becoming of my own identities, may have shaped experiences when conducting the research and analysing the data. Williams (2015) provides a useful and considered approach to positionality in relation to doing research with groups. He discusses the precariousness of insider/outsider categories (Mohammad, 2001), suggesting that these terms can be too simplistic, covering over and ignoring the nuances of identities. Williams (2015) argues that considering the researcher as inside or outside to different forms of identities is somewhat contradictory to the conceptualisation of identity that we seek to argue as spatially complex, multiple and constantly becoming. Identities are more complex, contested and continually shifting to be simply shared or not shared, and the effects of the encounters between identities is variable and fluid, as well as spatially and temporally diffuse.

However, Williams (2015) does not completely dismiss the workings of insider/outsider categories and recognises that there can be a sense of shared identity and understanding that has an impact upon the research. For example, despite nuances in beliefs and experiences of faith, sharing the ‘same’ religion of those participating or as the research environment being studied provided invaluable conversation, cultural awareness and understanding when engaging with participants and discussing various topics, especially when developing initial relationships. For Williams (2015), however, there were aspects of faith and the embodiment of his

identity as a Christian that differed to those participating in his research, which he struggled ethically and personally with. That was also experienced in this research and was challenging, especially when experiencing the responses to geopolitical moments and the way my faith and theology shapes my ethical and moral responses, values and embodiments. Critically this also blurred the lines between researcher and youth leader, when considering what my moral and ethical responsibility was and how to care for the development of these students' values and theology. Importantly, Williams states there is a

> *"need not to essentialise the criticality of 'religious' or 'non-religious' researchers, as if belief somehow produces a fixed and homogenous way of seeing and instead attend to the multiple, fluid and contradictory tensions and practical negotiations that shape the critical interpretive frames emergent in the field and beyond" (2015: 5)*

As identity is seen as fluid and multiple it is therefore important not to generalise the experiences and encounters of the researcher, instead thinking through how both the researcher's and the participants' identities and positions shift across the research. Importantly, recent scholarly work on feminist methodological processes has also begun to reflect on the complexities of positionalities in relation to claims of insider/outsider/in-betweenness, (Chacko, 2004; Sultana, 2007, Mukherjee, 2017) suggesting along with Williams an idea of multiple positionalities. Recognising that multiple positionalities affect the insider/outsider status is important, as well as critically exploring how positionality is specific to spatiality and how the social-temporal relationships that exist within which participants and researchers are embedded (Mukherjee, 2017). Positionality, then, must be considered as a "relational and unstable process" (Mukherjee, 2017:296).

To apply Williams' idea, my own position as a young Christian woman was not fixed or determined throughout the research process, it was continually in flux and being negotiated. Therefore, it is important to maintain a critical reflexivity throughout the research, acknowledging how, why and if my position impacted the research over the course of the research, but being careful not to over-emphasise or limit the impact that my positionality has. My 'insider' status as a Christian does not necessarily guarantee specific results or encounters as it is variable and fluid. Critically, whilst

supposedly sharing a faith with the participants, that does not mean that theologically our faith is the same, or experienced in similar ways. Whilst I may be an insider on certain aspects of Christian faith and 'speak the language', so to speak, it is important to not overstate that. My understanding of the faith allows me insider knowledge and a shared understanding with the participants, which helps a certain depth of conversation and sharing of feelings and emotions, but it can also provide barriers if certain theological or personal feelings towards certain ways of doing life differ.

My own 'doing' of identity was carefully reflected on continually throughout the research process, unpacking how aspects of identities and the spatialities and temporalities they exist within shape the research and are written into the data. As demonstrated by Williams (2015), the acknowledgement of subjectivity and 'familiarity', albeit imagined or real, of the researcher with certain practices that are being researched could provide a point of contact and trust with participants; participants could be more likely to share and relate to the researcher through this perceived familiarity, allowing the researcher to discuss topics in more depth (Woodyer, 2008). It is also important to think about times where presumed identities, ascribed onto my body because of my self-identification, are contested or non-existent, exploring carefully how this could impact the research and data. More so, the self-identity of a body may shift and be spatiality and temporally different, as we understand identity to be something not pre-discursive but constantly in becoming (Thrift, 2007; McCormack, 2013). I was incredibly aware of my difference every time I was around people who did not know I was British, especially in stores and public areas. In order to avoid repeated conversations about my nationality and purpose in the USA to every stranger that asked me, I developed certain management strategies in relation to my Britishness in order to hide or mute it. At one point, a friend commented on the way my accent shifts in relation to who I am talking to and where I am. Whilst out on a hike, my friend commented that during small talk and passer-by conversations I came across as American, yet in longer conversations with him and my other friend, I sounded 'normal', which I suppose means British. To me, it has not been the presence of different bodies around me that have made me more aware of my national identity and belonging, but the absence of similar bodies and voices, who hold similar values, and the absence of things I take for granted back home in the UK.

Identities are negotiated through the encounters we have and the subjectivities we bring to the encounter (Pink, 2009). Pink (2009) talks in depth about the idea of self-awareness and positionality within research, especially when researching practices that are established within their own everyday life, such as eating, drinking, working and such forth. She discusses how she did not necessarily deconstruct her subjectivity prior to doing the research but allowed a certain amount of self-reflexivity to assist her in unpacking how others took part in the practice. Pink (2005; 2009) was able to situate the practices of the participants through the reference point of her own experiences. The use of, and awareness of, our own practices is something also discussed by Woodyer (2008: 357) when she states that a "deeper understanding of our own practice allows us to share our experiences with our participants in a more intimate, intricate manner". Compiling a research diary, then, is a useful way of developing self-reflexivity and is helpful for looking back over the research process both during the data collection and retrospectively during analysis.

It is important to think about how my non-Americanness made me reflect on my own positionality throughout the research. Thinking further on this, Benwell's (2014) discussion on presupposed or assumed encounters with identity is helpful to explore positionality further. Whilst not conducting research in a (post)conflict or politically volatile setting as Benwell (2014) was in his research in the Malvinas/Falklands, his discussion surrounding the self-reflexivity of the performance of national identity by the researcher is useful. As national identity is understood as something felt and shifting, continually being brought into being through encounter and performance (Wood, 2012; Closs Stephens, 2016), it is key to reflect on the researcher's own national identity throughout the research. How might encounters with other presumed national identities impact the awareness of our own national identities and how can this shape the researcher's access to the supposed mundane, 'un-thought-of' and everyday encounters of national identities? It may be useful to consider Koefoed and Simonsen's work exploring the encounters with others in the shaping of national identity (2012). Whilst there are methodological implications to my national difference in relation to a heightened awareness or self-reflexivity, affecting what was discussed or revealed, it also perhaps hints at wider, more theoretical issues surrounding national identity performance and formation. Specifically, it draws attention to the concept of absence, presence and proximity (Jones et al., 2012). Participants talked

about feeling their national identity more when they were in a different country or around people of different nationalities. Indeed, I also felt a heightened awareness of my non-shared-national-identity and my, often stark, difference when it came to certain cultural ideas, my accent and vocabulary, and my practices.

Reflecting back on the year, there were times when my feelings of nationalism and the self-awareness that emerged through that was due to the me researching these very ideas. By researching these topics, they were on my mind more readily and therefore shaped how I thought and interacted in the spaces I moved through and with the bodies I encountered. There were, however, many cases where I genuinely felt more or less British, or was much more aware of my Britishness, often in banal, yet significant moments. One of these moments was during the Olympic Games of 2016, where I was frustrated by struggling to watch British competitors due to the localised focus on the USA's team. Being surrounded by bodies that were not like mine was then frustrating and made me aware of my difference as I desired to be able to celebrate with other British people when we won events. I was much more aware of my encounters when conducting and narrating experiences, considering how my presence may have altered these experiences and, therefore how my positionality could have impacted the research (Pink, 2009; Benwell, 2014). Did my presence as a (perceived) 'British' body make participants more aware of their difference as American bodies? The research also enables me to explore my own felt and emotional encounters and embodiments of my national identity whilst being absent from the territorial space of the nation-state I 'belong' or feel attached to. How might new technologies and digital spaces, such as Skype, facebook and online streaming, disturb notions of absence and presence in spaces, rupturing the fixed understandings of 'being' in a space and 'feeling' national? These are interesting tensions that not only highlight the relational nature of identities, but also the need to explore the more-than-representational performing of identity across varying spacetimes, that were usefully reflected on within my own research diary and analysed accordingly.

3.4.3 Reflections from the field: Encountering my 'Otherness'

A question must be asked about the role of my British body, or perhaps more importantly my non-American body, in the research, and the role that this played in the research process and data collection. Indeed there was a noted difference in the

encounters, sometimes my Britishness evoked a sense of nostalgia and excitement, yet other times I was seen as not-American, and therefore an outsider and incapable of understanding. There are three aspects to this that are important to consider. Firstly it is important to think about how the presence of my non-American body and voice influenced the research process, possibly making participants more aware of our national difference and therefore shaping how they discussed their national identity. Critically my body was not visibly differentiated from the other bodies around me, but was marked by the sound of my voice and the words spoken. When asking participants about my presence within the research, they often commented upon how my difference made them aware of themselves, as seen below.

> *Do you ever think about your Americanness more when you're around me because I'm not American? – Author*
> *Laughs! Yeah! Mostly yes. – Christina*

> *Do you ever feel more aware of your Americanness because I'm not American? - Author*
> *I mean a little bit, I think so. Like you just get so used to the people you're around and living with and then you're like, wait a minute you're not from here! - Sarah*

Christina, along with other participants, talked about how my presence as a British person brought to mind her own national identity, something that she takes for granted on an everyday basis. It was suggested, however, that this changed over the duration of my stay with the participants, with them becoming used to me, and the normalisation of difference due to my increased and regular presence in their lives. Whilst at times participants described an increased awareness of their own Americanness, more often than not it was my difference that they felt and experienced. Indeed, often the use of British phrases or colloquialisms produced emotive responses from participants; laughter, confusion, romanticism. The sound of my voice certainly had an impact on shaping the atmosphere in which the research was conducted. Whilst in many ways I was an insider in the research - I am young, a Christian and doing life alongside them in Bellingham - I was not the same as them when it came to my national identity and the culture I had grown up in and lived in. There were cultural things I did not understand or that felt strange, or sometimes

frustrating. At the beginning of my time in Bellingham there was a novelty to my presence, with participants wanting to explain what being from Bellingham was like or give me all the 'real' American experiences and asking questions about what things are different in the UK. The impact of this on the research could be an increase in reflection on what being an American was or what things constituted "authentic Americanness". It also did shape some of my relationships with participants and recruitment into the research as they were curious about how the UK was different to America and wanted to hear me talk more about my own identity. I do not think that my presence as a non-American body influenced the research significantly, as more often it felt like participants were able to communicate their ideas better as our relationships developed and as they had thought more and processed the topics of the research more naturally over time. The initial interviews were useful for gaining more immediate and reflexive responses, but the other group activities and interviews provided space and the opportunity to go deeper with participants, really unpacking the ideas they had shared.

During the research there emerged a romanticised notion of Britishness from the American people I encountered and engaged with. It was interesting to experience simultaneously the disdain for the British that they overcame in their fight for independence and the interest and romanticism they expressed towards England. Often, throughout my ethnographic notes, I talked about the role of my voice and accent. In some circumstances it was clear that initially some participants only became engaged in the research because of the romanticisation and fixation on my Britishness. I predominantly experienced positive responses to my accent, with many people telling me they wished they had an accent or were not American at the moment, as discussed here in this research diary extract.

> *Author's research diary: Today I was in Fred Meyer paying for some groceries when the usual conversation began. 'Where is your accent from?' asked the cashier, 'Oh England', I responded. The cashier smiled and said 'I wish I had an accent! Or that I wasn't American. At least at the moment with everything going on! It's embarrassing'. I laughed and said, 'It's ok, it's just as bad over in England at the minute too!', 'yes,' she said, 'I suppose we all have our problems!'. I feel like this has been a pretty common conversation that I've been*

having over here in the States. For the longest time it was really annoying that shop assistants, or anyone really, would without fail comment on my voice. But it's also so interesting to think about these comments of feeling embarrassed or ashamed to be associated with America at the moment. I can't even begin to count how many people I've been reassuring lately that it's ok - Britain is crazy as well right now and politics aren't any better over there. I wonder why they feel the need to tell me, a random stranger, that they're embarrassed about their country? It's almost like they're apologising for things going on at the moment. (Thursday May 25th 2017)

There were many times where participants felt awkward or seemed uncomfortable talking about their American identity due to the historical relationship with Britain. Some of the discomfort was felt by my own body at these times too, especially when in situations where Britain was being portrayed as the enemy or not as good as America. These moments seemed to stir some lingering national pride deep within me, that came out in two main emotional expressions, and led me to reflect on my own national identity and how I felt it in different ways during these moments.

Author's research diary: "I'm in Sedro Wooley for 4th July. I enjoyed walking around the quaint town before the parade. It was different to a lot of places I've been before. Felt more like a western movie – you know? I found a good spot to stand for the parade. I did feel like I couldn't speak, or as if people would know from looking at me that I wasn't American and shouldn't be there. I feel like every time I opened my mouth people would be like- you're not from here. Why are you here? Something about the sound of my accent disrupting the sound of the day and sticking out as not American. This probably wasn't helped by the fact that there was a real community vibe going on. People knew each other and didn't know me. It wasn't that anything happened or anyone said anything to make me feel 'out-of-place' but I definitely didn't feel like I belonged there." (July 4th 2017)

Author's research diary: On the boat over to the Statue of Liberty Sophia turned to me and asked, 'why do you think people who aren't

American want to go to see things like the Statue of Liberty and the constitution? It doesn't mean anything to them like it does to me'. The question actually made me a bit mad and I don't know why. Maybe because I was a non-American going to see these things, or maybe because it demonstrated some of the American exceptionalism and entitlement that I'd felt so strongly from her and the visits to these historical sites over the past week, or maybe just because it was such a dumb question. My response was 'well why do you want to go and see Buckingham Palace or Big Ben?! Because it's an iconic thing in an area, that gives you a taste of the culture of that place.' But seriously. This vacation has been so interesting in terms of me having to listen about why Britain is terrible and dark and oppressive, and I know back then it was those things, but it's still my home and I don't know why America really sees themselves as so much better right now.

In DC we met two of Sophia's friends who work in the Senate. One of them turned to me as he introduced himself and said:

Ryan: oh, I just need to glare at you for a solid 5 minutes for when you burned down the Capitol building.

Researcher: I took pleasure in laughing in his face and demonstrating just how little the British care about their history, saying 'Right now I am so glad we did that. We just wanted to check you were serious about the whole independence thing. Plus it's more like an annoying kid who finally left home'

Ryan: Yeah, your son who left home and grew up to be more powerful and influential and better than you ever were.

Researcher: Better? Right now? Do you even realise who is in control of your country? Plus literally no body in the UK cares. Like zilch. They don't even mention American history in schools, so you can try to tease me about burning the Capitol building down or about the Boston tea party but I literally learned about those things 5 minutes ago. Most people back home would probably stare at you with a blank look. We are far too busy learning about our own history ... one which kind of goes back 1000s of years. No big deal. (April 15th, 2017)

The reaction on the Fourth of July contrasted starkly to my response and simmering irritation that lingered a little longer than perhaps it should have in April, in Washington DC. On the Fourth of July my response of discomfort and exclusion developed through multiple encounters within a very specific atmosphere and spatiality. In DC I was angry and I felt the desire to protect and defend my national identity. My own experiences and embodiments of my own national identity were shaped as I encountered my difference and became more or less aware of my own sense of self as I moved through different spaces. This not only influenced the auto-ethnographic research, but was influential on how I read, interpreted and researched the data collection for this project. It is important to consider how my own positionality and experience of self was not only shaped by the conducting of the research, but also influenced it. Critically, the way people encountered and responded to my body and presence is important to consider, as it shaped the way people spoke about and were aware of their own performances of national identities.

3.4.4 Reflections from the field: power relations

Part of my role within the youth group was as a leader, with certain responsibilities and roles. This leadership role may have shaped the interactions with the participants and also the type of data collected. Whilst my role was critical in developing trust and relationships with participants, especially over a long period of time, it is important to ask how my role as a youth leader could have affected my research in a negative way. Louise Holt (2004: 19) provides insight in thinking about what she calls “in-between status”, her need to fulfil commitments that were made in order to gain access to participant groups and perform her identity in specific and strategic ways. In her case, she drew on her qualifications as a teacher which allowed her access in schools in a specific way, but her concerns that she did not want the power relations associated with that to inhibit the children’s responses in research.

Similarly, the role expected of me within the church youth group as a volunteer had implications upon my relationships with the young people participating and therefore the data that was collected. Nina Laurie’s (2010) editorial considers the ‘doing’ of geographies of religion and the position of the researcher, arguing the importance of emotions in research, both from the position of the researcher and participants, something also discussed in Punch’s (2012) paper. Participants, whilst reminded throughout the research period that they did not have to participate, may have felt

like they needed to get involved with the research project. The group discussions were usually timed to be before the evening youth group meeting in a conference room in the church. Due to the timing and location, there were often extra students who turned up to participate in the group discussions because their sibling was going and was their only way to get to the evening youth group meeting, or their friends had dragged them along. There were one or two participants who confessed to only initially getting involved because of my accent. My position as a youth leader did involve having some power, responsibility, and also influence. Building relationships with the participants was useful, but there were times where it would have been easy for me to sway their opinions on certain topics because of those relationships, the respect I had earned from them, and the influence I held as an adult voice amongst teenagers. The power relations were not always negative, however, and my role also influenced a sense of responsibility, which led to students taking the project more seriously. There was a sense of respect that they held for me, in part because of my position, but also due to the nature of developing strong relationships with them over the course of the research.

With turns in feminist geography to ground research in the everyday, emotional experiences of people, that must also apply to the researcher alongside the participants (Laurie, 2010); the researcher is not set apart from these encounters and the emotions and affects that linger within them. The lived experience, geographical imaginations and emotions of the researcher can influence the methodologies employed and, as Woon (2013) contends, using those emotions can provide a form of analysis that engages with the field of research more carefully, and attempts to unpack the ambiguities of encounters and experiences more realistically. My relationship and care for the participants meant that during the analysis and writing I wanted to make sure I gave them their own voice and that I was even more careful with their quotes and context. My care for them as people made me much more conscious and shaped the way I interacted with my data, making me view the interviews, stories and conversations as small pieces of their world, wanting to do justice to the personal things they had shared with me.

3.4.5 Reflections from the field: Embedded research

This section responds to calls to think more carefully about researchers' emotions, considering the value of acknowledging how researcher emotions interact and shape

both the research process itself and the analysis of their work (Bondi, 2012; 2014; Askins, 2009; Whitson, 2017). One of the important aspects of the research was the long-term ethnographic research that was conducted through the embedding of myself in the field. This was important for many reasons as discussed earlier, such as the development of trustworthy relationships with participants, and allowing myself to have a more realistic picture of the context in which the participants live, work and do life everyday. Whilst there were many benefits to conducting research in this way, there were some challenges that emerged.

Firstly, the feeling of detachment from the academic community and the change in pace of doing research was initially difficult to navigate, often finding myself feeling as though I was forcing myself to observe certain things that perhaps I would have not thought about otherwise. Writing a research diary was a useful tool for processing my experiences in the field, but there were also times where I wondered if I was writing for the sake of writing. The total absorption of my life into my research world was great, but also made me so aware of my research subject and topics that I wondered to what extent these encounters were genuine or just a product of my ethnographic existence in the nation.

Secondly, over time, it became increasingly more difficult to remove myself from the research, especially when discussing topics I had strong feelings about, such as the current political climate. The time and context of conducting my research around the 2016 Presidential Election was highly influential and important. It was, however, a highly contentious and emotional election that seeped into most people's daily lives both before and following the election. The divisive and emotional nature of the election meant that discussing politics or even Americanness felt at times like stepping on eggshells, not knowing how a person felt about the campaigns and outcomes. I had my own personal convictions, which I felt very strongly about, yet I was aware that verbalising these opinions to my participants was unethical and unhelpful as it might influence them in what they shared and how honest they were being. It was interesting that both liberal and conservative leaning people were cautious initially in sharing which way they leaned, just in case I was of the opposite opinion. As a youth leader and a person that the participants had regular contact with, my relationship with the students meant I felt like I wanted to teach them or help them understand what I felt was a balanced perspective on certain topics, but I felt

constrained by my research and it was frequently a challenging tension to live with. I wanted to be open, honest and transparent about my identity and my life, in order to gain trust and build relationships, yet I did not want this to influence the data collected. An example of this tension was when I discovered one of my participants had been to a Trump rally. When discussing the experience with her and asking her thoughts on the event, I found it hard to not speak out and talk to her about her political choices and decisions. It brought to mind the question of how do we, as researchers, respond and react to things that are shared that we personally find outrageous or contentious? Surely it is impossible to fully disengage ourselves from the lens we see life through and this lens will always affect the way we ask questions, respond, analyse and write.

My absence from Britain and being away from the country did seem to make me feel different. Moments where my cultural upbringing and values I hold clashed with even those who I would consider most similar to me politically and religiously left me desiring to just talk to someone from the UK who would understand and agree with me about the American cultural practices and normalities that baffled me. I also experienced a strange sense of attachment and felt very at home in Bellingham. Feeling comfortable and part of a community did not, however, translate to my feelings of attachment to America as a whole. My national pride is firmly rooted in my Britishness and I was made even more aware of this during the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in April-June of 2017 (BBC News, 2017b). Being so far from the UK during these attacks and mainly encountering the USA's media coverage of it made me incredibly proud to be British as I noticed so many differences in the processing of these terrible events. I had a longing to be connected with my home country, and managed to tune into BBC news coverage as I trusted it more than the USA's media; I wanted to hear about my country from my country and through their voice, rather than another nation's opinions and interpretations. Coming back home to the UK and stepping through the border felt like a welcomed deep sigh of 'I'm home. These are my people, my culture and my values'.

3.5 Conclusion

There is much to be considered when thinking about studying national identities at the intimate scale of the body. Critically this research utilised ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methods, alongside interviews and group activities, in order to gain a

deeper and much more nuanced understanding of everyday lives and experiences. Reflecting back on the research period, my position as a young Christian, and working as a youth leader was extremely important in developing trust and rapport with participants. The first few months of research involved developing critical and deep relationships with participants, gaining their trust, beginning to notice topics and ideas to explore, as well as learning the best ways to communicate, organise and conduct research through the familiarisation with everyday life, schedules and the local culture. The culture of the pacific northwest was important to become aware of and engage with, particularly when it came to navigating how much participants could do, how often they could meet and the methods that would be most effective. High school students in Bellingham lead busy schedules, with after school activities and sports as high priorities. This time constraint and the challenge of fitting in time for interviews meant learning the places students hung out after school and involved me, as the researcher, going into the participants' world. As noted above, most interviews were conducted at a specific coffee shop near one of the major high schools as I learnt that this was the place that was popular with students after school finished and before their evening plans and activities began. Gaining this insider knowledge into what was deemed as cool to these high schoolers, where the hang out spots were and how to engage with them in their world was incredibly important in the research.

The value of spending an extended period of time in the research field, and sharing experiences with participants helped in coming to unpack how and why the participants felt or performed their national identities in certain ways. By embedding myself in the research I was able to gain the trust of participants and also pick out things that were important to them over time, leading to a more careful exploration of national identities. This method also centralises the research on the voice of the participant, seeing their stories, feelings and experiences as authentic and important. By producing a personal research diary, this enabled me as the researcher to tune in more carefully to ideas of emotional subjectivity and positionality. It also meant I was able to look back at key political or cultural moments and revisit them at a later date. This research suggests that there are more creative ways to pursue a deeper understanding of the nation and more must be done to hear the voices of participants.

Chapter 4: Belonging to the Nation

4.1 Introduction

National identities are often described as a sense or feeling of connection, however there is little research that explores the ties between national identities and belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Knott, 2017). Whilst laws, places, wider narratives, discourses in political and popular domains, and things - whether that be objects, bodies or the built environment - serve to play a part in the performances of national identities, they also work alongside each other to stir feelings and memories within bodies that remind or create a notion of (non)belonging. Authors, such as Skey (2011), Antonsich (2010) and Brubaker (2010), begin to point out the interactions between nation and belonging, with Brubaker contending that the nation exists at the very centre of the notion of belonging. What is lacking, though, is a more embodied and emotional exploration of national belonging, grounded in questioning the ways in which different bodies experience (or do not experience) nations, and how these encounters are felt and performed, shaping their personal stories and performances of national identities. It is perhaps useful to consider belonging itself as an affective force; belonging is transient and fluid, it ebbs and swells, and is encountered and embodied differently across spaces and bodies.

Belonging, as a concept more broadly, is under-theorised and seemingly wooly or vague (May, 2013; Knott, 2017), perhaps due to the nature of it as intertwined within laws, formalities and modes of citizenship, yet when unpacked and described by bodies, it is an emotional ‘thing’. It is important to consider feelings of national belonging(s) as multiple, with bodies experiencing and expressing multiple connections to place, or experiencing shifting intensities of belonging, affected by spatio-temporal contexts. Critically this leads me to ask further questions about the becoming of national identities and the affective influence of belonging. What is it about the nation and this utopian or romanticised vision of belonging to a nation that captivates us, affecting our feelings of (non)belonging, attachment or detachment? Equally, how do our emotionally subjective understandings of belonging impact our sense of national identities across different spacetimes? How can we better conceptualise national identities as constantly becoming, emergent and processual? This chapter seeks to unpack these questions in more depth.

During the research process, it became clear that for some participants, there were taken-for-granted moments, things and events that they assumed as defining or demonstrating Americanness. However, for some other participants, these same things provided a sense of exclusion, difference, embarrassment and non-belonging. An example of this could be as simple as enjoying a game of American football, which to some was a key representation of, and participation in, American culture and spoke into their perspective of the character of Americanness as physically strong, competitive and powerful. To others, the loud and proud nature of American football was embarrassing, and made them feel excluded from certain aspects of Americanness, creating almost a sense of non-belonging and demonstrating the non-fixed nature of how Americanness is perceived, felt and embodied. Some moments, things and bodies that were taken-for-granted by many, were disruptive and had emotive forces of disconnection or rejection for others. This suggests then, that national identity is more-than-representational and multiple; things that stir feelings of national belonging for some are rejected by other bodies, and evidenced in their embodiments and emotional entanglements of belonging.

National identities are emotive and emergent performances, driven through continual affective encounters with the nation. These encounters and embodiments, which produce feelings of (non)belonging within or to a nation, and are also contextually, spatially and temporally driven, are critical to further understandings of how national identities come to be and persist. National identities and belonging must be understood as fluid and relational as feelings change and are shaped by spatio-temporal qualities and national moods and atmospheres. This chapter intends to consider how national identities are tied to, and shaped by, feelings of belonging, and the ways in which these feelings are embodied across multiple spatialities and atmospheres. The normalised assumptions surrounding belonging to a nation are questioned through exploring the ways in which alternative narratives of belonging and affective disruptions both consciously and unconsciously contest singular narratives of national identities and belonging. Firstly it unpacks the idea of belonging to a nation before arguing the possibility that people can identify with a multiplicity of national identities, which are experienced simultaneously through feelings of belonging and not-quite-belonging. It asks how space plays a critical role in relation to feelings of belonging to a nation, as well as considering how the intersections of

scale are also important in what being an American feels like to different emotionally subjective bodies.

4.2 Belonging

National identity has often been treated as a taken-for-granted and static category designated or assigned to a body at birth; national identity is seen as natural, and just being (Benwell 2014a; Weber 1998) rather than being pulled apart and questioned as a performed element of identity formation and experience (for exceptions see Grabham, 2009; Benwell, 2014a; Faria, 2014; Wood, 2007; 2012). Indeed, literature has often reinforced this narrative through the exploration and contestation of national identity as something that you are, a specific and singular idea which is constructed through multiple scales and represented in both the unusual and the everyday, but none-the-less seemingly a static concept (Brubaker, 1996; Edensor, 2002; Close Stephens, 2013). Here, through looking at conversations with participants about what being an American is to them, I will explore what Sumartojo (2017) argues is a more *emergent and processual* account of national identities, which is felt through affective encounters and emotions (Faria, 2014). Whilst arguing that national identities are constantly becoming and emergent, it is important to recognise the existing representational and static contestations of the nation, therefore considering the tension that national identities exist and emerge within. This tension is between formal identification and the felt, emotional belonging. Belonging and the nation is complex and, as Knott (2017) discusses, seems to encompass both ideas of 'official' membership and emotionally subjective identities, blending together forms of formal citizenship and informal feelings and doings of (dis)connection. It is important not to disregard these wider, more formal and often singular narratives and scriptings of national identities, that persist at a larger scale, often through media, political and historical framings.

Indeed, since the 2016 election of Donald Trump in the USA, a rhetoric has emerged in the USA (The New York Times Editorial Board, 2017) surrounding which bodies are citizens, which bodies can move through the USA and become citizens and which bodies belong. These rhetorics have emerged in many ways in the USA, through the arguments over the infamous "travel ban" (BBC News, 2017c), attempts to repeal the DACA bill which allows the children of immigrants to stay in the USA (Kopan, 2018), and the targeting of Mexican, Muslim and 'other' bodies as being not-

quite-American (The New York Times Editorial Board, 2017). It is clear that formal and legal forms of citizenship are entangled in emotional and subjective performances and narratives. These narratives, whilst not necessarily representative of how bodies understand and perform their identity, do have an affective capacity upon the formation of embodied national identities. Critically I ask how, where and when the 'official' modes of belonging and citizenship collide with the personal, emotional forms of belonging, and what this means for the performances and experiences of feeling American. Through exploring embodied narratives and personal stories from the young people, I seek to ground encounters with the nation in the everyday. I give voice to young people, exploring their emotional accounts of being American, and addressing the continual call from feminist geopolitics to challenge taken-for-granted or dominant notions of identities, which ignore the socio-spatial nuances of lived experiences (Mukherjee, 2017). Drawing on the concept of emotional subjectivity, I ask how bodies negotiate and perform their sense of self in relation to surrounding spaces, atmospheres and bodies (Rose, 1997; Hiemstra and Billo, 2017).

In order to explore this sense of belonging in relation to national identities, the next section considers the intersections of 'official' narratives of belonging to a nation (Antonsich, 2010) with emotional and experiential understandings of being American. It asks what it is about the nation that cultivates feelings of connection, considering how national identities are embodied. Considering the nation as an affective atmosphere helps to unpack the messy and nuanced feelings of national identities, thinking through how feelings of national belonging emerge through the encounters of bodies, spaces, things and feelings. Finally I conclude by discussing the spatiality of national identity and the intersections of both local and other forms of identity within wider narratives of feeling American and experiencing national belonging (Antonsich, 2016; 2018).

4.2.1 Feeling American

> *"I think it's just the place that I live. I live in America. It's the nation I was born in." - Mia*

“I kind of imagine like someone with like a passport and an official document, like this is your national identity … so something super official and documenty.” - Alex

How do you know what your national identity is? Initially when posed with this question, respondents like Mia and Alex began by discussing formal or official connections to their place of birth. National identity was discussed as a formally designated indicator, which was beyond your control and irrespective of emotions, things and doings. It was also seen as quite simple, and taken-for-granted, “it’s just the place that I live” (Mia). Indeed, much of the literature on nationalism and national identities has worked to explore national identities as pre-determined and given indicators, suggesting it as more of a method or tool of categorisation, rather than something felt, emergent, multiple and diffuse (Closs Stephens, 2016; Sumartojo, 2017). Whilst this is beginning to change (Knott, 2017), it is evident that there is still space for thinking through these more formal or official narratives of national identities and asking how citizenship and nationalism seem to intersect and work together on an embodied level. Critically, in doing so we can ask the question of how certain imaginaries of being ‘good citizens’ (Mills and Waite, 2017) or performing specific narratives of Americanness have significant implications on feelings of national (non)belonging.

Often, participants discussed national identity as just something that was on a passport or on a birth certificate, suggesting it is simply something you are born with. However, as the discussion went on, participants' thought processes developed and the young people began to explain national identity as something that you can become, that changes, that is related to values and ideas, and is therefore fluid and personal. This shift in explanation was often seen as they moved from talking about the general concept of national identity towards explaining what it meant to them to be an American and furthermore, to their own encounters and performances of Americanness. National identity seemed impersonal or ‘official’ and their description of what being an American was remained somewhat distanced, full of what they described as stereotypes with similar answers of freedom fighting, flag waving, burger eating Americans and the Constitution. Americanness, however, was significantly more personal or relatable to them. The taken-for-granted nature of their association of national identity with a place of birth perhaps also suggests that formal

belonging through citizenship and membership, made evident through birth certificates and passports, could still be conceptualised as an emotional or felt concept (Antonsich, 2010). Citizenship and formal membership, demonstrated through things like birth place, is beyond the symbolic or representational. Indeed, the terminology and meaning surrounding citizenship is also problematic and variable, demonstrating a certain messiness surrounding what official citizenship is and how it is defined (Percy-Smith, 2010; Mills and Waite, 2017). Tobin demonstrates this blurriness and felt nature of 'official' ascribed forms of citizenship and belonging as she challenges the singularity of 'membership', suggesting that national identity is something you could become or choose.

> *"Like you were born in this country and that's why you are American, or British. But then there are immigrants and I believe that if you come here legally and you take a test and pass, erm, you should be able to qualify as an American or whatever other country you want to be involved in. I don't think, erm, I don't think it should be right to say you can't be an American because you weren't born here, I think you should have the right to become one." - Tobin*

Belonging as a concept itself inherently suggests that there must also be non-belonging, highlighting processes and tensions of inclusion/exclusion and encountering 'others' (Koefoed and Simonsen, 2012; 2013). By thinking beyond a simple binary of belonging/non-belonging, perhaps it is more useful to think of national identities as emergent. National identities and feelings of belonging are intrinsically interwoven through formal modes of citizenship, identity performance and doings, emotional subjectivities and affective atmospheres. If, as Tobin believes, it is possible to become an American in a formal, citizen capacity, there must be more questions asked about how the modes of citizenship and 'becoming American' play a role in emotionally subjective understandings of national identities and performance. For instance, if taking a test makes you 'an American', what implications does that have on feelings of belonging and Americanness to that specific body? Equally, it suggests external imaginations and ascriptions of being 'an American' in terms of race, religion and sexuality also play a role on felt belonging and participation in Americanness. It is important to acknowledge the process of 'becoming American' as a legal citizen as laden with affective and emotional capacities, which bodies

experience in multiple and diffuse ways. In my previous work, it was evident in the lives of young British Muslim women, that whilst ‘officially’ British, this formal citizenship was not seen as having full access or feeling connected to the nation (Lyons, 2018). Finally it is noteworthy that spatiality seems to play a role in the affective nature of belonging, shaping feelings of connection across physical, imagined and remembered spaces. For instance, the specific geographical location of birth has implications upon feelings of national identity and connection to the nation, as Mia, Alex and Tobin illustrate above (page 101, 102 and 103). The shifting spatial nature of national identities will be discussed in more depth later on in section 4.3.

When thinking about the taken-for-granted nature of formal citizenship as influencing feelings of national identities, and the ways in which it is so often considered as a singular or non-emotionally subjective concept, I am drawn to consider my own experiences of citizenship and membership whilst conducting this research.

> *Author’s Research Diary: I hate the US border. I hate crossing it. It seems crazy to me that I go through the intense process of getting the right kind of visa to be in the USA, yet I am still grilled and questioned at the border as though I’m doing something wrong. I wish I had fewer stamps in my passport. I can’t even describe the way it has instilled such anxiety and discomfort. The fact that they have so much control over where my non-American body can go and what I can do is quite scary but also really frustrating to me. I think growing up in Europe and experiencing the freedom and ease of moving around through different countries there has impacted how I think about moving around the world and being more of a global citizen. Why should I not be able to go and visit another country or move to another country? What right does a government have to determine where my body doesn't belong? (January 2016)*

For me, the atmosphere of the border transcends the physical space of the border and is embroiled with objects, such as my British passport, and memories of previous experiences in that space, which all work to label my body as not American. My body's encountering of this atmosphere generates emotional reactions to the

movement between nations and, more simply, my movement through a very specific room. In moving through these spaces, the encounters of my body with objects, spaces and other bodies both created and was shaped by a specific national atmosphere, that was seen and felt through my own emotionality and subjectivity. My experiences of 'official' citizenship are certainly not banal or emotionless in this specific atmosphere and temporality. These emotional encounters within these atmospheres made me much more aware of my non-Americanness and therefore my non-belonging, perhaps highlighted by the taken-for-grantedness of European borders in the past, and even my lack of feeling significantly attached to a nation when traveling. In coming back to the United Kingdom, and indeed traveling around Europe following my research there was a a sense of freedom, possibly a nostalgia for easier days, and certainly a greater comfort and attachment to my Britishness. My membership to a particular nation was not simply a written document, or an external ascription, but was something that transcended that and was emergent through my emotional encounters within specific affective atmospheres. My own experiences of my national identity was acknowledged as being incredibly mundane and unthought-of in everyday life, not seeming to impact or shape my encounters in the world, but became tangible, felt and very real, when trying to move my British body across the border and within the atmosphere that existed there. The atmosphere of the border was shaped through the coming together of my flesh, other bodies, objects, feelings, the built environment, its specific locality and geography and the sounds and smells in that space, working together to shape the way I understood, experienced and embodied my national identity through the triggering of feelings of exclusion, difference, frustration and anxiety.

Equally it is important to note how my own body is privileged and my whiteness, my Britishness, my class and even my religious identity could all play a role on the ease of my mobility through borders and states, as well as the way I understand and encounter my own national identities and feelings of belonging (Pink, 2009). Atmospheres become and yet already are nationalised through the movements and doings of bodies and objects within those spacetimes. In order to consider national identities as processual and emergent, exploring the nation as existent within, yet constantly becoming through atmospheres, is useful, especially when drawing on the concept's messiness and vagueness. The nation can be vague and distant, but sensed specifically and personally, emerging through everyday encounters and

movements across spaces. The encounters I experienced both in the anticipation of the border, at the border itself, and then following the border demonstrate not only the messiness of national identities and the nation, but also show how the routine practices of the nation become personalised and subject to our own positionalities and encounters.

The emergence and constant becoming of national identities in the example above at international borders also draws attention to the entanglements of personal embodiments of national identities, with external prescribed and taken-for-granted notions. Indeed, it is important to not under-estimate both the influence and messy nature of these entanglements as the internal and external - the body and the wider nation - work together to reinforce, rework and reproduce one another. Maguire (2016) discusses national identities as being forged through the interactions between internal ascriptions and external categorisations. However, both ascriptions and categorisations seem devoid of emotions and feelings, which can often be irrational, immeasurable or unexplainable. Gemma (below) demonstrates this idea as she discusses the coming together of felt connection or attachment and formal external ascription.

> *"I think [national identity] comes from like two places. It's from where you've grown up and where you've been your entire life. Where your memories are. I know like where your birth certificate says you're from … like if you're born in Australia but you've lived your entire life in North America, you might have kind of two national identities. But I'd say it more relates to where you've spent the most time and where you feel the most connected to." - Gemma*

Gemma describes national identity as the place "you feel most connected to". Whilst initially suggesting that it could be defined by a birth certificate, she goes on to explain that national identity is not as simple as a categorisation or an external ascription, but is more related to how you feel and what you understand to be the place you are connected to or belong to. Faria's (2013; 2014) concept of emotional nationalisms not only allows for an understanding of nationalism as varying in intensity, felt differently by bodies and shifting across spaces, but also enables a process of thinking through how national identities can be produced through deeply

affective qualities, emergent through intimate and mundane spaces alongside the eventful and intense. Here Gemma is expressing her belief that national identities and belongings are entrenched in feelings of connection and attachment, but there is a need to investigate where these attachments come from, how they are forged, and how space and identity change or shape these feelings.

In beginning to focus on national identities and feelings of belonging and attachment, it is important to consider this tension between formal citizenship and felt belonging. Critically it is key to not take away from the emotion and felt subjectivity of formal citizenship, and the ways in which it creates certain prescriptions surrounding who should or does belong, as well as stirring feelings and emotions within bodies. Coming to belong is not neat and easy to express or vocalise, it is messy and multiple. As Sumartojo states, (2017: 207)

> *"we must take seriously and attend to how nationhood 'feels', expanding the focus from what we think about national symbols to what emotional responses accompany them".*

The discussion and exploration of national identities and belonging must not limit or overlook embodied and emotional experiences. Sumartojo's call to attend to the felt, emotional aspects of national identities and belonging is vital and this these situates itself amongst this debate. She prompts research to look beyond the representational nature of taken-for-granted symbols in order to ask how these symbols trigger and affect the atmospheres and bodies surrounding them, thus drawing research to look more closely at the flesh and bodily attunement to national identities. Not only does Sumartojo's call push us to think about the grounded, lived and sensorial experiences of the nation, but she encourages a deeper exploration of how spatiality and atmospheres affect the day to day doings, performances and (re)productions of the nation, something that is lacking within this body of work. In the following chapters I begin to attend to Sumartojo's (2017) call through the unpacking of the national symbols such as the national anthem and the flag, thinking about the performances that accompany them. In doing so I go beyond what thoughts or imaginations are triggered through these performances and objects, and question the emotional and felt responses that are stirred through and by performances of these national symbols. Indeed it is also critical to think about the spatial context of

nationhood and how emotional responses are shaped and shape the spaces that encounters occur within. Thinking more carefully about scale gives voice to the intersections of bodies with local, national and global scales, asking how these intersections form perceptions and feelings of Americanness within the everyday. This section has begun to consider and challenge the emotionality of 'official' narratives or categorisations. In doing so it has pointed to the need to understand the ways in which these official or formal narratives of belonging collide with individual experiences and feelings of Americanness. National belonging must, therefore, be unpacked further in relation to the body and the placing and performing of the self-in-the-world, questioning also how affective qualities, spaces and feelings work to shape national identities.

4.2.2 Sensing belonging

If national identities lie within this affective and messy tension of the external and internal, it must also be questioned where this sense of commonality and attachment comes from. As Sumartojo (2017) contends, the nation lies within the entanglements of the representational and sensory experiential, the cognitive and the remembering, coming together within affective national atmospheres. Indeed, it is important to note how the nation is experienced through these atmospheres, and the ways in which bodies move through these spaces, feeling, experiencing and perceiving the nation. Participants each told their own stories of Americanness and their national identities. Their stories show varying types of felt connection but also share a common thread of belonging, sensing and performing the nation. This section explores ideas of belonging to a national community and imaginations of safety or security in the commonality that is felt to exist. Here, three different stories and sets of experiences are explored, firstly Jennifer, and then James and, finally, Louise.

> *"So I think that a nation is just a group of people you feel in common with and really connect with or something […] it feels better in some ways if, not necessarily in a confrontational kind of way, but to be, to almost feel different and be able to identify with a certain group of people. Like […] to somebody that can mean a certain safety. It like gives you a sense of yourself […] I think that if you feel American and feel you belong in our society, you've been able to take advantage*

and find success in our society. And by living here and participating … then, you kind of become part of the nation, and identifying yourself with people […] So I think, if you're part of that nation and you feel part of the nation in that way [then] that relates to opportunity and stuff." - Jennifer

Jennifer's comments are interesting in the way she suggests that belonging to a nation, or to a group, is intrinsic to the stability of identities and a sense of self. National community, or a feeling of belonging to something bigger evokes this stability in Jennifer's own sense of being-in-the-world, and provides a more intimate sense of safety. Often when conceptualising ideas of safety and security when thinking about the nation or geopolitics, safety relates to ideas of national security, war, or larger scale ideas. Here, safety sits more within an embodied or intimate geopolitics (Pain and Smith, 2008; Pain and Staeheli, 2014), allowing feelings and experiences of national safety to instead be located on the physical body and even shaped through identity. The sense of commonality and shared identity is discussed as being important in national belonging by Lauenstein et al. (2015) who discuss the idea of rootedness and national belonging developing as a bond or a sense of care and affection. Of course this is a problematic suggestion as it omits consideration of negative feelings and emotions that relate to national (non)belonging, yet for Jennifer her experiences of national belonging do create a sense of safety and shared identity. In seeking an embodied account of the nation, it is critical to not only ask how bodies' identities and feelings of nationhood are shaped by national atmospheres and encounters, but to equally ask how bodies work within this agglomeration of components and affective atmospheres.

Literature has regularly focused on the nationalisation of objects (Billig, 1995; Raento and Brunn, 2000), times (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011), events and spaces (Kong and Yeoh, 2003; Closs Stephens, 2016), but significantly lacks a greater understanding of both embodied accounts of the nation and bodies as nationalised, affective capacities (for exceptions consider Grabham, 2009; Faria, 2014). Often the need to understand how bodies read and write the nation (Kong and Yeoh, 2003) through lived experience are alluded to, yet not unpacked. To explore the embodied nation, then, leads us to ask how the nation is felt and sensed (Sumartojo 2014; 2017), in order to unpack statements like Jennifer's above, where

she talks about bodies finding a sense of themselves in becoming the nation. Becoming the nation, or even being American, is to be a part of a collective and shared 'thing', which provides this sense of safety in their role in the wider world, or subconsciously develops an understanding of how to emotionally connect with other bodies and places. What is critical to point out from Jennifer's story, is that 'sensing yourself' is intrinsically related to feeling part of something bigger, a community or a group to which you perceive a shared unity or commonality. For Jennifer, feeling part of a nation had emotional dynamics, but was also wrapped up in performances and participation. Feelings of national identity, then, are multifaceted and emerge through specific performances and emotions.

> *"Wearing an American flag shirt is like wearing a sports jersey." - James*

One specific embodiment of identity is seen in James' comments about wearing his national identity through clothing choices. It is necessary to think about the ways in which shared identities, performances and embodiments work together in fostering conviviality and feelings of unity. Expressing his national identity and feelings of connection or affiliation to the nation was difficult to describe, so James worked to use other comparisons or metaphors in order to explain how his national identity becomes embodied and expressed, as well as made meaningful. James described his Americanness as something that is worn, that is made visible and shows his identity; more than just an official sense of citizenship, James' national identity was to be embodied. There is a certain fleshiness to the performance and putting on of James' analogy as he intertwines the body with the material and emotional. Americanness, then, was both something that could be put onto the body and intertwined the flesh with both objects and representations. Wearing a sports jersey perhaps symbolises participation within a group or community; in itself a sports jersey suggests belonging to something. Similarly, work on religious dress has also considered how identities can be embodied and performed through the wearing of specific things that have significant meaning and attachment, especially when encountered in specific affective atmospheres (Dwyer, 1997; 1999; Mansson McGinty, 2014). James, then, demonstrates how feelings of national identity are

entangled with ideas of belonging to something collective, or a sense of participation in something bigger.

It may be useful, then, to consider McCormack's (2013) discussion of Guattari's (1996) work on the religious icon and how bodies and icons work together to shape its meaning and experience. Whilst Guattari discusses religious icons, a shirt displaying the American flag, a national icon, could parallel these discussions. Guattari considers religious icons as not representational, but as pragmatic, shaping and creating a "dynamic-affective spacetime" (McCormack, 2013:146) in which the body exists, can affect and be affected. McCormack argues that rather than standing for or representing something, icons are key in producing an atmospheric quality in which bodies can experience something. He talks about the power of the image (or icon) as having power in their capacity to "catalyse affective transformations in bodies who inhabit its scene" (2013: 147); here space, things, atmospheres and bodies are coming together within the experience. The refrain in which the religious icon is encountered has a more-than-representational quality through its engagement with multiple registers; it is not just about what the icon is, but about where it is encountered, the body that encounters it, the other bodies present, the other things that are around it and the refrain it takes place in – it has multiplicity of both meaning and affective capacity (McCormack, 2013). The expression of these experiences of the non-human varies with distinct affective tonalities, whether that is through words, bodily movements and gestures or emotions. It is this ambiguous and affective approach that is useful for thinking through the complexities and nuances of the lived experience, enabling a deeper conceptualisation of how national identities are brought into being through their embodiment, performance and encounters in the everyday. For James, the wearing of an national icon, an American flag may feel like a natural and mundane association with his national identity and a demonstration of his national belonging, but also points to the ways its wearing can be shaped as it moves, and is worn, through spaces and by different bodies. Thus, the multiplicity of meaning for both national symbols and national identities is demonstrated.

Building upon this idea of multiplicity we can think through the nuances of national identities and the embodiment of them. A jersey can be taken off and it may, therefore be interesting to consider the implications of this when thinking of Americanness and how this relates to the performance of identity across different

spacetimes and the way bodies participate in Americanness. It points to the ways in which different moments and atmospheres may create this feeling of wanting to demonstrate support or show physically an attachment or belonging to a group. Notably, James' articulation and experience of his national identity through specific embodiments also points to the ways in which bodies can be more or less aware of their national identities at different times. National feelings and moods can then stick to different objects, like shirts, at different moments, as bodies move through and encounter multiple spatialities and atmospheres. The wearing of an American flag shirt on the 4th of July would have a different felt attachment to perhaps the wearing of the shirt in the mundane and everyday doings of life. Indeed it could be suggested that the rhythms of everyday life shape the awareness and unthought-of nature of national identities, and it is through the exceptional, the interruptions, and the encountering of difference that bodies become both more aware of their national identities and feel them in different ways (McCormack, 2013; Koefoed and Simonsen, 2012). Wearing and performing Americanness during different times and places emphasises the shifting nature of national identities, where feeling a sense of belonging is seen as critically shaping the sense of the self-in-the-world. It exemplifies the complexities of national identities which are both felt differently across spacetimes, and also become more or less unthought-of as bodies move through particular affective atmospheres.

James' analogy is also interesting because it prompts questions about belonging, attachment and support, specifically around the incomprehensible and semi-conscious. When thinking about people's support of sports teams, including my own as the researcher, it is intriguing to think through the somewhat unexplainable nature of it, and yet consider how passionate and attached people become towards these things. What is it that grasps attention and produces such intense feelings towards supporting a group or team? I would argue, perhaps, that there is an affective nature to belonging which works deeply and unconsciously through the unspoken everyday moments. There is both a conscious and unconscious reworking or shaping of what performing and embodying this identity looks and feels like, affecting the ways in which the body moves and feels during different times and places. Supporting a team feels like being part of something bigger than yourself; it is pledging allegiance and wearing the uniform, yet still recognising that it can mean different things to different people.

To think of the nation as an atmosphere, then, is to recognise that the sense of belonging and attachment can be quite simply unexplainable, wooly or vague. For James, pulling on an American flag shirt is symbolic and representational of who he is and where he belongs. It is pledging allegiance to the nation he feels an attachment to and performing, or wearing his nationhood. For a tourist, perhaps the shirt is a memorialisation of a visit, for others, it may be the idea of a foreign land that is quite different from where they live, and yet still for some people it may mean nothing. The shirt itself is more-than-representational as it exists in an emotionally subjective and spatio-temporal atmosphere, where the wearing of the shirt is a process and something that comes to be. It has an affective capacity and is an example of how mundane and seemingly insignificant objects and wearings become nationally charged and embodied. The affective capacities do not necessarily lie in the shirt itself, but in its wearing, the spaces and temporalities it is worn in, the consumption and the encounters with other bodies and things. Again this draws into consideration the affective nature of material things as being more-than-representational, and as working as a critical aspect in bringing the nation into being.

Considering the body that wears and the ways in which emotional subjectivity influence and shape the embodiment and felt nature of national identities requires more exploration, specifically when thinking through how national identities emerge through different spaces and bodies. Both the cognitive nature and the materiality of bodies are vital in the exploration of national identities. Louise, below, described her faith as shaping what she hoped and desired Americanness to be rooted in. Her faith impacted the way she saw her own belonging in the country and the town she lived in too.

> *“Being an American to me is, well, I’d like to think that being an American has a Christian base, because it does, you know our founding fathers were. But I think it’s hard to say that a country has a religion. Like you can’t really say that this is because everyone is coming with their own ideas and their own opinions. And that’s what America is! It’s this melting pot [...] Yeah, I mean it’s probably more so that we live in Northwest Washington and, erm, I think in other parts and other states … people who’ve been to other states and the other*

states I've been to, there is a stronger identity […] I feel like in Bellingham it's very neutral, because you can find erm, people who think whatever." - Louise

National identities are intensely personal and intimate, shaped by other aspects of who we are as people. Louise's faith was influential in the way she thought about America as a whole, shaped through her own personal experiences and understandings of her national identity. She also illustrated the role of hope and dreams in affecting the way that she engaged with the nation as she expressed what she hoped Americanness would be, but felt wasn't the lived reality. The intersections of faith and other identities are important to think about as recent demonstrations and protests in the USA have demonstrated a specific narrative of white-nationalist America, labelling and defining which bodies are more or less American (Laughland, 2017). These demonstrations and narratives have influenced a 'hot' nationalism (Jones and Merriman, 2009), driving many to state that they are simply reclaiming their version of what America should be and how it should look (Green, 2017). Louise's story also brings into focus questions surrounding the specificity of space, and begins to show the ways that national feelings and identities intersect with other scales, something explored in more depth in sub-section three below. She describes a national identity that is influenced by spatiality and that varies in intensity and tone, perhaps alluding to national identities as more-than-representational, multiple and diffuse.

4.2.3 Not-quite-belonging

Dominant representations and discussions of national identities often consider national identity as a positive experience or as something that just is (Benwell, 2014a). If we are to consider national identities as intimate feelings of belonging and connection, it is important to also critique this idea and consider "affective disruptions" (Marshall 2014: 351) to the dominant narrative of belonging, by exploring feelings of emotional detachment or disconnection to national identities. Key to this research is understanding the performance of national identities through bodies, exploring how emotional subjectivity in response to feeling American shapes these embodiments and encounters. To consider only the narratives that seem to fit within dominant, positive or assumed ideas of belonging is to ignore the nuances of emotional connections and affective encounters of the nation, which instead tell

stories of not-quite-belonging or feelings of otherness and difference in relation to their Americanness. This section questions the dominance of narratives of belonging to the nation, by thinking through the idea of not-quite-belonging in more depth, challenging taken-for-granted notions and scriptings of being and doing Americanness. It highlights the multiplicity of national identities and suggests a consideration of alternative forms of national belonging and feeling American, emphasising how conceptualising the nation as a messy atmosphere, (re)produced through embodied and emotional encounters is important for deepening understandings of national identities and belonging. In order to begin to unpack the idea of not-quite-belonging and its nuances within narratives of Americanness, national identities and belonging, this sections draws on Abigail's story. Abigail's story demonstrates the emotionality and multiplicity of belonging and can be unpacked to consider the key ideas of emotional subjectivity, embodiment and atmosphere, adding more depth to taken-for-granted notions of national identities.

Abigail's personal feelings of Americanness are intrinsically related to and shaped by her perceptions of wider narratives of 'being' or 'doing' Americanness. To her, external ascriptions and categorisations narrate what it means to be a 'real American', and she juxtaposes her own experiences and feelings as different to how she assumes 'other' Americans feel or experience national belonging. These comparisons of the external and the personal subjective experience draw into question ideas of emotional subjectivity and national belonging. They contest taken-for-granted notions of belonging to a nation and demonstrate how feelings and perceptions act as affective disruptions to the dominant and assumed narratives emplaced on bodies and experiences.

> *"So do you feel American?" - Author*
> *"Sometimes, but also then sometimes there are things that I can't relate to. Because, erm, because my mom is German I was raised with a lot of German influence, so, like I didn't have peanut butter until the end of 4th grade! And that is like really a typical school lunch for elementary students […] And I grew up with the privilege of Nutella, which we hauled back in our suitcases because it wasn't available here! [...] Anyway, so sometimes I don't feel very American. And like I have been more in Germany than I have been in America for the 4th*

July. Like I can remember maybe 2 or 3 times I was here for the 4th July. And erm, also like I don't really understand American football as much as like Tobin would. So there are certain things where I don't really get that or feel like I'm part of that part. But, yeah there is enough where I do." - Abigail

Abigail sees certain practices, objects and temporal moments as 'normal' American things but feels like she does not understand them or experience them, and therefore this works to make her feel different from the others. Abigail's story highlights two key aspects of national identities, the emotionality of national identities and the plurality of national identities. Firstly, her descriptions of national identity demonstrate the felt and emotional nature of it, not only identifying how national feelings are influenced by the external categorisations of the nation, but how these feelings play a role in producing the nation itself. In addition, Abigail's story suggests that there is an assumed 'realness' or narrative of Americanness that is somewhat distanced and perhaps even idealised or utopian, certainly a version of being an American that is different from the embodied and encountered version that Abigail feels and knows. These external categorisations and narrations of the nation work to inform Abigail's own embodiment through her emotionally subjective lens, demonstrating to her what the nation is and is not, and shaping how she feels a sense of not-quite-belonging. Indeed, these idealised versions of Americanness play a role upon Abigail's feelings of Americanness and demonstrate the collision of these formal and personal narratives of belonging and doings of Americanness. It works to highlight the intersections between the external categorisations of being American and the internal, embodied and emotionally subjective doings and performings of national identities.

Secondly, the plurality of national identities is made clear here through Abigail's story. She notes how there are these multiple versions and feelings of national identities that are tied up into embodiments, performances and practices. National identities work recursively in relation to the atmosphere they exist within, being felt, emoted and embodied through encounters with sameness and difference. It demonstrates, then, how abstract and diffuse national identities are. For Abigail, missing out on specific practices of Americanness was intrinsic to her feelings of connection and belonging. Perhaps Abigail's experiences suggest national identities

and belongings as transient and shifting emotional embodiments, ebbing and flowing, affected by spatio-temporal contexts and individual emotional subjectivity. Abigail does not describe a binary feeling of American or not-American, instead she explains a not-quite-ness to her national identity. National belonging, then, should not be considered as a binary identification, but a moving and messy feeling, which is brought into being through emotional encounters and doings.

One of the key concepts within this thesis is that of affective atmospheres, which is useful in exploring a relational and experiential understanding of national identities. Affective atmospheres enables the realisation of the unexplainable and considers the ways in which the nation comes to be through the entanglement of bodies, things and spaces. It helps to describe and make tangible, that which is often un-thought-of, rhythmic and routinised; it conceptualises the unexplainable and un-thought-of. When unpacking feelings of national identities, atmosphere helps to explore how bodies become connected to or captivated by these feelings or senses of Americanness and belonging. It enables a deeper and more nuanced consideration of why national pride is stirred and feels more real during certain times and spaces, as well as how experiences of difference and intersections of other identities and cultures work to perhaps disrupt the often taken-for-grantedness of national identities. Indeed, experiences and embodiments of national identities cannot be separated from encounters with other bodies and the reactions triggered through these encounters. Abigail's not-quite-Americanness was influenced by her encounters with different spaces, like her school and home, and the people within those spaces. Other people's understanding and interpretations of her own body and national identities at times led to feelings of discomfort, which played an affective role on how she embodied her national identity and sense of self.

> *"So do you feel a connection to Germany?" - Author*
> *"Yes. And erm, I think that's really cool but also it's sometimes kind of weird because you know I am only half German but for some reason, like … maybe because I am one of the only German kids in my school, I feel like that defines me a little bit more. I dunno." - Abigail*
> *"So do people see you as half German?" - Author*

"I don't think they would see it … they would have to get to know me because I speak with an American accent and I didn't even learn how to read or write German until 9th Grade." - Abigail
"But you speak it right?" - Author
"Yeah. So you know they wouldn't know just from looking at me but like my brother on swim team was Captain Germany because he had this German flag towel and would wear it like a cape. So I guess within my friend group, as kind of a joke, I am the German one! Which I don't mind – it's fine!" - Abigail

The atmospheres of the home and school was shaped in part by these encounters with difference and ideas of normality. These atmospheres were important in shaping Abigail's own sense of self-in-the-world because the encounters with bodies, spaces and things, cultivated specific ideas of what Americanness was or felt like. Both Abigail and her brother's German-ness were seen by friends as different to their own identities, and therefore intriguing. This difference in national identity was embodied through either choosing to embrace it by literally embodying and marking the body through clothing or items, as her brother did, or unintentionally producing some discomfort by having it demarcated as her primary identity within her friendship group. Abigail's national identity was seen as a more defining aspect of her identity to others, separating her body and identity out as different. Whilst Abigail described not being too bothered by the perceptions of others in relation to her difference, she did describe feeling "kind of weird" living in the tension of (non)belonging and yet being more obviously defined by her national identity. National identities can create a sense of belonging and contestations of sameness and difference, yet can also produce feelings of discomfort through unexpected spaces and moments. Abigail did not choose to be the "German one" in her group, yet this difference was almost a forced embodiment, put onto her body in a more defining and significant way by others around her, making her awareness of national feelings more obvious and considered.

One of the concepts discussed throughout this chapter has been in relation to how sensing belonging and attachment to a nation comes through feelings of shared identity and commonality to other bodies, places and values, which may be (per)formed in different ways. Importantly the chapter has highlighted how individual subjectivity and emotions play a role in the embodiment and (per)forming of national

identities. Abigail's story adds another dimension to this by discussing the idea of 'fitting in' and growing up in a specific geographical space as having an influential role in her not-quite-Americanness.

> *"Do you think there are different places where you feel more or less American or more or less German?" - Author*
> *"Erm, it's always really interesting going to Germany. Because I've been there every summer but, even though technically I'm German and I have dual citizenship, but I didn't grow up there. Like, I don't fit in with them really. And it's also interesting seeing their perspective of what America is. At Aldi they had this American food section and all of it was stuff I have never seen before!! They had ketchup and mustard together in a squeezy tube! That was … I mean it seems like an American kind of invention you know "well if you're gonna put ketchup and mustard on the same thing then just squeeze it from the same tube" … but it's not something we do here! [laughs]. They have like premade waffles … it wasn't like you know waffle mix … which also I didn't actually learn there was premade pancake or waffle mix until 10th grade when there was a pancake feed." - Abigail*

The body's location in physical space is an important consideration when thinking about feelings of national identity and demonstrating how national identities are affected by spatiality, and how they ebb and flow across atmospheres. Abigail is made more aware of her national identities as she moves through different countries and encounters bodies and things within those spaces. Her encounters with familiar yet un-familiar items in the American food section of a German store saw the coming together of her two national identities in a way that was amusing and interesting to her. It was in these moments of encounter between objects and bodies that certain narratives of national identities were both felt, (re)worked and embodied through emotionally subjective lenses and atmospheres. Importantly, Abigail describes the feeling of not really fitting in as a German, and relates this to the specificity of the geography of growing up.

'Growing up' in a specific place hints at the role that space and age play in contextualising our experiences and encounters. Indeed, for Abigail, she relates her

body's absence from German space, specifically at a young age, as critical in shaping these feelings of not-quite-belonging within Germany. Whilst she encountered Germanness through her mother and in the home, and was clearly marked out as 'more German' than her friends, it was not seen by Abigail as a real or full German experience of growing up within Germany and being embedded in that culture. This embeddedness of bodies in national atmospheres points again towards the entanglement of affective encounters and emotional subjectivity within the performance and feelings of national identities. Existing as part of a collective atmosphere and experiencing the banality of the nation infused within the everyday was something Abigail did not fully experience in either America or Germany and shaped these feelings of emotional disconnection or not-quite-belonging. To Abigail, not-quite-belonging was expressed through feelings of not fitting in. She did not feel a sense of shared commonality and sameness as discussed earlier in the chapter, instead she demonstrates how emotional subjectivity can act as an affective disruption to taken-for-granted conceptualisations of belonging and national identities, and how her responses to not-quite feeling American or German were critical in the feeling, embodying and performing of her national identities. Abigail's story points to the alternative narratives of national identity and nationalisms, which are critical for deepening how belonging to the nation is understood and explored. Not only does her story highlight the importance of hearing individual narratives but also in valuing age and space as critical influences to be explored in relation to national identities (Hopkins, 2010).

Abigail's story describes her shifting feelings of Americanness and belonging across time and space. Her story describes temporal moments where she feels different and disconnected from other American bodies and objects, discussing how simple, everyday practices and objects create feelings of difference, and also play an affective role on disrupting normalised and taken-for-granted notions of doing Americanness. Her German mother played an important role on her childhood and it was through the seemingly insignificant and mundane things and doings that Abigail described not feeling a sense of belonging. These examples point to the banal, mundane and everyday nature of national identity in many cases and relate to the practices of being American, which are seen to be tied up in the routine-ness and doings of life. Abigail's story highlights the significance of spatiality, embodiment, emotions and atmosphere in becoming American through her examples of pancakes,

peanut butter and the 4th of July, all of which led to this deeper feeling of not-quite-belonging. It is also important to consider the concept of 'growing up' and how youthful development has an impact upon formulations of national identities and feelings of belonging. This idea of growing up will be unpacked in depth in the following chapters, but it is important to highlight here how ageing, learning and being present within specific geographical locations for those processes seemed to shape Abigail's own experiences and feelings of Americanness and national identities. Abigail's story, along with Louise's earlier story, begin to highlight the role that spatiality plays upon the (per)forming of national identities, something that requires more unpacking and consideration, and highlights the multifaceted and messy atmospheric nation.

4.3 Encountering Americanness across space

A commonly occurring theme across the research was the multiplicity of national identities across space, and how Americanness was felt and encountered in different ways in different places. Indeed, there is a significant body of literature which engages with the locality of nationalism, exploring how local processes influence and shape national identities (Paasi, 1999; Benwell, 2014a; Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Antonsich, 2015). Much of this focus, however has been on border regions, considering how the locality of the border inscribes particular narratives of belonging, citizenship and nationalism onto bodies (Paasi, 1999; Megoran, 2006; Nevins, 2002). Beyond just the border, state and local atmospheres influence the perception and feel of Americanness both when bodies are present within those spaces, and when bodies are absent from them. This section focuses on the intersections of local, regional and national identities, and the ways in which national identities are performed and felt differently across multiple spaces. Importantly, it asks how these regional atmospheres shape and influence national feelings, through their being charged with feelings of apathy, embarrassment or disconnection, rather than feelings of pride or American identification. In doing so, it demonstrates how national identity is both something emergent and processual, and the multi-faceted nature of belonging to a nation. It also considers how these spatially dynamic and diffuse emotional embodiments of Americanness can exist within the sense of commonality and sameness found in the 'American Dream', an ethos that says anyone has an equal ability to achieve happiness if they work hard enough, are determined and

show initiative (Merriam-Webster, 2018); “life liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence, 1776).

4.3.1 Regional variations of national identities

It is necessary to differentiate between regional identity and regional variations of national identities due to the ways in which they shape ideas of national identities. This was something discussed below by Abigail who begins to tease out these nuances. Considering how feelings of Americanness are infused by regional contexts and atmospheres demonstrates how feelings of national identities shift and are felt differentially across geographical spaces and contexts. Critically, this adds to the key argument that national identities are multiple and processual, constantly emerging and unfinished. Thinking through regional variations of national identity therefore requires an unpacking of how the doing of Americanness shifts across space and is influenced by the specific, felt, atmospheric context of the state or space. Abigail, below, begins to describe how her own understandings of Americanness are shaped by her feelings of connectedness to other bodies and areas of the nation, as well as her experiences of being in and performing her national identity within Bellingham.

> *“Do you think that regional identity is important? So being from Bellingham and stuff?” - Author*
> *“I think so. Because also like, as a nation America is huge. If you compare the size of the US to the size of Germany, you know, it covers a lot more land. So it’s hard for me as someone from Bellingham to connect with someone from Georgia, because they’re so far away. So I think that having a regional identity is also significant.” - Abigail*

> *“And do you think the version of Americanness is different too across different regions?” - Author*
> *“Yeah. Yeah! Because you know up here we don’t really have cowboys … well we have the Lynden rodeo! Lynden is different than Bellingham, but then Washington is very different from Texas. So it totally depends where in the US you’re from.” - Abigail*

Here Abigail is differentiating between regional identity and regional variations of national identity. Her regional identity is her sense of belonging and felt connection to a region, like the Pacific Northwest, or state, like Washington. Regional variations of Americanness describes how her conceptualisations of Americanness are shaped by the spatially differential cultures and atmospheres of regions or states. Regional identity to Abigail, is a personal feeling of connection with those in the state or area she lives in; it is specific to that place. It is something that can exist in cooperation with, and even separately from, feelings of Americanness and national belonging. Yet her regional identity can simultaneously provide a specific lens of being-in-the-world and therefore encountering national identities. Regional variations of Americanness, however, relates to the different ways of encountering and embodying Americanness within and across different spaces due to the atmosphere and moving bodies within that space. Regional variations of Americanness describe how the specific context of regional location influences and shapes the way that national identities are felt and embodied within that space and atmosphere.

> *"Can we just talk about our identity as PNWers. I feel like that identity is so much more than anything else!" - Jennifer*

Having a regional identity was important and possibly more impactful on how participants thought about their identity in relation to place. Jennifer found it difficult to think about and articulate her identity as an American, understanding her regional identity as much more significant and obvious in everyday life. The young people's identities as 'Pacific Northwesterners' was easier for them to talk about and describe than their American identity. Certainly participants regularly felt that they encountered their "identity as PNWers" (Jennifer) regularly and tangibly, more consciously engaging with regional identities than national identities. Often their regional identity was tied into types of clothing, chaco shoes and Patagonia fleeces, habits, like 'hammocking' or walking on train tracks, and ways of doing life, a sort of subdued excitement about things and an active engagement with the outdoors. These aspects of regional identity are much more tangible and physical things that shape participants' being-in-the-world in clear and everyday ways, certainly influencing the mundane parts of their lives. Often participants were making conscious decisions to embody, promote and evidence their regional identity through wearing these clothes

and doing these things. Importantly, though, whilst these objects and rhythms of everyday life are seen to be influenced by their regional identities, they tended to naturally influence how Americanness was perceived and described. These interconnections between regional identity and national identity were not always obvious, but certainly shape how participants understand their own national identity. For these participants, often this very localised atmosphere of ‘subdued excitement’ could be seen in their feelings of attachment, belonging and pride in relation to their national identities. There were few participants who perhaps demonstrated any strong emotions in relation to their Americanness, most obviously evidenced in their perception of ‘other’ versions of Americanness and their own embodiments of it. Participants would much rather talk about their love for their region than their nation. National identities, then, are shaped through the coming together of bodies across local, regional and national scales, influenced as bodies exist within, embody and move through the atmospheres within those spaces.

Local and regional identity was described as being influential in shaping their Americanness, or perhaps shaping other people’s Americanness. Antonsich (2015) talks about the importance of locality for people when talking about their own national belonging. In particular his participants described being from Milan as more significant than being from Italy, yet when discussing Italy on a wider scale, ‘national values’ are suddenly more important and immoveable, even if they don't hold themselves to that or feel like they fit into it. This leads to questions surrounding the scales of intersection of local identities and national identities and how these identities are felt as more or less important across different scales. Critically work from Benwell, Núñez and Amigo (2018) works to demonstrate the complexities of these intersections of national and regional belonging through the exploration of Chilean and Patagonian identifications. Their work underscores the role of regionality and also the significance of feeling geographically peripheral to the nation, or in other words, different and distanced from perhaps the power-ladened core or centre of the nation. Indeed this notion of geographical proximity translates to this case study, as Bellingham exists at a significant geographical distance from Washington DC (henceforth DC). DC was seen as the place where power and Americanness emanated from and Bellingham was therefore not only distanced from the decision making and power of DC, but also some of the perceived narratives of national identities. Participants were proud to have their local and regional identity, and felt

their national identities were the things that produced a necessary sense of connection to other parts of the USA that would otherwise feel like a different world. Bellingham, and the Pacific Northwest more broadly, was imagined as ideologically and culturally different to the power of DC and the rest of the USA, something that participants were proud to embody and practice. Through describing this, participants were clearly underlining how their regional identity, their doings and feelings within this particular geographical space, were shaping their own embodiments and performing of their national identities. In describing the removed nature of their own way of being-in-the-world and sense-of-self from 'other' parts of the USA and 'other' ways of being American, the participants were articulating the emotionally subjective performances of their personal and intimate national identities.

Abigail (Page 122) and Jennifer (Page 123) demonstrate the problematic and often ironic tensions that exists between the conscious and un-consciousness of national belonging and doing Americanness. For Jennifer (Page 123), and many of the other participants, talking about and thinking about their national identity was challenging and not a 'normal' part of their thoughts, yet had a distinct, learnt, instinctive nature and was laden with feelings of pride, strong affiliation and belonging, seen through how she talked about, engaged and performed her national identities within specific moments and atmospheres. The taken-for-granted nature of national identities is critical to unpack as it reveals moments of surprise alongside alternative forms of (non)national belonging and attachment. Whereas the wearing, performing and flagging of their national identities was seemingly un-thought-of, their regional identities as "PNWers" was an incredibly conscious and thought-through decision, choosing to wear specific branded clothing and styles, taking part in certain practices such as hammocking or slack-lining, having a keen interest in the outdoors. There were very specific ways that participants chose to respond to and embody their regional identity, and often this was seen to be a way of fitting in or demonstrating their belonging-ness to this group of people and way of being-in-the-world. In contrast, their desire to seem American or demonstrate their national identities was limited and very quiet, or subtle, emerging more through encounters with difference and during certain taken-for-granted practices. The spatiality of this taken-for-grantedness is certainly significant, and will be explored in greater depth in the following two chapters when considering the coming-to-be American through schools, growing up and also through performances and articulations of national

identities. Encounters with otherness and difference has been discussed as a way of (re)forming and shaping national identities and emotionally subjective perceptions of belonging (Koefoed and Simonsen, 2012; 2013). However, the spatiality of these encounters has not been explored in great detail. Significantly, as described earlier by Louise (Page 113) and Abigail (Page 122), and later by Sarah (page 126) and Madison (Page 127), affective atmospheres of national identities are influenced by the agglomeration of bodies, objects, memory and space (Sumartojo, 2017), demonstrated by these shifting embodiments, emotional entanglements and affective encounters of Americanness across different states and regions within the USA. The plurality of national identities and the continual emergence of the nation is underscored through these processes.

4.3.2 'Other' Americans, 'other' spaces

Perceptions of other people's performances and embodiments of Americanness were significant in how participants came to describe their own feelings and understandings of their national identities, as was the significance of spatiality. Participants often described certain other places as being more or less American. Indeed, when discussing their national identities and what Americanness was, participants usually discussed the spatial variations in how Americanness is embodied and imagined across the USA. In doing so, participants considered the entanglement of national and regional atmospheres, discussing the recursive relationships that exist and shape the ways in which national identities are felt and embodied through moments of encounter. The affective atmosphere of the nation is then not only multiple and shaped by spatiality, it also plays a significant role on the lens through which national identities are felt, performed and resisted. Generally the Pacific Northwest and Bellingham were felt and described as not very American, and participants were mostly glad about that. Bellingham is known as the city of 'subdued excitement' and participants felt that this laid-back feel to the town and area also worked to influence people's feel of the nation. Bellingham is also a strong Democrat voting area, with its local politics being shaped by welfare and liberal style policies, which were discussed by many as being influential in affecting the lens through which the rest of the nation was seen and felt. In contrast, Texas, a predominantly Republican state, was regularly identified as being much more American and more patriotic. There was seemingly a recursive relationship between the 'feel' or

atmosphere of a place, its perceived Americanness and pride level, the bodies moving and encountering it, and its presumed political affiliation.

> *"Yeah like Washington is super Democratic and not very conservative/Republican, whatever […] so I think that where you live definitely plays in to how you feel about the country [...] Like we were in Texas this summer for a wedding and they are like super patriotic […] It's like a different country! It's truly extremely different from here." - Sarah*

> *"Where did you move here from?" - Author*
> *"Texas. Which is very American! … I think they are just proud to live in a country that erm … gives them the opportunities to do what they do … they support a lot of the original beliefs about America and are very open about what they believe." - Madison*

Americanness seemed to exist as something that could have different forms across different places. Critically, many participants stated that local history and state-specific narratives were key in contextualising the shape and feel of a place, as well as the atmosphere and performance of national identities within that. For instance, some talked about how Texas was an independent country for a short while, and therefore they suggested that Texans feel a greater sense of pride for their own state. Participants suggested that these heightened levels of Texan patriotism might work to shape how those living and growing up in that space and atmosphere feel, perform and embody their national identities. Perhaps the visibility of national pride within the everyday plays an important role in feelings of belonging and connection to America. Certainly much has been done to consider the everyday flagging of the nation (Raento and Brun, 2000; Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Skey, 2011), yet little work unpacks the embodied responses to the emotional entanglements with these flaggings, or considers the specific spatiality to these moments of encounter with the nation.

The feel or atmosphere of a state played a role in how Americanness was understood and experienced by these participants, especially in the way that they recognised and performed their Americanness in contrast to 'other' types of

Americanness. Experiencing Americanness across space underscores the nation as something that is more-than-representational, as it is infused with the entanglement of bodies, affects, things and spaces, which shape the encounters, feelings and (per)forming of national identities. Encounters and descriptions of 'other' Americanness as something geographically distant and separated from their own bodies also demonstrates the affective and diffuse nature of national identities, moving and sticking to different bodies and things with different intensities. Bodies can engage with and be affected by different ways of being American and performing national identities from a distance, with 'other' doings narrated across space by TV, movies, media, the internet or personal experiences. This 'othering' of Americanness was important in the defining of their own embodied American national identity. Certainly for many participants, their national identity was not something they considered often, perhaps due to its more taken-for-granted nature. It would be interesting to study the encounters and embodiments of national identities in other states, such as Texas, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of how the visibility of the nation shapes feelings of belonging, and how these feelings shift across space.

The influence of political party affiliation and spatiality upon national identities was another area of significant importance. It seemed that to many, the national 'feel' and level of 'real' Americanness was related to the politics and the generalisations of states and areas as being Democrat or Republican. When asked what being an American was, or how they experienced Americanness within Bellingham, most participants suggested that Republican party values were intersected with stronger feelings of patriotism, pride and an association with original, constitutionally aligned American values. That is, however, not to say that all bodies within that space feel and experience Americanness in the same way. Bellingham was described as a Democrat area, and therefore it was assumed that by saying that, it would be clear that they meant that Bellingham was not very patriotic or associated with the 'stereotypical' version of America. Most participants appreciated this lack of patriotism, and Bellingham's seemingly quiet and understated nationalism was what they chose to embody themselves. One exception, however, was Olivia, who felt that she was more American than other people in Bellingham, and saw those who shared her local culture and atmosphere as embodying and performing a different kind of Americanness. She felt that those around her were less American than her own

personal feelings of patriotism and Americanness. Olivia's comments demonstrate a sense of being somehow 'out-of-place' and point to territorial-political dynamics that are reflected through feelings of Americanness and national belonging.

> *"I was raised in like a super duper Republican family and so like, I don't know, I go to Trump rallies with my Grandpa and stuff and I don't know … like America whoah, you know … but I think, I feel like I am more American than some, than most people in Bellingham." - Olivia*

Political affiliation, to Olivia, was an important part of her Americanness as well as labelling what 'genuine' or true Americanness was. Her Americanness and political affiliation were heavily influenced by family members. The entanglement of national identities and political affiliations was evident throughout the interviews and small group discussions as participants tended to conflate political identity with specific notions of American pride or nationalism. Indeed, conservative or Republican bodies and places were frequently described or inferred to be much more patriotic and 'American'. Olivia felt that her Republican upbringing made her more American than other people who lived in the same place as her. This perception of herself as being more American and feeling out-of-place in Bellingham shaped her national identity, the way she performed it in certain spaces and the way that she thought about authentic or true Americanness through the performances by 'other' bodies surrounding her. The collision of her national identity and the (non)national 'feel' or atmosphere of Bellingham influenced how she spoke about certain topics and her sense of belonging and feeling at home within the state.

The political season that contextualised this research brought together the intersections of the nation in significant political moments and in the banal, un-thought-of everyday. It also highlighted how individual understandings of Americanness were expressed by rejecting other versions of Americanness; participants used examples of dominant or prominent narratives of Americanness that they were encountering during the election period to explain their own embodiments and understandings of their national identities. Sometimes the 'othering' of Americanness was in relation to perceptions participants held about how national identities seemed and felt in different states, or in the lives of those who have different lifestyles to the young people from Bellingham. Specifically, the young people talked about the idea of a divided country, with certain states articulating and narrating alternative versions of nationalism. This idea of a divided nation evidences these messy intersections

between regions, the nation and personal subjective embodiments of national identities.

> *"It's pretty crazy how our election has just … it really has shown such a divide. And everyone has to be so divided and so different and you're either on one side or the other. And that is definitely geographic in some way. […] I think it's definitely very very clear about how you make a living can influence your identity a lot. You know, what job you have is really related to your national identity I think in a way. You know, if you're working for a big company or you're working for yourself on the farm … I think my uncle would see himself as very self-sufficient and self-made. You know he made his farm a very successful company and that he has, it's definitely a place of opportunity and he has very strong ties to the physical land … and I think … I think … very strong ties to the actual physical version of America. But as you're like … if you're living in Seattle and working for Microsoft which is so huge globally, you work for Microsoft so that has a lot to do with your identity and so you may think of yourself as more of a global citizen because you're working for a global company. I think, so maybe like some people are more tied to a global world whereas some are more tied to physical dirt! So I think maybe, maybe that affects the way you see yourself and the way you see America as a separate place rather than living and interacting with like a global society." - Jennifer*

Here, through thinking about the political season of the election, Jennifer is demonstrating the intersections of the everydayness of life, political affiliation and the significance of particular moments. Within national atmospheres, the significant event of the Presidential election is not only conducive of its own affective capacities and narratives of nationalism, but it seeps into the everydayness and banality of life where bodies encounter the nation in unthought-of ways and moments. It is in these moments that bodies become both subtly and obviously more aware of the nation, their national identities and sense of belonging. Jennifer shows this by talking about how the moment of the election causes a consideration of what being an American looks like in relation to daily life, thinking through how occupations and the everyday geography bodies live in. She brings up this idea of a divided nation and goes on to

describe how the doing of life itself affects outlooks and feelings about the nation, shaping attitudes and ultimately playing a role on what Americanness is to that body. In particular Jennifer underscores the complex, messy and multiple nature of national identities through considering the geographical nuances to the being, doing and feeling of Americanness. She does this through considering the way that personal lifestyle and emotional subjectivity can shape the way national belonging is understood and how different types of feelings of belonging emerge through these encounters between bodies, localities and the nation. What is more, and what is often demonstrated through the election season is the disparity between the rural and urban lifestyle. It would be pertinent to consider the ways in which being and doing Americanness is conducive to specific national atmospheres within the urban and rural, affecting how bodies feel a sense of belonging to the nation.

The individual, everydayness of life and the way our bodies perform, exist and encounter others within specific spaces and atmospheres comes to shape versions and visions of what Americanness feels like, is experienced as and is desired to be. The politically charged atmospheres of the election in 2016 and 2017 were both obvious and significant, as well as banal and unthought-of; both shaped the emotionally subjective doings of Americanness within this moment and evidence the undulating and shifting nature of national identities, with encounters of these specific moments and spaces producing both a heightened awareness of national identities and multiple feelings of (non)belonging.

4.3.3 American atmospheres through the built environment

Americanness was also described as something that could be seen or made tangible through the built environment. Mia's comments below highlight the ways in which the historical context, made real through the built environment, can shape physical encounters with national identity. Encountering Americanness physically through objects, things, monuments, buildings and memorials leads us to think about how the nation is (re)produced and the more-than-representational nature of these tangible reminders of nation-ness (Waterton, 2013; Waterton and Dittmer, 2014; Sumartojo, 2016).

> *"I feel like on the east coast and in like Philadelphia … the original 13 colonies, I feel like they maybe have more of … proud to be an*

American because it's their original stomping grounds and stuff? Super historical […] tangible visible history right there. Whereas we don't have much of that or as much of that" - Mia

The nation is tied into experiences that we come to know, feel and sense, beyond cognitive and representational decisions and instead through a more intimate and reflexive doing (Sumartojo, 2017). The buildings and surroundings all work to create a specific national mood or context, especially when encountered by bodies with differing positions and motives. For example, perhaps to somebody living amongst that environment, the presence of these monuments and stirrings of national identities may not be as evident as for those who experience their absence. For Mia, living on the West Coast of the USA which has a much more recent history and lacks significant spaces, monuments and historical sites that she may define as more American, she notices the absence of this American historical context in her daily life. The absence of these things works to give a greater sense of awareness and even meaningfulness when considering the places that set the stage for the formation of America. This highlights the dynamics between absence and presence, as well as how the rhythms of everyday life and space can affect encounters with national identities; what is mundane to some, is significant to others.

Whilst in the later chapters I consider the affective nature of sound and how its absence and presence can disrupt and form atmospheres of the nation, here it is the physical built environment that has this more-than-representational capacity to simultaneously disrupt and form atmospheres of the nation, cultivating or shaping feelings of belonging. The built environment is representative of common narratives of unity and Americanness, yet at the same time holds affective capacities in itself through the way it structures space and can direct the encounters of bodies with it, whether through specific signposting or walkways through these built environments. An example of this could be the "Freedom Trail" in Boston, where the built environment specifically directs bodies through buildings and monuments, telling a very specific narrative of the nation and Americanness. Critically, the bodies that encounter these buildings bring their own emotional subjectivity, shaping how these narratives are read, felt, embodied and then become forms of national identities. This can be seen in later research diary excerpts (pages 164-165) which contrast some of these encounters with the same national atmospheres in Bellingham and Boston. In

this way, the nation is constantly emergent through these multiple and different encounters of the same spaces and buildings, but in multiple ways. Considering these specific national atmospheres, it is possible to see how the built environment itself can work alongside other components to affectively shape and charge atmospheres, demonstrating the messiness of the nation within both everyday and significant spaces.

These entanglements of representation, memories, learnt histories, and experiences of bodies and spaces are then critical in thinking through how national identities become worked into our everyday life in an un-thought-of yet conscious manner, being cultivated through our movements and rhythms within the world. We must ask questions of how the taken-for-grantedness of built environments are more-than-representational in their existence and work to affect bodies, feelings, emotions and performances. Through this we can ask questions about why these places work to create imaginations of belonging to a nation and how they simultaneously act as affective disruptions. Indeed, considering the messy agglomeration of components that work within affective atmospheres highlights the multiplicity and complexity of being-in-the-world and (per)forming of national identities. Considering the built environment is also to consider the spatiality of national identities, and how feelings of national belonging can ebb and flow across different spatialities with varying intensities.

4.3.4 The American Dream

If national identity is diffuse and spatially differential, it is important to consider how these different versions, performances and feelings of Americanness and national belonging come together and exist within a unified nation. Tobin (below) describes how the spatially dynamic and contextually specific variations, feelings and embodiments of Americanness shift across different states and regions. All the while, these different feelings of Americanness are being brought together through a specific mindset and set of key values that act as a coalescing element: the American Dream.

> *"When I think of 'an American', and this is what a lot of other people from other countries think about our country … they think of Texas and they think of people running with an American flag and saying*

yeehaw! So when I think of the stereotypical American, I think of that. But if I … erm … there are just so many different sections of our countries that makes it hard to define one specific thing. It's so … you know, Northwest, you drink coffee and wear crappy shoes and hike. And there's New York where you're running in 5 inch heels, and trying to get to your 9-5 office job. But I think just a lot of people, I feel like, work really hard to get what they want. Erm … like the American dream. You work hard to obtain whatever you want. I think that's something that a lot of Americans believe will come true. Erm ... and I kind of like that mind-set, just like working hard and trying really hard is going to get you where you want to go. I mean it's not always going to be the case unfortunately, but I think a lot of Americans believe that." - Tobin

Whilst there are these regional variations of performing and feeling national identities, like Tobin exemplifies through the Northwest and New York, she comments on this connecting element of the American Dream as truly pulling all American bodies together, as a way of doing life and being in the world. To Tobin, the American Dream is this underlying and possibly unthought-of mindset that influences both how people navigate their everyday life whilst also being shaped by the everyday atmospheres and political systems they exist within. The American Dream is an important point of consideration for thinking through what drives and shapes feelings of belonging and attachment to the nation, stirring what Faria (2014) calls emotional nationalism, through feelings of pride and love. The term dreaming tends to imply a utopian narrative and a significant sense of nostalgia, which is felt, embodied and emergent in different ways.

Certainly the American Dream is a social construct, produced during the Great Depression and aiming to uplift and drive American people forward into seeing the USA once again as a land of opportunity, freedom and wealth (Callahan, 2017). Tobin (above) makes an important point, as she talks about the pulling together of these multiple, spatial versions of 'doing' Americanness into these neatly coalesced values or dreams of Americanness as working hard in order to achieve. Callahan (2017:252) states,

> *“we should take [the American Dream] seriously as a way of thinking about how national belonging takes shape through debates about values”.*

In taking the American Dream seriously it is important to ask how it acts as an affective force, drawing on ideas of nostalgia but also embodied through very banal and mundane rhythms of life. This links back to Sumartojo’s (2017) work who contends that national identities are processual. Sumaratojo (2017) argues that national identities emerge as feelings, memories, rhythms, built environments, subjective bodies and senses are encountered and embodied, shaping the sense-of-self. In what ways, then, does the American Dream produce a utopian or idealised way of being American, tied up in rights, obligations, performances and desires? Not only does it narrate appropriate ways of doing national identities, it also has very specific narratives of who belongs within the nation and what national bodies look like, or do not look like. Here, the American Dream speaks as a collective yet highlights and makes central the individual and personal. Callahan (2017) describes the American Dream as a futuristic longing for the past; a dream for the future based upon nostalgia.

The American Dream highlights shared values that were described and evident in both the engagements with participants and my personal experiences of living in US culture, in obvious and subtle, un-thought-of ways. The American Dream was seen as shaping and affecting the atmosphere, or mood, of the nation, through the intersections of domestic atmospheres of work, personal strength and achievement, and also wider narratives of national power, strength and enlightenment (Daniels, 2015). By considering the American Dream as an affective capacity, shaping and being shaped by the atmosphere of the nation, it was evident that it impacted the embodiment and doing of national identities. The concepts and values the American Dream perpetuates infiltrate into the often un-thought-of mindsets of bodies within the nation, defining what they hope America to be or become, and also shaping the way they perform and feel their national belonging across the space of America. Through the coalescing element of a shared identity or dream, the American Dream works within this national atmosphere to pull together and create a commonality between bodies at distance.

4.3.5 Proximity and choosing difference

National identities still tend to function around insider/outsider binaries, yet not everyone belongs in either (Spiro, 2007:3). This paradox is something that Faria begins to discuss in relation to how bodies experience and embody national feelings through everyday encounters and attitudes directed towards different bodies in order to produce a greater understanding of "self-in-society" (2014:319) and "our being-in-the-world" (Davidson and Milligan, 2004: 524). It is important to not fully abandon the ways in which insider and outsider tensions intersect, have affective capacity and are navigated. Perhaps, however, these insider/outsider tensions are more nuanced than an either/or binary, and there is a need to question the affective disruptions of bodies who express alternative narratives, being perceived as 'insiders' but choosing not to belong? What happens when a body chooses to identify with a different national identity to the one ascribed to their body through these previously discussed formal forms of citizenship and membership? The previous sections have alluded to notions of distance and proximity, with the American Dream seeming to translate a feeling or mood across bodies at distance and working to shape and affect feelings of Americanness and belonging. Proximity can also play a role upon encounters and embodiments of national belonging (Koefoed and Simonsen, 2012). To do so, Christina's story of her national identity is useful to consider.

> *"Well that's the thing. My mom is Canadian and my dad is American. So I'm like a Canadican!!! Camerican … so I'm technically American because I was born here but I also feel like I'm so close to Canada that I'm like … and my mom is Canadian and I go up there so often because of family. But on the other side, like my grandparents are from Germany so that throws a whole new aspect in there!!! So when I think about my nationality I think of American because that is where I was born, but when I think in a deeper aspect I also think of being Canadian and also German … of different nationalities into one." - Christina*
>
> *"So do you feel a connection to those places too?" - Author*
>
> *"Yeah, I feel like that when I think of Canada like yeah Canada!! And when I think of Germany too. So it's not just woo go America, it's other*

places too. [...] I feel like there is a sense of belonging that is there when you become part of a nationality. So like for instance, I'm from America and because of that I feel like I belong to America. But I feel like it shouldn't be that way, it should be wherever you feel comfortable I guess. Like I also feel like that in Canada. I love being Canadian!!!" - Christina

Christina's experiences and embodiments of her national identities are diffuse and multiple in themselves, demonstrating clearly the emotionally subjective nature of national identities. Her performance of her national identities are also spatially specific in relation to the idea of proximity. The fact that she lives only a 45 minute drive from the Canadian border, regularly driving past signs stating the border wait time and directions to Vancouver, is a regular reminder of her proximity to Canada and her connection to that nation. Christina's experience of how the border shapes and affects her feelings of national identities stand in contrast to my earlier experiences (Page 136), demonstrating how the same physical space and atmosphere can be taken on, felt and encountered in very different ways according to the subjectivity and fleshiness of bodies. The border and experiences of the border have been studied in depth and in relation to the affective experiences of these spaces, both real and imagined (see Paasi, 1999; Amoore, 2006; Amoore and Hall, 2009; 2010; Williams and Boyce, 2013) although not often in relation to the ways in which the border can shape the feelings, and performances of national identities. Christina's story underscores the felt and multiple nature of national identities, demonstrating how they are emergent and in process as her body moves across space and encounters different bodies and things. Her experiences of her American identity are intertwined with multiple feelings of belonging and attachment to both Canada and Germany, which are made tangible through certain encounters and performances.

Every Christmas time, a family tradition of Christina's is spending time with her family in Canada singing German Christmas carols. Talking to Christina after she had been in Canada doing this, she spoke of being so glad to have this cultural aspect in her life as a reminder of her German identity, as she went on to sing me a song or two. It is sometimes these small moments or traditions that seem to have become so ritualised or rhythmic in the doing of life and being-in-the-world, that reminded

participants of their national identities. In a sense, these traditions or doings are not exactly what literature may categorise as ‘everyday practices of nationalism’, certainly singing German Christmas carols is not an everyday practice as would be defined by perhaps Billig (1995) or Jones and Merriman (2009). It is however, interesting to consider what affect these moments have and how they work to shape and cultivate feelings of national belonging, because whilst they are specific or spatiotemporal moments, they are not felt as spectacular or ‘hot’ either. It is here that affective atmospheres and rhythm become useful concepts to consider. Later in the following chapter, rhythm is useful for thinking through how the performing of the national anthem, something that is not an everyday practice, but is equally not always a huge spectacle, becomes an un-thought-of characteristic or performance of national identities. Here, the singing of German Christmas carols is this semi-unconscious doing, repeated yearly and perhaps unthought-of in its significance or flagging of national identities, yet working to reinforce and (per)form Christina’s national identities, through the emergence of feelings of belonging that it cultivates and shapes. The annual rhythms of life and traditions could equally be as significant and banal as those everyday things; for Christina, ‘it’s just what we do each year’. Christina also encounters and moves through Canadian and American spaces regularly, and, like Abigail earlier in the chapter, is reminded of her Canadian and American identities through the bodies of her parents. However, in a different way to Abigail, Christina does not express a ‘not-quite-ness’ to her Americanness but a fullness of feelings of belonging to both nations, blending them into her own personal understanding of national identities.

National identities are critically shaped by feelings of belonging, which exist and are (per)formed within a messy agglomeration of bodies, spaces, atmospheres and objects. Through Christina’s story we can see the unfinished, emergent nature of national identities, that shift across different moments and spaces. Not only are bodies reminded of national identities through spatially dynamic encounters with other bodies and things, but it is also where national identities are also brought into being, shaped and embodied. Exploring national identities at the scale of the body evidences the ways in which national identities are affected by the atmospheres bodies inhabit and become attuned to, and are shaped by wider narratives of belonging across these varying spatialities.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter unpacks the ways in which national identities are affected and shaped by feelings of belonging, and the ways in which these feelings work across multiple spatialities. It has highlighted the multiplicity of national identities, demonstrating that there is not just one singular narrative of 'being American', but that being and doing Americanness is shaped through spatiality, emotions and practices. Indeed, "locating national identity in experience in this way allows us to understand it as individual, shared amongst different groups or promulgated through state structures, all at the same time" (Sumartojo, 2017: 210). Considering the emergence and performance of national identities in the messy atmospheric nation is then to equally give voice to the affective disruptions and alternative narratives of belonging; it is to make real and evident the feelings of (dis)connection which are navigated in tension with feelings of conviviality and belonging. This was seen clearly through both Abigail's and Christina's (Page 122 and 136) experiences of not-quite-belonging and multi-national-identities. Their experiences demonstrated the emotional workings of feeling and doing Americanness which work alongside dominant narratives of belonging and national belonging. Abigail's and Christina's stories highlight the ways that emotions, atmospheres and embodiment work through spatio-temporal contextualisations of being American and learning to be American. These alternative forms of national belonging that do not quite fit in with the status quo demonstrate the messiness of what national identities are. Sumartojo (2017) discusses the idea of conceptualising space as unfinished, what might it look like to think of the nation and national identities as unfinished, treating them as relational and multiple. This would mean understanding that national identities are intensely personal yet belong to a collective, and that they are felt, embodied and encountered in relation to the environments we move through and the ways in which we seek to make sense of our self-in-the-world (Sumartojo, 2017; Faria, 2014).

This chapter has demonstrated the spatial nature and multiplicity of feelings of national belonging, thinking through how the nation and Americanness can shift across spatial and temporal contexts, but often remaining as a positive and felt attachment to the nation. Whilst feelings of Americanness have been described and shown to vary across space and state, participants mostly discussed feeling attached to their Americanness and national identity. Critically, when thinking about the spatiality of national identities it is clear that feelings of national identities are affected

by and through spatiality. There is a seemingly recursive relationship between the ‘doing’ of the nation and the local atmosphere or ‘feel’ of a place, each encapsulating affective imaginations, emotions and doings, which work to shape not only how the nation is perceived but also performed and felt through embodied practices. National identities, then, come into being through and as diffuse and multiple atmospheres, which are temporally and spatially contextualised, laden with affective capacities, bringing the felt nation into being through emotionally subjective encounters and embodiments.

Chapter 5: Performing the Nation

5.1 Introduction

It has been argued recently that studies concerning nationalisms and national identities would benefit from a greater consideration of the everyday encounters that work to (re)produce ideas of what the nation is and how it is both embodied and performed (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Closs Stephens, 2016). National identities are embodied, reproduced and exist through "non-exceptional landscapes" (Botterill et al., 2016: 125) and therefore, it is critical to consider how these unthought-of and unnoticed moments work to affect and shape the becoming of national identities. Key to this research is unpacking the ways in which national identities are encountered and brought into being through bodies in the everyday, drawing on ideas of atmosphere, embodiment and emotional subjectivity in response to 'feeling American'. Specifically, exploring the taken-for-grantedness of US patriotism and national identities is key when thinking about the plurality of the nation, how it comes into being, and its embodiment in everyday life. This chapter intends to think through the ways in which emotional subjectivity and encounters with the nation stir, and are stirred by national feelings, which in turn lead to bodily movements and performances of national identities. These embodiments and performances of national identities relate to wider discourses and narratives from above, through formal, practical and popular avenues, meshing together with personal, subjective understandings of national identities at the location of the body. This chapter considers the body as one of the spaces through and upon which other identities intersect and affect how the nation is seen, understood and made tangible. The body is the scale where so often the nation is acted out and brought into being, existing within an atmosphere comprised of a multiplicity of affective and emotionally charged components. Indeed, this entanglement between private, embodied expressions and performances of nationalism with the broader public narratives is a key area to explore (Botterill et al., 2016) and is nowhere more prominent than in the performance of the national anthem.

National anthems have been mostly missed as a point of enquiry or as a component relevant to the study of national identities, yet they exist as perhaps one of the most banal, yet significant indicators of the nation. The performance of the national anthem involves the collision of bodies, ideas, things, movements, sounds, signifiers and

unspoken expectations (Lauenstein et al., 2015). It pulls together a multitude of components which work to subtly shape and affect the co-construction and embodiment of national identities. Fundamentally, national anthems tell an imagined story of a nation, its culture and its identity as a collective (Kyridis et al., 2009; Lauenstein et al., 2015). This narrative is not a personal story, nor is it the definition of the nation, but it is a space where formal, imagined narratives become emplaced on and through the body, by personal, subjective embodiments of national identities. The performance of a national anthem also demonstrates a moment where 'something' is marked; in the case of this research, 'something', an event, sport, object, body, becomes an 'American thing', and for that moment the nation is perhaps both remembered and redefined. Of course, this is not the same for every person, but it is a moment where emotions and feelings connect with something larger than the personal world. It is also a moment that often has specific bodily movements and performances associated with it, that are felt to be required or deemed appropriate. The national anthem has a specific spatiality and temporality to it, which means that approaching it from a more-than-representational perspective requires viewing it as more than just a symbolic reminder of what the nation is and represents, instead allowing a consideration of the complexity of its performance and the multiplicity of individual embodiments. It also provides space to draw from the growing bodies of literature exploring affective atmospheres, and within that, the capacities of sound as mediating "the relations between people and place through emotional and affective registers" (Doughty et al., 2016: 39).

This chapter will draw on the refusal by NFL (National Football League) players to participate in a normalised bodily performance of the singing of the national anthem. This non-participation in a national, naturalised ritual made a big media storm in both the 2016 and 2017 NFL seasons and contextualised much of the research. Participants often discussed the protest informally with me, social media was full of opinions about it, the news media constantly commentated on it, and, during the ethnographic research process it was noticed how much this protest infiltrated everyday life and conversations. In doing so, it suggests wider relationships between conceptions of national identities and patriotism, and the encounters and embodiments of national belonging. This reaction to the national anthem also demonstrates how multi-faceted and emotionally subjective conceptualisations of national identities are, through showing the different ways in which they are

performed, perceived and encountered. Both the (non) performance of specific bodily actions during the singing of the national anthem, and the reactions to them, have many interesting aspects that can be picked apart. Crucially these occurrences highlight the role of the national anthem, emotions and embodiment, which are not separable, within discourses of national identities in the USA. The intense debates within the media and everyday life, that have occurred in response to the actions of these athletes leads to questions about the role of the anthem in encountering and embodying national identities, and how the performance of these emotionally charged symbols matter, going beyond simply what they represent.

I explore some of the complexities and tensions associated with the performance of the national anthem, and how this relates to feelings of national belonging and embodiments of national identities. It asks, what it is about the national anthem that captivates a group of people in that moment and demands specific bodily responses to its presence and sound, and how that relates to feelings of national belonging. Initially I will consider the emotionally subjective nature of national identities through exploring how the national anthem is understood and encountered by young people in Bellingham. This section will explore the way in which the performance of the national anthem is shaped by other forms of identity, and also creates imaginations of unity. It questions the convivial and perhaps utopian understanding of the anthem through performance, individual subjectivity and sound. Critically, it considers the role that atmospheres play upon the encounters and performances of national identities, thinking through how national atmospheres can be constructed and therefore disrupted by bodies and things. Following this, the second section considers the 'fleshiness' of the anthem, exploring how the rhythmic nature of the anthem is made normal, and the role that interruption and disruption play upon this normalised performance of national identities. This section also links to chapter four’s discussions on felt notions of (dis)comfort and belonging, exploring how these themes are made tangible and affect feelings of national identities and attachment.

The chapter concludes by suggesting that the national anthem provides an important and useful way of exploring the ways that the nation is encountered and embodied by emotionally subjective bodies. It suggests that the national anthem is one of many important moments of encounters with the nation, and again demonstrates the importance of shifting the scale of analysis on to the body, asking how the nation is

felt and understood by individual bodies who experience and bring it into being through performance. Through thinking about the fleshiness and emotionality of performances of the national anthem, I suggest this can enable a more personalised and therefore tangible way of thinking about the wider nation and the way it becomes manifest in everyday life. Rather than assuming broader narratives, it places critical value on the voices of people, especially young bodies whose voices have often been ignored or devalued (Mills, 2017) in considerations of geopolitics and the nation.

5.2 Encountering the anthem

The emotionally subjective entanglements of wider narratives of national identity and individual embodiments are highlighted in the performing of the national anthem. Not only does the anthem display a specific version or interpretation of the nation's character and identity, its narrative and importance as a practice was noticed during this research as being highly emotive. This emotive nature was demonstrated by its portrayal across news and social media platforms, reactions from the President, and conversations with people in Bellingham. The importance of the anthem, and flag, was described by participants in a way that suggested the anthem itself was often unconsciously interwoven into personal understandings of multiple identities and the performances and navigation of their self-in-the-world. The nation is felt through bodily performances, whether consciously or un-consciously performed, having critical, emotive impact upon the cultivation, expression and taking-on of national identities. This section discusses the ways in which Americanness is felt, encountered and experienced through the national anthem and how these encounters are shaped by other aspects of identities (age, religion and race). Initially asking how identities affect personal encounters with the national anthem and the nation more widely, this section then goes on to explore how imaginations of cohesion and coming-togetherness are brought into being through the anthem. In doing so they contribute to the constant rearticulation and becoming of the nation through the body's performances and encounters with the nation. Finally this section explores how feelings of national identities are cultivated by the movement of bodies through intentionally crafted national atmospheres, specifically thinking about the role of the doing and flagging of the anthem within those atmospheres.

5.2.1 Americanness and the subjective body

Narratives of Americanness and national identities are often taken-for-granted as distanced or emplaced upon bodies, however, this thesis seeks to argue for the highly emotive and subjective nature of national identities, which are both conscious and unconscious in their workings. National identities and feelings of Americanness come to light and are brought into being through encounters with national atmospheres and both personal and perceived performances of Americanness. Indeed, the performance of the national anthem demonstrated the emotive nature of national identities, often seemingly benign and unthought-of to participants, yet suddenly becoming aware of these intricate entanglements between the self, and their national identities when those taken-for-granted performances and notions are challenged. Often, one of the main topics of discussion during the initial interviews with participants was in relation to Colin Kaepernick's kneeling for the national anthem in the NFL's games. His practice, which then led to other players across multiple sports copying him or taking up their own stance, was done as a protest, highlighting racial injustices within the USA. When discussing the actions of Colin Kaepernick, with some of the young people in the study, the responses to him kneeling varied, with some saying it was more patriotic whilst others described it as unpatriotic. To Alex and Gemma, the utilisation of his first amendment right and his desire to see America changed to become a better place was interpreted as more patriotic.

> *"I think his act of not standing for the national anthem was actually ... could be viewed as really patriotic because he is trying to make our country a better place." Alex*

> *"If anything, isn't he being more patriotic by not standing up because he knows it is one of his rights to not stand up? The right of free speech? And so he was exercising that to make a point!" Gemma*

Alex's and Gemma's responses to Kaepernick's not standing were positive and they did not feel like his actions offended them, or challenged their feelings of how Americanness should be 'done'. The national anthem not only represents the wider story of the nation's history and coming into being, but is an active part of the constant reproduction and articulation of what American identity is. Through the

anthem, a connection was felt to the USA in some shape or form. Whether they felt Kaepernick's actions were disrespectful or not, there was an awareness of their own feelings of Americanness and an emotionally subjective response in relation to how that identity felt or was understood as part of their self-in-the-world. The entanglements of Americanness and the self demonstrated the influence that national identities can have on the way bodies navigate spaces, and the lens through which they view the world around them. For Olivia, Madison and Tobin, sitting or kneeling for the national anthem was seen as a disrespectful action that triggered a different emotional response to Alex and Gemma, because it was felt as if Kaepernick was disrespecting part of their personal identity.

> *"I feel like for so long we had the flag and said the pledge of allegiance and that's just how we, the country, has always done it. So like changing that or someone disrespecting something what you have done forever … would be offensive against a country as a whole I guess […] When I think of America you think of the military and pledge of allegiance, the American flag and all that stuff. And you just respect that and, that's just how I was raised – knowing that stuff and doing that. […] I've grown up like you* ***stand*** *for the national anthem or you take off your hat and put your hand on your heart. You respect it. I just don't know any different" Olivia (significant bold emphasis made by Olivia in her speech)*

> *"I think [kneeling is] pretty dumb because when people do that I feel like they are forgetting how great of a country they live in and while some events in the world might not be things you support … like I don't support a lot of the things that are happening in America right now, but at the same time this is a really great country and you should be proud to live in it. So I think sitting down and kneeling … that is a sign of disrespect … because everyone stands for the national anthem so you know that in sitting down you are disrespecting your country, and that isn't ok […] you're in this country, you're blessed to live in this country, you should respect it." Madison*

"I think that some people believe that saluting the flag is your duty as an American. Like you're an American, it's your job to respect the flag […] I do think that you can still salute the flag whilst stating your opinion in a different way." Tobin

These comments help explore why responses to Colin Kaepernick's performance of the anthem were felt and expressed so strongly. Whilst the anthem talks about past historical moments in time, which are disconnected from the personal lived experiences within their everyday, it is a critical aspect to their identities and something they feel should be honoured and respected, even suggesting that as an American citizen, it is a duty to salute the flag. Equally, as will be discussed further in the following chapter, there is this emergence of repetition and 'growing up' as having an influential role on the embodiment and emotional entanglements with national identities. Whether in school or at home, there is a certain level of felt appropriateness and a learning of both emotional and bodily responses to certain manifestations of national identities. The different scales of the distanced nation and the intimate bodily scale repeatedly collide together during the anthem, reminding people of their nation, but also producing a more tangible point of connection between the body and the nation through the affective and emotional registers. The differences in opinion also illustrate the individually subjective nature of national identities, asking the question of how people differentially view Americanness, how it is shaped within and through them, and what they expect it to do, or be, or look like. Considering the body as an affective component within explorations of national identity is critical, as it becomes clear how important emotional subjectivity is when considering how different encounters with felt belonging impact the ways in which the nation comes to be and exist.

Feelings of Americanness and national identities do not exist separately from other forms of identities, such as gender, age, sexuality and religion. Indeed, the messiness of subjectivity and positionality when exploring national identities became evident early on in the research process. Importantly, the pledge of allegiance, the national anthem and the flag were described by many participants as items that say much about what American identity is and what it stands for. The encounters and performances of the national anthem were impacted by the subjective body. The pledge of allegiance, the anthem and the flag signify, perhaps unconsciously,

expectations surrounding who belongs, who can identify with the nation and what Americanness looks, feels or sounds like. This was something I experienced and reflected on during my trip to some of the historic sites on the East Coast of the USA during my research period.

> *Author's Research Diary: I've spent a few days now exploring the sites where this American notion of freedom and liberty were fought for here on the East Coast, and learnt a lot about US history. One thing that has struck me repeatedly is a strange sense of discomfort as I listen to tour guides, hear the national anthem, see the original flag, read plaques and ask my American friend how she feels visiting these sites. I'm uncomfortable because I find myself asking who this excludes and what narrative this sets out about belonging in this nation and national pride. This is freedom for whom? It's talked about as though freedom and liberty has been achieved, but it hasn't, not for everybody. What would it feel like to visit these sites, to look at the Liberty Bell, to see the constitution and Declaration of Independence as a black or hispanic or gay American? Even as a woman I felt strange. This was such a white-old-rich-man kind of thing. I don't see myself in there and I think, sure you're talking about how awesome this freedom is but it wasn't freedom for everyone! It was freedom for a few and gave such a specific version of what Americanness looks like and who it could include. (13th April 2017)*

Emotional subjectivity is important and shapes how we connect with our own feelings of national identities and belonging. Above, the research diary excerpt discusses how the visiting of national monuments and the reading of specific narrated national histories is read in light of our position, and begins to ask how these national narratives are so often taken-for-granted and are experienced differently according to the bodies that encounter them. Certainly there is a specific narrative that is demonstrated through the national anthem and that is embodied and felt differentially due to bodily encounters and experiences of it. National identity is not a singular narrative as perhaps historical accounts and performances such as the national anthem attempt to suggest and work hard to cultivate, telling a specific story of freedom and liberation. Bodies approach these narratives and their national identity

in different ways, and whilst my friend felt a heightened sense of national pride at these monuments, others I spoke to during the time felt ashamed or embarrassed at the way their identity was being literally performed and brought into being by actors giving tours. It is also important to note the spatiality of these historical and national encounters, with the meaning and affective nature being tied up in the atmosphere of the sites being visited, sites specific to national events and moments, demonstrating how space itself has an affective capacity to both physically and emotionally move bodies in relation to national feelings and attachments. Moving away from focusing predominantly on the representations of national identity, the concept of national atmospheres is a useful lens through which to explore the ways in which national identity is experienced in the everyday through bodies, things and encounters. Moving through different affective atmospheres, which have a particular feel or mood, can certainly work to generate an awareness of the self and affect both the feel of national identities, and the embodiment of particular practices.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the response during specific national atmospheres can be both comfort and discomfort. For my friend on the East Coast, these national atmospheres moved her to tears as she walked through and experienced places and events that were meaningful to her sense of self as an American. For me, as a non-American, these atmospheres did not move me in the same way, but instead my gender was influential in how I felt and reflected on notions of freedom and indeed feelings of discomfort and distaste for this historical narrative of American identity; I was proud to be different, to be British. Affective atmospheres do, as Close Stephens (2016) argues, ebb and swell, yet they also can be driven and constructed by particular spaces, histories, memories and temporalities that bodies move through and within. Atmosphere also sets the stage as a theoretical concept for understanding the complex intersections of the collective and intimately personal, allowing a more nuanced, yet albeit messy, approach to the ways in which national identities belong to and are (re)produced both by the collective and the individual simultaneously.

When thinking about the collision of this formal, often distanced, yet collective narrative of Americanness with emotionally subjective encounters, it can be seen how these two scales and narratives of the nation interact and influence one another. National identities, atmospheres and bodies work as affective and emotional

capacities that form one another. They are constantly being brought into being as bodies move through and encounter spaces, other bodies and things, shaping the feel of the nation. Through this, national identities are made real and tangible by the subjective doings and thinkings within these atmospheres. The demonstration of these varying emotionally subjective understandings and engagements with the nation shows the importance of understanding each person's story, and the way that their identity works to affect how participants conceptualised, expressed and performed what it meant to be American. One example of this may be Alex, who, during informal conversations, described what it meant to her to be an American as what she desired America to become, hoping for what she understands as a more equal society, and hoping for progress and growth. Alex described being apathetic to the national anthem and would not consider herself patriotic, yet still feels American and desires her country to do well, to grow, and display equality in all aspects of its identity. Her performance and felt relationship to the national anthem was, perhaps, not the appropriate or correct 'doing' of this performance but demonstrates how these performances of Americanness shift alongside other aspects of her identity and character.

Alex's feelings of national belonging are driven by her experiences of the nation and influenced by her gender and faith, especially exemplified by how she felt America was male dominated and patriarchal, limiting her rights as a woman within the USA. Quite different to other participants' views of their Americanness, Alex's feelings of Americanness were inseparable from other aspects of her identity, like her gender, that seemed to play a more important role on how she understands her self-in-the-world. In fact, her gendered encounters and embodiments of being-in-the-world were not separated from her national identity, like perhaps other participants described, but were deeply entangled within narratives of belonging. For other participants, their gendered encounters of being-in-the-world were expressed as being distinct or separate, yet, it was clear that other aspects of their identity, their faith, sexuality and age, were shaping the lens through which they understood and performed their national identities as they moved through different spaces and atmospheres. Alex's embodiment(s) of her national identity demonstrate the need to consider how other aspects of identity can and do influence and shape the becoming of nationalisms and the ways in which she feels a sense of belonging to America. National identity cannot be separated from other forms of identity, whether that is faith, race, sexuality or

gender. The nation and bodies cannot be pulled apart yet have not been considered enough alongside national identities. Exploring nationalism and forms of national belonging as subjective and emotional aspects of everyday life problematises this simplistic understanding and allows an unpacking of the reality of how the nation is encountered and performed. Unpacking the everyday lives of these participants demonstrates the ways in which national identities are encountered, embodied and brought into being, and the national anthem is one of the taken-for-granted moments in which specific expectations are inscribed onto the body and national identities are performed.

Returning to the performing of the national anthem, this draws into question ideas of normalised responses and performances, and asks how bodies are both perceived by the performer and the audience. By not performing his national identity in the prescribed or normalised way during the national anthem, other aspects of Kaepernick's identity, in this case his faith, were scrutinised in order to justify his actions (Boren, 2016; Peters, 2016a). These attempts to explain his actions were done through lessening his 'Americanness' by suggesting he was a Muslim; thus questioning the authenticity of his American identity and in doing so, suggesting an alternative form of identity that did not fit as an American value. The perceived lack of patriotism was made sense of by using a scalar and exclusive version of national identity and belonging. This questioning of Colin Kaepernick's faith is interesting as it highlights ideas of "cultural citizenships" (Weber, 2011) and those who are considered outside of the melting pot of America and Americanness, but labelled instead as safe or unsafe citizens. It projects the assumption that certain religious values, or more specifically Muslim values, and American identity are not congruent, demarcating the boundaries of what a nation considers patriotic (Weber, 2011). Whilst unspoken, the use of a different religion, specifically one that has strong ties to discourses of security and othering (Weber, 2011), plays a role in demonstrating the way both certain media sources and the national anthem itself speak into being a subconscious version of American identity. As stated earlier, and as described by some of the young people, his performance was perceived as demonstrating a lack of patriotism and respect, working to demonstrate the strong relationship between the anthem and feelings of national identities. More specifically these forms of disconnect manifest themselves in a way that not only suggests that a person does not belong in the USA if they are of a particular faith, but also have implications for what an

‘authentic’ American national identity looks and feels like. Having considered the variety and emotionally subjective nature of national identities, thinking through how different identities work alongside each other to shape and form the way in which the self-in-the-world is encountered and embodied, the tension of this emotionally subjective approach with feelings of unity, cohesion and sameness was evident. Kaepernick’s evocation of such emotional responses to his performance of national identity suggests that whilst national identities are intensely personal and felt, they speak to a greater narrative of imagined sameness, appropriate performances and emotional encounters.

5.2.2 Imagining unity and cohesion

The performing of the national anthem seems to both speak the nation into being, and inscribe a specific definition of American national identities into a space. This idea of identity inscription was discussed by Jennifer and Amber.

> *“We sing [the national anthem] at sports games. Why do we do that? I don’t understand that. It doesn’t make sense … maybe because we are all together in one place … So maybe to mark something? Like if we are proud of a certain thing, we sing our national anthem and it makes it American, so we are proud of being American and proud of this thing that is ours” Jennifer*

> *“I didn’t have any particular feelings about [the national anthem], I just kind of went along with the flow because everyone else was doing it […] I think it Americanises the whole [football game] more” Amber*

For many, the national anthem separates out something, an event or a thing, as significant and the idea that an American identity can then be placed onto that. In these quotes above, it is possible to consider the atmosphere of a football game and how the performance of the national anthem works as an affective component that almost nationalises the event; the national anthem exists beyond simply representing American ideals or character, but is an active component in describing, producing and continuing national feelings. This also draws on ideas of space as a contextual and critical component in the becoming and doing of the nation. Jennifer makes an interesting point as she talks about being together in one place, and the relationship

between the performance or doing of the national anthem and imagined notions of cohesion or unity. Americanness, through the national anthem could then perhaps be seen as a method of demonstrating that America is one and unified, and inscribing that feeling and connectedness onto an event or place.

The way in which certain definitions of Americanness and unity are created and interwoven into the fabric of the anthem was later highlighted in one of the small group discussions where David explained how he felt the national anthem was a purposeful attempt to both create unity and remind the nation and other nations of America's strength, solidarity and power. He built on this by explaining how the national anthem was not introduced until during the Cold War, a time when the nation seemed to need unity and a demonstration of strength within as a nation. Interestingly, the phrase "one nation under God" was also inserted into the pledge of allegiance during the Cold War, to contrast against the 'godless' communists (Independence Hall Association, 2017). To David, this was one of the main reasons as to why he thought the national anthem was performed, specifically at sports events, as it inscribed a specific version of national community and physical togetherness onto performances of American national identity. What David's comments also suggest is a temporality to feelings of Americanness and imaginations of belonging and unity. This suggests that there are times and spaces where there is a perceived need to be seen as, or feel, unified as a nation, and that this is in part played out through performances of the national anthem, but also seeps into the subconscious through narratives that are learnt over time and repeated, like the pledge of allegiance. These narratives and learnt performances therefore become more present and emergent during specific moments and atmospheres. As mentioned earlier, the nationalising of spaces, bodies, things, songs, games and sports must be unpacked and observed carefully, as these things are encountered and shape affective atmospheres of the nation.

The sound and noise of the anthem also have an affective capacity that works to reconfigure space or create an atmosphere, which shapes bodily encounters with space and the nation (Doughty and Lagerqvist, 2016). Within social sciences and geography more broadly, sound is becoming recognised as a significant aspect of daily life (Anderson et al., 2005; Doughty et al., 2016; Gallagher et al., 2016) and it is key to not underestimate the role that sound plays in the creation and encountering

of space (Doughty and Lagerqvist, 2016), performance of identity and on feelings of belonging and attachment, linking to reproductions of the nation. How does the sound of the national anthem have an affective capacity in relation to both the imagined and physical coming together of national bodies in a moment of seemingly national unity? The national anthem is a moment where voices unite in the singing, murmuring or speaking of specific words in a rhythmic and ritualistic practice that brings the many into one. Sound is heard and felt; it moves bodies in multiple and sometimes unexpected ways, and shapes the ways in which space is encountered and experienced, therefore making sound an important point of inquiry (Duffy and Waitt, 2011; Doughty et al., 2016).

It is necessary to explore how the sound and absence of sound during the national anthem is encountered and experienced, and how encounters with national soundscapes are understood, un-thought-of and embodied in different situations and by different people. Through this we can question the affective and emotional capacities of the playing and performing of the national anthem, considering how the sounds of the anthem reconfigure space and shape the becoming of national identities through bodily and fleshy encounters. Exploring the affective and emotive capacities of sound within the national anthem can also speak into notions of belonging and feelings of togetherness, asking how a sense of belonging can emerge through the participation in sound creation, and encountering sounds and atmospheres. In their paper on street music in Stockholm, Doughty and Lagerqvist (2016) discuss the way in which music can work to create feelings of conviviality between people. They state,

> *"these ephemeral aspects of the interactions between people, sound and place can have a strong impact on how places are practiced, and can be traced in dominant narratives about place-specific experiential qualities such as atmosphere, safety, sociability and belonging."*
> *(Doughty and Lagerqvist, 2016: 59)*

Whilst they are discussing sound and music in relation to street music and the urban environment, it is important to think about how sound and songs can work in other situations but in similar ways. Labelle (2010 in Doughty and Lagerqvist, 2016:60) talks about how sound has an intimate capacity to "stitch bodies together in a

temporal instance". Instead of considering what sounds represent, we may think about what situations they create or produce, and how these situations or moments are encountered, exploring their affective capabilities in relation to bodies, and therefore thinking about the role of sound within the swirling agglomeration of components in the national atmosphere (Cox, 2011). Perhaps, then, sound can be a way of constructing unity or creating a sense of belonging within a space, through the evocation of nostalgia (Mills, 2017) and the singing in unity during those moments. Certainly sound contributes to the atmosphere and ambience of a moment and a space, so in this sense, the national anthem is key in the affective atmosphere of the nation and the ways in which the nation is encountered and embodied. Equally, the lack of or interruption to expected songs within specific spatio-temporal moments has often been seen to shape experiences of spaces, especially in relation to the national anthem. Whether missing the song cue (Parveen, 2016) or sound system failures (Murray, 2016), the absence or presence of sound in relation to the national anthem evokes emotional and felt responses and shapes both the encounters within space and the becoming of feelings of national belonging and cohesion.

Another aspect that can be picked out of these ideas is that of a physical coming together or collectiveness. In an earlier quote, Jennifer talked about the significance of singing the national anthem when people are gathered in one place. The collective nature of bodies encountering one another and participating in a shared performance was also something of significance to Madison.

> *"I think [the national anthem is] important because, I think a lot of people don't necessarily think of what the words meant. But it was written in a time of war and then America came out of that, so that alone has a lot of history and heritage and we've always had it. So if that wasn't there and if people didn't have the national anthem, I think there would be a hole missing in America that people need to remind them where they live. […] So when you [sing the national anthem], and everybody collectively does that, you're spending a moment like thinking about how far America has come. And I know a lot of people aren't necessarily taught that and it's just a thing that they do, but because everyone does it, it's a respectful thing to do." Madison*

The national anthem has the power to be a reminder and to flag national identity, but it is also a personal interaction with the nation, an affective encounter, which sometimes evokes emotional responses and specific physical bodily movements and performances. The coming together of bodies whilst performing the national anthem demonstrates the critical value of unpacking the embodiment of national identities. The idea of an authentic and collective national identity is something that continued to emerge throughout conversations with young people. When thinking of community, it may be useful to consider this in relation to Anderson's (1983) theory of an imagined community. In the case of this research, there was a specific imagination of what being an American was and what draws people together within that. However, to maintain, like Anderson (1983) does, that these representations produce and maintain the nation, is to ignore the multiplicity of narratives that exist and are being continually reworked and rewritten through performances and encounters between bodies, spaces and things. There is no singular narrative. Even when considering shifts to banal workings of the nation in the everyday (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Raento and Brunn, 2000), a singular and linear idea of what a nation is made up of and looks like, emerges. Instead, the nation exists as a messy entanglement of distanced collectives, with the individual, emotionally subjective. A sense of shared commonality exists to a degree, often articulated through historical ties, 'shared values' and nostalgic notions, but for many participants, this was not the case, especially when thinking about how emotional subjectivity and positionality, specifically race, sexuality and religion, impact actual and imagined notions of citizenship.

Feelings of American-ness are more complex, exclusive and subjective, and unpacking the multiplicity of experiences of the nation within the everyday lives of people enables a better consideration of how national identities are felt and embodied (Militz and Schurr, 2015). The emotional encounters and performances of intersectional identities in relation to feelings of citizenship and belonging within America was the cause of the protests during the national anthem; for Kaepernick it was about the racial tensions, and for Rapinoe, a US Women's National Team soccer player, she drew from her experiences of citizenship and her sexuality (Mather, 2016). Considering the importance of the ways in which identities are tied into political and formal imaginings of Americanness helps to unpack why the performance of the national anthem is significant and reveals the affective nature of

it. It also demonstrates why the national anthem is an important thing to consider as the performances had such an emotive and affective impact upon feelings of national identities.

5.3 Rhythms of the nation

When thinking about how the nation is embodied through encounters, the performance of the national anthem is something that is understudied, yet is a moment where the nation is brought to life and into being through singing, bodily movements and gestures. Whilst the performance of the national anthem takes place within a specific spatial and temporal moment, affected by the atmosphere and context it exists and is created within, its repetitive and performed nature has the ability to bring together and forge imagined connectivity with bodies at distance, and to the wider concept of the nation. If the nation exists as an affective atmosphere, which is affected by, exists within and comes into being through affective spacetimes, it is key to unpack the significance of bodily encounters and performances within those spacetimes (McCormack, 2013). The singing of the US national anthem was highlighted by many of the young people as this unthought-of, yet significant moment of encounter with the nation in their lives, a moment that brought awareness of their belonging and connectivity with a wider group of bodies across space, yet was routinised and mundane. Unpacking the experience of national identity and belonging means thinking about the patterns and rhythmic connections that bodies engage with and encounter within the landscapes of everyday life. This section of the chapter draws from McCormack's work on how experiences of spaces are wrapped up in affective atmospheres and rhythms, for he states, "to be affected by affective spacetimes is to take up and be taken up in the rhythms of which these spacetimes are composed" (2013: 6, emphasis my own). This is useful here, for if we are to apply it to the concept of the nation and belonging, we can consider how to be connected and experience the nation, is to consciously and semi-consciously take up and be taken up by the rhythms of the nation. The nation is something that exists as this rhythmic, dynamic, contested and swirling mass of components, which we engage with and are swept up by, contributing to and shaped through personal and collective interactions and embodiments of the nation. National anthems are one of these collective, rhythmic movements of the nation, and a point where bodies engage and participate in the becoming of the nation.

It is helpful to consider how the idea of rhythm can work to forge an idea of unity or coming-togetherness. When thinking about the national anthem and its rhythmic or unthought-of nature, it is difficult to articulate the ways in which the performance of the anthem exists as more than a reminder or marker of American national identity or an articulation of identity and belonging. The singing, gesturing and performing of the anthem exists in the anticipation and presence of its performance; it does not simply exist as it is being sung but is anticipated before it is physically brought into being. This anticipation works as part of the patterning of the nation through the possibilities that might emerge from the encounter with it. The national anthem then is not a 'thing', but perhaps more of an "urge to movement" (Bergson, 2007:169 in McCormack, 2013:79). The national anthem can be usefully conceptualised as an affective component working alongside an agglomeration of other affective components, swirling within, and conducive of, an atmosphere of the nation. It is affected by not only the spatio-temporal context, but also the other bodies and things it encounters and collides with in the moment before, during and following its performance. To each body, an individual yet collective experience of the nation is encountered simultaneously. Whilst that is not to take away from either the individual emotional subjectivity of the nation or the distanced and more linear conceptualisation of the nation that seems to exist and is engaged with, it is to highlight the seemingly chaotic nature of what a nation is and how it exists, is felt and becomes tangibly real and embodied within the everyday. Considering the national anthem through the lens of affective atmospheres is useful, then, in unpacking the complexity of national belonging. In order to explore the felt nature and affective experience of the performance of the national anthem, and the way this relates to ideas of national belonging, there are three concepts I wish to highlight: rhythm, motion and interruption.

5.3.1 Collective rhythmic movement

An interesting starting point to consider when exploring the performing of the national anthem and how this relates to ideas of national belonging, is the idea of rhythm and bodily movements. When discussing the national anthem, it was clear that most of the young people saw it as both an unconscious, but equally significant action or doing.

"I stand, I put my hand over my heart, yeah, and I guess that's something you grow up doing? Most people don't really question it. You just do it. […] We memorised [the pledge of allegiance] but we never really got what it meant. But you say it so much that eventually it does click." Abigail

"I think it's important to stand, but I'm not quite sure why. It's like, of course you stand, why wouldn't you stand? […] It just always happens so you always sing along and that's the national anthem." - Sarah

"So it is almost like an un-thought-of thing?" - Author
"Yeah, like I don't think about it. I don't ponder it as I sing it, I just sing the words to the song. It just happens. […] Yeah, [the pledge of allegiance] is kind of also a rhythm. Like you just say it, I'm pledging allegiance." - Sarah

There is a significant tension that exists between the unthought-of and thought-of nature of the national anthem. It is not unthought-of in a way that removes its meaningfulness, but it is a rhythmic pattern that is performed and engaged with in an instinctive way. In his book, McCormack (2013) discusses how affective bodily actions, experiences and encounters exist within larger agglomerations of things and spacetimes, where rhythms and gestures can seem or feel instinctive but have in fact been in the process of becoming familiar. In this case, thoughts, actions and gestures that seem familiar and un-thought-of, such as standing and placing a hand over the heart whilst reciting the national anthem, suggests that bodies can learn to be affected in terms of expression. At some point, the purposeful action of performing the national anthem becomes more of a reaction, through its repetition and taught nature; performing the national anthem in a specific way, with appropriate bodily movements, is cultivated and intentionally made important. One of the spaces highlighted as significant to the learning and performing of the national anthem was school. This links into the following chapter, discussing the ways in which the space and temporality of school and growing up plays an influential role in the cultivating and teaching of specific American doings and embodiments in a way that becomes taken-for-granted. School was where the students described learning and singing both the pledge of allegiance and the national anthem, with bodily movements

enforced by teachers and those in power around them. The role of school, then, is critical in thinking about how the bodily expression of national belonging and connectedness is expressed and made real through the singing of the national anthem and specific embodiments.

> *"We memorise it and remember the words so we always remember where we live and what happened to get us our freedom and stuff. We can always be conscious of that." Mia*

> *Author's Research Diary: Emma said that honestly, she thinks that the reason she stands up and puts her hands behind her back is not because she is patriotic or anything but because that's what they told her to do in school and when they were in elementary school, they literally sung a patriotic song every single day. Justine was saying that she grew up in scouts and there they teach you to put your hand on your heart, so that's what she usually does. I asked how often they sung the national anthem and they said that it was always sung at sporting events and in assemblies in school. (August 4th, 2016)*

Being an American and feeling connected to a nation is described by many of the participants as often being intentionally taught. The national anthem is a time where formal and expected performances and narratives of Americanness collides with the individual body. Whilst taught through the doings and enforcing of other bodies, over time it becomes a natural bodily response to a specific sound, and is a moment where the body reacts to its Americanness, whether thoughtfully or seemingly instinctively.

The national anthem is also a shared moment of perceived harmonious collectiveness, performed alongside others in remembrance but also playing an active role in bringing the nation into being. Crucially it is also something that connects bodies at distance across the country, perhaps cultivating this imagined sense of unity and togetherness. This idea was highlighted by Jennifer when she was discussing the significance of the national anthem and why it is perceived as something so important.

“This is something we are all getting together to do and people across America are getting together to do, and this is …” - Jennifer

“Tying the nation together?” - Author

“Kind of, like schools in Texas and New York are also singing the national anthem in their school assemblies also. It’s like what we’re all doing in different parts of the country.” - Jennifer

The idea of tying a nation together and the way in which this national rhythm does that will be discussed in more depth in the following section. The national anthem is a doing that feels instinctive and unthought-of, yet is specific and has significant meaning behind it. It is more than a natural response and its learnt nature can be seen as an important part of its shaping and coming into being. Critically, the performing of the national anthem also has specific movements and embodiments entwined within it.

5.3.2 National belonging in motion: interruption and intervention

During the interviews, Jennifer and a couple of others commented upon the difference between whether Colin Kaepernick knelt or sat down. These actions seemed to produce a different response with some young people saying that kneeling seemed more respectful, in comparison to sitting, which seemed passive and uncaring. Specific bodily movements and gestures have an impact on the perception of national belonging, and assumptions of what is an authentic portrayal of national identity. It leads to a suggestion that there are appropriate ways to demonstrate one’s national attachment and pride through physicality and performance. In her work on physical education in the USA, Gagen (2004) discusses the entanglements of national character and physicality, specifically thinking about how exercise, games and parades were imbued with nationalist rituals and became patriotic spectacles. She discusses the parallel between the prioritisation and desirability of physicality with the muscular and mechanical process of becoming American; national character is cultivated over time, through these different ideas of physicality and through individual bodies and flesh (Gagen, 2004). Indeed, the simultaneous, collective movements and embodiments performed during the national anthem, standing and placing a hand over one’s heart, demonstrates a coming-

togetherness and a moment of unity, affirming and reaffirming national belonging and identity through this common rhythm (Eichberg, 1998). This unison in movement not only demonstrates the habitualised nature of national identity and cohesion (Gagen, 2004), but it also brings into question the idea of authentic or 'rightness' of 'doing' Americanness.

The performance of the nation through embodied movements and doings, and the contextual framework of these practices has an affective capacity upon the presentation of the self, influencing feelings of belonging and connectivity, as well as perceptions of 'doing' or 'being' American. The nation and being an American feels different whilst singing the national anthem at a football game or watching the national anthem being performed through a television screen at home. This spatial nuance links to wider notions of both how the nation is brought into being, how perception and engagement with specific national doings influence the felt nature of nationalism, and how the nation is translated and diffuse across space. During these moments of encounter, the presentation of the self draws into question why certain atmospheres, spaces and times feel more or less national, and how bodies react and respond in those moments. The physical doings of the nation are evident here as the nation is performed and brought into movement through physicality. The body is an important component within the conceptualisation of the nation and plays a specific role in not only working to bring the nation into being, but also to shape how the nation is perceived and encountered. Specific motions and bodily movements are key and influential when unpacking the performance of the national anthem. It is also evident that there are specific roles and expectations when considering what is an appropriate way to respond when singing the national anthem. If there are bodily movements which work to build and foster a sense of community and togetherness, how then can bodily movements and gestures also work to resist, interrupt or (re)shape these national rhythms?

When thinking about rhythm and affective experience, it must be considered how participation is influenced, shaped and perhaps even underpinned by disruption and conflict. As McCormack states, "rhythmicity might be as much to do with disorder as with order" (2013: 54). Drawing on arguments made by Dewey (Boydston, 1984-1991) and Lefebvre (2004), he discusses how to explore critically the idea of encounter and rhythm within everyday life, it is important to think about how the

perception of rhythm as creating harmony, unity and collectiveness is ordered and rational until the point where an experience or performance does not produce this feeling. In other words, what happens to the harmonisation or ‘coming-togetherness’ when there is a disruption to the movement and rhythm, and is this indeed an interruption, or can it be an intervention? McCormack (2013) argues, then, that whilst there is this idea of collective rhythmic movement as an affective experience in the idealistic pursuit of authentic harmony, unity, collectiveness and integration, this assumption of conviviality is in fact a utopian conceptualisation of both the experience and existence of rhythmic movement and sensibilities. He states, a “rhythmic conception of experience should be attentive to how this experience might also have plateaus, fractures, and tears” (McCormack, 2013:54). Relating this to the nation, the national anthem is this harmonious and shared moment in time, which transcends space and seems to pull together members of the nation, producing an imagination of togetherness, similarity and unity. When that is disrupted, this narrative is firstly made noticeable and then affected in multiple ways. Closs Stephens (2016) begins to consider this idea of resistance and has continued to explore ways in which dominant narratives of the nation are resisted by its citizens, perhaps due to their own experiences and embodiments of what the nation looks and feels like to them. She explores this often through artistic practices, asking how resistance looks and is felt in specific moments (Closs Stephens 2016). Pulling these two ideas together, then, if rhythm and affective experience are critically related to disruption and conflict, it is important to consider how bodies that resist work to intentionally produce new narratives of what being an American 'looks' and 'feels' like. There is also a differentiation perhaps between interruption and intervention. How is the atmosphere changed or shaped when the sound system fails, an interruption, in contrast with when a body purposefully resists in order to intervene or draw attention to a specific cause or idea? It also asks questions in relation to the individual and spatial perceptions of interruption and intervention, asking whether an intervention only becomes an intervention if something is achieved, and to whom it is understood as an intervention, whilst others perhaps experience a disruption?

Kaepernick’s kneeling and sitting was an intervention into that which is considered by the young people in this study as a respectful, almost ritualistic and revered moment. His performance was intentional, as was the location and the timing. The importance of these acts of bodily resistance can also be seen as important due to the way in

which they shifted their bodies in relation to the geopolitical context. On the anniversary of 9/11, players knelt or linked arms rather than remaining seated (Pyke, 2016). The geopolitical timing also seemed to shape how participants felt about the actions.

> *Author's Research Diary: Sophia also said she had a tough time with [Kaepernick] sitting, but could support him kneeling. She was not happy about any of them doing it on 9/11. Sophia said, on all other days, don't support your flag, but on a day of national mourning, which remembers one of the biggest tragedies in the nation, stand and respect the flag. (Thursday 15th September)*

This slight differentiation is important to note as it again demonstrates the way in which the nation is more-than-representational, being performed and felt differently in relation to time, geopolitical context and spatiality. The actions of sitting down or kneeling were a different way of 'doing' the nation, and not the usual performance of the national anthem. The encounter with difference seemed to bring the performance of the national anthem to mind and make it noticeable. To the students, the national anthem has been described as a rhythm that is hard to explain and discuss. They found it difficult to describe why they thought the national anthem was important to do and respect, yet to disrupt that rhythm brought the action into question. Whilst they could not explain why their actions were right or important, most were quick to state that Kaepernick's actions were wrong, dumb or inappropriate. The interruption made people consider why the action has significance.

> *"I guess people do respect the song and think it is important, but I think they're just mad that he is not doing what's always been done. He's not standing and following the custom of standing [later…] [The national anthem] just always happens so you always sing along and that's the national anthem." Sarah*

Critically, Kaepernick's (and other's) refusal to perform a ritualistic and specific bodily movement brings into question how the nation is performed in everyday spaces, through movements and rhythms. It evidences the disruption of the seemingly banal, suddenly bringing this performance into consideration. The interruption also works to

affect the shape and feel of the atmosphere, its encounter and embodiment, and the felt nature of that atmosphere also changes across different geographies.

Disruption to a rhythm could also link into the idea of discomfort and the way in which that relates to a personal reflection on national identities and the way they are embodied. It speaks into those moments where self-awareness highlights feelings of non-belonging. Critically I want to take a moment to reflect on times undertaking research in the USA where my own body felt out of place and I experienced a heightened awareness of difference. Often this occurred during the singing and standing for the national anthem. My feelings during this practice shifted over the year spent in the USA, and also as I moved through different spatialities and encountered it with different people.

> *Author's Research Diary: I'm stood for the national anthem at a rodeo on the Fourth of July. Literally everywhere I look people are wearing American flags on clothes, red white and blue, or there are American flags hanging around. The feelings of normality paused as I became incredibly aware of my non-belonging. This isn't my nation and I don't know the words to the song. In so many ways I felt as though I did belong in this town and this state, I had become accustomed to the culture here so quickly and I loved it, yet this was a stark reminder that there was not a shared commonality between myself and those around me. I was an outsider for that moment. (July 4th 2016)*

> *Really I was the enemy! Or the basis of a joke as my friend laughed about buying me a cup of tea in Boston and throwing it in the river. I had no idea what she was talking about. We don't learn American history back home! I did feel a little flare of national pride come up, wanting to defend my country. I do like to occasionally remind them when they comment on my spelling or words that we came first! They don't like that. But sometimes their nationalism annoys me and then sometimes it just makes me laugh out loud because its so dumb! For example Matthew was telling me that all police vehicles are American made... I just muttered, "of course the are" and rolled my eyes. It's moments like this that I do feel different. Or when talking about guns*

and health care. In fact I work to avoid talking about those topics now! (March 28th 2017)

We were walking around and trying to find our seats for the baseball. Of course we were late, all British and couldn't really figure out what the ticket meant. It was as we were wandering that I heard the sound and noticed the bodies around me were still. I turned and saw the choir beginning to sing on the field. The other British people I was with were still talking and wandering around so I got their attention and said - hey they're singing the national anthem, stop. They didn't stop and one guy even got his phone out to film it! I was irritated and I felt a little embarrassed to be with them I think! They were being so disrespectful. So I stood and listened, and took part in the anthem. Then when it was over I clapped and moved on. It's funny to look back and think how much of an outsider I felt at first during this exact same type of situation, and now, well now it feels like the others, Bethany and George, they were the outsiders to a part of my culture. It's not that I feel American, I don't and I don't ever want to, but this is a country that I've grown to feel very attached to and a sense of belonging has emerged. I have a tie to it and I've called it home for a year. I wonder if it would be different if it weren't such a patriotic country, like somewhere in Europe or something. But there is some feel of reverence and respect that lingers when the anthem is sung. (April 5th 2017)

Reflecting on my positionality across the 11 months spent in the USA reveals how my personal feelings of attachment and national belonging were shaped by the exposure to, and repetition of specific national practices. Whilst initially there was a hyper-awareness of my national and embodied difference to those around me both through my accent and my feelings of awkwardness and cultural difference, this changed over the course of time. My feeling of belonging felt especially different when suddenly I was surrounded by supposed 'similar' bodies, those of other British people attending a conference in the USA. The collision of other British bodies in an American space felt a little disorientating at first and my feelings of belonging felt messy and multiple. It was comfortable to hear British voices, although they sounded

strange and unfamiliar, and being still on US soil there was a sense that they were coming into my territory or land, and that the USA was something I had become a part of. These feelings were not played out through my body and practices until the moment we were stood in the stadium and my body reacted in a very specific way to the national anthem. The anthem was performed in a specific spatiality as I was surrounded by other British bodies and it had an emotional affect on my body and my felt sense of (dis)connection. The location and spatiality is important to consider here. If this event had happened in Bellingham I think I would have had an even stronger reaction, as my connection to the people and place of Bellingham is much more significant and felt than any ties to Boston, USA or even my university community. Indeed, I felt more at home in Bellingham because of my faith and the connections I had made in my church community, which transcended any feelings of national belonging or cohesion. National belonging is not singular and is also not always the most prominent aspect of a person's identity, yet it does affect emotions, feelings of belonging, embodiment and practices. The national anthem is a moment of distinction. It sets apart groups of people, defining them, whether they feel it or not, as formally belonging to a place. The performance and embodiment of the anthem, however, is where it is possible to see how the body demonstrates its felt belonging and felt understanding of what being an American means and looks like.

5.4 Conclusion

The performance and ‘doing’ of the national anthem is a significant and understudied moment of encounter between bodies and the nation, where the nation is brought into being through embodied movements, rhythms and articulations. Whilst often considered an un-thought-of and automatic moment, the performance of the American national anthem has significance in the minds of these young Americans, defining authentic ways of ‘being’ American through appropriate bodily movements. These bodily movements are one of the ways in which the nation is made tangible and real, at the intimate scale of the body. Importantly, the embodiment of the nation through the singing of the national anthem also has specific emotional attributes attached, such as conceptualisations of respect, freedom, reverence and honour. These felt aspects, are narrated onto the identity of the nation, emerging through the learnt environment and repetition over time in the everyday moments of life. The repetition creates an almost reactionary and instinctive response when the sound of the anthem comes into existence.

The national anthem describes a wider narrative that narrates the nation in a specific way. However, it is important to not only consider the story the anthem tells, such as in approaches by Lauenstein et al. (2015) and Kyridis et al. (2009), but to also consider how the national anthem is more-than-representational. These practices act as affective components that work within, contribute to and are themselves affected by the atmosphere of the nation. The atmosphere of the nation (Closs Stephens, 2016) is a useful way to consider the nation because it accounts for the geographical, temporal, geopolitical and emotionally subjective nature of the nation, thinking through how feelings of national identity shift and are shaped, constantly coming into being. To argue that the nation is embodied, is to consider how other aspects of identity intersect and play an affective role on the emotionally subjective encounters and (re)productions of national identity. It is through everyday encounters that the co-construction of national identities are negotiated, navigated and embodied (Antonsich, 2015; 2018a; Benwell, 2014; Botterill et al., 2016).

Critically, the emotionally subjective embodiment of and encounters with the national anthem shape the ways in which the nation is felt and brought into being. National identity is not a distanced concept to which people either belong or do not belong, belonging is forged and crafted at the scale of the body. Belonging and feeling connected to the nation is a subjective experience, a point at which intersectional identities shape and are shaped as they negotiate the swirling mass of bodies resonating with each other and the nation (Militz and Schurr, 2016). It is *this* subjective and personal feeling of what the nation is and should be, that enables a person to take a stance and argue that their nation is not being represented, that their nation could be better, that whilst some forms of citizenship may be legal, they are not felt or a reality in the everyday. The nation is made real and tangible by bodies. The national anthem is a moment, a point where the formal representations of the nation collide with the embodied contestation of Americanness, where the multiplicity of nationalisms are felt and expressed even though it may often look the same. To consider only its representation is to not fully appreciate the nuances of the performance and the bodies that work to make the nation come into being.

It is difficult to articulate the connection between the anthem and the embodiment of the nation through specific movements, gestures and feelings, as it is not simply a

‘call and response’ moment. There is a much greater complexity of components at work that shape the way the body responds to the sound of the national anthem, such as the geographical and temporal context, whether the body is surrounded by other bodies and the relationships between those bodies. Of course, the anthem is also something that is taught in schools, homes and through watching others, it is very much an expected and learnt behaviour, becoming an engrained, un-thought-of, and rhythmic aspect of ‘doing’ national identity. This learnt aspect and the notion of learning to ‘appropriately’ perform national identities is important and will be explored further in the final chapter. Its performance cannot be separated from that which the body brings to it. This highlights the ways in which national identity is formalised yet is, at the same time, something constantly becoming. National identity is felt differentially, at specific moments, times and places. It changes, shifts, is made new, is reaffirmed and rearranged. Sometimes national identity is driven and utilised, sometimes it is exercised and intentional, and sometimes it is background noise. Within this there is a specific geographical context to the sensing and feelings of national identities that drive research beyond a perception of the nation as singular or ‘flagged’ to something that is in process, encapsulating and quite captivating.

Chapter 6: Learning Americanness

6.1 Introduction

As noted in chapter 5, school is a significant space in the lives of young people in the USA; it frames their everyday routines, and shapes how they think and perceive the world around them. Research has previously considered how schools work in influential ways in the formation of identities (Collins and Coleman, 2008), and more explicitly how text books and curriculums work to narrate specific histories and versions of national identities (Williams 2014; Benwell, 2016; Ide, 2016). Few studies, however, have worked to unpack the consumption of these practices and spaces by the students themselves, nor have they explored other encounters and embodiments that take place within the spatially specific area of the school. Within studies on the nation and nationalism specifically, there is a significant lack of research when it comes to considering age and the role it plays upon feelings of national identity and performing the nation (Mansfield, 2005; Hopkins and Alexander, 2010). Indeed, within this research, students told stories that highlighted the school and their age as significant parts of their everyday, where they regularly encountered and navigated their national identity. School itself is indicative of a specific age and certain practices. Age, school and growing up are interwoven and characterized by specific national practices and engagements. For participants, encounters with their national identities, then, were regular, sometimes intentionally designed by government systems and taken-for-granted practices, and other times considered and intentionally engaged with by the students. Examples of this are seen in the participation of the Pledge of Allegiance, the taking of mandatory US history classes, and protests around gun laws, defining what they feel being an American should be. These interwoven and connected aspects of age, school and growing up are messy yet critical in the performing and feeling of national identities. This chapter is shaped around these ideas, drawing on the specific examples of the Pledge of Allegiance and gun law protests, considering how school, age and growing up work together to create specific notions of being, doing and feeling American. Whether through the daily pledge of allegiance, the America-centric, mandatory history classes, or their encounters with bodies doing Americanness differently in this space, growing up in school shaped how these students came to understand what it meant to be, or feel, American, and how to perform that in appropriate ways.

One key practice that was regularly drawn to attention as influential in participants' ideas of Americanness was the Pledge of Allegiance.

> *"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." (Independence Hall Association, 2018: np)*

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1882 by Francis Bellamy and edited in 1923 and 1954, in relation to surrounding geopolitical contexts, to become as it is known and recited today (Independence Hall Association, 2018: np). Today, the Pledge of Allegiance is spoken every morning in schools across America as children are taught the practice from an early age and it becomes a mundane, everyday practice and performance of their Americanness. Critically, the Pledge of Allegiance is limited to the specific space of the school or of summer camps, making it a practice that is distinct to those atmospheres, and a specific temporal moment in people's lives. Both symbolic and a national ritual, the Pledge of Allegiance is also inseparable from both the flag of the United States of America and the bodies which perform it. The Pledge of Allegiance is not only written about the flag, but is to be done as a direct response to the flag, accompanied by specific words and bodily movements. Section 4 of the Flag Code states:

> *The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag ... should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute."*
> *(http://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm, 2018:np)*

Indeed, the doing of the Pledge of Allegiance is underlined in the flag code as a participatory practice, through which bodies interact with, perform and negotiate their national identity. The specificity of its performance is tangled up with the flag, demonstrating how the hanging of the flag is much more than a symbolic reminder of America. Rather, it is an active and affective component of feeling, performing and even interrupting Americanness. These entanglements, which are specific to the

space of the school, point to particular ways of doing, feeling and being American in this space through teaching embodiments of national identities, and identifying both the school and age as a critical component in the becoming of national identities. During the research process, it became clear that whilst the doing of the Pledge of Allegiance is an unthought-of and taken-for-granted bodily performance of national identities for some, it is also a spatially specific moment, in which particular national narratives can be challenged and shaped through disruptive or “inappropriate” embodied responses. Because its recital occurs in school situations, the Pledge of Allegiance is a useful example to unpack as it highlights the role of age in emotional subjectivity, the more-than-representational nature of the flag, and the intersections of wider collective narratives with the personal, emotional and experiential. Thus, the Pledge of Allegiance not only provides an example of how narratives and doings of Americanness become both normalised and unthought-of through rhythmic everyday life, it shows the emergent nature of national identities, and demonstrates how certain taken-for-granted aspects of national identities can be interrupted and reclaimed for alternative purposes.

This chapter will examine the space of the school in more depth, exploring stories and experiences of these young people who have grown up in schools across Bellingham. It also considers the journey of a student who was home schooled until high school, providing a different narrative to the process of growing up and using this to demonstrate the intersections of space and identity. The chapter is framed around two different moments of encounter, where bodies negotiate, learn and perform their national identities in different ways. Initially I will argue that schools are a space in which appropriate or “good” (Mills, 2013) versions of national identities are presented, taught, learnt and embodied. I suggest that national identities are emergent through the growing up and learning of certain ideas and values, becoming affectively charged with the atmosphere of the school, and taken on by bodies. I also argue that the atmosphere of the school can be a place where national identities can be contested, resisted and reshaped, conducting spatially specific feelings of Americanness, and demonstrating the shifting tonalities of national identities across both temporal and spatially distinct moments in everyday life. In the second part of the chapter I look in more depth at one of the practices that shapes school life: the pledge of allegiance. The pledge is a physical, bodily engagement with the nation, and this ritual is significant due to its limitation of usually being performed and recited

only within schools or summer camps, framing growing up in America and specific to a certain age group. The pledge of allegiance is a mandatory practice that enmeshes the flesh, the emotive, the spatial, and the material, and is key in unpacking how national identities come to be done and known in the USA. This chapter looks at school in a different way to previous studies on nationalism, building on existing work on curriculums and behaviours (Collins and Coleman, 2008; Benwell, 2016) by looking at personal understandings and encounters with the nation. It shows how school and formal education both intentionally and subtly produce specific discourses surrounding belonging and national identities through the affective entanglements of bodies, doings and things, that emotively and physically move bodies through these spaces. Critically it underlines the emotionally subjective and emergent nature of national identities as bodies move, and grow, through space.

6.2 Learning to be American

Participants were quick to suggest that school played a role in the understanding and embodiment of their national identities, and that the school environment was a space in which the nation, and their identity as citizens, was presented to them in a formal and specific way. Schools have been shown to be a key site in shaping the identities and behaviours of children (Epstein and Johnson 1998; Ruddick and Flutter 2004; Collins and Coleman, 2008; Mills, 2013). Indeed, Collins and Coleman (2008) discuss how schools in Canada and the USA were initially crafted as nation-building spaces, aiming to shape the students alongside a narrative of belonging to that particular nation. Students talked about the impact of the rhythm of saying the Pledge of Allegiance every morning, singing the national anthem in assemblies and at sports games, encountering flags hanging in every classroom, and the mandatory participation in US history classes in order to graduate. These were all things and practices that students identified as playing a role in how they knew what it was to be American and perform that identity. There is, then, an active nationalising of the population within the space and atmosphere of the school, and this itself highlights the processual and emergent nature of national identities as they come into being through everyday encounters and embodiments. The atmosphere of the school encapsulates a multitude of rhythmic practices, such as the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, and encounters between bodies, things and spaces, shaping how Americanness is felt and embodied through the everyday lives of children, young people and indeed teachers, in America.

This section will examine the school in more depth, considering how national identities and specific versions of Americanness are taught, learnt and subtly woven into the everyday rhythms of school in the USA. Through this it will consider how appropriate or "good" versions of Americanness are learnt in order to become unthought-of and taken-for-granted, extending Billig's banal nationalism, which hints at the school as playing a role in the representation of the nation. In 6.2.1 I discuss the ways in which schools, practices and performances teach both what it means to be a 'good' American, but also key American 'feelings' or values, which become affectively charged components of feeling and doing Americanness. Through unpacking participants' experiences of school and growing up, I ask how national identities emerge as unthought-of, yet significant, senses of belonging to a wider, distanced collective, and are constantly made through the performing and learning of 'appropriate' national embodiments. Secondly in 6.2.2, I suggest that school and formal education both intentionally and subtly produce specific discourses on belonging and national identities through the affective entanglements of bodies, doings and things that emotively and physically move bodies through these spaces. I ask how age plays an important role in feelings of national identities, evidencing their emergent and processual nature as bodies grow up and develop their own personal, subjective understanding and embodiments of national identities in response to certain atmospheres. In 6.2.3 I think more carefully about how atmospheres are designed, and how the specific space of the school works in order to conduct a particular feel or way of being American. I draw on recent school protests surrounding gun control to show how national atmospheres can be used unexpectedly, or intercepted to be used for alternative narratives. The particular example of gun protests is used because it occurred in the surrounding context of the research project, and was something that the participants were involved in personally. It also demonstrates the ways in which national identities can be both created and encountered through a feel or tonality in a space, which can equally be intentionally cultivated and made known.

6.2.1 A 'good' national identity

> *"In elementary school, that's when we started the Pledge of Allegiance and they, in 1st or 3rd grade they had a little poster with the words*

next to the flag but in 1st grade we couldn't read that fast so you just kind of memorised it anyway. Also there are some really big words you know like indivisible – we all thought that was invisible! But it's not! That's not the same thing [laughs]. We memorised it but we never really got what it meant. But you say it so much that eventually it does click." Abigail

National identities are processual and emergent, shaped by emotional subjectivity and affective atmospheres. Indeed, through Abigail's recounting of her experiences growing up, we are able to see how aspects of national identities become shaped and are cultivated as children grow up and age in America and through their schooling. Initially describing a sense of unknown and a lack of comprehension about the Pledge of Allegiance, Abigail articulates how these practices, that are so specific to school, became ingrained into her normal everyday life, unquestionably shaping her embodiments and performances of Americanness. The atmosphere of the school is important to explore, thinking through how encounters with performances, practices, other bodies, the built environment and the positioning of objects have an influential role in the shaping of national bodies. Specifically, thinking through how these national practices and rituals taught in schools work to subtly articulate discourses of national belonging and 'appropriate' Americanness, or what Mills (2013:120) has described as "good citizenship". Mills' (2013) discusses the ways in which informal educational spaces, specifically scouting and national citizenship projects, aim to articulate narratives of what it means to be a good citizen in Britain onto young bodies. She considers how these organisations and projects work to shape the character of young people, particularly young men, through prescribing specific embodied practices of masculinity (Mills, 2013). Equally, Mills (2013) argues that these articulations can be understood as spatially and historically specific, with narratives of 'good citizenry' being contextualised and changing over time and space. Mills' work moves away from the spatiality of formal educational spaces, like schools, thus, there is still a need to think through the interworking of national identities and school life. Research considering the interactions of national identities and schools is still limited, particularly, that which focuses upon individual experiences and narratives of 'growing up' in school (Collins and Coleman, 2008; Vom Hau, 2009; Benwell, 2014; 2016; Ide, 2016). This research adds depth to these areas of research, exploring embodied narratives and experiences of school and thinking

through how the nuances of everyday life for participants shape their being-in-the-world and feelings of national identities.

Often studies focus upon examining curriculum materials and nationalist discourses within those resources, rather than students' own experiences and encounters with those things (Williams 2014; Benwell, 2016; Ide, 2016). Tangled up in the atmosphere of the school and the process of growing up are experiences of cultivating 'good' national citizens, moving beyond just learning national values and histories but infusing and teaching particular embodiments and rituals into the rhythms of everyday life for young people (Mills, 2013). Schools are also made up of specific age groups, and it must be thought through how influential narratives of the nation are taught to students, and how their age impacts how they respond to, feel and embody their national identites. This research adds to calls to explore the everyday, banal embodiments of children and young people in order to more fully explore the complexities of identities and messiness of being-in-the-world (Horton and Kraftl, 2006; Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009). Whether through the learning and daily repetition of the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of patriotic songs in school, or the emphasis on American history, experiences of growing up and belonging in America are mobilised alongside narratives of Americanness and appropriate embodiments subtly intertwined with schooling.

Abigail's comments above not only talk about the effect of age and the process of growing up, but also highlight how rhythm and memorisation play a role in the becoming of national identities. Indeed, understanding what the Pledge of Allegiance is, does and means, impacts how participants' embody their identities and navigate their physical being-in-the-world. Tobin underlines this idea of taking on and claiming her Americanness through the repeated performing of the Pledge of Allegiance within the process of growing up. She moves from performing the Pledge of Allegiance out of a place of peer pressure, to it becoming something she believes in and chooses to participate in and embody.

> *Initially, when I was younger and like we would say the Pledge of Allegiance, I would be like oh everyone is doing this and so I'm going to do it too. But now I understand what it means and how it relates to*

our country. I just wanted to do my duty as an American and respect the flag as it is a part of our country. (Tobin)

For Tobin, whilst initially driven by group dynamics and feelings of pressure to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance, this practice became a personal, emotive aspect within her national identity. The flag was not just an object that reminded Tobin of her national identity, but required actions and participation, moving the body physically but also emotionally as it shaped Tobin's body to feel a sense of respect and duty to her country. For these young people, the Pledge of Allegiance is described as part of the daily rhythm or ebb and swell of the nation, as bodies actively yet, so often unthought-fully, take part in positioning and aligning their bodies and emotions with a very specific, wider and collective narration of the nation. These particular doings and feelings of national duty and affinity come in part as a response to the intentional teaching in schools of how to be a 'good' American. So specific to the United States of America, and its importance and significance as explained later in this chapter, the Pledge of Allegiance is un-thought-of in many ways as it works its way into the mundane practices of being an American. Yet it's sound resonates, driving, shaping and affectively charging those bodies, things and spaces it encounters, whether through feelings of uncertainty or pride and duty, narrating space with a specific narrative of what 'good' Americanness feels, does and is. Equally, similar to Wood's (2012) exploration of the rhythmic doings of nation through music, the Pledge of Allegiance notes the emotional, everyday articulations of the nation as it is performed by 'ordinary' people, not only reflecting ideas of national belonging and identity, but creating and living them out. Learning, growing up and school have an important role in making national identities tangible and known, developing and cultivating national bodies, and exemplifying the ways in which specific environments can be intentionally used to transmit a specific national atmosphere.

6.2.2 Americanness in school

> *"Do you think school influences or teaches what it is to be an American?" Author*
> *"Yeah, I feel like you learn that kind of stuff in History class or in government class. Like you know in a US history class you learn all about the history of the US, and how our ancestors came all this way to give you everything you have today. And like government class always reminded me of like the constitution and how many rights you have as an American citizen." Mia*

Schools and spaces of formal education both intentionally and subtly produce and promote specific discourses surrounding belonging and national identities through the affective entanglements of bodies, rhythms and things that move bodies through these spaces. Ploszajska (1996; 1998) and Gruffudd (1996) discuss how ideas surrounding the nation were woven into school curriculums and modes of learning in English schools in the early 20th century, with the intention of cultivating a particular, appropriate understanding about national belonging and being British. In the quote above, Mia's first thoughts surrounding learning to be an American link directly to the school curriculum and lessons of history and government. Formal curricular surrounding national history provides a sense of commonality and connectedness, and this quote demonstrates how, for Mia, being an American is linked to this history and her rights as a citizen. To Mia, a sense of national belonging is cultivated through specific teachings surrounding shared history, stirring feelings of both attachment to, and participation in the nation of America. Not only do these teachings produce this sense of a shared history, they also cultivate more intimate feelings and values, like freedom and pride, that were regularly discussed as being key aspects of participants' national identities. Schools provide a space, then, where a sense of unity and national togetherness is cultivated through the re-telling of common histories. National feelings and values are cultivated and taught at a young age, becoming naturalised, rhythmic and un-thought-of understandings of Americanness as children and young people grow up and age.

These taught concepts, combined with the rhythmic doing of the Pledge of Allegiance and encounters with the Americanised atmosphere of the school through its flagging,

shape not only feelings of belonging to the nation, but also articulate specific ideas of what these students' national identities should be defined by. This was commented on by Jennifer.

> *"I think we also get taught a lot about [our national identity] through the school system. Like I was home schooled so I didn't have as much as that but when I got to high school and you stand up and say […] the Pledge of Allegiance […] Like I think that was interesting how [national identity is] definitely a very prevalent and very clear thing in our school system and that's good. Kids are educated on what our country stands for and we have that certain sense of like this is what I belong to and these are the things I stand for because the people and my country and the people I look up to, that's what they stand up for. And so they definitely want me to know that through the education system." Jennifer*

In her final few sentences, Jennifer makes an interesting point in regards to the teaching of belonging, and what it feels like to belong. This sense of belonging was not a naturally emergent feeling but rather a cultivated and taught notion. Home schooled up until high school, Jennifer describes the schooling experience from a much more distanced place. She talks of other students as if separated from them and as if it does not apply to her. Her analysis of how national identities are worked into and encountered through the space of the school seems detached, as if they had not affected her in the same way as others. She also seems to describe an external force, group, or narrative, which uses the education system to teach what being a 'good' American feels like, looks like and does. Her use of the word "they" is intriguing and points again to these collisions between the grounded, intimate understandings and embodiments of national identities with wider, collective and more formal narratives of Americanness. Interestingly this suggests an imagined sense of unified Americanness, or a singular understanding of what having an American national identity is narrated as, yet contrasts to the reality of her lived experience.

We can see the entanglements of perceived identity with lived experiences in Jennifer's statement and additionally in her comments about her own recent

experiences of national belonging and national identity. Interestingly her comments about a desired singular experience of learning to belong are juxtaposed with earlier statements about her own Americanness. Jennifer described how her recent participation in an international relations class, studying American foreign policy and the Iranian coup d'etat, had caused her to doubt these 'appropriate' forms of Americanness and to question aspects of her own national identity. Her research project had negatively influenced the taken-for-granted notions of Americanness as she encountered a version of America that she felt was contrary to notions of freedom, liberation and equality. These feelings were also expressed by other students as they described the current political situation following Trump's election in 2016. Learning, then, not only demonstrates how national identities shift within the process of growing up, but also demonstrates how age, growing up and the school can work against the seemingly intended goal of cultivating a particular feel of a 'good' or 'appropriate' form of nationalism. Through this recounting of her experience, Jennifer demonstrates national identities as multiple and malleable, growing and changing, shaped by feelings, embodiment and affective encounters.

Whilst Jennifer and Mia both talk of examples that are more obviously related to narratives and practices of Americanness, such as American history and the Pledge of Allegiance, Abigail discusses some mundane aspects of schooling and learning, and considers how small things affect her perception.

> *"Do you think that there are aspects of national identity that are taught through school?" Researcher*
>
> *"Oh for sure. Yeah, oh yeah. Because like, you're learning influences the way you are going to perceive everything else. So, when you learn to spell colour o-r rather than o-u-r, you learn that that's the right way to do it. And that's not a big deal but like history, that was always interesting to say the least when we got to World War 2 because I'm German and people know that. And all you hear about Germany is that they were the Nazis, they were the bad guys and they killed everyone. But you don't hear that most people didn't support it and then also, my mom's parents were really old when they had her so my Grandma was alive during that war. And I've heard those stories so*

that makes it really personal. Erm, I think that a lot of the times American schools don't care if they tell the whole story, as long as they sound like the heroes. Which is a bad way to go about it. [...] Anyway, so, erm we sang a patriotic song. I think we only did it on Mondays or Fridays. Just once a week. [...] And then like in elementary school there is Martin Luther King Jnr day and you learn about slavery and why it is wrong…" Abigail

Abigail talks here about learning and perception. She draws on the mundane and insignificant idea of spelling, yet uses it to demonstrate how the small things work together to cultivate and demonstrate ideas about national identities and senses of belonging. Whilst more obviously national rituals and symbols, such as the flag, the anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance have a more visual and overt link to Americanness, Abigail's comment points to the subtle interworking of the nation within everyday life. These banal workings in everyday life create a way of being and doing that are taught as normalised concepts, something noted by Billig (1995) and his focus on linguistic nuances. National identities encapsulate more than the obvious and evident workings of the wider nation, but filter into the smaller, mostly un-thought-of practices that shape a body's living, speaking and writing. Critically one aspect of this which must be commented on is that these mundane ideas create a sense of difference from a young age, perceiving 'other' ways of practicing this as being wrong, and marking the self as separate or different because of the national identity you hold. Twisted into Abigail's accounts of school is a story that speaks of her dual-nationality and the ways in which her feelings of Germanness are encountered through lessons in school, triggering feelings of discomfort and frustration at the ways in which Americanness is taught. Abigail's experiences of her national identities, then, are impacted by her home life and the fact that her sense of belonging is equally tied to two different nations, shaping her position and the way she sees her own identity and the identities of others.

Whilst schools and curriculum may tell a particular story of being an American, this section has demonstrated that the young people's encounters with those narratives are not linear, but multifaceted, shaped by the situatedness of bodies and the other aspects of their identities that affect their sense of belonging and being-in-the-world. Schools, then, have the potential to craft and narrate specific versions of "good"

American identities, and teach this from a young age through their curriculums and informal practices, yet schools seem to also provide a space of contestation and interruption. By listening to the stories of these young people we can see how these taken-for-granted narratives and feelings of national belonging are questioned and taken-up by bodies in emotionally subjective and specific ways. We must not only take seriously the voices of young people but also explore the situatedness of knowledge, asking how bodies make sense of the world in relation to the specificity of space and their emotionally subjective lens (Horten and Kraftl, 2006; Woodyer, 2008; Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009).

6.2.3 "Self-righteous kids": disrupting the norm

So far, this chapter has underlined the ways in which the school plays a role in the normalisation of specific ideas of being American and doing Americanness. Critically, it has alluded to the emotionally subjective entanglements of national identities with other identities, such as age. It has also begun to consider how these normalised and linear narratives of national identities are pulled apart and made individually subjective through their embodiments by students. This section teases those entanglements apart in more depth by considering age and how the framing of children and young people's bodies by national media and politicians is used as a way to dismiss resistant or disruptive embodiments of the nation. It does so by considering the wider affective atmosphere of schools, and by asking how the rituals, bodies and encounters happening within this atmosphere can interrupt and rework these supposed narratives of being a "good" citizen and articulate instead the real stories and feelings of young people's national identities. It must be questioned how the seeming ‘appropriateness’ of Americanness and its performances, feelings and doings, are challenged and shaped through the seizing and resisting of atmospheres. Contextualised by the recent protests against gun violence (Holpuch and Owen, 2018), I argue that this underlines the multiplicity of national identities, demonstrated through varying embodiments across space and framed through age. This example occurs in particularly controlled and supposedly Americanised spaces: the school and the classroom, both containing very specific understandings and perpetuations of how to participate and ‘be’ American. Both spaces have recently been challenged and experienced a redefining of what being an American is about to the bodies moving within it, contextualised by age, encounters, relationships and experiences in those atmospheres. Specifically I will think through how spaces come to feel ‘more

American', producing specific understandings of what Americanness is, feels like and does. In doing so it is important to consider the flagging of classrooms, the practicing of the Pledge of Allegiance and the sounds and moods that exist within that space. As bodies move through these spaces they are shaped and affected.

As discussed in chapter 5, the previous two NFL seasons have seen many players participate in protests, taking the often un-thought-of national ritual of the national anthem and reclaiming it in order to address issues of racial injustice in the USA. Those players claim to be working to reframe what Americanness is, does and looks like through their own intimate, bodily experiences and performances. Whilst the NFL players underline how racial identity can shape how national identities are felt, encountered and experienced, the recent 2018 gun protests by young school students across the USA have demonstrated the role of age on national identities. It has specifically drawn attention to the ways in which young people can politicise the space of the school, and how the performances and embodiments of their national identities can challenge, disrupt and interrupt taken-for-granted narratives of the nation. This underlines the multiple and emotionally subjective nature of national identities. Many of the participants in this research participated in school walk-outs and protests in Bellingham, voicing their concern over gun controls in the USA and school shootings (see figure 2). They desired for their voices to be heard and shared photos over social media of their participation. Indeed the outcry from American bodies at both the NFL and school shootings protests highlights the need to explore these emotionally subjective entanglements of national identities.

Figure 8: Instagram images posted by students participating in school walkouts and protests.

Whilst American footballers and athletes were discredited as ungrateful, privileged Americans by Donald Trump (Lewis, 2017), the high school students were reframed as immature, manipulated, overly-emotional and too inexperienced to understand what it means to be American, markedly set out as “middle-class kids” whose voices are not valid (Cummings, 2018). Rather than being labelled as a protest around gun violence, the age of those protesting was frequently underlined in order to subvert or reframe the march. Fox News TV presenter Tucker Carlson was quick to say that the march was organised by “self-righteous kids screaming at you on television” (mediamatters.org, 2018). Age was a key definer of this protest, and the news media of right leaning America drew heavily on pre-conceived notions surrounding young people by attempting to disqualify their voices, labelling them as utopian fanatics, deviant, immature, reactionary and troublesome, and aiming to subvert their attempts to articulate what Americanness meant to them (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009;

Skelton, 2010; 2013; Hopkins, 2010; Pain et al., 2010). The age of these bodies expressing their national identities was significant.

Indeed, for media outlets like Fox News, their narratives of Americanness seem ensnared by specific understandings of appropriate performances, values and ideologies that are wrapped up in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. These specific understandings held by Fox News and others who agree with their perspective were seen to be challenged by these 'other', protesting, individual bodies, who were claiming and expressing their own personal understandings of their national identities. Indeed, both the young people involved in the protets, and the voices of the media outlets, made the protest on gun rights to focus on what being an American was, what it looked like and what it should enable a body to do. For the right-wing media, being an American was about the freedom to own and carry a gun, in line with how they understand and view the Constitution. For the young people, being an American was about the freedom to education, to life and to live without the fear of their school being attacked by someone carrying a gun. For both groups it was about the American value of freedom, yet its interpretation of what that meant was different, seemingly shaped somewhat by age. The heavy backlash and aims to subvert and reframe the contestation of defining and doing of Americanness that these students represented could be seen as a clash of multiple and varying embodiments of national identities. It is clear that these clashes not only demonstrated how multifaceted and emotionally subjective national identities are, but how intimately and personally felt national identities are. A multiplicity of national feelings can be simultaneously attached to, and produced through, varying things, sounds, spaces and bodies. It clearly states the need to hear the voices of young people and unpack their feelings and experiences of national belonging and national identities. Young people's bodies and voices are becoming more apparent in wider society and political narratives, as seen here in this example. Young people are also active members of nations and are negotiating what it means to be and do Americanness. Yet, as research has stated, the voices of youths and children are often dismissed by both the media and academia as being troublesome or dangerous (Hopkins 2010; Pain et al., 2010). Therefore, their voices are necessary to a full engagement with the nation and the ability to understand the multiplicity and subjectivity of national identities.

The emotionally subjective embodiments of national identities through the protests not only underscore the importance of understanding the role of age on national identities, but also the ways in which certain spaces, and more specifically affective atmospheres, both shape and are shaped unexpectedly by the bodies encountered within. As previously argued, national identities are emergent through these atmospheres in which an agglomeration of components work together to cultivate and shape the ways in which national identities are felt, taken on and performed. Indeed, these atmospheres are where spaces, bodies, sounds, smells, surrounding geopolitical contexts, objects and things collide, demonstrating the messy and fluid nature of feelings of national identities (Bille et al., 2015; Closs Stephens, 2016; Militz and Schurr, 2016). It underlines how emotionally subjective experiences of the nation emerge and are taken on by bodies in particular times and spaces (Closs Stephens, 2016). Times, spaces, symbols and rituals cannot be understood as simply national or even symbolic in themselves, but they hold the capacity to affect, shape and emote, national feelings when they collide with and are encountered within particular spaces and by particular bodies (Militz and Schurr, 2016). These symbols and rituals possess a multiplicity of meanings, which emerge through emotionally subjective entanglements through affective atmospheres.

Critically, then, it is important to unpack how national atmospheres and moods are constructed and experienced. For the participants in this research, the school was an Americanised space, decorated with the flag and tied up in routine, taken-for-granted practices of their national identities. However, the school became a place of resistance in the instance of these protests. It was taken up as an American space and used to juxtapose these 'good' national freedoms that this space spoke of, with the lack of freedom they faced due to the threat of gun violence. Atmospheres are ambiguous and vague, and can also be shaped, taken-over and used to disrupt taken-for-granted norms and communicate alternative narratives. Seeing the nation as an atmosphere can be seemingly ambiguous and convoluted, however, it is this haziness that allows a deeper consideration of doing, or becoming the nation. That is not, however, to ignore specific intentionality that can lie behind an event, moment, speech or thing, whether that be a nationalising project or the crafting and implementation of specific ideas that aim to cultivate or produce an atmosphere and a national feel. It is certainly the case that in specific times and spaces there can be attempts to create a patriotic atmosphere for a purpose, whether that be a political

agenda or following a national disaster. Some of the participants talked about these times, such as after a tragic incident like 9/11, or during the 4th of July celebrations, where there seemed to be a purposeful bringing together of the nation as a community and body reminding the citizens of their shared values and existence. To consider the nation as an atmosphere is to explore the ways in which the nation is relational, brought into being through encounters between bodies, things, spaces and the more-than-representational, and made real through practices, movements and embodiments (Sumartojo, 2014).

Understanding the nation as an atmosphere and national identities as felt, emergent embodiments, intertwined with notions of belonging, and emergent across spacetimes, allows an exploration of how and why certain national feelings emerge, touch or captivate us. Practices and performances contribute to a messy atmospheric nation, which is not defined by state borders, but moves with bodies as they encounter spaces, sounds, smells, feelings, things and other bodies. Whilst the atmosphere of the nation can be intentionally crafted within certain spatialities, and even brought into being through formal, practical and popular methods, it is still inseparable from performance and embodiment. By arguing that national identities are processual and emotionally subjective, ebbing and flowing as bodies move through space, this provides the possibility of alternative narratives of belonging, and the commandeering of particular 'good' national narratives and atmospheres in order to perform a different version of Americanness. As seen in the school protests by the students, national identities are perceived to be done in specific, appropriate ways, with age being underscored as a significant influencer in how national identities are felt and embodied. This section has also emphasised how age plays a part in how national identities and atmospheres are encountered, shaped and felt. Young people demonstrate and use their age to articulate and perform feelings of Americanness, yet are also dismissed due to their age. Age shapes how the nation is seen, felt and experienced, as well as how perspectives are legitimised by others and deemed ‘appropriate’ or ‘good’. In a space where conscious decisions to teach Americanness through the curriculum, and do Americanness through the pledge of allegiance daily are routinised and made un-thought-of, the school became somewhere these ideas could also be challenged and disrupted. National identities, then, are contextualised and felt differentially according to the emotional, subjective body and the encounters with spaces, moments and bodies. Not only are they contextualised by these

encounters, but are also brought into being and reproduced through these very things. National identities are not static but move and undulate as bodies grow and encounter different things, bodies and spaces.

6.3 More-than-symbolic: Embodying national symbols and rituals

As this chapter has already demonstrated, school plays an important role in making national identities tangible and known. It works to demonstrate how certain spaces can become affectively charged with particular narratives of Americanness through the encounters between bodies, and also the practices that are carefully cultivated and routinised. This section investigates the pledge of allegiance in more depth, as a spatially specific practice that is confined to the school and to summer camps, and is an equally significant yet un-thought-of encounter with national identities. National symbols and practices, such as flags, have often been reported and researched as a key element and aspect of nationalism and national identities, reminding and demonstrating an everyday or banal sense of being-in-the-world, and highlighting the pervasiveness of the nation in people's lives (Billig, 1995; Raento and Brunn, 2000; 2005; Edensor, 2002). There is, however, much more to these objects and practices than their acting as a reminder. The flag does not simply hang and remind, indeed its hanging and reminding are practices and processes themselves, imbued with affective capacities and the potential to shape, stir, reflect and become. The flag is encountered, worn, shaped, hung, waved and performed, whilst simultaneously having the affective capacity to shape bodies and emotions through encounters within specific atmospheres. Embroiled with the flagging of the nation are specific practices and emotionally subjective bodily responses that become triggered by encounters and experiences with the flag. Practices that feel automatic or un-thought-of, yet are inherently taught and learnt. It is these taken-for-granted processes of learning how to do Americanness and be American, through appropriate bodily responses and feelings, that this section questions.

Initially when asking the young people about the flag's role in their lives and on their national identities, these discussions became conversations about the practices of singing the national anthem and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in schools. The students interchanged these three ideas, speaking about them as if they were all the same thing, and thus suggesting that the flag, the pledge and the anthem are all interrelated and hold significant, affective power. This section seeks to consider the

pledge of allegiance in more depth, reclaiming the object of the flag within national identities literature, but widening the focus, arguing for its multi-faceted and inherently affective nature, which provides a tool for showing how national identities are cultivated, learnt and contextualised by certain spacetimes and atmospheres. Thus, this section focuses upon the more-than-representational nature of national identities and considers school spaces as imbued with emotions and feelings, produced through and by encounters and practices that are performed within it. It asks how feelings of national identities are shaped, learnt and done through encounters within spatially specific affective atmospheres, which can be intentionally created through the positioning of the flag, bodies and practices.

6.3.1 Flagging feelings

As discussed above, the Pledge of Allegiance is a national ritual and symbolic practice within the United States of America (Independence Hall Association, 2018). National rituals and practices not only work to highlight and articulate a specific version of Americanness, but they are intimately entangled with emotions and feelings, produced through and by encounters with bodies and spaces.

> *"I think because [the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem] are all pieces of America's history and its core, we've always done it, it's always the tradition, we look at the flag when we sing the national anthem … I like America and I am proud to live here. And that comes out, I think, when people do historical things like sing the national anthem or say the Pledge of Allegiance." Madison*

The flag has the capacity to physically and emotionally move bodies during the participation and performance of the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem. This has implications for national identities because, as can be seen from Madison's quote, wrapped up in the flag, Pledge of Allegiance and national anthem are ideas of national pride, community and belonging, and historically specific traditions. Madison describes this multifaceted and more-than-representational nature of national identities when discussing her feelings of pride towards America. Her pride in her national identity is not only driving her to perform and embody her identity through the performance of the national anthem and Pledge of Allegiance, but is also shaped through the performances themselves. Thus, it is possible to see how the recursive

and messy relationships between emotionally subjective embodiments and encounters with national rituals, performances and rhythms, shape feelings of national identities. Critically, the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance and the anthem are all seen by Madison as core, historical elements of the nation that somewhat determine what Americanness is and looks like.

These national traditions hold particular, collective meanings, yet are made personal and understood through their embodiment and performance. Indeed, for Madison, participating in the seemingly appropriate ways of standing and looking at the flag cultivates a sense of attachment, pride and nostalgic allegiance to her nation, shaping feelings of national belonging and identity formation. For other participants, however, these traditional practices and objects provide the opportunity to resist, alter and shape what Americanness is and feels like. Whilst for Madison, these national traditions are a positive, collective performance and embodiment, for others they can create a sense of disconnect or disillusionment. Unpacking the more-than-representational nature to the flag allows space for disruption to the perceived and taken-for-granted ideas and values that are perpetuated through the (non)performing of, and encounters with, the flag. It is possible to then challenge the dominant narratives surrounding particular ‘values’ and freedoms often presumed to define Americanness. Bruce (2014) discusses the ways in which emotions work to make meaning of national identities as the nation is encountered and performed, and how this provides the ability and space to disrupt dominant narratives. Indeed, it is important to think about this national ‘myth’ described in the Pledge of Allegiance as something that can be disrupted as feelings of belonging and national identities are unpacked through grounded experiences. What is clear, however, is that national rhythms, traditions and rituals hold specific values and ideas, but also contain an affective capacity to move bodies in certain physical and emotional ways as they are encountered within affective atmospheres, shaping how national identities are felt, imagined and embodied.

The American flag is interwoven with particular spaces, such as the classroom, and also rhythmic performances that have particular etiquettes and ‘appropriate’ ways of doing. The space of the classroom is significant as it is a space which shapes the day to day lives of children and young people, therefore having a very influential role on their social identity formation (Collins and Coleman, 2008). If national rituals and

symbols can be done differently, however, this leads to questions surrounding both taken-for-granted ways of doing and performing Americanness. It asks how objects and rhythms can take on power and significance, shaping how national identities are encountered and made tangible. In turn, these performances shape wider ideas of Americanness and belonging. The role of rituals in America is explored in an interesting article by Borden (2016: np). Discussing an interview with Eric Liu, former speechwriter for Bill Clinton, Borden (2016: np) writes,

> *"Unlike a majority of countries in the world, the United States was not created on a common platform of religion or ancestry or, as Liu said, 'some origin myth which goes all the way back to the beginning of history.' Instead, Americans are bound by notions and concepts — that all men are created equal, as one example — and the ethereal nature of those ideas makes anything that Americans can latch on to concretely seem more important. 'I think that's why this whole thing strikes so many people in such a passionate way,' Liu said. 'This is not a country in Europe or Asia that has the traditional patriotic ideas built into it. We are united by a creed, and in a creedal society, the outside rituals — like the anthem — just carry a lot more weight.'"*

The flag in the USA is an important figure in national life. It represents ideas and values, but is more than just an object that represents something; there are rules and certain rituals that must be completed in order to actually 'flag' (Billig, 1995). Flagging is not simply displaying a flag and having it represent something in order to remind its citizens of their nationalism, but is more than this as there is a process to the action, which works to both create and be influenced by meaning and significance. Indeed, the term 'flagging' itself suggests a process and a doing, which shapes and is shaped by bodily encounters with it. Building upon Billig's (1995) conceptualisation of flagging as a reminder and banal articulation of our nationalisms, by populating this theoretical framework with embodied experiences, we can begin to see how emotionally subjective bodies interact with the flag in varying capacities. Indeed, this builds on a growing body of literature that seeks to consider the more-than-representational nature of banal nationalism (Closs Stephens, 2016; Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010; Militz and Schurr, 2016; Militz, 2017). The flag is more-than-representational through both its affective entanglements with the national anthem

and Pledge of Allegiance, and its existence within affective atmospheres. Atmospheres involve a coming together of things, bodies, spaces and the built environments, shaping the emotionally subjective experiences of spaces and wider narratives of the nation (Hillary and Sumartojo, 2014). The flag both shapes and is shaped by the affective atmospheres of the nation as it comes into collision with other affective components, such as bodies, sounds, movements and things, demonstrating how national feelings and tonalities are transmitted, brought into being and can be stuck onto different objects, moments and bodies. This was seen in 5.3 when discussing the moving of bodies during the national anthem in football stadiums, and is seen again here as bodies respond to the flag in specific ways within the spatiality of the school. As bodies pass through and move within these spatialities and moments, the nation is felt and sticks to them during these times. These national rituals hold an affective capacity and power as they cultivate, often in taken-for-granted ways, a conceptualisation of what Americanness is and looks like. They provide significant yet unthought-of moments of encounters between emotionally subjective bodies and the wider national collective. Moving beyond the representational questions how taken-for-granted signs, symbols and rhythms affect national feelings, emotions and performances.

Participants talked about the Pledge of Allegiance and the flag as being a repeated practice when growing up in school, and suggested that the hanging of the flag in the classrooms and repeated reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance did stir some feelings of commonality or unity. Indeed Gagen (2004) points to the early work of Eichberg (1998) and Hall (1904) as they describe the critical influence of common national rhythms during childhood on the formation of national identities. As bodies move together in synchronicity, they demonstrate a unity visually, but also emotionally and affectively as bodies are stirred and both the feelings of national belonging and the physical, muscular movements of ‘doing’ their national identity are “locked into every movement of the child’s body, to be made available in other contexts” (Gagen, 2004: 437). The repetition of the Pledge of Allegiance was key to its becoming unthought-of as it draws the voice and sound of America together to participate in their shared creed. It equally produces or marks ‘something’, through an action and gesture, that has the ability to be drawn from in unthought-of ways and across spatialities. Rituals, then, in America can work to identify specific notions of Americanness and trigger feelings of unity and belonging, whilst providing space and potential for resistance

and disruption. They demonstrate the ways in which national feelings and moods can stick to different rhythms, moments, bodily movements, sounds and things at different times, highlighting both their individual and processual nature.

Thinking through the emotional and affective entanglements of the flag and Pledge of Allegiance with bodies draws attention to the potential to resist and reshape feelings of national identities. As stated earlier, national traditions and rituals hold specific participatory elements, intertwining both physical and emotional aspects. The taken-for-grantedness of national identities must be thought of as disrupt-able, then, if we are to consider them affected by, shaped and brought into being through these felt encounters with national atmospheres. It points to two key elements: bodies and space. We can begin to see the exploration of alternative narratives of national identities in the work of Closs Stephens' (2016) discussion surrounding the placing of the flag and how it represents different things about the nation in relation to where it is hung and over whose bodies it is draped. For example, she considers a flag draped around a successful British athlete's body as being understood, encountered and experienced differentially to the same flag being held in "the hands of the extreme right" (Closs Stephens, 2016: 2). Critically then, we can understand flags as part of a swirling agglomeration of bodies, sounds, smells and environments that do not work in isolation, but within an atmosphere, shaping national feelings. These national feelings are sensed and taken up, often by bodies or objects during temporally and spatially specific moments, and embodied, offering different ways for the nation to be felt, encountered and made real (Closs Stephens 2016). During the national anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance, the flag has the capacity to physically, emotionally and affectively move bodies in relation to its presence, and evoke responses both felt and emotional, to the nation. Critically, as highlighted below by Jackie, emotionally subjective engagements with the flag are enmeshed with both flesh and geopolitical, spatial contexts. Bodies are moved by national feelings and affects, both physically and emotionally over time, shaping the personal and intimate embodiments of our national identities.

In a conversation with participants about the Pledge of Allegiance, the flag and the national anthem, participants discussed the importance and role of these 'doings' and of other key objects, the constitution, the declaration of independence and the liberty bell, within the nation. The conversations recorded below took place during the first

round of protests during the national anthem in the NFL in 2016, specifically just following the anniversary of 9/11.

> *Author's Research Diary: Jackie also told me a lot about very specific flag etiquette - the way the flag is to hang, to be folded, to be lit up at night etc. This reminded me of an article I read in the New York Times about the relationship between the flag and Americans- I think the author described it as almost a religious feeling and as a symbol of unity in a nation that doesn't have the same kind of traditional nation-state history as many other nations across the earth. They have no historical ties, ethnic groups or monarchy that ties them together. In fact they're very much tied together by creed, which is what Jackie and others are suggesting the flag, the pledge and the anthem are reminders of. My friend Sophia agreed with this idea and talked to me about how important things like the anthem are, simply because of the recounting of their history and the fact that objects like the declaration of independence, the liberty bell and actual star spangled banner (which is in Washington DC) are really significant. So not only is there a heavily symbolic nature to these things - the pledge, the anthem and the flag - there is a real affective nature to these items that invokes a sense of feeling, and a way of being. The flag, anthem and pledge have particular etiquettes and ways of 'doing' those things, and that, actually, these mis-embodiments of not performing the pledge or anthem correctly, this was seen by many as disrespectful to wider narratives of what Americanness is, should be and should feel like, but also to very intensely personal understandings, encounters and feelings of being-American. (September 12th 2016)*

Whilst still heavily revered in many countries, rituals and symbols seem to carry even more value in the United States. This is seen in the above quote from Jackie. The Pledge of Allegiance and the flag hold values that can be protected; the flag, then, is more than a representation of values. The flag is protected and fought for, it can be physically taken and is intricately entangled with lives and fleshy bodies. Here Jackie is specifically linking the flag to the bodies of soldiers. Indeed, when it comes to the flag of the United States of America, it is inseparable from both the national anthem

and the Pledge of Allegiance as they involve both the speaking of the flag and specific bodily attunements and responses in relationship with the flag. There is a certain fleshiness to the flag, pledge and anthem, one that interweaves the wider nation with the intimate body. Jackie gives an important example of the ways in which bodies and things ‘pick up’ and ‘take on’ different meanings and tones when national atmospheres are encountered across different spatialities and geopolitical moments. This builds upon the earlier argument considering how national identities are felt and performed in a multiplicity of ways across different bodies, atmospheres and spacetimes.

Unpacking the experiences of specific bodies when considering national symbols and rituals matters because they demonstrate the recursive nature of identity formation; bodies take on the meaning of the flag whilst also shaping what the flag means. Rituals and national symbols provide an entry point into exploring how national identities, which belong to the wider collective, yet are felt intimately and through emotionally subjective bodies, are emergent, processual and made known. National identities are multi-scalar and must be understood as such. Also highlighted above is the idea that national rituals and rhythms are felt, embodied and encountered differently across different spaces. Indeed, considering the spatiality of these encounters and their everyday, unthought-of nature is useful as it recognises the multiplicity of representations, shaped by the emotionally subjective body. Most participants agreed that the national anthem, the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance could mean something different and evoke different feelings and emotions in different atmospheres, and when encountering specific bodies, whether that be post-9/11, during the Olympics, or in a school environment. The nuances surrounding spatiality and feelings of Americanness are critical to our understanding of how national identities are felt, performed and persist.

The next section will consider the affective entanglements of these national rhythms and rituals with the flesh in more depth, thinking through the moving bodies and the participation and repetition of the performance of the Pledge of Allegiance. Importantly the following section considers the ramifications of these fleshy performances on the imagining and bringing-into-being of Americanness in the daily and mundane aspects of young people’s everyday lives. This national rhythmic ritual is a very ordinary part of a young person’s life growing up in the significant space of

the school, and provides an opportunity to explore how national identities are shaped, become and are equally resisted and negotiated through the banality of everyday atmospheres. The anthem, the pledge and the flag are indicative of the messiness and complex nature of national identities as they demonstrate wider notions, symbols and rituals coming onto and being performed through the fleshy body. There is uniformity and togetherness alongside drastic feelings of individualism and emotionally subjective engagements. What is critical, then, are the interpretations, encounters and experiences of these objects and how these are seen to express what Americanness means, how it is imagined and how it is performed by individual bodies across spaces.

6.3.2 Fleshy encounters and bodily attunements

The Pledge of Allegiance and the flag seem to highlight a primarily symbolic nature to national identities, however, drawing on the work of Gagen (2004:422), bodies are seen to be affected by feelings, senses, objects, and atmospheres that are pivotal in the meaning making and production of both space and identities (Wetherall, 2012). Critically the body is an "important marker of national identity" (Gagen, 2004:422), not only as inscribed with symbolic practice but as practical performing and bringing into being notions of the nation and national belonging. Militz (2017:190) also states that "bodily performances incite national categorisations through making sense of the felt reality and through dealing with bodily discomfort". Unpacking the fleshy performances, and indeed feelings, senses and emotions, adds a greater depth to understandings of how national identities and feelings of national belonging are (re)produced, made known and transmitted within moments of encounter and everyday rhythms of the nation across space (Militz, 2017). The Pledge of Allegiance demonstrates how rhythmic doings remind and also attune bodies to react in particular ways that bring national identities into being and into existence. Not only does the Pledge of Allegiance speak specific narratives of Americanness into being, but it moves the body both physically, to orient itself in relation to the flag, and emotionally, through a cultivation of pride, attachment and notions of belonging and connections to others. These feelings of togetherness have been explored in more depth in the earlier chapters. Of course, within that, it is vital to note the times and experiences where these positive 'feelings' are not felt, and moments where bodies are excluded or encounter a sense of non-belonging. In this section I discuss bodily attunements to national identities through movements, rhythms and emotions within

the specific space of the school. This highlights the coming together of a collective and distanced narrative with the intimate and subjective body. Initially I consider the 'appropriate' fleshy responses to the flag through performances of the Pledge of Allegiance before considering its spatiality as bodies encounter and are shaped by other bodies (Haldrup et al., 2006). Thus, notions of affective atmosphere and emotional subjectivity provide a useful framework for thinking through the specificity of age and space upon the processual and emergent nature of national identities.

> *"Every morning you're supposed to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. That used to be a bigger deal but I've noticed in high school that not everyone stands up and says it, or salutes to it. But … I don't know, I still think it is kind of important to do. So I always stand up and do it." Sarah*

> *"I remember that they did teach us like all the young kids when we came in, they would say hey when you say the Pledge of Allegiance you stand up and put your hand over your heart […] so I think it is something that we are educated on very young. You never think about having the right grammar but you still learn grammar when you're little. It's kind of like that, it's not something that people are forcing on, but just something that you kind of know what to do" Gemma*

Sarah marks out a prescribed version of everyday life that encapsulates the rhythmic bodily movements and doings of Americanness as intimately intertwined. To her, performing and participating in the Pledge of Allegiance is something that she values and understands as being an element of her everyday life. Not only does her participation develop her own sense of connection to the nation, and embed her national identity into her everyday doings, but it is made more evident in her life by the encounters with the other bodies around her that do not participate in the Pledge of Allegiance. In this case, there were certain performances of national identities that were seen to be good or bad, the good performances demonstrating the appropriate type of national identity. To Sarah, the others she encountered who are not participating in the Pledge of Allegiance are evidencing a 'bad' nationalism, which is contrary to her everyday, banal bodily doings. Thus, it again underlines the ways in

which particular nationalist practices are seen to be inclusionary and exclusionary, making bodies feel at home or bringing an awareness of difference to others around them (Haldrup et al., 2006). It can be argued that Sarah's national identity becomes thought-of and conscious through her embodied, sensuous encounters with difference as other bodies disrupt this taken-for-granted aspect and norm in her everyday life.

Difference is emergent through encounters (Ahmed, 2000), it is not fixed, but is contextualised by space and surrounding atmospheres. Gemma's comment, however, demonstrates the unthought-of nature of learning what Americanness is. Gemma was slow to think of examples of her national identity in her everyday life and did not mention the flag until I asked her about it. As I did, she suddenly realised that it was a very mundane and banal part of her everyday life, that was not revealed until pointed out, yet was always there. Often when encountering sameness, then, whilst something is seen it becomes unseen. Gemma found it hard to explain the way her national identity feels, as something so intrinsic yet unthought-of, learnt but automatic. Her example underlines the productive place of repetition and bodily attunements to national identities, showing how the Pledge of Allegiance works to embed the nation onto the body through fleshy, yet mundane and banal processes. Sarah and Gemma's experiences of the Pledge of Allegiance show national identities as often taken-for-granted, but having the potential to be interrupted as bodies move through different spaces and encounter other bodies.

The spatiality surrounding national identities is important, especially when thinking about the ways in which bodies are conducted within specific atmospheres through the encounters of these national rituals, symbols and performances. The previous section underlined how national symbols can demonstrate the colliding of wider taken-for-granted narratives of being an American with intimate, emotionally subjective experiences and felt embodiments of Americanness. Encounters with both the space of the school and particular bodies within that space have an affect upon how national identities are embodied and performed. In part, this can be seen in the comment below from Abigail and in an informal conversation with a participant recorded in my research diary.

“In 8th Grade, in my history class there were some kids and they wouldn’t stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and our teacher got really, like really mad. And she said you have to stand, I don’t care if you say it but you have to stand and pay respects to the people who are serving in the military and stuff.” Abigail

Author’s Research Diary: I asked her about the Pledge of Allegiance in high school and she said it was just kind of weird how differently people responded in different places. For example in her orchestra class, their teacher was so formal and kind of strict, so Jennifer described how the teacher would stand and salute, and ensure the students stand and read the pledge as it came over the tannoy. This contrasted to being in the school library, where nobody even blinked an eye to the Pledge of Allegiance going on in the background over the tannoy. It was as if it was so mundane and banal that it was completely unnoticed. Like when you get so used to something and you don’t hear or see or feel it happening. Jennifer had only ever been to high school and was home schooled for the first 14 years of her life, so really her experiences of the Pledge of Allegiance came just from these moments. She said she always finds herself looking around the room to see what everyone else is doing and is always a bit unsure which hand goes where! I asked her why it was so different in the different places and she talked about how the people within that space have a significant impact upon what everybody seems to do. Sure, she is looking to make sure she gets the correct hand positioning, but also she is trying to figure out if she should even perform or participate in this national ritual, in relation to the other bodies around her. “So I guess you’re kind of saying that your performance of the Pledge of Allegiance is really connected to who you’re around?” I asked. “Yes. Totally. If I’m with Mrs X in orchestra, you can bet we are going to stand for the pledge, but no way is that happening in the library or in certain other spaces. It’s about people”. Other bodies matter. The location matters.” (April 2nd 2018)

Both in Abigail and Jennifer's experiences, the participation in these national rituals and symbols seems to relate more to the encounters with other bodies within that spatiality. Whilst Grabham (2009) and Graham (2004) talk in depth about the fleshy performances of national identities through the physical body, it is important to also consider how both encounters with other bodies within specific atmospheres affect and shape the (re)production of the nation through bodies. These encounters and bodily rhythms also impact upon feelings of belonging and point more towards ideas of 'fitting in' and obeying rules, rather than a personal or intimate desire to participate in these bodily rhythms.

6.4 Conclusion

National identities are affectively and emotively shaped as bodies both affect and are affected by encounters with other objects, bodies, spaces and even ideologies within particular atmospheres and moments. The school provides a specific environment that temporally and geographically defines students' everyday rhythms, teaching, both consciously and unconsciously, particular narratives of being an American and having an American national identity. This chapter has sought to unpack the ways in which national identities are shaped and come into being in relation to age and school. By exploring the situatedness of these young people and asking how their age shapes their experiences of the nation it has highlighted both the importance of unpacking the impact of other identities upon national identities, and the way specific spaces can affect national feelings and moods. Critically, whilst national identities are shaped by fleshy, emotive and affective encounters with bodies, things and atmospheres, bodies themselves work in a recursive relationship with these things, having the capacity to reimagine, rework and (per)form wider narratives of Americanness. Thus, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of national identities. The example of the protests surrounding gun control highlights how objects, spaces and atmospheres can become laden with affective capacity and take on the nation. Through this specific protest we see schools, guns and the constitution become tools and components that national feelings and affects become stuck to and are embodied by young people.

The Pledge of Allegiance does not exist without bodily experience and engagement. As a spoken ritual and a participatory moment, bodies actively work to bring the nation into being within this moment both on a collective and personal level. The flag

and school provide further significant collisions between formal narratives of national identities and personal, intimate embodiments as bodies move within the swirling mass of components that exist within these atmospheres, and as bodies themselves ebb and flow through the mundane everyday rhythms of school life. School and growing up surround young people and are one of the most significant and most inhabited spaces of their daily lives (Collins and Coleman, 2008); the age of these participants is vital in contextualising their experiences, performances and embodiments of national identities as bodies are taught and shaped by government designed spaces to grow into 'good national citizens'. It is a space where embodied responses to the nation get learnt and become ingrained in bodies, stirring flesh and emotions. Acknowledging how age plays a role upon national identities is not only vital here in this research project, but is also demonstrative of the need to further unpack the experiences of young people and children within wider studies of national identities and the nation. Exploring age reveals one of the ways in which bodies become impressed differentially through affective encounters and across multiple spatialities (Ahmed, 2010; Militz, 2017) and highlights the need to explore the situatedness of embodied experiences of national identities. National rituals and symbols, such as the flag, have long been important within narratives of nationalism and national identities, and remain to be overt reminders and markers of nations. What is critical, however, is understanding them as more than representational; flagging the nation does serve to remind bodies of their national identities (Billig, 1995), but flagging is also participatory, interwoven with sounds, smells, spaces, flesh, things, feelings, ideas, values and emotions.

It is not just flesh that embodies, but objects too. By considering the flag as more-than-representational through the performing of the Pledge of Allegiance, this chapter has argued that specific values and understandings of national identities are perpetuated through the rhythms and repetition of the practice, bringing the nation into being. It is, however, through the disruptions to the rhythm that these practices become thought-of by bodies. This emphasises firstly, how the nation exists as an unthought-of and intangible 'thing', or affect, that is often made visible through disruption and interruption. Secondly, it points to the need to explore more carefully the ways in which the rhythms of national identities are woven into the fabric of mundane, everyday life. Considering national identities as being processual and intimately subjective allows national feelings and moods to become taken up and

stick to unassuming objects and moments. It allows everyday, mundane things to assume different intensities in different moments and become politically or non-politically charged in varying moments as they work to project national moods and feels (Closs Stephens, 2016). In understanding national identities as shaped by and existent within affective atmospheres, it does not assume a linear and singular version of feeling and being American, but sees the nation as emergent within the everyday, and it allows space for taken-for-granted norms to be subverted, challenged and disrupted.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to give voice to the experiences and lives of young people in Bellingham who are navigating, doing, feeling and performing their own stories of national belonging. It argues that national identities are fleshy, emotional and multiple, emergent as bodies move within spatially dynamic affective atmospheres. National identities simultaneously belong to both the collective and the intimate and are encountered in relation to atmospheres and the different ways bodies make sense of their self-in-the-world (Sumartojo, 2017; Faria, 2014). I consider the spatiality of national identities, exploring how, as bodies move through certain spaces and moments, they experience, feel and encounter the nation differently. The ebbs and flows of the nation, encountered through space, are taken on, felt and performed in specific ways, both affecting and being affected by the space that these bodies are engaging with and moving through. When thinking about the specificity of these spaces, I argue we must consider the other components at work, thinking through how bodies, objects, built environments, accompanying practices and surrounding contexts work to impact the nation and how national identities are understood and performed.

Sumartojo (2017) prompts us to think about how nationhood feels, thinking beyond what national symbols are, and exploring the emotional, embodied and fleshy responses, triggered by these things. This thesis answers that call and looks to go beyond what Americanness is meant to be or look like, and ask instead what it feels like to be American, how that changes across spatialities and temporalities, how it is influenced by encounters with other bodies and things as bodies move through atmospheres, and how feelings of national belonging are emotional, felt and fleshy. It draws on this tension that is seen to exist between a distanced, unified, taken-for-granted imagining and understanding of Americanness, with the individual, emotionally subjective experiences and performances of national identities. In doing so it asks how these two things repeatedly collide and influence one another, working recursively to shape feelings of national belonging and demonstrating national identities as processual and emergent through time and space. This provides space to explore why national identities seem to exist and move with varying intensities, rearing their heads at certain points yet almost non-existent at others.

Critically, by exploring the situatedness of the young people in this study, this thesis concludes by highlighting the importance of locating national identities on the intimate site of the body. In doing so it considers the fleshy performances and doings of the nation, shaped by emotions, feelings of belonging, and the everyday movements of bodies through atmospheres and spaces, as well as productively bringing into discourse children's and young people's geopolitics with studies on the nation and belonging. Drawing on emotional subjectivity, embodiment and affective atmospheres, I argue that there is a need for research into national identities to more carefully consider the multi-faceted and more-than-representational nature of national identities. This focus upon emotional subjectivity, embodiment and affective atmospheres also points to the utility of using auto-ethnographic and ethnographic approaches when thinking about national identities and belonging, as these methods enable a more intimate and experiential understanding of how the nation is felt as bodies move through space. I underline how specific spaces can affect national feelings and moods, addressing calls to unpack the multi-faceted, processual and sensual nature of national identities that go beyond taken-for-granted narratives and notions, towards a feeling or mood that ebbs and flows, being taken on by bodies, things and spaces as they encounter one another and become enmeshed (Lyons, 2018; Closs Stephens, 2016, Militz and Schurr, 2016; Sumartojo, 2014).

The geopolitical context surrounding this research is important to unpack as the politically and nationally charged atmosphere of the 2016 Presidential election, and its following fallout in 2017 and 2018, saw national identity and Americanness take centre stage in the banal, mundane, everyday. It shaped conversations, lined streets and billboards, and meant that questions of what it meant to be or feel American became part of everyday life. Indeed, the encounters with Americanness in this political moment evidenced the emotionally subjective nature and doing of national identities, with encounters and spaces producing a heightened awareness of national identities and belonging. Key to this research was unpacking the ways in which national identities were performed, encountered and made tangible by bodies in the everyday. Drawing on ideas of atmosphere, embodiment and emotional subjectivity, it unpacked the taken-for-grantedness of doing and feeling American, exploring the mundane everyday lives of young people in Bellingham, Washington, and arguing for an emergent and processual understanding of national identities, constantly becoming and being taken on by the body at different times, in different spaces, and

different moments as bodies work to make sense of their being-in-the-world. Bellingham, Washington is not a stereotypical place of particularly 'hot' nationalism (Jones and Merriman, 2009) or Americanness; Bellingham is not a major city, nor is it particularly patriotic or connected geographically and geopolitically to Washington DC and the centre of the US' political power. Instead, Bellingham's mundane and 'subdued' nature, then, enabled an exploration of the mundane and taken-for-grantedness of Americanness, as well as underlining how space, scale and geography work to produce and demonstrate a multiplicity of national identities. Rather than exploring pre-conceived notions or stereotypes of American national identities, I was able to locate feelings and experiences of the nation on the body and within these young people's everyday stories of belonging. I asked how national identities are performed, practiced and felt, thinking through what it is about the nation that draws us in, and how feelings of national belonging and identity become un-thought-of or learnt, in order to forget, through ritual, rhythm and growing up. This thesis draws attention to the highly subjective and emotive nature of national identities, which are both unconscious and conscious, are multiple, and are shaped by bodies sense-of-self and being-in-the-world.

There are three concluding points, which I will unpack in more depth below. Firstly, I will argue that national identities are emotionally subjective, shaped by our everyday encounters. Secondly, that national identities are performed and embodied., and that practices and routines work to make national identities un-thought-of and naturalised, emergent within certain contexts and moments. My final argument is that national identities are emergent and processual across space and scale; they move, and are felt and embodied as bodies move through atmospheres, encountering other bodies, feelings, ideas, practices and objects. They are multiple, and bodies can interrupt, disrupt, contest, challenge, and do national identities differently. The following three sections unpack each of these key points in more depth.

7.1 National identities are emotionally subjective

National identities are personal and intimate; they are not linear and rational, but are messy, felt, and emotionally subjective (Faria, 2014; Bruce, 2014). One of the key outcomes of this research project is that national identities are more often understood as something that people feel as a vague sense of (non)attachment. The unexplainable and un-thought of nature of national identities meant that they were

difficult for participants to express or describe, most often using terminology surrounding a felt sense of ‘something’, or an affect. Drawing on an everyday nationalism (Edensor, 2002; Benwell, 2014; Skey and Antonsich, 2017) and notions of performance (Vincett et al., 2012; McCormack, 2013) meant thinking through how bodies are situated and how practices work alongside emotions, and spaces in order to shape how national identities were experienced and done. Belonging to the nation, then, was a feeling that emerged over time and was taken-for-granted, made real and known through everyday, mundane practices, such as the pledge of allegiance or the national anthem. Critically, it was demonstrated how other parts of identities influence and shape being-in-the-world and play a role in the ways in which national identities are felt, understood, navigated and embodied. By unpacking practices and rituals such as the national anthem and pledge of allegiance, considering experiences in school and growing up, and thinking through how feelings of belonging to a nation are experienced as multiple and diffuse, this thesis challenges singular and distanced understandings of national identities and suggests that instead, national identities sit more within an emotional and intimate geopolitics.

One key example was the exploration of the performance of the national anthem, and the recent protests surrounding it. This example underlines the ways in which other aspects of identity seep into and shape the performance of taken-for-granted rituals and practices tied to a sense of being and feeling American. The protesting of the national anthem saw how race, sexuality, gender, age and political affiliation all influenced feelings of national belonging and how national identities were performed. Indeed, emotions and bodies are inseparable and are emplaced in specific contexts and spaces, which work to not only blur scales, but to also shape the performance of the self across these spaces (Pain, 2009; 2010; Simonsen, 2012). Bodies are positioned variably according to their situatedness and there is a need to unpack the “intersubjective entanglements” (Botterill et al., 2016:132) at work in the becoming and doing of national identities. Not only does this thesis demonstrate clearly the emotionally subjective nature of national identities, it highlights how national identities are made tangible and real through the doing, watching, and the embodying of specific practices. This was also seen in the final empirical chapter when thinking about how national identities are constantly made, felt and encountered through the performing and learning of ‘appropriate’ or ‘good’ embodiments. These rhythmic performances then become unthought-of, yet significant, belonging to a wider

collective of bodies, but done and felt by the individual. National identities may hold particular collective meanings, values and ideas, but they are emergent as they are brought into being through emotionally subjective bodies. Bodies, then, are moved by these national feelings and affects as they encounter different atmospheres and spatialities, highlighting the need to explore the situatedness of embodied experiences of national identities in more depth.

Critically, this thesis develops a productive discourse between children's and young people's geopolitics with narratives of national identities and belonging. This discourse shows how there is space to unpack more critically the complexities of how national identities are shaped by other aspects of identities such as age and gender. It also demonstrates how there is still more to be done to listen to young people's experiences of everyday life (Hopkins, 2016). A key contribution to research on young people and national identities is highlighting the utility of using auto-ethnographic and ethnographic approaches and exploring how these methods enable the researcher to reflect on their own experiences of the nation, whilst embedding themselves in the everyday worlds of the participants. Moving through shared spaces and experiencing moments or surrounding contexts is important in coming to more fully interpret and grasp the multiplicity of lived experiences, performances and feelings of Americanness and national identities across a period of time and variety of spaces. This research only considered one small corner of the United States of America, and these key moments of performing national identities as explored in this thesis vary across space. This research has begun to hint at the ways in which Americanness is understood and performed differentially across geographical locations, but future research could unpack this further through embedded research in different cities and states across the USA. Doing this would help to see these nuances and develop knowledge surrounding the multiplicities and affective nature of national identities. Understanding the nation as emergent and processual (Sumartojo, 2017) shifts discourse away from singular, linear narratives of national identities to understanding them as something that is felt, becoming, moving and changing over time and space. Ethnography enables a more nuanced exploration of the messiness and situatedness of the nation.

7.2 National identities are intertwined with the flesh

The body is a critical component within the conceptualisation of the nation and plays a very specific role in both bringing the nation into being but also shaping how it is encountered and perceived (Gagen, 2004; Grabham, 2009). The fleshy performance of the nation is evidenced as the body is physically and emotionally moved as it engages and practices the flagging, singing and participating in the nation. Through the practices of the singing of the national anthem and the pledging of allegiance, the nation is spoken into being, and demands both fleshy and emotional responses as it triggers well worked and learnt responses to feelings of national identities. If national identities are emotionally subjective and embodied, it is critical to think through how these practices and routines are made natural and un-thought-of, identifying the body as one of the key spaces upon which the nation is seen, understood and made tangible. Thoughts, actions, gestures and the familiarisation of practices demonstrate how bodies can learn to be affected as they move through and within specific spacetimes and atmospheres. As stated in the earlier chapters, there is an urging to movement by the experiences and encounters with particular sounds, places, feelings, bodies and things that hold affective capacities in relation to the nation. Bodies are moved in specific, fleshy ways in response to their Americanness.

It is key to think carefully about the rhythms and practices of the nation, which are so often taken-for-granted or routinised, becoming unthought-of and natural, yet being inherently taught and learnt (McCormack, 2013; Edensor, 2002). These rhythms become part of the heartbeat of national identities, yet are not determined or fixed. By conceptualising the nation and national identities as fluid, emergent and processual, we can explore the recursive nature of them, thinking about how bodies equally impact and affect wider narratives of Americanness through the disruption and interruption of pre-supposed fleshy embodiments. Indeed, this was evidenced throughout the thesis in both everyday practices, and also insignificant but annual rhythms of the year. Thinking through Christina's annual traditions of singing German Christmas carols demonstrates the momentary taking on of her German heritage that is not necessarily banal, nor hot, nor everyday, but is a significant spacetime through which Christina performs and embodies her national identities. These stories highlight the interactions of the nation and the flesh, and enable us to account for alternative experiences of national identities, for multiple-national identities, and for narratives of non-belonging (Lyons, 2018).

To further research the embodied and fleshy understandings of national identities, it would be beneficial to look at different bodies. This research focused on a small sample of young, American, mostly-white, mostly-Christian and mostly-middle class bodies, which does produce a specific example of feeling American. National identities have been shown throughout this thesis to be profoundly affected by the flesh and by emotional subjectivity, therefore considering other bodies would be necessary to gain a fuller understanding of how the nation is produced, felt and affected by the flesh. Bodily actions and fleshy materialisations of the nation, however, do not exist on their own. Indeed, embodied experiences and encounters exist within much larger agglomerations and atmospheres, where rhythms and gestures have become familiar as they encounter other things, bodies, spaces, sounds, smells and ideas. National identities are intertwined with the flesh and must be understood and unpacked at the scale of the body, asking how national identities are made real and tangible through their performance and embodiment, emergent often within specific contexts and atmospheres.

7.3 National identities emerge through atmospheres

Affective atmospheres help to understand and explore how national identities are encountered, become sensed, connected to and captivated by bodies (Closs Stephens, 2016; Sumartojo, 2017). It allows an acknowledgement of the multi-faceted, messy, multi-scalar and intangible nature of national identities, understanding how the nation comes to be through the interactions between and through bodies, things, spaces, times, ideas, values, feelings and doings. Indeed, as regularly articulated, national identities are vague, diffuse and distant, belonging to a collective, but simultaneously personal, emotional, precise, and intimate, being made real through their embodiment and performance. Atmosphere helps to make sense of why feelings of national identities change, or are stirred during certain moments, as well as how experiences of difference and emotionally subjective entanglements can work to interrupt and disrupt the taken-for-grantedness of national identities. Considering the nation as an atmosphere is to think about how the nation is relational and brought into being through these everyday interactions between bodies, spaces, things, practices and feelings.

Throughout this research, Americanness seemed to exist as something that was felt differently and could exist differently across spaces, scales and moments. The intersections of the scales of the national, state, local and body often connected and were demonstrative of the moving nature of national identities. The specificity of Bellingham is important to consider and was a key aspect of the research, arguing for the nation as an atmosphere and as multiple. The location of Bellingham demonstrated how feelings of national identities can change in relation to the atmosphere of a place, but also as bodies move through and encounter different atmospheres. Bellingham is also a 'subdued' and non-patriotic place, it does not evidence a 'hot' nationalism, nor is it a major US city or place of interest. Indeed, Bellingham allowed an in-depth exploration of the taken-for-grantedness of Americanness, moving beyond pre-conceived and stereotypical notions in order to listen to the embodied encounters and performances of the young people there. So often Americanness was described as having a different form, meaning and embodiment in different states or places, and was influenced by the local history, state-specific narratives and local culture, as well as historical voting patterns and political affiliation. These shifts help to account for why and how national identities were felt differently by different participants, and again underline the importance of considering the nation as a diffuse, affective atmosphere, that has varying tonalities and shifts as it is encountered by different moving bodies.

National identities, then, are not static or singular but ebb and flow, and are constantly becoming through atmospheres. Atmospheres simultaneously already are, yet become nationalised through the movements and performances of bodies within those spacetimes (Sumartojo, 2017). These scales repeatedly collided during particular moments during the research. Whether it was during the collective singing of the anthem or through the education system, specific versions and feelings of Americanness were presented, taught, learnt, embodied, contested, resisted and reshaped all at the same time. This demonstrated the shifting tonalities of Americanness and national identities across spatially distinct moments within the everyday lives of these young people. Thinking more carefully about scale gives voice to the intersections of bodies with the global, national and local, and considers how feelings of Americanness are shaped and shape encounters with regional, local and international contexts.

The taken-for-grantedness of wider, normalised, narratives must be pulled apart further in order to understand how national identities come to persist but also in order to understand why and how bodies experience feelings of distance, non-belonging and multiple-belonging. This goes beyond simplistic cause-and-effect ideas, and sees the nation as existing as a messy and undulating 'thing' or atmosphere that is difficult to pin down, distanced and historic, belonging to all, but equally felt personally, emotionally and distinctly. Critically, this argument contributes to literature from Lyons (2018), Closs Stephens (2016) and Militz and Schurr (2016) who argue for the multiplicity of national identities by thinking through their affective nature and how taken-for-granted ideas can be interrupted, resisted or reworked, something seen throughout this research. The nation exists as this un-thought of, yet tangible and significant 'thing', which is often made visible through its interruptions.

7.4 Concluding thoughts

National identities have often been understood as pre-given or tied to formal notions of citizenship and belonging. This thesis contests this taken-for-granted notion, and through exploring stories of everyday emotional feelings of belonging and performance, the messiness and complexities of national identities is demonstrated. This thesis underlines the need for a more embodied, emotional and considered approach to national identities, listening to real life stories and experiences of national belonging, in order to fully understand how and why national identities come-to-be and persist. It also enables a much more nuanced and complex understanding of why national identities are felt in different ways and how expectations of being or doing national identities emerge within specific geopolitical moments. National identities exist within a tension. They are distanced, belonging to a collective, yet are emotive and personal, played out on and through bodies and things. Indeed this tension points to the conceptual framework of affective atmosphere as a useful tool in conceptualising national identities. National identities are messy and multiple. They are not linear or binary, and simultaneously belong to many whilst feeling significantly personal and distinct. This tension has been exemplified throughout this thesis through stories of multiple embodiments of national identities, multi-national feelings of belonging, experiences of performing national identities in ‘appropriate’ or ‘good’ ways, and challenges or interruptions to these normative ideas and feelings of being American.

Throughout this thesis are examples of how national identities, whilst belonging to a wider collective and influenced by formal prescriptions and 'appropriate' ways of doing or feeling American, emerge through a process of learning, growing, encountering, embodying and feeling, as intimate, emotionally subjective entanglements between bodies and the world. These entanglements provide space for disruption and interruption to these rhythmic and taken-for-granted performances of national identities. Drawing on McCormack's (2012) conceptualisation of moving bodies, rhythmic practices and encounter, we can see that it is in these moments of disruption and discord, that we are able to understand the messiness of how bodies come to encounter and embody their self-in-the-world. This, then, relates to the constant emergence of national identities as bodies move through spaces, shaped by these external articulations or prescriptions of practicing 'good' Americanness, yet also having an embodied and emotional potential to re-create and re-define their being Americanness through their feelings of national belonging and performances of national identities.

National identities are emotive and emergent performances, which are made real and come into being through continual encounters within the affective atmosphere of the nation. These encounters are shaped by the context they emerge within, work to produce feelings of (non)belonging to the nation, and are critical to explore in order to further understandings of national identities. To be connected to and experience the nation, is then to be both consciously and subconsciously taken up by its rhythms. Bodies participate in the persistence and coming-to-be of the nation as they engage with the collective practices of the nation. National identities are not distanced, singular ideas to which bodies belong or do not belong, but are instead crafted and formed by bodies themselves as they negotiate other bodies, things, places, sounds, and smells resonating with the nation around them (Militz and Schurr, 2016). Critically, national identities have been shown to be disrupt-able and interruptible, not taken-for-granted or singular, but messy, complex and multiple. Moving forward, this thesis contends for a renewed focus upon embodied and emotional experiences of national identities in the mundane, everyday and taken-for-granted. It highlights the utility of extended, embedded research, where ethnographic approaches enable both a critical insight into the lives of participants, but also a deeper and more experientially rooted understanding of the experiences that they describe. Living alongside participants produces the opportunity for shared experiences and moments

where a more nuanced and critical analysis emerges. It is also important to continue to listen to the stories of young people, thinking through how other identities work alongside and shape the lens through which we embody, perform and experience our national belonging. What we must continue to unpack are the stories of people, the interpretations, experiences, embodiments, and feelings of what national identities are, how they're understood and felt, and how they come to persist across spacetimes.

Appendix A Coding Framework

Theme	Sub-Themes	Concepts
Age		
National Identity	Affect and Becoming	
	Belonging and attachment	Home
		Multiplicity of nationalisms
	Embodied	Sport
		Physicality
	Emotions	Embarrassment
		Fear and unity
		Freedom
		Patriotism
		Pride
	Everyday	
	Formal top-down national identity	Education
		Heritage
		Historical roots and ideals
		“Melting pot”
	Imaginations	Memory
		Outsider perceptions
	Materiality	The Flag
	National Anthem	
Temporality		
Spatiality	Regional Identitiy	

Table 1: Coding Framework

Appendix B Participant Biographical Information Sheet

Name	Age (at time of research)	Ethnicity	Nationality	Gender
Jennifer	17	White	American	F
Tobin	17	White	American	F
Madison	18	White	American	F
Olivia	18	White	American	F
Sophia	26	White	American	F
Jackie	26	White	American	F
Justine	18	White	American	F
Emma	18	White	American	F
David	18	White	American	M
Amber	18	White	American	F
Alex	18	White	American	F
Gemma	17	White	American	F
Abigail	18	White	American	F
Sarah	18	White	American	F
Mia	18	White	American	F
Matthew	25	White	American	M
Bethany	26	White	British	F
George	26	Hispanic	British	M
James	16	White	American	M
Louise	18	White	American	F
Christina	16	White	American	F
Tom	17	White	American	M
Brennan	16	White	American	M
Andrew	16	White	American	M
McKenzie	17	White	American	F
Ruth	16	White	American	F
Hannah	17	Black	American	F
Joshua	18	White	American	M
Molly	16	White	American	F

Table 2: Participant Biographical Information

Appendix C Information sheet

Assembling the Nation: Spatialising young religious American's affective experiences of the nation, fear and danger in the everyday

Thank you for volunteering your time to participate in this research project. Please take time to review the following information, and do not hesitate to contact me at h.t.lyons@ncl.ac.uk or my supervisor Dr Alison Williams at Alison.williams.1@ncl.ac.uk for further information about this research, or to raise any points that were not discussed in the interview. Please keep this sheet for future reference.

What is the purpose of this research?

The research is being undertaken as part of my PhD project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK. The activities that you are involved in are part of a bigger project looking at how both national and religious identity are felt, experienced and understood in different places. The research builds on existing ideas surrounding representations of national identity and is interested in individual experiences, exploring how young people learn and understand what it means to be American and the role that America has in the wider world.

I will be returning to England after the research to write up a thesis exploring these ideas, contributing to a wider set of debates on geographies of religion and nationalism. This thesis is expected to be completed in September 2018.

How and when will the results be made available?

The transcript of your interview(s) will be made available to you three weeks after the final interview via email if you wish to view a copy (please make sure you have noted this on the Consent Form).

What you have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs. I will publish all related publications at https://sigpromu.academia.edu/HannahLyons. You can access these publications without creating an account. Alternatively, I can send you copies of any material before publication if you wish (please make sure you have noted this on the Consent Form).

What will happen to the information provided?

All personal information provided will be anonymised, and immediately following the interview, you will be assigned a research code under which your recording and transcript will be saved as. I will be the only person to have access to your name and contact information, and this information will be deleted after the project is completed. To prevent data misappropriation, loss or theft of the data, all information will be password protected, and will be saved securely on my personal area on Newcastle University's server, as well as on my personal laptop.

Your transcripts will also remain secure, although if you have agreed on the Consent Form, anonymised quotations may be used in publications, and if requested, my research supervisors may review the transcripts. You will not be identified in any publication or other form of dissemination of this research. You have the ability to withdraw at any time, even following my return to the UK (you must email to let me know if this is the case).

Appendix D Consent Form

Research on Young, Religious People's Everyday Experiences of Insecurity and Place

Researcher details: Hannah Lyons, Newcastle University, email: h.t.lyons@ncl.ac.uk

Information:

The interview will be recorded with a Dictaphone and transcribed, looking for key themes that appear. These themes will be used to answer my research question and aims. Some direct quotes may be used but they will be anonymous. If you do not wish to be recorded or quoted, please indicate below. You are able to access these transcripts at any time and the researcher will be available to ask any questions throughout the whole research project.

Interactions with the researcher will be treated in strict confidence, however, if you reveal something potentially harming to yourself or others, the researcher may need to share this information with discretion to relevant leadership.

By signing this form, you are consenting to participation in the research. It is important to note that you may withdraw at any time and choose for any information to be removed from the research. You may contact the researcher at any time during and following the research project.

Delete Appropriate

Have you read the information sheet?	Yes/No
Have you been offered a copy to keep?	Yes/No
Have you been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study?	Yes/No
Are you aware that you can contact the researcher afterwards with any further questions?	Yes/No

Are you aware that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time for whatever reason? Yes/No

Following the research are you aware that you can withdraw from the project and have the information you provided removed from the project? Yes/No

Are you happy for the interview to be recorded? Yes/No

Are you happy to be quoted, with a different name being used for the research? Yes/No

Do you want to receive any transcripts of your interview(s)? Yes/No

Would you like to receive a copy of the key findings of the study and any other subsequent publications or reports? (please provide email address if so) Yes/No

Declaration: I agree to take part in the research project led by Hannah Lyons between the months of September 2016 and June 2017.

Name of Participant **Date** **Signature**

Researcher **Date** **Signature**

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