

# THE FALLACY OF MISPLACED IDENTITY IN MACEDONIA AND LITHUANIA

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## ABSTRACT

Using case studies from Macedonia and Lithuania, the authors develop a three level theory of the formation and dynamics of national identity. Case study material is used to show how first order levels of identity such as common language, religion, ethnicity and history are by themselves unmotivated until they are anthropomorphized as national characteristics and capacities, usually in heroic proportion. This second level order of national identity gives life to national identity but also can emphasize differences between different groups of people; a third epistemological level is often required which, if it is effective is a way of selectively emphasizing similarities and eliding differences across these disparate groups that constitute the nation. This theoretical model integrates “top down” and “bottom up” approaches to understanding the formation of national identity and case studies are used to support and illustrate the theory.

KEY WORDS: national identity, Macedonia, Lithuania, epistemology identity, scale of integration, selective knowing.

## ANOTACIJA

Straipsnio autoriai, remdamiesi savo tyrimais Makedonijoje ir Lietuvoje, toliau aptaria savo anksčiau suformuluotos tautinio identiteto formavimosi bei dinamikos trijų lygmenų teorijos teiginius. Minėti tyrimai liudija aiškiai apibrėžtus šių trijų lygmenų parametrus. Pirmuoju atveju tapatus identitetas konkrečioje bendruomenėje yra suvokiamas jau pašamonėje glūdinčiais objektyviais pavienių individų analogiškais kalbos, religijos, etniškumo bei istorinės patirties aspektais. Jie sudaro nacionalinių tautos gyvenimosi bruožų pagrindus. Antrasis tautinio identiteto lygmuo – realus šio proceso vyksmas, kur atskiros asmenų grupės išsiaiškina ir apibrėžia tam tikrus tarpusavio skirtingumus. Trečiasis, epistemologinis, lygmuo tampa aktualus tais atvejais, kai atrankos būdu tenka aptarti tokius tapatumus ar skirtingumus, kurie yra sąmoningai nutylimi atskirų socialinių grupių tarpusavio santykiuose. Toks teorinis trijų lygmenų modelis leidžia abiem kryptimis („iš viršaus“ ir „iš apačios“) išskirti tautinio identiteto sampratos sudėtines dalis. Tyrimai Lietuvoje ir Makedonijoje pateikia ir realius pavyzdžius šiai teorijai praktiškai pagrįsti.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: tautinis identitetas, Makedonija, Lietuva, identitetas, epistemologija, integracijos laipsniai, pasirinktas supratimas.

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The focus of most texts on national identity are on issues concerning invented traditions<sup>1</sup>, imagined community<sup>2</sup>, language, ethnicity, cultural heritage and other social constructs that can be used to promote a shared national culture. Usually, the focus of such texts is on hegemonic designs of national identity imposed from the top down. The emphasis, if it is on the ordinary people, is on forms

<sup>1</sup> See: HOBBSAWM, Eric & RANGER, Terence (eds.). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> See: ANDERSON, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2006 (new ed.).

of resistance and hidden transcripts. In this paper we propose that the non-elite members of a culture are also active agents in constructing a national identity and that a national identity is not only based on sharing common attributes of identity but on an epistemology of knowing by which otherness is made familiar. We also propose a scale for measuring the integration of national identity forms. Our study uses Lithuanian and Macedonian examples to extend our empirical knowledge and understanding of national identity and for the development of a scale of national identity integration.

### A Three Level Theory of National Identity

In two earlier papers the first author made a distinction between first, second and third order levels and components of national identity<sup>3</sup>. Briefly, a first order level of identity consists of top-down homogenising components formulated and marketed by and for the national cultural elite. These components are posited to be essential and “natural” components for defining a person as a genuine, 100%, citizens of a nation-state. The main first order components of national identity are: language, religion, common history, and ethnicity. The more of these components that are combined and considered essential, the more exclusive and “hard” the normative definition of national identity; the fewer of these components and/or the more variable their saliency (some being seen as essential and others as preferred but not essential), the more inclusive and porous the normative definition of national identity (by normative, we mean the generally accepted “official” definition of national identity). Through the imputed articulation of first order components a larger collective system is created that functions as a gestalt of and for national identity. To emphasize again, such identity forms (or gestalten) are always formulated or constructed by agents of the state and/or the social, economic and cultural elite.

These first-order components are used to construct invented traditions. Invented traditions are defined as “(...) a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (...). However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition”<sup>4</sup>.

Thus the manifold functions of invented traditions is to legitimize state institutions and authority as well as to create collective identities that receive their value in their continuity with the past which, in turn can be called on for collective action that supports the state. Such inventions are made culturally iconic via cultural heritage sites and state apparatuses that formulate, make material, and propagandize these invented traditions<sup>5</sup>. But first order identity components are not enough. For a conception of national identity to have motivational force one needs more than a checklist of first-order components; one needs to contextualize and to insufflate these first-order components by endowing them with personality and character, thus showing through illustrative

<sup>3</sup> See: de MUNCK, Victor. Primary, Secondary and Metamagical Constituents of Identity in Lithuania. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2005, p. 209–232; de MUNCK, Victor. First, Second, and Finally Third Order Understandings of Lithuanian National Identity. *Mintis ir veiksmas*, Vol. 1, 2007, p. 51–78.

<sup>4</sup> HOBBSAWM, E. & RANGER, T. (...) 1983, p. 1f.

<sup>5</sup> See: FRIEDMAN, Jonathan. The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 94, No. 4, 1992, p. 837–838; GRAHAM, Brian. Heritage as Knowledge: Capital or Cultural? *Urban studies*, Vol. 39, No. 5–6, 2002, p. 1004.

concrete examples, how the members of a nation are supposed to act. This is where second and third order levels of identity come into play.

Components of the first-order level of national identity are used to create invented traditions and conceptions of an “imagined [national] community.” However, as the good soldier Schweik, George Orwell<sup>6</sup> in his autobiographical story of shooting an elephant while a colonial administrator in Burma, and James Scott have all shown<sup>7</sup> power is not merely the genie for the bourgeoisie but also serves the proletariat. Further, first-order components must be more than some set of rules or “cultural representations.” they must be capable of inspiring devotion and serving as projective systems with which people identify and which motivate people; in short, they should have personality if they are to be reified. First order systems of identity remain abstract, distant, or non-motivating representations until life is breathed into them. Few if any people are motivated by ideas alone; rather they are motivated by how the ideas alter the conditions of one’s life.

The function of second order level of identity is to insufflate the components of the first order level with life. The second-order level is very different from the first order in that it is not authored by anyone in particular; it is not class-centered, if anything it rises from the bottom up. Second-order components originate as jokes, folktales, ordinary stories, and actions that are transmitted and distributed across a people as cultural “memes”<sup>8</sup> or “epidemiologically”<sup>9</sup>. Second order components are always understood as scenarios or stories that include things people do, think, and feel in particular situations. They often articulate with the first order components, as the story the first author mentioned in an earlier article where a Lithuanian explained how Lithuanians were hard people who, unlike Americans, were not easily dismayed by getting their toes stepped on in trolleybuses, waiting a long time for the waiter to bring coffee, or being bumped while walking down the narrow streets of Vilnius. There are many other examples of the tough or hard quality of Lithuanians that were collected, and indicate that the trait “hard” is distributed across many different situations and contexts. and not easily dismayed by having their toes stepped on in a trolleybus. Thus, second order components refer to the general characteristics or traits of a people; jealousy, hospitality, and familial loyalty are examples of second order features.

Finally, the third-order level of national identity is not so much based on the content of an identity, but on *ways of knowing* intra-group patterns of difference. For instance, in two previous articles, the first author, with reference to Lithuania, emphasized how older and younger generations recognize their respective differences as complementary rather than oppositional, with the older generation reflecting the values, beliefs, aesthetics, and character traits of Soviet times and the young reflecting a new aesthetics and its co-occurring values, beliefs, practices and character traits.

### **Macedonian and Lithuanian Case Studies Illustrating the Three-level Approach to Constructing National Identity**

This third order *epistemological level* is critical for the construction of a functioning national identity system because there is too much variation among the citizens of any one nation for its

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<sup>6</sup> See: ORWELL, George. *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*. London: Penguin, 1936 [2003].

<sup>7</sup> See: SCOTT, James. *Weapons of the Weak*. New Haven: Yale University press, 1987; SCOTT, James. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991; SCOTT, James. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> See: DAWKINS, Richard. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> See: SPERBER, Dan. *Explaining Culture: A Naturalistic Approach*. London: Blackwell, 1996.

members to “naturally” feel as if they are “one”<sup>10</sup>. Some psycho-cultural mechanism needs to be operating and therefore described by the researcher in order to resolve the problem of citizens of one nation holding opposing values, beliefs and practices while still reckoning one another as full citizens of the nation. For instance, in Lithuania where Catholicism is the state religion, how do atheists, pagans and Catholics subordinate their religious differences to still recognize each other as 100% Lithuanians? These particular religious differences (i.e., those between Catholics and atheists or neo-pagans) must somehow be perceived as irrelevant to the construction of a prototypical Lithuanian citizen, while being Jewish or Roma are not. This third order epistemological level of national identity is therefore critical to the construction of a national identity that can function as a collective motivational system. We will suggest that this is the importance of national holidays, famous people, sports and other kinds of activities whereby the members of a nation can elide their differences, in the motivated and strongly emotional expression of their national identity, *per se*, without explicit regard to first-order components of identity, but as indicators of second-order components.

For instance, the most famous Macedonian footballer is an Albanian, Artim Šakiri, who was often cheered by Macedonians as “Alexa” or “Alexander,” a reference to Alexander the Great. All Macedonians still can replay his corner kick that helped Macedonia to a 2-2 tie with England in the 2002 World Cup qualifying rounds. His status as being the most brilliant footballer, able to stalemate and hold the far more populous and larger country of England in check are highlighted over the fact that he is Albanian and his mother tongue is Albanian and not Macedonian. This sort of “*selective knowing*” allows for creative flexibility in the use of first order and second order level components and their integration.

These three levels of national identity are independent of each other; one doesn’t automatically entail the other. The third level, that is the epistemological level, allows for the psycho-cultural integration and use of first and second order levels in flexible ways that allow for the formation of a collective (in this case, national) identity. When this third order way of knowing integrates first and second level components, subsuming differences as part of a larger mosaic national identity, then a seamlessly naturalized and coherent national identity system is formulated. However, the Macedonian way of knowing Šakiri, as if he were of Macedonian blood, was perceived as an insult by many Albanians. In this case, the way of knowing Macedonian national identity via the connection of a first order level of national identity-ethnicity, and a second order level – as an invincible warrior – is hard and exclusive and leaves out 20-30% of the residents of Macedonia (estimates of Albanians living in Macedonia vary)<sup>11</sup>.

First, second and third order levels of national identity are always in a dynamic relationship, largely because ways of knowing can vary and shift the way first and second order components are interpreted and linked to each other. When first and second order levels are integrated seamlessly the national identity is stable and coherent; when they are not, the national identity is fragmented and incoherent. Always of course the identity is changing. However, when these identities are not integrated, then those who are left out of the national identity will voice their opposition in ways that range from vocal to violent. The opposition will be focused on the ways of knowing the linka-

<sup>10</sup> In other words, how people develop and feel unity in the face of differences needs to be explained and not presumed.

<sup>11</sup> There are large numbers of undocumented Albanians and Romas living in Macedonia; they are not counted in the census. Macedonians typically underestimate their number and Albanians overestimate them. By underestimating estimates, Macedonians show that affirmative action policies are effective; by overestimating, Albanians and Romas show that they are underrepresented in universities, the administration and for aid projects.

ges between first and second order components of identity. We will demonstrate how the approach above can be used to analyze, predict and help resolve social divisiveness among the citizens of a nation-state. Due to limits of space we provide only two examples, both of them will involve self referencing jokes.

We begin with a Lithuanian joke recounted by Linas Svolkinas in a multi-authored book on Vilnius<sup>12</sup>:

A narrator tells about how God decided to create a human being. God, the narrator said, decided to create as many human beings as possible. He took small pieces of clay and started to model humans. He made them in all shapes, sizes and colours. But suddenly he comes to the end of his clay but one of the creatures still needed to be finished. Then god looked around to see if anybody was watching him and he took a small piece of his own shit and finished shaping the last one. Then god set all the creatures free on the earth. God was happy with his work and watched how everybody lived in freedom and peace. However after for a while he could not see his shit man. He looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Then he decided to go himself to the earth and look for him. God travelled around the earth but could not find him. Then he reached a dark and gloomy wood. He decided to look for him there and unexpectedly he found a hut in the middle of the forest. He knocked on the door but nobody answered. He opened the door and what he found was the shit man sitting near a table. God was very happy to at last see his own creature. Enthusiastically He asked the creature, “How are you doing my lovely little shit man?” And the shit man very obnoxiously answers: “*Prašyčiau kalbėti su manimi lietuviškai*” (“In Lithuanian please!”). [ibid, P. 75–76]

The second joke is a Macedonian one:

An American, Albanian and Macedonian were captured by a cannibal. The cannibal was preparing to eat them when all three begged for their lives. The cannibal said, “very well, you can pay me, dig a hole or eat grass like a cow and I will let you go.” The American gave the cannibal money and was let go, the Albanian dug a deep hole and was freed; the Macedonian first dug a hole but the cannibal said “not deep enough,” then he ate grass but the cannibal said “not enough” and then finally he paid the cannibal and was allowed to go.

Both stories indicate second-order character trait of Lithuanians and Macedonians respectively, the first of stubborn pride with the first order system of language; the second, a kind of casualness of character that both Albanians and Macedonians recognize as an ethnic difference. Below we present two third order ways of knowing to show how Lithuanian third-order “ways of knowing” are organized not around inter-ethnic divisions but among generational divisions, while in Macedonia they are organized primarily around ethnic divisions. The examples are meant to illustrate how intergenerational distinctions can, much more easily, be elided and subsumed as a way of creating unity, than can ethnic divisions.

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<sup>12</sup> See: de MUNCK, Victor; de MUNCK, E.T.; ANTANAVIČIŪTĖ, R. & SVOLKINAS L. *Experiencing Vilnius: Insider – Outsider Perspectives*. Vilnius: Kronta, 2009.

## When Invented Traditions Fail

In Macedonia, the years after independence (in 1991) have been marked by a constant quest for nationalizing history and historical artefacts. An example of this is the renaming of streets, schools, culture centres and other institutions. Thus, if a foreign visitor to the Capitol, Skopje, tries to find his way to the City Museum, he will look in vain for the famous street “Marshal Tito”. This street, as many others, has been renamed as a result of the attempts to “clear” the city of its socialist past. The visitor would seek in vain for “Edvard Kardelj” Boulevard, “Ivo Lola Ribar” street, or “Boris Kidric” high school. The same happened in almost all settlements in Macedonia. In the period that followed only very few of the places were immune to the changes.

Another (more controversial) wave of changes occurred in 2008: the two airports in the country were renamed “Alexander of Macedon” Airport and “St. Paul” Airport; the City Stadium in Skopje was renamed “Philip of Macedon” Arena; one part of the main highway (E-75) was re-named name “Alexander of Macedon” as well. Still, the most astonishing is the announcement for placing a 30 m high monument of Alexander the Great at the central square of the capital at an estimated cost of 14 million dollars<sup>13</sup>. These initiatives provoke extensive debates among the people and the scientific community. Dunja Rihtman-Augustin<sup>14</sup> incorporates the phenomenon of renaming of the streets, boulevards, squares, schools with names which correspond to the new social and political constellations, in the group of *political symbols*. On the other hand, the Israeli researcher of societal transformations in Eastern-European countries, Maoz Azaryahu, calls these changes – *renaming the past*<sup>15</sup>.

However, people seem largely cynical of the most recent “inventions” as was acknowledged by the mayor of Skopje in a May 2009 interview when he said:

There has been a fuss made in the public as if we are doing a terrible damage to the state, I regret this. The monuments are marvellous, fascinating. We will have something to be proud of in two or three years.

A former leader of the Socialist Democratic Party, Radmila Sekerinska, argued that “this is no time for Alexander-mania”. The current party in power the VMRO has held control for two concurrent elections and has come to power on a nationalist theme. In political advertising for the VMRO claims not only that Alexander the Great was Macedonian but that there is genetic proof that the Caucasian “race” emerged from Macedonians and thus Macedonians are the Ur-ancestors of all Caucasians.

These inventions of tradition are controversial, not just because they hinder Macedonia’s attempt to become a member of the European Union, since they arouse the wrath of the Greeks, but also many, if not most, Macedonians would rather that politicians use state funds for the improvement of their lives and not for the “invention of traditions”. Consequently these sites are ineffective, as ordinary Macedonians can not identify with such monumental projects in a time of economic crises, (that includes an unemployment rate around 35%). Further, almost all Macedonians (and Albanians) believe was surety, that the political-economic system is completely corrupt. The building

<sup>13</sup> Rumors typically estimate the costs to be much higher – as high as 100 million Euros.

<sup>14</sup> See: RIHTMAN-AUGUŠTIN, Dunja. *Ulice moga grada. Antropologija domačeg terena*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek., 2000, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

of the Alexander the Great statue, far from symbolizing the heroic past of Macedonians symbolizes is an iconic manifestation of that corruptness.

As a counter example, the Sri Lankan government has invented traditions and developed cultural heritage sites that are closely identified with the concerns of “ordinary” people by blending them with large-scale development projects meant to improve the lives of ordinary people permanently<sup>16</sup>. In contrast, these traditions are not linked with any objectives to improve the lives of ordinary people, but they are framed as cultural objects—projects unto themselves. In this context, even those in favour of these projects feel that these are economically profligate projects that squander public good will and capital. Further, if Macedonians espouse their Ur-ancestry as the founders of the Caucasian race, where does this leave the Romas and Albanians? From that perspective, of course, as second class citizens and thus starts a schismogeneic process where each increase their own nationalist identity in opposition to the other. This schismogenesis is illustrated by the current building of a traditional Macedonian orthodox church alongside the downtown square of Skopje. The Albanians, outraged by putting a church in the centre of the city, are arguing that as there was a mosque in the square area a new mosque must also be built there. The point is that invented traditions are only effective when all levels are integrated together and the invented traditions are not imposed on a people from the top down. While the government has power, and the elite do invent the traditions, societal memory constrains what is legitimate and psychologically effective. Thus, second and third order levels of national identity building cannot be ignored.

Let us clarify some of the points above. First an ideal, well-integrated and stable national identity would look something like this (see Fig. 1):

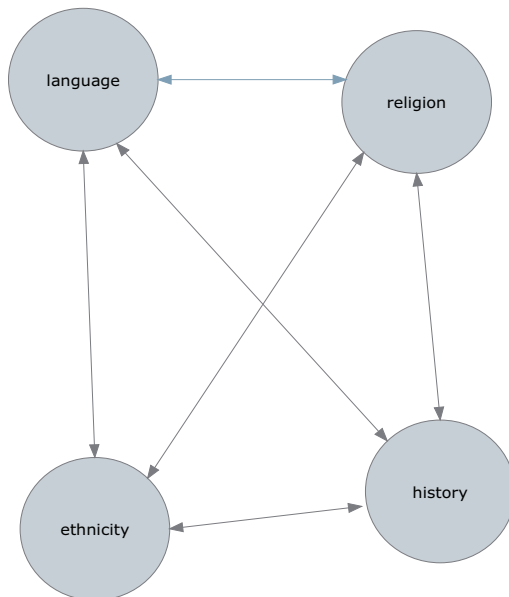


Fig. 1. Theoretical Gestalt of Well-Integrated and Stable National Identity

<sup>16</sup> TENNEKOON, N. Serena. Rituals of Development: the Accelerated Mahavali Development Program of Sri Lanka. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 15, 1988, p. 294–310.

In this figure Ethnicity, Language, Religion, and notion of a common History all fit together without any significant disputes or alternative versions. In countries like the United States you have a national identity that approaches this as most of the ethnic groups speak the same language (English) and perceive themselves part of a common national history. The master narrative of American history is that it is a nation of immigrants, and so there is not only no motivation but it is virtually impossible to construct a common invented tradition based on primary identities. Any such attempt would create more division than unity. However, one can create commonality through secondary and third level order as the secondary one's focus on personality traits and ideologies – democracy, ambition, drive, independence, etc. – and the third order focuses on ways of knowing the other. In this case the focus is on a shared ideology of freedom, self reliance, and democracy and not on blood and language and even a common ancestral history. Hence there is no collective motivation to construct traditional of national identity that excludes other immigrants through first order constituents of identity. I suggest that in terms of first order systems of identity the U.S., Lithuania and Macedonia fall along the following scale.



*Fig. 2.* Scale of Integration of First-Order National Identity Systems

The scale is meant for heuristic purposes as an approximation. Ethnicity is a system of “felt similarity” among a people based on common ancestry. Without a collective feeling of “felt similarity” ethnicity does not function as a system. This felt system of first order identity is expressed in contrast to other ethnicities. Thus, Lithuanians of Lithuanian descent feel themselves to be the repositories of Lithuanian language, culture, and history, and a love of Lithuanian nature and these commonalities distinguish them from Russians, Jews, Romas, Poles, and other nationalities that may be living as citizens of the state of Lithuania. As the systems of semantics, grammar, morphology, and phonetics constitute language, so the second order and third order systems support this first order collective feeling of a unique ethnicity with common traits, heritage, traditions, experiences, and so on.

## Conclusion

We have argued that secondary constituents of identity are precipitates of experience and are devices by which the individual frames his or her relationship to their behavioural environment. Secondary constituents create heterogeneity in the face of the homogenizing force of the primary constituents of identity. The primary constituents of identity – language, ethnicity, common history, religion – serve as the foundation for constructing invented traditions that reflect these primary constituents. However these sorts of “invented traditions” are too crudely and conspicuously “invented” and will remain ultimately controversial, divisive – unless they acknowledge the secondary constituents of identity through the third level of unifying disparate identities – that is by ways of knowing the “other” as a sister and brother. The epistemological order is important because it



allows for a tacit synthesis of primary and secondary constituents of identity and creates the possibility of talking about a common cultural heritage that is inclusive, not exclusive.

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## NETIKSLIAI APIBRĖŽTOS TAPATYBĖS PASEKMĖS MAKEDONIJOJE IR LIETUVOJE

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#### S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnio autoriai, remdamiesi savo tyrimais Makedonijoje ir Lietuvoje, toliau aptaria dar 2005 m. Victorio C. de Muncko suformuluotos tautinio identiteto formavimosi bei dinamikos trijų lygmenų teorijos teiginius. Minėti tyrimai liudija aiškiai apibrėžtus šių trijų lygmenų parametrus. Pirmuoju atveju identitetas konkrečioje bendruomenėje yra suvokiamas jau pasąmonėje glūdinčiais objektyviais pavienių individų analogiškos kalbos, religijos, etniškumo bei istorinės patirties aspektais. Jie sudaro nacionalinių tautos gyvensenos bruožų pagrindus. Antrasis tautinio identiteto lygmuo – realus šio proceso vyksmas, kur atskiros asmenų grupės išsiaiškina ir apsibrėžia tam tikrus

tarpusavio skirtingumus. Trečiasis, epistemologinis, lygmuo tampa aktualus tais atvejais, kai atrankos būdu tenka aptarti tokius tapatumus ar skirtingumus, kurie yra sąmoningai nutylimi atskirų socialinių grupių tarpusavio santykiuose. Toks teorinis trijų lygmenų modelis leidžia abiem kryptimis („iš viršaus“ ir „iš apačios“) išskirti tautinio identiteto sampratos sudėtinės dalis. Tyrimai Lietuvoje ir Makedonijoje pateikia ir realius pavyzdžius šiai teorijai praktiškai pagrįsti.

Detaliau aptariant šią sistemą teigiama, kad pirmojo lygmens komponentai turėtų išeiti iš elementarių „kultūrinio atstovavimo“ ribų. Jie turi sudaryti galimybes inspiuoti individualios atsakomybės bei atsidavimo savo apsibrėžtam identitetui jausmus ir tapti atskaitos taškais motyvuotiems tokio identiteto nusistatymo atvejams. Kitaip tariant, jie gali kilti ir būti materializuojami ne įvairaus lygmens bendruomenės, o pavienių individų sąmonėje. Pirmasis identiteto apibrėžties lygmuo bendruomenės atžvilgiu lieka abstraktus, nepastovus ir nepakankamai motyvuotas, kol visa tai nėra patikrinama ir patikslinama antrajame lygmenyje – realiame gyvenime.

Lietuvoje yra pastebimas skirtingas identiteto traktavimas atskirų piliečių kartų, augusių ir brenusių sovietiniu laikotarpiu (pirmasis atvejis) ir nepriklausomybės laikotarpiu (antrasis atvejis) sampratoje. Tai sudaro prielaidas atsirasti trečiajam (epistemologiniam) identiteto raiškos lygmeniui, nes pavieniai individai kultūrinės patirtis ir vertybes gali suvokti skirtingai. Skirtingai jie gali suvokti ir identiteto „tapatumų“ bei „skirtingumų“ ribas, individualiai ieškoti būdų pažinti ir teigiamai priimti minėtus skirtingumus.

Taigi antrasis ir trečiasis identiteto sampratos lygmuo gali tolygiai ir vaisingai prisidėti prie visai tautai aktualios, aiškios ir visai bendruomenei priimtinos nacionalinio identiteto visuminės sampratos suformulavimo ir brandaus jos esmės suvokimo.