
Call for Papers for issue 2/2026 of the *Journal of Diversity Research and Management*
(*ZDfm: Zeitschrift für Diversitätsforschung und -management*) on:

National identities and nationalism: An eternal quest for belongingness, genuineness, self-worth and strength?

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For many people, territorial affiliations and identities are a key aspect when it comes to describing their own essential make-up, or that of others. Examples of such identity-forming territories include villages, neighbourhoods, cities, and regions. The most powerful territorial notion, however, which often connects smaller-scale territorial identities, is the political concept of the nation. Although this idea is still a relatively young one, having existed only for a few hundred years, and although there have certainly been efforts in the past to create a basis for the establishment of a European identity through European unification processes, national identities within the EU continue “to shape the predominant ways in which people make sense of themselves and others” (Antonsich 2009: 281). Throughout almost the entirety of Europe, recent election results suggest that the importance of national identities over the past decade has probably increased rather than decreased.

In the discourse on diversity, however, this significance is reflected only to a very limited extent. When it comes to processes of demarcation, exclusion, and inclusion or devaluation and revaluation based on origin or descent, the concept most often invoked is the concept of racism. As a result, the identity-forming (and thus also polarising) potentials of national affiliations are wholly overlooked; instead, primarily phenotypic characteristics (such as skin colour) are assumed to be the decisive factor in these processes.

If we take, for example, the numerous controversies and considerable discussion surrounding the 2024 UEFA Men’s European Football Championships, which focused on the extent to which individual players were actually “real” countrymen of the nation for which they were playing, the dynamics involved here could certainly be attributed to some considerable extent to racist perspectives, and thus also to the physical appearance of the players. However, if we examine the more intense and mobilising dynamics that occur within and between the various fan groups in the context of the respective matches (and, to some extent, also between the players and in the interaction between fans and players), then these are clearly nationality-related dynamics linked to the very construct that the players represent in that moment: the nation. Aside from certain religious mass rituals, there are no purely secular events in the present day that have a greater emotionalising potential for such a large number of people – even beyond the specific location of the event – than major football tournaments in which nations compete against each other. Whatever direction it takes, this emotionalization is very strongly linked to a sense of belonging and a desire for self-affirmation, uniqueness and strength. Even the Eurovision Song Contest, a very different sort of competition, which mobilises people on a large scale, can be said

to exhibit a certain nationalist mobilisation, if only because it pits representatives of nations against one another.

These dynamics, based on the political concept of nations and nationalities, are of course not only at work in such institutionalised focal arenas of national identification, but also in everyday life and encounters: for example, in families, circles of friends, associations, and in the workplace. The aim of this special issue is to provide perspectives on these dynamics and thus to further elaborate the specificity and significance of nationality as a dimension of diversity in the diversity discourse. This call is therefore open to all disciplines and combinations of disciplines that can contribute to this debate, such as sociology, psychology, economics, business administration, linguistics, political science, philosophy, pedagogy, media studies, law, cultural studies or history.

Contributions may be empirical, conceptual or theoretical. Possible questions – which are not to be understood as exclusive – might, for example, include:

- How do nationality-related dynamics manifest themselves and how do they affect our daily lives, at work, and in general? What are the relevant categories for national categorisation and self-assurance, and how do they work (language, pronunciation, appearance, views and opinions, length of stay, first and/or last name, religion, family history, etc.)?
- What is the significance of multinational or transnational (encompassing two or more nations), nationless, European, or cosmopolitan/world citizen identities? How do the processes of self-assurance and demarcation play out? What headwinds or tailwinds exist in everyday life, at work, in private environments, religious communities, families, etc.?
- What role does social media play in nationality-related dynamics? What is the role of “national” media in national languages? What role do such media play for people with a history of migration? What is the role of politics?
- What is the role of schools, kindergartens, sports clubs, religious educational institutions, etc.? What are the particularities of nationality-related dynamics and processes in these environments?
- What new or alternative theoretical explanatory models of these dynamics are conceivable?
- How do dynamics based on nationality interact with those based on other dimensions of diversity? How do these dynamics influence each other in terms of shifting, reinforcing or weakening boundaries or tendencies towards appreciation or devaluation?
- How important is formal citizenship (possession of a passport) for national self-identification and identification by others? Which other factors might be more important?
- What is the impact of the legal possibility of dual citizenship? How does this change national self-identification and identification by others? What dynamics lead people to identify more with one nation, with both equally, or with neither?

For the double-blind peer-reviewed section of this special issue, *full papers* should be between 35,000 and a maximum of 45,000 characters (including spaces). We also welcome *short papers* from academics and practitioners: outlines of research projects, pointed statements and (preferably provocative) positions, as well as practical examples and reports. These should be between 12,000 and 15,000 characters (including spaces). Contributions are welcome in German or English.

The deadline for submitting *full papers* on the main topic is 1 November 2025. *Short papers* from science and practice may be submitted up until 1 February 2026.

Please submit your contributions by email to the editor of this special issue. Please also direct any questions you may have about the topic to thomas.koellen@unibe.ch.

On the [website](#), you will find further information for authors on how to structure your contribution and on how to submit manuscripts for open-topic contributions to this and other issues of ZDfm.

I look forward to receiving your submissions!

Thomas Köllen

Reference

Antonsich, Marco (2009). National identities in the age of globalisation: The case of Western Europe. *National Identities*, 11(3), 281–299. doi: 10.1080/14608940903081085

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