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## ***National Identity in the Science and Social Studies Textbooks***

### **Extended summary**

The paper presents the results of a research conducted with the aim of determining the contribution of Science and Social Studies textbooks in the formation and strengthening of the national identity of younger students in primary school. The formation of supra-national unions, such as the European Union, along with the undergoing processes of becoming members of the EU, represent a new and insufficiently researched socio-cultural context for studying the national identity of students and the role of textbooks in this process. The theoretical part of the paper provides an overview of different conceptualizations of the concept of national identity, as well as an overview of the research on the role of program frameworks and educational content in the development of the national identity of children and young generation.

Investigating the topic of national identity in the Science and Social Studies textbooks is important for several theoretical and practical reasons. This school subject has been identified as the basis for building and preserving national identity in the first cycle of primary education. Accordingly, the selection, preferred mode of teaching and dimensioning of the content for the subjects The World around Us and Science and Social Studies should support development and encouragement of the national identity in students. A good quality Science and Social Studies textbook, as an important educational, social, and cultural medium for conveying social and governmental values, should contribute gradually and systematically to the development of the students' national identity and their sound identification in terms of nationality. The theoretical importance of dealing with this issue stems from the fact that many relevant aspects related

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to forming, nurturing, and preservation of national identity through education cannot be interpreted only by the existing theoretical assumptions that are commonly explored in sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

In accordance with different conceptualizations, national identity has been operationalized in 11 categories: religion, customs and traditions, national feelings, language, symbols and insignia, solidarity and togetherness, cultural heritage, important personalities, geographical concepts, family, and general information. The method of theoretical analysis and the method of content analysis were applied in the research. The units of analysis are the sentences of the basic text of the textbook. The research included the Science and Social Studies textbooks in the lower grades of primary school (N = 12). The results of the research indicate that textbooks insufficiently contribute to the formation and strengthening of the national identity of the younger school age students, in terms of all considered categories of national identity.

The findings indicate that the representation of national content is minimal, moreover, that there is a dissonance in treating and dimensioning the concept of national identity in the Science and Social Studies textbooks for the lower grades of primary school. The textbook authors allow for a broader and more comprehensive treatment of the intensity and extent of the concept of national identity, as well as dimensioning the national content in a broad spectrum of thematic units. The conducted analysis implies that it is possible and desirable to strengthen the contents of national significance and, to a greater or lesser extent, incorporate them in all thematic units.

Further research should focus on the analysis of other textbooks for the lower grades of primary school from the perspective of their potential for dimensioning, development, and horizontal and vertical integration of the content of national significance. In addition, any further research should explore the (national) orientation in terms of the value system of subject teachers, lower primary teachers, and pre-service primary teachers as a contribution of the relevant higher education institutions to nurturing and empowering national identity.

**Keywords:** national identity, textbooks, Science and Social Studies textbooks, globalization, younger school age students

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