

Field report
“National Identity: Models, Elements and Characteristics”

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In this report I will briefly summarize identity concept placing special emphasize on “national identity”. First, I start with the etiology and definition of the “identity” concept, than I will try to classify and describe several forms of social identities and furthermore review the basic elements of “national identity”.

Identity

(Etiology and definition)

Identity comes from Latin roots ‘idem’ (‘same’) and has different usage in diverse academic disciplines: technical meaning in algebra and in logic but in philosophy it has been associated with the permanent body-mind problem.

Despite of long past definition of identity as a term appears in only 50-ties in English oxford dictionary and has been defined as:

“Sameness of a person or thing at all time or in all circumstances; the condition of the fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality”

Firstly Joan Lock introduced concept of identity as it is used now in contemporary psychology. According to Lock Identity is:

“...the condition or fact of remaining same person throughout various phases of existence, continuity of personality” (Lock, 1860)

Later, psychologist William James defines the personal self as "the most enduring and intimate part of the self, that which we most verily seem to be ... it is what we think of our ability to argue and discriminate, of our moral sensibility and conscience, of our indomitable will ... " (James, 1890, p. 315).

The concept of identity has developed, shaped, modified and simultaneously become subject of theoretical debates (Primordial vs. Optional) throughout the decades.

In 1963, William Goffman in his work 'Stigma' has shifted from the terminology 'the self' to 'identity' and popularized sociological understanding of identity. The sociological view of identity is focused on a human's permanent interaction with his/her environment. Placing especial emphasis on "experience" they argue that identity is unstable and changeable, and "artifact of interaction" rather than a stable mark of personality.

Alternatively, E. Erikson (1959) defined identity as a "conscious sense of [self], an unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character, . . . a maintenance of an inner solidarity with a group's ideals". According to Erikson's theory personal identity was internal and deeply embedded in the human psyche structure. Ericson's theory has colossal meaning for developmental psychology and has served as a conceptual framework for future research.

While the traditional notion of identity assumes the homogeneity and stability of personal identity (Erikson, 1968), postmodern identity is understood as a dynamic and multiple structure, including independent and partially contradictory sub-identities, which are related to one another to support a sense of coherence (Kraus, 2000)

Currently, social scientists discern personal identity as stable and collective identities as flexible one that seem the optimal resolution for longstanding debates. Along with personal and collective identities, many other different types of identities are discussed in modern scientific literature: social, national, political and etc.

Below are definitions of most frequently used identity types:

Type of Identity	Brief definition
Individual/personal identity	<i>Individual or personal identity</i> refers to aspects of self-definition at the level of the individual person. These may include goals, values, and beliefs, religious and spiritual beliefs, standards for behavior and decision-making, self-esteem and self-evaluation, desired, feared, and expected future selves, and

	one's overall "life story"
Collective identity	<i>Collective identity</i> refers to people's identification with the groups and social categories to which they belong, the meanings that they give to these social groups and categories, and the feelings, beliefs, and attitudes that result from identifying with them
Social Identity	<i>Social Identity</i> refers to Perception of self through membership in a social group or collective
Self Identity	<i>Self identity</i> refers to aspects of the self defined in relation to others
Relational identity	<i>Relational identity</i> refers to one's roles in relation to other people and also to how they are defined and interpreted by the individuals who assume them.
National Identity	<i>National Identity</i> refers to the aspects of self as a member of a national community
Political Identity	<i>Political Identity</i> refers to pattern of beliefs related to the social and structural relationships that connect the individual to social groups

National Identity as Collective identity

Identity categories like gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class and etc. could be the basis of collective identity formation process.

The majority of social science researchers see collective identity defined also as social identity and calls 'type' (class, gender, race, ethnic, state, religious, etc.) as opposed to 'role' (father, etc.) identities (Abdelal *et al.*, 2001)

We should point out that in spite of existed differences between collective and personal identities they are located within a range of overlapping contexts. (e.g. Bhavani and Phoenix, 1994; Wilkinson, 1996). The majority of researchers focus

its connections on a particular context: gender, ethnicity, religion and particularly on nationalism (Snow, 2001)

With the conceptualizing of collective identity researchers mainly focus on three core proposition: (1) the collective identity resides in a shared and interactive sense of 'we-ness' or 'one-ness' (2) the same collective identities share similar real or imaginary attributes (3) the collective identity corresponding/generating sense of "collective agency" within group.

One type of collective identity is national identity. French sociologist Ernest Renan contends that "nationhood is determined by a "daily plebiscite" of its citizens and is reflected in more recent social constructivist approaches to national identity as opposed to essentialist views of 'national character' as primordial, stemming from relatively fixed factors of "blood," "soil," or "culture" (Hammack, 2006)

According to Renan's definition of nation we clearly see that the elaboration of national identity concept has faced the same problem as identity in general: is national identity primordial or experienced?

Consistent with Renan, national identity or nationhood has come to be largely seen as evolving, negotiated, even contested terrain in the historical trajectory of countries. What evolves and what is particularly contested are the cultural symbols and the meaning of these symbols, which provide the definition of, and legitimation for, the modern state (Smith 1991; Calhoun 1993) historically grounded in an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991).

Still, Renan's (Renan 1990) analysis remains an analytic foundation for studies of national identity. He proposed that ultimately, a nation is not static or determined by objective factors but is a collective project of those sharing (and forgetting) the past in seeking to construct a future together.

Referring to the distinction of Friedrich Meinecke (1908) between *Kulturnation* (cultural community) and *Staatsnation* (political nation) Anthony Smith argues, that 'national' identity necessarily refers to some kind of political community. Anthony Smith distinguishes between Western or 'civic' and non-Western or 'ethnic' models of nations. The first model has the following elements: a specific territory, the 'homeland'; the idea of a patria – a legal-political community; legal-political equality of members, including rights and duties given to members and deprived from non-members; and common civic culture and ideology. In the non-Western model, on the contrary, a nation is understood through such elements as a community of common descent, rather than territory; popular mobilization based on the 'will of the people'; native language; and tradition. While the first model, expressed in the rational state, a territorial nation, first occurred in the

West, the second model of a nation was more characteristic outside of the West, to the Eastern Europe and Asia in particular. Both model has civic and ethnic elements in different forms and degrees. Thus, both models of the nation have common principles, by which a nation is distinguished from a cultural community. Based on these assumptions Smith presents a definition of a nation: “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.” This definition underlines the multidimensional character of national identity. Besides, it distinguishes a nation from a state – while a state refers to political institutions and monopoly of power on a given territory, the nation is a cultural and political union, creating a political community based on common historic culture and homeland. While the concepts of a nation and a state may overlap, they have different content and focus.

Elements of National identity

Anthony Smith argues that national identity is based on several interrelated elements – ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political. Besides, the concept of a nation is a mixture of civic and territorial components on one hand and ethnic and genealogical ones on the other. Furthermore, Smith divides the functions of national identity for individuals and groups into ‘external’ and ‘internal’ consequences. The external functions refer to a defined territory for living and working, control over territorial resources and manpower, political dimension of national identity expressed in either state or other pre-political equivalents and furthermore, legitimation of social order and solidarity. The internal functions of national identity involve socialization of the members as ‘nationals’ and ‘citizens’, a social bond based on common values, symbols and traditions, and finally, means for self-definition, ‘rediscovering’ and location oneself in the contemporary world. Last element of national identity has received most doubts and criticism, of both philosophical and political characters. From the philosophical point of view, self-definition through national identity has been regarded as logically contradictory. From political and moral position the legitimation of political community under nationalism leads to conflicts. Nationalism may have as many positive consequences, as negative ones and while the effects of nationalism on individuals and groups are not unambiguous, the equivocal power of nationalism and its influence are less debatable.

Smith distinguishes two extreme characteristics of ethnicity – ‘primordial’ and ‘situational’. While the former refers to ethnicity as existing out of time and given by nature, according to the latter group identification changes along with changing situations. Smith adopts the position between these two polar ends and defines ethnic group as a cultural collectivity, with myths of descent and historical memories as key factors, and which can be identified by such differences as religion, customs, language and/or institutions. Furthermore, Smith distinguishes between ethnic categories and ethnic communities. Ethnic categories are separate cultural and historical communities, but otherwise they may not have much self-awareness. On the contrary, the ethnic communities, or ethnies, have the following main characteristics: a collective name; a myth of common descent; shared historical memories; distinguishing cultural elements; a ‘homeland’; solidarity for the population. The more of these elements they share, the closer such communities are to the ideal type of an ethnie. However, most of these elements are subjective, the feeling of a single family based on the myths of common descent. Furthermore, Smith argues, that attachments and associations matter more for ethnic identification than residence or possession of a land. Thus, through attachment ethnie may last even away from homeland. As for the language, religion, customs and colour, they are not always ‘objective’ in differentiating between ethnies; they can be seen as such only when these elements are given special significance. Thus, Smith argues that ethnie is not primordial, as it is formed both by subjective attitudes towards the abovementioned elements and the sense of belonging to the community.

There are two main patterns – unification of separate communities or division from a community for forming a new unit. The instrumentalist arguments against primordialist ones are strengthened by the frequency of ethnie amalgamation and separation processes, along with boundary changes, which also shows that different levels of self-identification are possible towards different ethnic communities at the same time. Ethnicity has both constant and changeable features, one should not judge about it from either primordialist or instrumentalist extremes.

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