THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY ON WELL-BEING OF BULGARIAN AND ROMANIAN YOUTH

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ABSTRACT[5]. This study compared high school youth from two major cities in Bulgaria and Romania, by examining differences in nationalism and national identity and their joint influence on well-being. We tested the hypothesis that nationalism activates a sense of national identity, which in turn increases well-being. Participants for this study – 178 adolescents of Bulgarian ethnic background and 211 adolescents of Romanian ethnicity – were sampled from two public high schools in Sofia (Bulgaria) and two public high schools in Brasov (Romania). They provided data on their nationalistic attitudes and national identity, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect and anxiety. Results showed that Bulgarians reported higher nationalism (most notably national feelings and national superiority) and national identity than Romanian youth. We found a good fit for a path model in which strong feelings of nationalism lead to strong national identity in both groups. However, under the chosen model specification nationalism and identity were related to enhanced well-being of Romanian youth only, a relationship that needs further examination. We discuss our results and their implications in the concluding section of the paper.

Keywords: nationalism, national identity, psychological well-being, Romanian youth

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Introduction

This study addresses the question of whether youth from Bulgaria and Romania, two neighbour countries with a similar post-communist history, differ in their feelings of nationalism, national identity and well-being. With few exceptions (Dekker, Malova, and Hoogendoorn, 2003; Mastrotheodoros et al., 2012; Oppenheimer and Midzic, 2011), most research on nationalism and national identity involves only one national group in one country, despite the plea to compare groups in different societies. Studies of nationalism and national identity in different European countries can provide insight into the role of context for national attitudes as well as their influence on individual well-being. There is much interest in understanding feelings of national culture belonging in children and youth in Europe (Gallagher and Cairns, 2011; Mertan, 2011; Reizábal and Ortiz, 2011), a most prominent segment of the population with large potential impact as future adults in their respective countries (European Commission, 2009).

Both Bulgaria and Romania represent intriguing contexts for the study of nationalism and national identity for two main reasons. First, both countries have undergone a difficult period of economic and political transition, witnessing the rise of ethno-nationalism and national identity (Volgyi, 2007). Second, both countries have a historical record of ethnic tensions with their minority population, which strengthened interethnic hostilities and national attitudes (Dimitrov, 2000; Mihailescu, 2005). Such features may be particularly salient in affecting youths' sense of nationalism and identity. Although studies have been conducted with either Bulgarian (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, Bender, and van de Vijver, 2013) or Romanian youth (Veres, 2010), no research so far has compared national attitudes, national identity and well-being across the two countries.

A framework to understand differences in nationalism in Bulgaria and Romania is provided by the national attitude model, introduced by Dekker, Malova and Hoogendoorn (2003). The model holds that individual's nationalism - that is, feeling a sense of belonging to a particular "nation" with a common origin - can be explained by a strong concern about one's political, economic, social, and cultural future; a low sense of positive self-identity and highly negative attitudes toward national or ethnic minorities living within the country. We expect that this process would be more salient among youth from Bulgaria, where lower socio-economic development, severely assimilative policies and internal threat for ethnic minorities have been observed, than among Romanian youth (Dimitrova, Buzea, Ljujic, and Jordanov, 2013). Differences between Bulgarian and Romanian youth in national attitudes and identity are therefore predicted. In line with the national attitude model, we tested associations among national attitudes, national identity and well-being in the case of Bulgarian and Romanian youth. Data for this project come from 178 high school students of Bulgarian ethnic background in Sofia, and 211 high school students of Romanian ethnic background in Brasov.

Theoretical background

Nationalism, Identity and Well-Being

Theory and research have identified different meanings of nationalism as an ideology, a movement, a process of nation-state building, and an individual's political orientation. We use the conceptualization of nationalism as an individual's attitude reflecting the amount of affection and feeling of favourableness for a certain object, namely the nation state (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Related to that, the national attitude model (Dekker et al., 2003), defines nationalism as feeling a sense of belonging to a particular "nation", wanting to keep that "nation" as pure as possible, and desiring to establish and/or maintain a separate and independent state for that particular nation. On the basis of differences in type and strength of affiliation, the model proposes five prototypical national attitudes: *national feeling* (feeling of belonging to one's own people and country); *national liking* (liking one's people and country); *national pride* (being proud of one's people and country), *national preference* (preferring one's people and country over others) and *national superiority* (feeling that one's people and country are superior to others).

To refine the investigation of national attitudes determinants, scholars have differentiated specific factors affecting the strengths and levels of nationalism. Most scholars agree that nationalism has its roots in historical experiences (Calhoun, 1997; Smith, 1995) and therefore, involves the right to territorial self-determination and interethnic relations (Brown, 2000). In countries where heterogeneity is related to ethnic minority groups, work based on the threat theory (Sears and Jessor, 1996) assumes that the sheer number of minority groups threatens the national way of life and enhances both anti-minority sentiments and strengthens in-group cohesion by increasing nationalist sentiments (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). An individual who develops negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities living within that country will tend to develop an attitude of nationalism (Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn, 1993). Closely related to these attitudes toward out-groups living within the country, concern about political, economic, social, and/or cultural future has been proposed as determinant of national attitudes. Also, individual's sense of positive self-identity serves as an affective determinant, such that low sense of positive self-identity (as a result from a failure of one's "old" ideology in the case of former communist countries) motivates individuals to develop extremely positive national attitudes (Blank, 1997; Bloom, 1990).

National or ethnic identity, a central issue for adolescents, has been defined as a process of maintaining positive distinctiveness, and feelings associated with a sense of national/ethnic group membership (Phinney and Ong, 2007). In this sense, the term is conceptually different from nationalism, with the latter dealing primarily with attitudes and strong sense of belonging to a particular national state. It has been suggested that national identity relates to

psychological well-being and adjustment. Across different cultural groups, strong sense of national identity has been repeatedly found to be associated with enhanced levels of well-being (Smith and Silva, 2011) and adaptive psychosocial functioning (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wiesskirch, and Rodriguez, 2009). However, in contrast to the widely investigated relation between identity and well-being, little research has been devoted to how national attitudes impact psychological outcomes (Walsh and Tartakovsky, 2011). An exception is the study conducted by Reeskens and Wright (2010) who found evidence for the premise that identification with one's nation-state fosters subjective well-being. In the present study we are interested in attitudes in the national domain (nationalism) as well as attitudes in the ethnic culture domain (national identity) and how these domains relate to well-being of Bulgarian and Romanian youth.

Historical Context
Following the collapse of communism in the 1990s in Central and South-Eastern Europe, both Bulgaria and Romania have undergone a difficult period of economic and political transition, which has also witnessed the rise of ethno-nationalism along with problems of national identity (Volgyi, 2007). The countries' joining the European Union (EU) on 1 January 2007 brought some 30 million new citizens to the EU. It also set off significant migration flows to the West, as many Bulgarian and Romanian citizens left their countries in search of better life opportunities.

While there are similarities between Bulgaria and Romania – particularly in terms of past communist history and EU transition, there are also some important differences in economic development and interethnic relations. First, Bulgaria presents lower economic development than Romania as documented by relatively low purchasing power parity (GDP) and higher unemployment rates, whereas in Romania the economy registers much more positive growth due to a strong export performance and higher GDP (The World Fact Book, 2011). Moreover, in Romania the real growth rate is 2,5% in 2010 placing the country on 134th place in comparison to the world, whereas in Bulgaria lists 160th with the growth rate of 1 % in 2011. Additionally, scholars have also argued that the lack of economic development combined with 500 years of Turkish occupation, followed by 45 years of Soviet domination, have left Bulgarians without experience in self-government, yet with a sense of pessimism and passivity that makes them less likely to change, and to protest (Greenberg and Erdinç, 1999).

A second important difference between Bulgaria and Romania regards ethnic relations and treatment of national minorities, which are likely to matter for national attitudes. Bulgaria has a historical record of ethnic tensions and policy of repression and assimilation of its Muslim population, like renaming campaigns in the late 1980s, which forced nearly one million people with Turkish

surnames to adopt Bulgarian names (Dimitrov, 2000). The presence of the Turkish minority and followers of Islam in the country, a religion and country which Bulgarians for centuries have associated with economic backwardness and historical occupation has continuously strengthened interethnic hostilities (Petkova, 2002). Discrimination attitudes and perceived threat are also present in the Bulgarian context in which official integration measures for national minority groups (Turkish and Roma) are rather scarce (Maeva, 2005). Related to that, 2005 marked the appearance of a new phenomenon in the political landscape of Bulgaria with the overwhelming success of nationalist right-wing party called *Ataka*. Using populist anti-Turk slogans this nationalist coalition has managed to attract the respectable 24% of the votes in the Bulgarian parliamentary (Genov, 2010).

In Romania, the interethnic relations between mainstream Romanians and members of major national minorities with Hungarian and Roma background are the result of a complicated history with numerous political and territorial disputes (Mihailescu, 2005) and interethnic conflicts (Andersen, 2005). The right of primogeniture in Transylvania (i.e., the right to own a land populated for the first time) and discrimination faced over the history by each ethnic group (i.e., by Romanians during the Hungarian occupation in Transylvania or by Hungarians during the communist regime) are subjects of partisan interpretations (Mihailescu, 2005). The latter interpretations refer to the fact that Hungarians believe that they have the right on Transylvanian land and suffered a bigger discrimination during the communist regime, compared with the discrimination suffered by Romanians under Hungarian occupation, whereas the Romanians hold the same believes for their community.

In the recent history of Romanian-Hungarian relations, interethnic clashes in the mid of March 1990 show that tensions among the two groups exist (Andersen, 2005). Yet, there is an improvement in the perception of interethnic relations in Transylvania, where our data were collected: 64% of Romanians and 70% of Hungarians consider that interethnic relations are better than under the communist regime (Ethnobarometer, 2000). Also, interethnic tensions have been observed between mainstream Romanians and the second-largest ethnic group living in Romania, after Hungarians, the Roma minority. Roma have traditionally suffered from severe discrimination, and the assimilation policy carried out by the communist regime led to the extinction of many of their cultural traditions and occupations, including nomadic lifestyle. After the fall of the Romanian communist regime in 1989, Roma were recognized officially as national minority and allocated one seat in Parliament. Compared to the Hungarian minority, the Roma are generally poorer, less educated and living geographically isolated and/or segregated from non-Roma. Discrimination and prejudice toward Roma are frequent phenomena on the Romanian public agenda and stereotyping speeches of political leaders are often present in political debates. It is telling that in 2010

the parliament considered a bill seeking to replace the term "Roma" with the historically pejorative term "Tigan" (Wolfe-Murray, 2010), which it eventually rejected. On the other hand, mainstream Romanians disapprove of the xenophobic discourse and expulsion of Romanian Roma migrants from Western Europe.

In summary, Bulgaria and Romania share certain historical experiences, yet they also differ with regard to issues such as the extent of policies of forced assimilation of national ethnic minority groups and the post-1989 socioeconomic situation. These similarities and differences are particularly interesting when studying nationalism and national identity in the context of youth from these two countries. There are enough reasons to affirm that how to address national attitudes and national identity is a big issue for these countries which started the process of democratization after 1989 but also for Europe, as a whole, according with its need for stability and security.

Research questions and hypothesis

This study addresses two research questions:
(1) Do youth in Bulgaria and Romania differ with respect to their national attitudes and national identity? In line with the national attitude model (Dekker et al., 2003), the severely assimilative policies and generally lower socioeconomic development in Bulgaria, we predict stronger national attitudes and national identity for Bulgarian than for Romanian participants (Hypothesis 1).
(2) To what extent do national attitudes and national identity affect psychological outcomes among youth in the two countries? Consistent with prior work (Reeskens and Wright, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2009) we use the national attitude model to test how youths' psychological outcomes are influenced by their attitudes toward their nation and culture of origin (Figure 1). In line with the hypothesized model and previous research, we expect direct relations between a) national attitudes and national identity; b) national attitudes, national identity and psychological well-being (Hypothesis 2).

Data

Participants for this study – 178 adolescents of Bulgarian ethnic background and 211 adolescents of Romanian ethnicity – were sampled from two public high schools in Sofia (Bulgaria) and two public high schools in Brasov (Romania). We chose the schools based on diversity of teaching track (academic and vocational) as we wanted to have as much as possible representative schools in the general school population in both countries. All schools were public, therefore fairly representative of the overall school population in the areas where we gathered the data. Respondents were asked to indicate their ethnicity by choosing or stating their ethnic background (e.g., Bulgarian, Romanian, other).
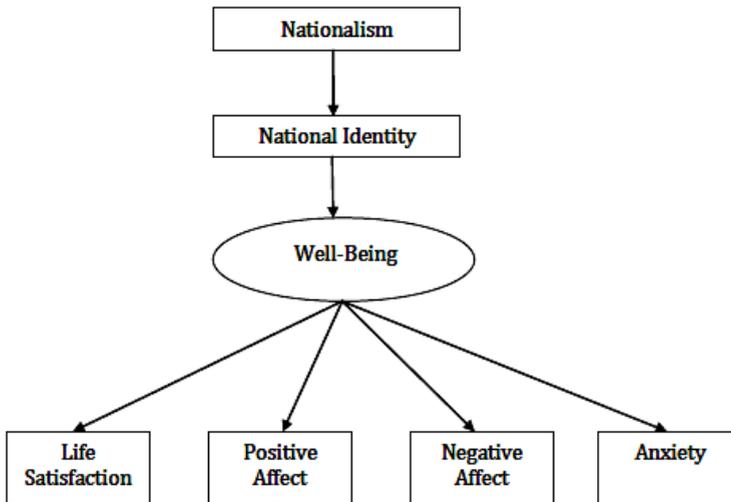
Fig. 1. Conceptual Path Model of Nationalism, National Identity and Well-Being of Bulgarian and Romanian Youth

Data and methods

Data collection took place from June to October 2012. Students were recruited in classrooms after informing local school personnel about the purpose and methods of the study. In addition to written instructions enclosed in the questionnaires, detailed verbal instructions were given in each class. Students were assured that participation was entirely voluntary and confidential and that they could discontinue their participation at any time.

Participants were on average 17 years old ($SD = 0.75$, see Table 1). The two samples differed with respect to gender, with more boys in the Romanian than the Bulgarian group, $\chi^2(1, N = 388) = 5.40$, $p < .05$. Groups differed slightly with respect to age, with Romanians being one year older than Bulgarians, $F(1, 388) = 5.11$, $p < 0.05$. The samples differed in parental socio-economic status (SES), with more educated parents in the Bulgarian than in the Romanian sample, $\chi^2(1, N = 347) = 47.76$, $p < 0.001$; see Table 1). Since the samples differed in SES, age, and gender, the effects of these demographic variables on nationalism, national identity, and well-being outcomes were examined to test the need to control for them in consequent comparative analyses. Girls were found to report higher scores on national identity ($F(1, 307) = 5.57$, $p < 0.01$) and anxiety ($F(1, 307) = 16.19$, $p < 0.001$) compared to boys. There was only one marginally significant correlation between SES and nationalism, ($r(373) = -0.11$, $p < .03$), whereas age was negatively associated with nationalism, $r(377) = -0.17$, $p < 0.001$. SES, gender and age were statistically controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Measures

Demographic Characteristics. Information about participant's age, gender, ethnicity, and family SES was collected.

Nationalism was measured with fifteen item scale created by Dekker et al.(2003). Sample items composing the scale were "In general, I prefer to live in Bulgaria/Romania than any other country", "In general, Bulgarian/Romanian are better than people with other nationalities" etc. Cronbach's alphas were α = 0.88 (Bulgarian) and α = 0.92 (Romanian).

National Identity was measured with eight-item scale adapted from Dekker et al.'s scale (2003). Sample items were: "I feel that I am part of my ethnic culture (e.g. Bulgarian/Romanian)"; "I am proud to be a member of my ethnic group" and "I am happy to be a member of my ethnic group". Responses given on five-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*totally disagree)* to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Cronbach's alphas were α = 0.82 (Bulgarian) and α = 0.87 (Romanian). Because nationalism and national identity may share common conceptualizations, we performed two multigroup confirmatory factor analyses to test the adequacy of both scales as separate latent factors. Results showed satisfactory scalar invariance as indicated by the measurement intercepts model across cultural groups for both constructs of nationalism (χ^2(11, N = 389) = 45.68, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.966, RMSEA = 0.080) and national identity, χ^2(51, N = 389) = 177.09, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.933, RMSEA = 0.080.[1]

Psychological Well-Being. In our conceptualization, well-being refers to various types of evaluations, both positive and negative, including reflective cognitive evaluations, such as life satisfaction, interest and engagement, and affective reactions to life events, such as joy, sadness, anxiety. We apply one of the most widely used approaches of subjective well-being introduced by Diener (1984), who proposed that judgments of life satisfaction could be made by combining positive and negative affect. Consideration of these indicators is particularly warranted due to the growing evidence that subjective well-being is a desirable goal for nations, in that it produces beneficial societal outcomes (which in our case may be relevant for the development of national identity and nationalism), whereas anxiety and prolonged negative states tend to produce undesirable societal outcomes (Diener, 2006). Consequently, well-being was measured with three scales. First, The Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin, 1985, Ponizovsky, Dimitrova, Schachner, and van de Schoot, 2013) using 5 items evaluated on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) was administered. Sample items are "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "I am satisfied with life" and showed an internal consistency of α = .72 (Bulgarian) and α = .74 (Romanian). Second, The Positive and Negative

Affective Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988) was used. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they experienced each of 20 positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) descriptors by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *very slightly* to *extremely.* The internal consistencies for PA and NA in the two groups were α = .80/.83 (Bulgarian) and α = .88/.86 (Romanian). Third, The Generalized Anxiety Symptoms (GAD) subscale from the *Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders* (SCARED; Birmaher et al., 1997) was used to assess general anxiety symptoms. The GAD consists of 9 items scored on a three-point scale: 1 (*almost never*), 2 (*sometimes*), and 3 (*often*). Sample items are: "I worry about whether others will like me", "I worry about things working out for me", "I worry about how well I do things" etc. GAD showed an internal consistency of α = .86 (Bulgarian) and α = .78 (Romanian).

Results

Before addressing our hypotheses, we obtained descriptive statistics for all groups in the respective countries (see Table 1). We then examined differences in national attitudes and national identity between Bulgarian and Romanian groups, using multivariate analyses of covariance (Hypotheses 1). Finally, we tested the influence of national attitudes and national identity on psychological outcomes in Bulgarian and Romanian groups (Hypothesis 2) using a multigroup path analysis (Arbuckle, 2009). Fit indices adopted to interpret the model fit were the χ^2 test, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; recommended value ≤0.08) and the comparative fit index (CFI; recommended value ≥ 0. 90) (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Marsh, Hau, and Grayson, 2005).

Comparisons on National Attitudes and National Identity

We conducted a MANCOVA with group (2 levels) as independent variable, national attitudes, national identity and well-being as dependent variables and SES, gender and age as covariates. The multivariate test was significant, Wilks' lambda = 0.93, $F(1, 373) = 4.21$, $p < 0.001$, (partial) $\eta^2 = 0 .065$. The analyses revealed a significant group effect for national attitudes, identity and well-being. Specifically, Bulgarian youth reported higher scores on nationalism attitudes ($F(1, 373) = 10.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.029$), national identity, ($F(1, 373) = 6.63$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.018$) and lower on negative affect $F(1, 373) = 7.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.020$) and anxiety ($F(1, 373) = 6.25$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.017$) than their Romanian peers. There were no significant group differences on life satisfaction and positive affect scales (Table 1).

Table 1

Means (and Standard Deviations) of Samples

	Bulgarian (n = 178)	Romanian (n = 211)	Group comparisons	
Variable			F value	η^2
Age, M (SD)	16.87 (0.72)	17.04 (0.76)	$F(1, 388) = 5.15$	0.013
Gender, n (%)				
Boys	54.8	66.4	$\chi^2(1, N = 388) = 5.40$	0.118
Girls	45.2	33.6		
SES				
Low	71	164	$\chi^2(1, N = 374) = 47.76***$	0.357
High	93	46		
Nationalism	3.37 (0.88)	3.15 (0.83)	$F(1, 373) = 10.94***$	0.029
National identity	4.05 (0.81)	3.84 (0.77)	$F(1, 373) = 6.62**$	0.018
SWLS	4.95 (1.26)	4.91 (1.06)	$F(1, 373) = .029$	0.000
PA	3.45 (0.81)	3.34 (0.67)	$F(1, 373) = 1.69$	0.005
NA	1.78 (0.73)	1.93 (0.70)	$F(1, 373) = 7.67***$	0.020
GAD	1.85 (0.49)	1.93 (0.37)	$F(1, 373) = 6.25**$	0.017

Note. SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; PA = Positive Affect; NA = Negative Affect;
GAD = Generalized Anxiety; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

In a further step, we performed additional analyses to see whether there might be group differences in specific components of nationalism attitudes between Bulgarian and Romanian groups. We ran a second MANCOVA with group (2 levels) as independent variable, attitudes of national feelings, pride, preference and superiority as dependent variables and SES, gender and age as covariates. Results showed significant group differences for national feelings ($F(1, 374) = 12.98$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.034$) and superiority ($F(1, 374) = 33.35$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.083$) subscales. Bulgarian youth scored significantly higher than Romanians on strong nationalistic feelings (Bulgarian $M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.03$ vs. Romanian $M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.12$) and national superiority (Bulgarian $M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.88$ vs. Romanian $M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.91$).

In summary, in line with what the national attitude model would predict, we found that Bulgarian participants showed significantly higher scores on national attitudes (most notably national feelings and superiority) and national identity than their Romanian peers. We can therefore conclude that the model was able to account for cross-cultural differences in mean scores.

Association of National Attitudes, Identity and Psychological Outcomes

Preliminary analyses included bivariate correlations among all study variables (Table 2). As can be seen from Table 2, national identity and nationalism were positively correlated and presented significant relations with well-being

outcomes in both groups. Next, we tested our second hypothesis in a path model using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2009).

Table 2

Correlations among Identity, Nationalism and Well-Being for Bulgarian and Romanian Adolescents

Variable	Bulgarian Adolescents						Romanian Adolescents					
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. National identity	-						-					
2. Nationalism	0.38***	-					0.44***	-				
3. SWLS	0.22**	0.02	-				0.30**	0.28***	-			
4. PA	0.14	0.19	.029***	-			0.21***	0.20***	0.35***	-		
5. NA	-0.33***	-0.10	-0.56***	0.04	-		-0.06	-0.01	-0.05	0.21***	-	
6. GAD	-0.14	-0.06	-0.16	-0.07	0.46***	-	0.20***	-0.02	-0.02	0.23***	0.38***	-

Note. SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; PA = Positive Affect; NA = Negative Affect; GAD = Generalized Anxiety; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Multigroup analyses testing direct relations among national attitudes, national identity and psychological outcomes in Bulgarian and Romanian groups were computed. The configural invariance model showed an excellent fit ($\chi^2(36$, $N = 389) = 47.63$, $p < 0.093$, RMSEA = 0.029 and CFI = 0.991) where all more restrictive models showed a poorer fit (Table 3).[2] The associations of national attitudes and national identity within both groups were statistically significant.

The path model shows that strong feelings of nationalism lead to strong national identity in both groups (Figure 2). In addition, both groups showed important differences in association among variables. The path coefficients between identity and psychological outcomes were significantly different among groups: the standardized regression weights of the association between identity and overall well-being were significant for the Romanian group only. As can be seen from Figure 2, national identity was directly related to well-being and mediated the link between nationalism and well-being of Romanian rather than Bulgarian youth[6].

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[6] We also performed alternative path model including national identity and nationalism in one latent variable, as suggested by the reviewer. The initial unconstrained model did not showed a good fit, ($\chi^2(16$, $N= 389) = 67.71$, $p < .001$, CFI = .750, RMSEA = .091). Although the model substantially improved by adding several modification indices, ($\chi^2(12$, $N= 389) = 25.28$, $p < .001$, CFI = .936,
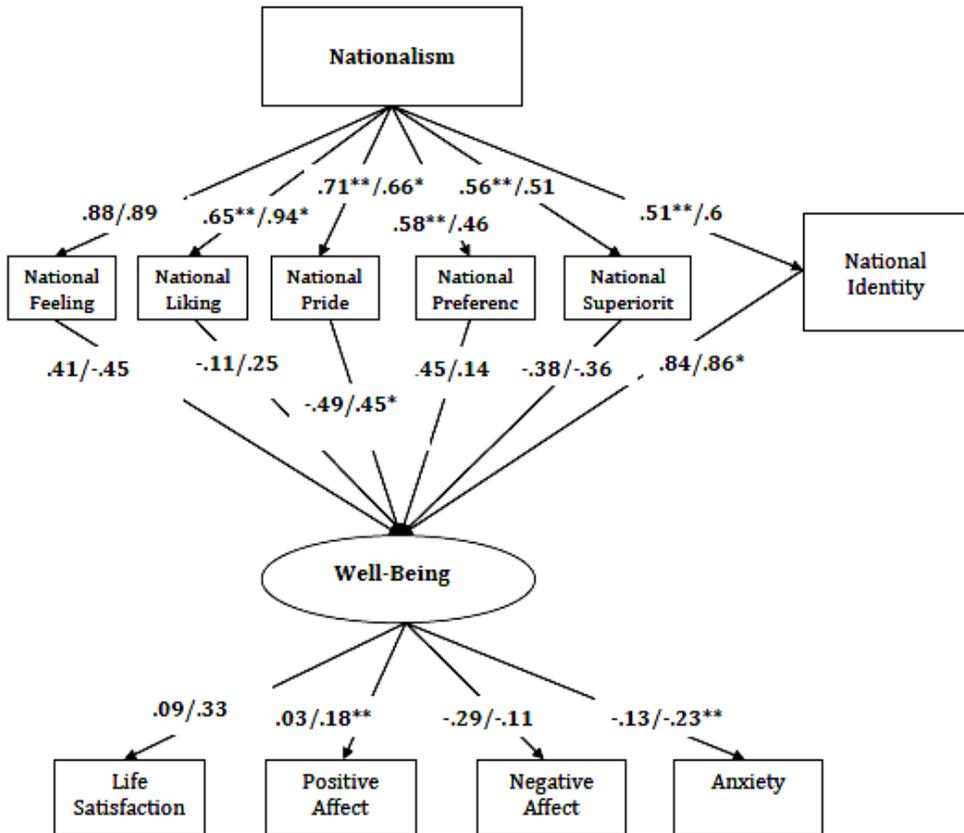
Fig. 2. Path Model of Nationalism, National Identity and Well-Being of Bulgarian and Romanian Youth

Note. The parameters represent standardized coefficients. First parameter on an arrow is the coefficient for the Bulgarian sample the second coefficient refers to the Romanian sample.

RMSEA = .053), still there were substantial problematic issues to be considered. First, the best fitting solution was the unconstrained model, which is the less restrictive and statistically parsimonious compared to measurements weights, structural weights and structural covariances models. Second, coefficient estimates varied greatly among groups, with significant link between the latent variable (composed by national identity and nationalism) and well-being for the Romanian group, whereas such relation was not significant for the Bulgarian group. Third, using the latent variable of national identity and nationalism does not allow testing direct relations between national identity and well-being on one hand, and nationalism and well-being on the other. Lastly, we could not test for the mediation role of identity on the relation between nationalism and well-being in line with our assumption that nationalism activates a sense of national identity, which in turn increases well-being. Therefore, we argue that the model we choose is the most parsimonious representation of our data also in relation to our hypothesis.

Fit Indices of National Identity, Nationalism and Well-Being Path Model for Bulgarian and Romanian Groups

Model	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	AGFI	RMSEA	CFI	ΔCFI
Configural invariance	*46.63 (36)*	*-*	*0.925*	*0.029*	*0.991*	*-*
Measurement weights	67.34 (44)	20.71 (8)	0.917	0.037	0.982	-0.009
Structural weights	78.92 (50)	11.58 (6)	0.915	0.039	0.978	-0.004
Structural residuals	79.26 (51)	0.34 (1)	0.917	0.038	0.979	0.001

Note. Selected model with a good fit is printed in italics.

Discussion

Whereas most research on national attitudes and national identity has dealt with groups in Western Europe or the US, our primary objective in this study was to examine nationalism, national identity and well-being of youth from two former communist countries in Eastern Europe. In order to understand how nationalism influences outcomes in these two groups, we also examined direct relations between national attitudes and national identity on psychological outcomes[7].

National attitudes and national identity differed significantly in Bulgarian and Romanian youth. For the Bulgarian participants, national attitudes toward their country and ethnic group are more important than for their Romanian counterparts. The emphasis on national and ethnic belonging may be related to the current Bulgarian situation and attitudes toward minority groups. National attitudes could be moderated by factors that become prominent if comparisons of national culture endorsement across groups in national contexts are made. The much longer history of severe ethnic tensions and policy of assimilation of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria compared to Romania is probably relevant here. As a reaction to these attitudes, Bulgarian youth may be more supportive of their culture and national unity. The long-term interethnic conflicts and negative

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[7] We opted for the configural invariance model (assuming the same relationships but different factor loadings for variables across groups) that showed an excellent fit where all more restrictive models showed a poorer fit, as indicated by CFI. Nonetheless, as Table 3 shows, the more restrictive model of measurement weights also showed an adequate fit, although lower than the one of the configural invariance model. According to the measurement weights model there are similarly significant loadings for all well-being indicators to one latent factor in both groups, which implies more similarities than differences among the groups being observed. These results are for exploration in future analysis.

attitudes toward Turkish ethnic minority living in Bulgaria may be related to the development of strong attitude of nationalism (Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn, 1993). On a related note and in line with the national attitude model, the lower economic development and concern about the future may also be a determinant of strong national attitudes in Bulgarian compared to Romanian youth. Overall, these findings suggest that the model may be able to adequately predict national attitudes and national culture identification among ethnic groups within two different former communist countries situated in Eastern Europe.

A further issue of interest was the relation between national attitudes, national identity and well-being outcomes in Bulgarian and Romanian groups, previously examined by researchers such as Reeskens and Wright (2010) and Walsh and Tartakovsky (2011). Our findings suggest that both national attitudes and national identification foster better psychological outcomes differently for the two analysed groups. In the Romanian rather than in the Bulgarian group, nationalism and national identity were strongly related and this relationship was conductive to positive well-being outcomes. This result needs further investigation. Possible explanations may come from understanding Romanian educational practices, which might enhance youths' national attitudes, and national campaigns conducted by government and mass-media to reaffirm the national identity and ethnic pride. In any case, it seems that national attitudes and identification of Bulgarian and. Romanian youth operate differently with regard to well-being.

Limitations and Prospects for Further Research

Although our findings provide the first comparative perspective on nationalism, national identity and well-being of Bulgarian and Romanian youth, there are a number of limitations that provide fruitful ground for future research. First is the need to verify our results using random, representative, samples of adolescents in the two countries, also in light of the SES differences among our samples. Second, we would like these analyses extended to other ethnic minorities. For example, a replication of this study including minority groups in Bulgaria (Turkish and Roma) and in Romania (Hungarian and Roma) will increase our confidence in the current findings. We can envision that for Turkish-Bulgarian youth, for example, the Turkish but not the national Bulgarian domains of identity promote better well-being and positive acculturation outcomes (Dimitrova, Bender, Chasiotis, and van de Vijver, 2012). Contrary, for Roma youth in Bulgaria, Bulgarian national identity has been found to be positive predictor of well-being (Dimitrova et al., 2013). It may well be that relations among nationalism, identity and well-being may vary across minority if compared to mainstream groups in Bulgaria and Romania, respectively.

Additional limitation involves the affective determinants of national attitudes. Further studies should include direct measures on determinants (concern about the future, attitudes toward ethnic minorities, sense of positive self-identity), which have been shown to motivate individuals to develop extremely positive national attitudes. Further direct observations and data on these factors would greatly increase the insight into the relevance of these contextual conditions. Finally, to fully understand the multifaceted processes that affect national orientations and outcomes, studies including further potential moderating and mediating variables should be conducted. Factors such as perceived threat toward minority groups and experienced interethnic conflict may also be linked to the national identification processes.

Conclusions

Although an enormous number of factors contribute to nationalistic attitudes, our research clearly shows that, for the employed data, strong nationalism and identity have a prominent stance primarily among Bulgarian rather than Romanian youth. This finding may not be surprising in light of the significant rise in ethnic nationalism in Bulgaria during the democratic transition leading to alienation and assimilation of national minority "low cultures" into the national "high culture" (Volgyi, 2007). Possibly, governmental campaigns of national pride have the potential to affect youth forming strong national identity and attitudes toward their nation state. Importantly, political-economic realities, elite behaviour, and ideological influences in the society may have direct impact on strong endorsement of nationalism, which in turn contributes to exacerbation of interethnic hostilities.

Another relevant implication of the study regards the impact of nationalism on public satisfaction and contentment with governmental policies. Nationalism may be a powerful tool for national and international politics by providing the basis of collective solidarity. As such, adherence to nationalistic feelings is often used by governmental campaigns to promote national policy of integrity and unity, consolidation of national identities, and preservation of cultural particularities. Yet, strong nationalistic attitudes facilitate the process of gradual interethnic conflict and tensions by providing space for lack of appreciation and tolerance for cultural diversity within the society. On a policy level, efforts to address these collective perceptions of national pride should include media campaigns to promote peaceful co-existence and social norms that place a greater emphasis on inclusiveness and equality at national and broader international policy perspective.

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