

NATION REPRESENTATIONS BEYOND NATIONAL IDENTITY

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INTRODUCTION

National identity concerns membership of a nation, thinking about ourselves as members of an imagined community (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Pehrson, Vignole & Brown, 2009). At the same time consideration and measurement of the process of identification changed in the last two decades, from a unidimensional construct (Doosje, Ellemers, Spears, 1995) to multidimensional approaches (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Leach et al., 2008; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008). Distinctions like patriotism and nationalism (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), or blind, constructive, and conventional patriotism (Staub, 1997) or attachment and glorification (Roccas, Klar, Liviatan, 2006) as processes of identification with one's nation, the consideration of the representation of the nation beyond that identification does not become an issue of debate.

According to the constructivist approach of social representations (Jovchelovitch, 1996; Wagner, 1999) content and process are interdependent in their essence, the representation in itself delineates also how to deal with it; in our case the representation of a nation as a social group and the possible

ways of identification are intrinsically interwoven. We assumed that there are different representations of the nation beyond national identification, and these representations intrinsically define the relevant others to being distinguished by, and consequentially the nature of intergroup behaviours.

The perceived threat created by the continuously changing world is often construed on the interpretative frame given by the psychologically existent social fractures and group boundaries. Group identifications become more salient, giving psychological security, serving as frames to deal with the new and the change and diminish anxiety. Threat becomes perceived often as to one's existence, thus identity, framed in a self-other relation, a relevant other chosen through that identity dimension is dressed to the cause of that threat.

Following Gellner (1983) we assumed that nations could be perceived as unities based on biological or cultural homogeneity or shared economic interests or societal co-living. We refer to the nation as a *biological* unity, when people identify with the nation at a genetic or biological basis, a membership inherited with birth. Traits, abilities and competencies are viewed as biological and genetically coded stable and unchangeable heritage. Target groups are viewed as threatening, by interbreeding because of their different genetic heritage, or by their quick proliferation, and their different reproductive strategies. The more individuals naturalize a group membership assuming that membership is given by birth, the more they psychologically close group boundaries. This kind of self-other distinction could be considered as the most dangerous, group boundaries perceived as impermeable lead to a loud expression of dehumanization and to the desire to definitely eliminate the cause of the threat perceived.

If the nation is perceived as a *cultural* homogeneity, unity is based on values, traditions, language, common history, lifestyles, shared worldviews. However, these shared futures are effects of socialisation and long-term co-living, they allow more permeability. Target groups are threatening as they represent different cultural values and living styles, assimilation efforts are on the agenda.

Thinking about the nation as an *economic* unity presents different threats and target groups. The nation in this case is perceived as a community of shared economic interests, material well-being is interdependent among members. There is a competition with foreign corporations and workers that threaten their own economic system.

And at least we assumed that the perceived unity behind the concept of nation could be an imagined co-living of different individuals where desired inclusive conditions are defined at a *societal* level, like education, health system, and all those issues recognized as common interests of those living in a delimited space. In this case, target groups of prejudice could be considered those groups that hinder the development of the community (Bigazzi, Siegler, Serdült, Bokrétás; 2019).

OBJECTIVES

We assumed that identification with different nation representations produce both different relevant others and diverse intergroup relations. We used a new prejudice questionnaire (Multiple Threat and Prejudice Questionnaire - MTPQ) measuring both perceived threat at relevant identity

dimensions (gender, nation, existential, religious) as well as the psychological distancing of relevant others.

We assumed that imagining the nation as naturalized, based on biological heritage, thus with strictly impermeable boundaries will lead to higher distancing and prejudice.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

We applied the MTPQ with 61 items to a sample of 1482 Hungarians in 2017. To obtain a heterogeneous sample, the survey was accessible to different strata of the population via paper-based personal contacts too. We will report here the data concerning national identity threat and distancing at a national level. 3 items were used for each dimension both at the threat and the distancing scale (biological, cultural, economic, societal).

Table 1. Examples of items for each dimensions in both scales

	Threat	Distancing
Biological nation	<i>The purity of our blood is put at risk by immigrants settling down in the country.</i>	<i>It is important to me to avoid ethnic interbreeding</i>
Cultural nation	<i>I think that minorities prevent the people of my nation from being judged positively.</i>	<i>Our culture is outstanding compared to that of other countries.</i>
Economic nation	<i>The stability of our country is at risk because of a lack of adequate economic growth.</i>	<i>The cheap labour coming from abroad should not be admitted into the country.</i>

Societal nation	<i>It makes me feel upset that in this nation we are unable to have respect for the differences between us.</i>	<i>I am fed up with groups promoting views of social exclusion.</i>
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The mean age of the sample was 37.1 ($SD_{age} = 15.086$). 60 % of the participants were female. Most participants were living in Budapest (27.4 %), followed by county seat (25.4 %), smaller cities (26.9 %) and villages (20.3 %). The education level of the participants was completed college for the 42.2 %, graduated university for the 40.2 %, finished high school for the 15.9 % of the whole sample.

RESULTS

We examined with explorative factor analysis the structure of the two national scales: threat and distancing. The two factors of the Threat scale ($KMO = 0,786$) explained the 54,745 % of the variance, the first factor included items which regarded the representation of the nation as biological and cultural unity, the second factor consisted of economic and societal items. Two items were excluded from the Threat questionnaire on the basis of their contribution to psychologically meaningful factors. The three factors of the distancing scale ($KMO = 0,771$) explained the 56,89 % of the total variance. In the first factor cultural and economic items merged together, in the second factor biological distancing items loaded and in the third factor societal ones did.

We found differences among the scales concerning our independent variables. Women perceived higher threat at an economic-societal level ($X_2 = 0,77$; $X_1 = - 1,11$; $t = - 3,541$; $p = 0,000$) and distanced less at a biological level ($X_2 = - 0,05$; $X_1 = 0,07$; $t = 2,425$; $p = 0,015$) than men. With higher subjective well-being bio-cultural perceived threat ($F(5,1145) = 3,631$; $p = 0,003$) and societal distancing ($F(5,1141) = 3,134$; $p = 0,008$) increased. With higher education both bio-cultural threat ($F(7,1430) = 16,459$; $p = 0,000$), economic-cultural ($F(7,1425) = 12,76$; $p = 0,000$) and biological ($F(7,1425) = 7,162$; $p = 0,003$) distancing decreased.

Assuming that identity threat cause distancing of relevant others, we find that biologic-cultural national identity threat predicted both biological distancing ($b = ,625$, $t(1405) = 29.99$, $p = 0.000$; $F(1;1405) = 899,962$; $p = 0,000$ with an $R^2 = 0,390$) and economic-cultural distancing ($b = ,421$; $t(1405) = 17,397$, $p = 0.000$; $F(1;1405) = 302,639$, $p = 0,000$ with an $R^2 = 0,177$). Those threatened in their biological national identity distanced ethnic interbreeding, felt that aggressive behaviour, destructive tendencies and poorer abilities are hard-wired of migrants and ethnic minorities and defined their own national values better than those of ethnic minorities and wanted cheap labour from abroad to be stopped. While felt threatened in an economic-societal national identification predicted societal distancing ($b = ,414$; $t(1405) = 17,055$, $p = 0.000$; $F(1;1405) = 290,86$; $p = 0,000$ with an $R^2 = 0,172$), feeling fed up with groups promoting social exclusion, or with the political and economic elite creating social tension.

CONCLUSIONS

Social identification processes are related to different social representations of the nation. While we predicted four different types of commonness between the members of a nation, as a biological, a cultural, an economic or a societal unity, in the Hungarian sample we find that biological and cultural unity as well as economic and societal unity are merged. Among the same four dimensions in the distancing scale, cultural and economic relevant others were merged in the Hungarian sample.

Threat perceived at the first nation representation, that of biological-cultural unity caused psychological distancing of migrants, ethnic minorities and other nation on the basis of biological and cultural diversity, and triggered intergroup behaviour based on biological and cultural superiority, and also at an economic level to reduce interdependence from others. While identity threat was perceived at the second nation representation, that of economic-societal unity, others are the economic and political elite as well as nationalist ideology and the intergroup relation concerns the problem of societal cohesion and tensions among people.

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