The Influence of Team Identity on National Identity
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The purpose of the proposed study was to elaborate on the relationship between sport team identity and national identity. The relationship has been documented anecdotally and in other areas of study, most notably in sport sociology (Bairner, 2001). Current research in sport management does not address the specific concept of team identity and its potential influence on national identity.

The goal of the current study was designed to advance the literature by examining the influence of team identity on national identity as well as assessing the relative importance of team identity in relation to regional and religious identities as a component of one's national identity. The proposed research also aimed to extend the GROUP* ID scale developed by Heere and James (2007) by examining different group identities in international settings.

The four group identities examined were: (a) team, (b) regional, (c) religious, and (d) nation. Moreover, the current study examined whether there were differences in the respective identities (team, national, regional, and religious) due to demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, and income).

Participants were selected from the country of Serbia (n = 800) and Ireland (n = 218). The Serbian sample was a multi-random sample of participants from the country of Serbia. The Irish sample was a convenient online sample from residents in Ireland. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the two datasets to provide evidence of reliability and validity of the GROUP*ID scale. The samples were then reduced to reflect ‘only’ those individuals that chose to identify with the nations of Serbia (n = 691) and Ireland (n = 194). Multiple regression and MANOVA were used to analyze the data.

The Serbian sample (n = 691) was composed of males (52%) and females (48%) and their average age was 43.71. The Irish sample (n = 194) was composed of males (57%) and females (43%) and their average age was 36.59. Descriptive results revealed that Serbians identified with the national soccer team the most (44%). And the Irish identified evenly with both the national teams of soccer (37%) and rugby (37%). The results of a series of multiple regressions revealed that the influence of team identity on national identity was significant in both Serbia and Ireland. The proposed models explained 46% of variance in national identity in Serbia (n = 691). And 55% of variance of national identity in Ireland (n = 194). Further analysis revealed that team identity was not as important in relation to regional and religious identity in assessing a Serbian’s national identity. In contrast to the Irish sample, team identity was more important in relation to religious identity in assessing Irish national identity, but not regional identity.

Another important finding to the current research was that gender, age, and education each had a difference on team identity on the Serbian sample (n = 691). A significant difference was also found on gender and national identity in Serbia. The Irish sample (n = 194) did not reveal any demographic differences on team identity nor national identity. Based on the findings, key research and practical implications will be discussed.