

# The Development and Test of a Measure of Youth's Ethnic and National Identity

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## Abstract

Comparatively few studies quantitatively examine the mechanisms underlying the formation of and change in young immigrants' ethnic and host country national identifications. A key reason for this research gap is the lack of an accurate measure of ethnic and national identity that meets the demands of integration research, i.e., includes a native reference group and is applicable to various age groups. In this article, we propose and test such a measure.

As ethnic identity and national identity both are types of social identity, our measure distinguishes three crucial dimensions of social identity. The cognitive dimension not only captures whether immigrants and their descendants actually conceive of themselves as belonging to the country of origin of their families but also captures the presence of potential dual identities. The evaluative dimension assesses how non-native and native youths evaluate their group memberships, respectively. Finally, the emotional dimension measures their respective strength of commitment towards their family's country of origin as well as towards the host country.

After presenting our measure of ethnic and of national identity, we test it quantitatively on native and non-native children and youths aged between 9 and 17 years. Our analyses confirm the suspected multi-dimensionality of both ethnic and national identity. We also ascertain the invariance of our measure across immigrants and natives as well as across different immigrant generations and age groups. The results further indicate strong reliability and construct validity. We therefore conclude that our proposed measure not only adequately captures different dimensions of ethnic and of national identity but that it is also applicable to different ethnic and age groups, thereby providing a valuable tool for studying immigrants' identification.

**Keywords:** Ethnic identity, national identity, social identity, identification, integration, migration, immigrants















































