

CITIZENSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

UNIT I: CIVIC EDUCATION

SUB-UNIT 1.1. National identity

1.1.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Hello Students, I am Dr. Philibert Gakwenzire, a PhD holder in History and Lecturer in the University of Rwanda - College of Education. I am member of the team who are giving lectures related to Citizenship on this radio.

My colleagues introduced to you the Module of: *Citizenship and Transformative Education* as designed by the University of Rwanda for all first year students. They also explained the reason behind the teaching of this module of *Citizenship and Transformative Education*.

Let's recall that this module is divided into four units, namely Civic Education, Integrity Systems, Human Rights and Peace Education. The first unit, which of *Civic Education*, consists of four parts that are Citizenship, State-building, National identity and Overview of the history of Rwanda in connection with citizenship, state building and national identity. Each sub-unit is presented by lecturers, in a team work with his colleagues. The first one is developed by Mr. Janvier Murenzi. The second by Dr. Innocent Rugaragu. Now, I am taking over with the sub-unit related to "*National identity*" while Dr. Raphael Nkaka will present to you an Overview of the history of Rwanda in connection with citizenship, state building and national identity.

A particular message to students of all first year students. Dear students, you are already informed that above these radio presentations, you can find your course materials on the UR e-learning platform. Keep also in mind that at the end of every unit, you are required to produce a reflective report which will be marked and graded. Therefore, you are expected to follow these lectures attentively, take notes, and do more self-study through further readings on the subject.

As I said, the lecture of today is about *National identity*. *National identity* is one of the concepts which historians have borrowed from the social sciences and then used for their own purposes. The origins of the concept of "identity" is situated in the 1950s and has psychological and sociological meanings that needed to be clarified. In addition, National identity is connected to several concepts that must be defined.

1.1.2. Definition, description and evolution of some concepts

1) The concept of identity

Identity is a socially and historically constructed concept. Anybody learns about his or her own identity and the identity of others through interactions with family, peers, organizations, institutions, media and other connections he/she makes in his/her everyday life.

Key facets of identity—like gender, social class, age, race and ethnicity, religion, etc.—play significant roles in determining how people understand and experience the world, as well as shaping the types of opportunities and challenges they face. Social and cultural identity is linked to issues of power, value systems and ideology.

Identity can be understood in singular terms, like I can say I am male or female, but also as multiple and intersecting parts as being northerner or southerner. Most importantly, these questions lead to consider the meaning of identity. Beyond “who am I?” these questions frame our individual identities in a broader social historical context and in relation to other groups. Part of understanding our identity, therefore, means understanding how we fit in, or don’t, with other groups of people.

When we think about identity, we may focus on cultural markers, like clothing, or biological and physiological markers as skin color. However, it’s also important to understand that our identities are comprised of shared ideas, ideologies, biases and ways of seeing the world around us. Our identities, therefore, are socially constructed, and our biological attributes are only one part of who we are.

But, where do these shared values or ideologies come from? Again, the answer is not clear-cut. In many cases, we’ve learned and internalized these values over the course of our lives from family, peers, role models, school, organizations, government, etc. The media also plays a prominent role in creating meaning, shaping our values, defining who we are, and establishing norms. These values are powerful because they generally come from places of power, but also because we internalize them and take them for granted; they seem natural and the way things should be, and in turn, shape the way we see and understand the people, objects, practices, and institutions in our lives¹.

2) The concept of “Nation”

Barrett and Davis (2008) define the concept of nation as a named human community that occupies its historic homeland, has a shared history, a common mass public culture, myths of common ancestry, shared symbols, traditions and customs, and demonstrates self-awareness as a

¹ Why identity matters?: <https://criticalmediaproject.org/why-identity-matters/>

nation. Usually, nations also have a common language, economy, and judicial system. A nation is an “imagined community,” i.e., the nation’s cohesiveness is not based on direct personal contact between its members; rather, the nation is based on a subjective sense of common identity and sense of belonging.

The nation is conceptually close to two other large social groups: the ethnos or the ethnic group and the state. Like nations, ethnic groups share a common language, a myth of common ancestry, symbols, traditions, and customs; however, ethnic groups usually lack a common territory, a shared economy, a system of mass communication and legislation. The term “state” is used to refer to a sovereign political entity in which a government uses a set of institutions to exercise an administrative monopoly over a territory, which has clearly demarcated borders, where the rule of that government is sanctioned by law, and where that government has the capacity to forcefully uphold its administrative policies. Using this terminology enables distinguishing between stateless nations, we can give the example of the Quebecois, Scots and Basques and nation-states as Rwanda, Germany, Japan, etc., and multination states like Canada, Britain, Spain and others. Many stateless nations actually had a state at some point in their history, but lost it and became part of a larger nation. Most states in the world are multiethnic but not multinational. Numerous ethnic groups live in their territory; however, they lack geographic national boundaries and other important features of nations. Some ethnic groups in different countries in the world have been struggling for their recognition as nations. Examples include the Native Americans in the USA; the Palestinians in Israel; and the Kurds in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey.

Membership in a particular nation may be defined according to two dimensions representing two approaches: the ethnic-genealogical dimension; representing the primordial approach and the civic- territorial dimension, representing the instrumental approach. The primordial approach most likely developed in countries with feudal economies and a strong totalitarian rule, such as Germany, Spain, Russia, and countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. This approach views a nation as a timeless natural entity that gradually evolved from prehistoric times. Membership in the nation is considered to be stable and dependent on lineage, language, religion, customs, and folklore; the main means of membership in the nation is through descent or ancestry. The primordial approach considers membership in a nation as based on inherent visible signs, such as facial appearance, skin color, and clothing as well as religious rituals.

The instrumental or civic-territorial approach to defining the concept of nation, first developed in the eighteenth century in countries with a strong bourgeoisie, where there was an established tradition of liberalism and decentralized rule, such as Great Britain, France, the United States, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The key point of the new ideology was the notion that every person, irrespective of religion, ethnic, or class background, could freely join the nation as long as he or she swore allegiance to a set of political principles and institutions representing the

nation's values and objectives. The common national culture is based not on genealogical commonality but on shared components of political culture such as the rights and obligations of each citizen. Therefore, according to the instrumental approach, membership in a nation is based almost exclusively on juridical definitions of citizenship. The acquired behavioral characteristics, such as citizenship, language, voting behavior, adherence to specific values, and service to the country, became the primary indicators of membership in the nation.

3) The Concept of “National Identity”

National identity may be defined as a set of cognitions and emotions that express an individual's relationship with a nation. “National identity” is a subjective construction, differing from the concept of “nationality,” which is an objective marker of an individual's belonging to a nation. Nationality is usually prescribed by the nation through official registration and issuing of relevant documents.

National identity is a complex concept that includes the following components:

1. A subjective conviction, also called self-categorization, as to which nation one belongs
2. A strong sense of national affiliation as part of the individual's identity
3. Emotions (positive or negative) toward the nation
4. Stereotypes about the typical characteristics and traits of people belonging either to their own national group or to other national groups
5. A subjective experience of inclusiveness and the perception of oneself as similar to other group members along important group defining characteristics
6. Subjective opinions regarding the current aims and problems of the nation
7. Knowledge of and a willingness to internalize the national culture and values and to follow national behavioral norms.

National identity is a social construct; therefore, it may change depending on psychosocial circumstances. Most people express some degree of national identity; however, its expression increases in situations where belonging to a nation becomes particularly salient, such as during international sport events, or when there is a potential threat to one's national identity, such as during a cross-cultural encounter. Although, most people have a single national identity, others, who either by birth or by choice, belonging to multiple nations may have separate national

identities that relate to each of these nations. For example, people whose parents come from different nations, as well as first- and second-generation immigrants may have multiple national identities.

- *Measures of National Identity*

The most frequently studied components of national identity include identification with the nation, attitudes toward the nation and national stereotypes. These components of national identity are measured using Likert-type scales², on which respondents are required to evaluate how accurately the scale items reflect their thoughts and feelings.

Identification with the nation reflects the degree to which the component of national identity figures in the overall identity of an individual. For example, according to some research, a scale is comprised of the following *four items*: “Being of this nationality is an important part of my self-definition”; “When I talk about this nation, I say ‘we’ and not ‘they’”; “When this nation is criticized, I take it personally”; in other words, you can’t tolerate someone insulting your nation, “It is important for me to think about myself as a member of this nation.”

Attitudes toward the country reflect the individual’s general evaluation of the country and emotions related to the country on a negative-positive continuum. The attitudes measured may be general or domain-specific. A scale used to measure general attitudes toward the country may include items such as “I would rather be a citizen of this country than of any other country in the world,” “There are some things about the country that make me ashamed of the country,” “The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the citizens of this country,” “Generally speaking, this country is a better country than most other countries”. Domain-specific attitudes toward the country are measured with items that relate to the individual’s sense of satisfaction and pride in various aspects of the country’s functioning: the quality of the democratic government, economic achievements, and the social security system, as well as achievements in the fields of science, technology, culture, and sports. The scales measuring general and domain-specific attitudes are highly positively correlated. Researchers argue that since holding a global positive attitude toward the country is the norm, it is more susceptible to the social desirability bias, whereas domain-specific attitudes are based on rational thought and, therefore, should be less susceptible to the social desirability bias.

National stereotypes reflect the individual’s opinions on other members of their nation and on members of other nationalities. National stereotypes consist of two main factors: competence and morality. The competence factor includes traits such as efficiency, intelligence, self-confidence,

²A *Likert scale* is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires. It is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research, such that the term (or more accurately the *Likert-type scale*) is often used interchangeably with rating scale, although there are other types of rating scales.

competitiveness and clumsiness. The morality factor includes traits such as honesty, tolerance, modesty, aggressiveness, selfishness and rudeness.

- ***Behavior, Feelings, and Attitudes Affected by National Identity***

Open behavior affected by national identity includes cultural practices and activities that demonstrate the individuals' *loyalty* to the nation. National identity is often associated with increased participation in ritualistic-ceremonial national activities such as parades, celebration of national holidays, singing patriotic songs in public and flag waving.

Another important theoretical and practical question is how national identity corresponds with patriotism and nationalism. All these three concepts reflect the individuals' feelings toward the nation. However, patriotism, in addition to a positive attitude toward and feelings of love and pride related to the nation, also assumes the readiness to sacrifice one's own interests for the welfare of the nation. Nationalism is similar to patriotism in its positive affect regarding one's nation; however, unlike patriotism, nationalism assumes an uncritical acceptance of national history and a refusal to consider national responsibility for injustices committed and negative attitudes toward other nations. Nationalism is also characterized by right-wing – *ubuhezanguni* - attitudes that support conservative leaders and policies, militarism, and anti-internationalism. Finally, nationalists tend to define national identity based on objective criteria such as country of birth, race, descent, and language, while patriotism also considers subjective criteria, critically views national history, and allows ambiguity regarding national borders.

Recent studies that tested the relationships between these three concepts revealed that national identity is strongly positively correlated with both patriotism and nationalism. National identity, patriotism, and nationalism were all associated with a strong positive affective orientation toward national symbols, such as the flag and anthem and with high respect for national leaders.

Reading 1: Eugene Tartakovsky, *National Identity*, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. This article is online and it will be posted on UR e-learning platform. In this article, the concept of “*nation*” is defined and the elements that compose what is called a “*national identity*” are described and explained. The article will strengthen students in understanding the concept of National identity in comparison with modern institutions.

1.1.3. National Symbols

1. National flag: brief history and meaning

Flags have a long history. Objects that resemble flags were in use across the world in ancient times. In Europe, flags became widespread during the Crusades under the influence of Arab

military banners. The development of the latter was stimulated by Islam iconoclasm: Because of the prohibition of figuration, Arabs had to rely on abstract patterns. In the Christian world, the first flags were called cross flags because they carried an image of the cross. In addition to Arab influences, the usage of cross flags was reinforced by the powerful legend of Constantine's dream of carrying the cross into battle on his military standards. It seems that the cross-cantered flag practice set medieval states on a special track in linking the sacrifice of the crucifixion to the redeeming deaths of ordinary citizen-soldiers in modern times. Thus, in medieval Europe, flags were religious and found in a military context. For the first time, flags were flown outside the context of religion and warfare in early modern Europe during the age of sailing, when trading companies started to use banners to identify themselves at seas. Thus, the flag became associated with a secular group of people, which helped pave the way for their modern usage as national artefacts. Moreover, in the early modern period, flag design, particularly in the maritime context, underwent the process of standardization, which also contributed to establishing a base for modern national flags.

National flag indicating a sovereign nation is a relatively modern phenomenon. It was invented only during the American and French revolutions. The latter revolution in particular attached great importance to the creation of a new symbolic universe, legitimize the new political and social order. Thus the French revolution was full of symbolic conflicts that played an important role in it, sometimes they even acted as the driving force responsible for the revolution's dynamic.

It is worth underlining that the novelty of the French and American flag lay primarily in the fact that for the first time in history, a banner had become associated with representing the sovereignty of the nation, not kings or ruling families. In fact, until the revolutions of the late eighteenth century, flags did not represent peoples or nations but rather kings and ruling families, whose coat of arms would be at the centre of the flags, which would be associated with armies and fleets, fluttering on forts and ships.

According to revolutionist ideologies, it was not the king who constituted the subject of sovereignty but the nation, defined at least declaratively as a community of equal and free citizens. The flag acquired an inclusive and egalitarian meaning, open to all citizens, not just for the chosen and privileged groups that used it only in specific circumstances.

- *Sacred flag*

National flags are frequently treated as sacred and surrounded by a cult; they are treated with respect, reverence and fear. Flags are a principal element of different national rituals that make up a type of civil religion, as envisaged in the 18th century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The cult of the flag also involves the creation of mythological narratives focused on the flag, which again is symptomatic of the special status of national flags. Thus, the beginnings of the flags are projected into the distant past, even if there is no continuity between the modern and the medieval meaning of the flag. The origins of flags in nationalist mythology reach back to antiquity.

It is possible to compare Christianity believers' devotion to crucifix to the flag in Western civilization and actually in current world. At the coming of Enlightenment, the significance of Christianity decreased and its role as the sole depository of legitimate violence was taken over by the nation-state. Both Christianity and nation-state require disciplined adherents who are believers and citizen-soldiers. In their view, the national flag acquired in the modern period a status similar to the crucifix in the Middle Ages. The flag indicates the willingness to die for your own country, as the cross carried by Jesus signifies his willingness to die for humanity. In the cases of both Christianity and nationalism, death is a sign of new life.

- *Significance of Rwandan Flag*

What does the flag of Rwanda look like? The Rwandan flag is a large horizontal blue band and two smaller horizontal yellow and green bands. There is a yellow sun in the top right of the flag.

The colours of the Rwandan flag hold great significance for the nation. The colours are designed to represent happiness, peace, economic development and the hope of prosperity. In addition to the horizontal tricolour bands, a sun emblem is also located in the top right corner of the flag. This sun was added to the design to represent enlightenment. The flag as a whole is designed to represent the unity of the nation, heroism, confidence and hope for the future.

- *Steps to current Rwandan Flag*

One of the first flags flown in Rwanda was the flag of the German East Africa Company. This flag was later replaced with the flag used by German East Africa; the first European colonial power. When Rwanda became known as Ruanda-Urundi, the flag of Belgium was used until 1959 to be in parallel with the flag of the Kingdom of Rwanda. This flag was used for just two years until another flag was adopted. This one was a tricolour using the Pan-African colours of red, yellow and green, with a black letter "R" distinguishing it from the flag of Guinea. This flag was used until 2001, changed to mark the unity of Rwandans after genocide committed against the Tutsi. The new flag was precisely adopted on October 25, 2001.

2. National Anthem

- *What Is a National Anthem?*

A national anthem is a patriotic song or musical composition that is either recognized officially by a nation's government and constitution or is accepted as such by convention through popular use. The national anthem reflects the history, struggles, and traditions of a nation and its people and serves as an expression of national identity. The concept of a national anthem was first popularized in 19th century in Europe. After their independence from European colonial powers, many of the newly-independent nations also composed their own national anthems and today, virtually every sovereign nation in the world has its own national anthem³.

- *When Is a National Anthem Used?*

National anthems are usually played or sung during national holidays, especially during the Independence Day celebrations in a country. National anthems are also performed during cultural and other festivals in the country, usually marking off the beginning or the end of such festivals. National anthems are often performed in international sporting events. For example, in the Olympic Games, the national anthem of the winning team is played during the medal ceremony. National anthems of the participating nations are also played prior to the start of a game and usually, the anthem of the host nation is played last. The National anthem is also an integral part of a school's daily routine in some countries. Thus, different countries promote their national anthems in different ways.

Most countries also mention several etiquettes to be observed while performing or listening to the national anthem like standing up, removing headwear, etc. Although the national anthem of a country is recognized within the country, the use of the anthem outside the country is dependent on the country's recognition at a global level.

- *What Is the Importance of a National Anthem?*

The national anthem, like other national symbols of a country, represents the tradition, history, and beliefs of a nation and its people. Hence, it helps evoke feelings of patriotism among the country's citizens and reminds them of their nation's glory, beauty, and rich heritage. It also helps unite the citizens of the country by one single song or music. During the performance of the national anthem, citizens of a nation, despite their differences, rise up in unison and listen attentively or sing the song with great enthusiasm. Players also feel a great moment of pride when they receive a medal at an international sporting event while their country's national

³Rahimi, Adel. (2015). Corpus study of World National Anthems. 10.13140/RG.2.1.2953.3924.

anthem is played in the background. It gives them a feeling of having made their country proud. Students who listen to the national anthem in their schools learn to respect their nation and develop a sense of unity among themselves.

- ***What Languages Are Used to Write or Sing the National Anthem?***

Most national anthems are in the country's official or national language since these languages are usually the languages of the majority of the country. However, in countries having more than one official or national languages, several versions of the national anthem in different languages might exist. For example, Canada's national anthem uses both French and English lyrics since both are official languages of the country. The national anthem of South Africa uses five of the eleven national languages of the country⁴.

3. State emblem

Emblem is an abstract or representational pictorial image that represents a concept, like a moral truth, or an allegory, or a person, like a king or saint

Since the 15th century, the term of emblem belongs to the technical expression in architecture. They mean an iconic painted, drawn, or sculptural representation of a concept affixed to houses and belong—like the inscriptions—to the architectural ornaments. Since the publication of several architectural works in 15th by Roman engineers, emblem were related to Egyptian hieroglyphics and were considered as being the lost universal language. Therefore, the emblems belong to the Renaissance knowledge of antiquity which comprises not only Greek and Roman antiquity but also Egyptian antiquity as proven by the numerous obelisks built in 16th and 17th in Rome.

The 1531 publication of emblem book of the Italian jurist Andrea Alciato launched a fascination with emblems that lasted two centuries and touched most of the countries of Western Europe. "Emblem", in this sense refers to a didactic or moralizing combination of picture and text intended to draw the reader into a self-reflective examination of his or her own life. Complicated associations of emblems could transmit information to the culturally-informed viewer, a characteristic of the 16th century artistic movement called Mannerism.

Emblems are certain gestures which have a specific meaning attached to them. These meanings usually are associated with the culture they are established in. Using emblems creates a way for humans to communicate with one another in a non-verbal way.

⁴ For Rwandan National Anthem, see the law N° 07/2013 of 27/02/2013, Law modifying and complementing Law n° 19/2008 of 14/07/2008 on characteristics and ceremonies of the National Anthem

4. National calendar

Calendar is a system of organizing days for social, religious, commercial or administrative purposes. This is done by giving names to periods of time, typically days, weeks, months and years. A date is the designation of a single, specific day within such a system. A calendar is also a physical record of such a system. A calendar can also mean a list of planned events, such as an academic calendar or a chronological list of documents, such as a calendar of wills. Periods in a calendar such as years and months are usually synchronized with the cycle of the sun or the moon.

National calendars have a strong relationship with identity formation especially in postcolonial nations. After colonisation, several nations emphasised certain aspects of the past for commemorative or celebratory purposes, while suppressing or ignoring the memories of some other event or historical figure. Both these processes, in different ways, seek to give a certain direction to the narrative about the history of the nation and the nation- state. These aspects of national memory and amnesia have been explained through the prism of national holidays. Shaping a specific narrative is common to every project of identity formation, its peculiarity is more pronounced in a postcolonial state, which has certain cut- off dates and ruptures but is, simultaneously, eager to emphasise continuities in its trajectory and antiquity in historical tradition. The process of developing a national calendar is a temporary process in which various values, political considerations and social processes play an important part. In particular, it requires an attempt on the part of the state to try to impose a homogenising historical narrative by envisaging a national calendar, i.e. by announcing a national or public holiday. This grants a prestigious opportunities to credited persons as founding fathers or ideologues to mark the occasions on which a nation gives a certain importance. The same occasions become pedagogical tools for the processes of identity formation.

Reading 2:

- Hüsametdin, İnaç, (2013), *The Construction of National Identity in Modern Times: Theoretical Perspective*, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 3 No. 11; June 2013

This article explains how Identity politics can be seen as the general framework of today's world politics. While the ethnic, sectarian, religious and national identities are prominent as the referential points of international politics, this article proposes a comprehensive framework on what is identity and how the national identity can be built in different socio-political circumstances. In this context, this study argues that identity is a construction and formed in accordance with the exigencies of the existing conjuncture. In line with this argumentation the attempts to elaborate the transition from the ethnic identities into the national one in accompanying the identity formation mechanism and national building strategies in theoretical perspectives.

- Elgenius, G., (2007). *The Appeal of Nationhood: Celebrating and Commemorating the Nation*, pp. 68-81, In Young, Zuelow and Sturm (eds.) *Nationalism in a Global Era: The Persistence of Nations*. London: Routledge. ISBN13: 978-0-415-41405-0

While many modernist theories of nationalism, symbols and ceremonies belong to the world of myths and legends this article argues that symbolism is, as far as nationhood is concerned, as important as economic and political factors. In fact, social life is a repository of symbols and ceremonies, whether in the form of totems, golden ages, flags, heroes, icons, capitals, statues, war memorials, football teams, national festivities or ceremonies, which are - at the core - symbolic markers of national groups. Symbols or ceremonials provide short cuts to the community it represents, and is by nature self-referential, subjective and boundary-creating. The usage of symbols and the performance of ceremonies are also a public thing, i.e. manifested in and sustained by public ceremonies performed in a public space. Moreover, and within the theoretical frame of this volume, national symbols and ceremonies provide a powerful testimony about the persistence of nations and of the appeal of nationhood.

To end the lecture, I propose to the students to find the notes and readings on UR e-learning platform. In reading try, to understand *National identity concept* in correlation with its manifestation as well as "*national symbols*". The assignments will also be posted to UR e-learning platform.

I thank UR and you my audience and I wish you success.