

Entangling Identities: Mapping The Different Ways Citizens Belong To Trans-, Sub-, National And Religious Identities

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Previous research, drawing on the legacy of Berry’s integration model tried to map the different identity patterns that emerge for citizens with a migration background. Berry’s model however overlooks the complexity of identity politics within nations; e.g. the identity of the host society is approached as a unique aggregate. In this way, identity struggles of both native and migrant citizens are obscured, which can lead to a false idea of inclusion. On top, there is a lack of empirical research that took up the task to map the complexity of these identity configurations, leading to theoretical speculation as a main driver in the identity politics debate in and outside of academia. To fill this gap, this paper uses a latent class analysis to cluster people based on their identity preferences for both natives and migrants on four identity categories; Belgian national identity, sub national identity, ethnic identity of people with a migration background and religious identity. The data of the SIS (school, identity and society)-survey is used; a recent, large scale survey in Belgium, containing the self-reports of 4500 high school students. In so doing, this paper advocates a stronger recognition of the complex nature of collective ethnic identity configurations within particular socio-political contexts in quantitative research, and the use of more inductive methods to map which collective identity configurations are meaningful within a particular socio-political context. In so doing, we develop a more in-depth understanding of the role of individual and contextual explanatory features in understanding the variation in multicultural attitudes, prejudice or stereotypes. Suggestions are made to elaborate the initial integration model of Berry to fit the multilayered reality of nation states.

investigate the different ways in which members of German Societies at three Russell Group universities perform, negotiate and use their national identity in everyday interactions. Based on an ethnographic study of these societies and their members, I find that students use a wide range of symbols and rhetoric strategies to perform their nationality. Among these are the ironic exaggeration of national stereotypes, humorous references to German history, distancing themselves from their English and international environment, using a national frame of reference and celebrating the German cuisine and language at their meetings. Most interestingly, however, they also strategically use their national identity as a brand to find sponsors for their events and improve their future chances on the labour market (e.g. through organising career and networking events). This indicates that the students do not only unconsciously and passively identify with the nation but are active and reflexive agents who pick positive and useful aspects of their German national identity to create their personal brand which they then aim to sell on the labour market.



Contexts: An Ethnographic Study on German Societies at English Universities

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Universities are generally regarded as the heartlands of cosmopolitanism. Yet, national identities still play an important role in the social life of students as the numerous national societies at many universities illustrate. Based on Michael Billig’s concept of ‘banal nationalism’ I aim to