

## THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF MEASURING NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Helping the development of national identity is an important task in the school. The role of history teaching is salient in this process, because it affects the development of concepts about the nation and national attitudes (*Carretero, Castorina and Levinas, 2013*). Educational surveys, especially civic education research could not avoid the study of national identity.

Surveys engaging in the study of this phenomenon have to face several challenges. First of all, identity is a malleable concept, and has several different interpretations, which elucidate this phenomenon in different ways (*Bodó, 2004*). Modern approaches draw attention to the complexity of identity, and emphasize individual differences and the role of the context (*Pataki, 1997*). Above all, researchers have to address the flexibility of national identity, and the fact that the emphasis of its components can also be different (*Kiss, 2010*).

Another difficulty is identifying the components of national identity. One possible model of national identity interprets the phenomenon as a pyramid, where the components build upon each other (*Örkény, Székely, Csepeli, Poór and Várhalmi, 2007*). Hungarian studies focus on the criteria of being Hungarian and national attitudes (*Horváth, 1997; Murányi, 2006; Páskuné and Harmatiné, 2011*). At the same time, there is a model present in the international literature, based on the results of nationalism studies. This model is suitable for the study of elementary school children and it distinguishes cognitive, affective and behavioural components of national identity (*Barrett, 2007*).

Interviews, focus group interviews (*Páskuné and Harmatiné, 2011*), special scales and questionnaires are suitable for measuring national identity, too (*Horváth, 1997; Szabó and Örkény, 1998; Murányi, 2006; Barrett, 2007*). Besides these methods there are also psychological tests which are suitable for measuring national identity, e.g. the Implicit Association Test (*Baron and Banaji, 2006*) or the Semantic Selection Test (*Polyák and Szabó, 2012*). Furthermore, history and geography tests are needed which can measure important cognitive components of national identity.

Studying national identity has several challenges. Researchers have to consider not just the flexibility of the phenomena, but the ongoing refinement of the models of national identity, and the incorporation of further components. Besides these challenges, the restricted validity of these measurements should be considered. It is also important to take into account that the results of these measures are depending on the context and the culture in which they are recorded.