

Introduction

Carrington and Short interviews with Sangita (9) and Ruth (11) reveal that:

- Children understand and are happy to classify themselves in terms of national identity
- An individual can have multiple affiliations - eg. Ugandan, Kenyan & British or hierarchical affiliations - Scottish, then British for example.
- Place of birth is important

Ingroup / Outgroup views (**Tajfel** - SIT) are prevalent amongst children.

Carrington and Short interview with Hilary highlights ingroup favouritism (good to be British) and outgroup denigration (I wouldn't want to be German, they're cruel) - based on a war that happened >50 years ago.

National identities in the UK

- Complex - there are a number of national categories people identify with.
- Meaning - categories carry different connotations in different contexts for different people.

as: UK != GB;
UK = GB + Northern Ireland
GB = England, Scotland + Wales

Britishness is perceived to be an Anglo-centric concept; the English confuse Englishness & Britishness (**Condor**).

In NI, national descriptions often related to religion (**Trew**).

Ethnic mix makes it even more complex - Britishness can be interpreted as citizenship, juridical or state identity as well as national, ethnic or racial (**Kumar**).

E.g. Sangita - Asian background may be reason for identifying as British rather than English, but not clear from her comments that this is the case.

Book 2 Chapter 6 - National identities in children and young people

Why is national identity of interest to developmental psychology?

- Testing of identity theories - e.g. Piaget's cognitive-developmental and Tajfel SIT.
- Exploring the development of emotionally 'hot' cognition - often associated with strong emotions, present before a child acquires factual knowledge - therefore 'hot' cognition could play an important motivational part in knowledge acquisition.
- Addressing important social issues - e.g. prejudice, hostility & conflict between national groups
- Addressing local policy-related issues - shifts to greater ethnic diversity, devolution, regional autonomy, EU federation require changes to social policies, educational curricula for example. **Carrington and Short** - investigated claims that multicultural and anti-racist initiatives undermine social cohesion in UK. Found that British children still have a monolithic view of British culture. Findings used to recommend that for anti-racist/multicultural initiatives to be effective children need information on values, beliefs and cultural similarities between ethnic groups in UK as well as an understanding of the differences.

Subjective sense of national identity

1. To have a sense of national identity, must have some knowledge of categories that exist
2. Must also understand that you are a member of a particular group (Sangita's response shows a complex understanding by age 9)
3. Individuals can then attribute different levels of importance about belonging to particular groups

4. The extent to which an individual experiences a personal sense of belonging to a group is important - e.g. the criteria people use to decide if someone is a member of a particular national group or not.
5. If individuals or others regard them as not meeting all of the criteria, it results in marginalisation / exclusion from a group - personal sense of belonging is therefore linked to these implicit/explicit criteria that people use to make these judgements.
6. Another aspect are the feelings of an individual towards others who are in the same national group - e.g. empirical studies show favouritism of the ingroup is common.
7. Individuals hold stereotypes about typical traits and characteristics of people in their group and others
8. There are institutions, symbols and historical figures that are important emblems or representations of the national group - knowledge of these is seen as important to this subjective sense of national identity.
9. There are a wide range of emotions that an individual can experience by virtue of national group membership - pride, shame, embarrassment etc.

National identity is context-dependent

The subjective sense of national identity is a complex psychological phenomenon - knowledge and beliefs about the national group and many feelings and emotions are associated with it. Its significance varies from situation to situation. It is a dynamic structure, which may or may not be mobilised. In other words it is the same as our other identities - context dependent.

Associated behaviours

Connected to many different activities in a child's life:

- The language they learn to speak
- The content of the school curriculum
- National holidays and festivals
- What is watched on TV
- The food they eat

Daily life is permeated by things that are related to national identity, but are unnoticeably so (**Billig**).

Empirical findings on national self-categorisation

Development of national self-categorisation

Open ended interviewing used by **Carrington & Short** (1995-6), **Piaget & Weil** (1951) and **Lambert & Klineberg** (1967) to investigate.

Piaget & Weil - Under 5, children knew they lived in Geneva. 5-6, children typically knew the name of their own country, but some denied they were Swiss.

Lambert & Klineberg supports - study of 6,10 & 14 y.o in 10 countries. Some 6 y.o. could name their country but referred to their national group as 'they' / 'them'.

Methodological issues:

Danger of prompting particular responses though - e.g. **C&S** - 'Are you British or are you something else?'

Children's responses can be biased by social desirability effects - e.g. xenophobic answers not being given; open-ended interviews are cognitively demanding for children.

Barrett et al investigated using cards with possible self-categorisation on them - national and state; supranational; city; gender; ages plus distracter terms used. Less cognitively demanding approach as recognition rather than recall is required to categorise.

Found that by age 6, most children know the name of their national group but also choose it to describe themselves.

Same studies also used to assess how much importance children attribute to their national identity.

Two developmental patterns identified, dependent upon their own national group membership.

First pattern: High importance attributed to national identity term from age 6 all the way to age 15. Found in all regions of Spain, for example.

Second pattern: Not important at age 6, importance grows up to age 12. Found in Scotland and Ukraine, for example.

Supranational terms not often chosen by 6 and 9 y.o; by 12 and 15 southern Spanish and northern Italian children used the term 'European' and ascribed relatively high importance to it. English and Scottish children rarely place much importance on this aspect - may explain why we are not the most enthusiastic EU members.

As well as variations as a function of age and nation, location within a country, ethnicity and use of language occur.

Geographical location:

Londoners attribute more importance to British & English identity than children elsewhere in the South East.

Possible reasons - availability of national emblems in the capital; knowledge of living in the capital; cosmopolitan nature of capital.

Ethnicity:

White English adolescents attribute significantly higher importance to British and English identities than London-born Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black African peers (**Barrett**). Not surprising on Englishness (studies by **Parekh, Phoenix** support); Britishness somewhat more surprising as it is often used as a super-ordinate and inclusive category for all UK ethnic groups.

Possible reasons: 1. **Hall, Parekh** argue concept of Britishness embedded in the colonial past - minority groups therefore seen as subordinate, therefore difficult for them to identify with Britishness today.

2. Responses a consequence of religious beliefs - for example, a Muslim may identify more with this than any national affiliation.
3. The 'British', like the 'English' category is defined on racial lines by many (e.g **Phoenix, Modood et al, Parekh, Shah**) [**Shah** compares 'Chinese' with 'British' - some people don't think of a black or brown face as Chinese, same with British]

Language:

Use of languages affects importance of national identity, even where a child lives in the same location and belongs to the same ethnic group.

E.g. Catalonia - importance attributed to Catalan or Spanish identity varies as a function of language spoken (**Vila et al**). Similar findings in the Basque country and in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Speaking a language is unlikely to be a causal factor - instead, a child's use of language is more likely to be a product of the parent's choices, values and practices.

Theoretical implications of variability in development

National identification therefore is a function of five main factors:

1. Child's age
2. Nation
3. Geographical location within the nation
4. Ethnicity
5. Language use

This variability causes major problems for any theory (such as Piaget's) which proposes all children develop in the same way, irrespective of the national or cultural setting they are in.

Children's views about other people's membership of national groups

Children's beliefs about criteria

Carrington and Short asked 8-12 y.o.'s in Britain and America 'What makes a person British/American?'

	Birth place	English Language	1 st Language	Place of Residence	Nationality of Parents	Legal Ctn'n'shp
UK	65	32	18	17	-	
US	64	-	31	11	16	

'Can you stop being British/American and become something else?'

When a child said 'yes' most frequent reason was because 'you can go to live somewhere else'.

Two noticeable differences:

UK - you can change the language you speak => can stop being British for this reason and if a child said 'no' to this question, the explanation of birthplace more common to UK children (33%) than US.

Penny, Barrett and Lyons - 8 statements for testing English & Scottish children (6 and 12 y.o.):

This child ...

1. Born in Scotland/England
2. Speaks Scottish/English
3. Has Scottish/English parents
4. Lives in Scotland/England
5. is Christian
6. is white
7. is 8 years old
8. goes to school

28 possible pairs; all presented. Children respond to task in similar way regardless of age/national group

If pair contained:

Born, the children chose that person; followed by speaks (if born absent); followed by parents (if born/speaks both absent); followed by lives (if all three preceding absent). Age and 'goes to school' usually disregarded.

Children's beliefs about people who belong to different national groups

e.g. **Piaget & Weil**; **Lambert & Klineberg**

Evidence from interview studies show national stereotypes are acquired at around 5 y.o.

At 5/6 years, they report typical characteristics of a few major national groups - physical features, traits.

10/11 years, many produce detailed descriptions - physical features, traits, clothing, language, habits, politics, religious beliefs.

Children's feelings about different national groups

Open ended questions - **Piaget & Weil**; Lickert scales - **Barrett & Short**; assignment of +ve and -ve traits - **Barrett et al.** Common finding emerge regardless of method used: *children generally prefer their own national group over all others*. This bias is present at all ages between 6 and 15; present in most countries where children have been tested.

Exceptions - **Tajfel** - Scottish children in late 60's; more recent (**Bennett et al, 1998**) now show same ingroup favouritism (devolution? rise of nationalism?).

Different findings on different measures - more ingroup favouritism apparent (**Barrett et al**) if like/dislike scale used than positivity/negativity trait scales used. On the trait task, Scottish children did not show ingroup favouritism until 15; Italian children no longer showed it after 6. Causes real problems for universal accounts of development - e.g. Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory.

Children do show evidence of liking other national groups, but to a lesser extent than their own ingroup. Outgroup denigration rare -e.g. English/German; Greeks/Turks - tends to be with historical enemies.

Most polarisation is at 5/6 years most +ve towards own, less +ve towards outgroups.

R'ship between national attitudes and identification

Barrett et al investigated - found no evidence of a relationship between children's strength of national identification and their attitudes to other national groups, however measured. Also no relationship between strength of identification and trait attributions to their ingroup.

Strength of national identification is related to how much children like their ingroup, at all ages.

Sources of children's beliefs about other groups

Lambert & Klineberg report learning about other groups is from parents, direct contact, television, films for 6 y.o.

10-14 y.o. report TV, films, books, school course work, textbooks, magazines.

Barrett and Short report for English children 5-10 y.o. TV is particularly important - parents, books, holidays are also mentioned.

Holloway and Valentine used a different method for British and NZ children - emailing each other with descriptions of what they thought each other's countries were like. Frequent references to media (Coronation Street; Crocodile Dundee); British children often confused NZ and Aus.

Himmelweit et al found TV influencing beliefs about national groups as far back as 1958 - 10-14 y.o. children had beliefs that matched portrayals on TV in a way that children who did not watch TV did not.

Historical conflicts between nations (**English & Halperin, Hesse and Mack**) responsible for negative feelings.

Is children's understanding of national group membership historically specific?

Recent studies show findings very similar to research carried out in the 1950s/1960s - particularly w.r.t. the common occurrence of ingroup favouritism and less positive views of historical enemies, despite the many changes of the last 50 years. More research on this is required.

Other aspects of the sense of national identity in children

Children's knowledge of national emblems increases with age (**Jahoda; Weinstein**) - but little known about how this happens.

It is possible emotional responses to emblems varies with ethnicity - e.g. Afrikaans vs English speakers in SA - stronger preference for national flag/anthem amongst Afrikaans speakers (**Moodie, 1980**).

Hengst found 9-12 y.o. English children thought English were liked abroad, c.f. German children of a similar age who did not - Nazi/world war associations? But no concrete evidence about individual differences or age group differences as to the extent to which these views were expressed.

Theoretical explanations of national id dev'ment

Cognitive-developmental explanation

Piaget & Weil locate a discontinuity in child development at 7-8 y.o and 10-11 y.o. First relates to achieving concrete-operational understanding - i.e. spatial inclusion of cities in nations; second to formal-operational understandings - i.e. abstract concept of national group membership. As a child's cognitive abilities develop, so does their understanding of nations and national identity.

Jahoda undermines this - showed many details in the description were incorrect, the underlying view that a child's understanding is dependent on their cognitive abilities continues. For example:

About argues there are discontinuities, but at 6-7 y.o. Here, ingroup favouritism reaches a peak. Between 6-12 y.o. polarisation decreases as children find more -ve characteristics in their ingroup and +ve ones in the outgroup. She argues this is due to the increase in cognitive ability in middle childhood - i.e. the onset of conservation, ability to use multiple classifications, the ability to see beyond superficial differences.

Can therefore explain why there is a decrease in ingroup favouritism and increase in outgroup regard.

Fails to explain why within different countries there are differences in the development of national identifications as functions of location, ethnicity and language used.

Does not explain why traditional enemies are regarded significantly more -vely.

Most importantly, it does not explain why some populations do not show ingroup favouritism at 6y.o, not why some populations do not change their attitudes between 6-12y.o. - **these findings run directly counter to this theory.**

Social identity explanation

Not formulated to explain developmental phenomena, but has been applied by others to the development of national identity.

+ve self-worth comes from identification with the ingroup; comparisons with outgroups are chosen to make ingroup appear superior. But for this to occur, individuals must internalise social group membership as part of their self-concept. If identification is weak, then ingroup favouritism will not occur.

Therefore, if subjective identification is a precondition for ingroup favouritism, the strength of subjective identification should be related to the individual's attitudes towards their ingroup and other's outgroups.

Available evidence does not support strength of national identification is related to attitudes towards national outgroups.

Attitudes to ingroups show only that the strength of the correlation is only to how much children like their ingroup - not to +ve/-ve trait attributions to the ingroup.

National identification not correlated to discrepancies between ingroup and outgroup attitudes (**Barrett et al**).

Nesdale argues there are four phases in the development of national and ethnic identities:

1. before 2-3 y.o - undifferentiated - national identity not important.
2. 3y.o. - awareness emerges. Self-identification as a member of the ingroup occurs (carries on until 10-11y.o)
3. 4y.o. onwards - bias towards ingroup emerges as a result of identification with the ingroup. Outgroups not disliked - merely a strengthening of ingroup preferences.
4. 7y.o. onwards - focus shifts to outgroups - prejudice and -veity can occur. Depends on three factors:
 - (i) level of id with ingroup
 - (ii) extent other ingroup members hold -ve views of outgroup
 - (iii) extent ingroup believes it is under threat.

Fails to account for evidence that shows ingroup favouritism does not always occur.

Contrary to the theory, traditional enemies are liked less than other outgroups

Therefore, this theory is not well supported by evidence.

Towards an empirically adequate explanation

Any adequate theory must be capable of explaining the variability that occurs in this domain.

Evidence shows that the development of national identity is impacted by all of the following influences:

- The media
- Schooling
- Family background
- Cognitive-developmental
- Social identity

The balance between them will differ from nation to nation and in social groups within nations. The content of national representations will also depend on media exposure, school, family, geographical location - therefore unreasonable to expect a universal pattern to be found in the development of national identity.

Future research is required into exactly how family, schooling & media representations impact on the development of national identity.

Pace of change - technological, social over the last 50 years, attitudes to national identity have far reaching consequences -> therefore, developmental psychology has a role to play in informing educational curricula to ensure children are prepared for the diverse and globalised world they will face as adults.