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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF SELF AND ADHERENCE TO VARIOUS SOCIAL CATEGORIES AMONG THE STUDENT POPULATION IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ABSTRACT

Pluralistic society adopted the discourse of identities on a large scale. Identity is considered a modern phenomenon with its origins in Western individualism, and the problem of how to reconcile the relationship of self-identification and the existence of the "other" in order to answer the question "who am I" and "Where do I Belong" is becoming more scientifically and practically exploited.

The Republic of Macedonia in terms of its plurality and in terms of crises in various fields, is a challenge for researchers of identity. Thus, in spring 2011, the research team from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research conducted research within the scientific research project *Perception of identities among the student population in Macedonia*. One of the primary goals of the scientific research project was the identification of self-identity of students and its relation to the sense of bonding with different social roles, groups and affiliations.

The results showed the complex relationship between personal and social determinants of identity and the various roles that "I" play in everyday life, and indirectly confirmed the need of society to care about identity and its relations with the "others" among its citizens.

Key words: self-identity, personal identity orientation, social identity orientation, perception of identities

INTRODUCTION

Changes in values and social change taking place in the last decade of the 20th century bring to the fore the complex problems of identity. Actually, discourse on identity is a modern phenomenon, having its origin in the Western individualism, because only in a plurastic society does a multiplication of identities comes into being. Hence, the problem emerges of how to reconcile the relation of self-identification and the existence of the "other" in order to answer the questions "who am I" and "where do I belong." The identity problem did not exist in a traditional society due to the fact that in such a kinship society the social status of individuals is strictly fixed. In contrast, modern people are confronted with a variety of choices, as a result of which there is instability of identity because the principle of ascription, characteristic of a traditional society, is replaced by the principle of achievement. Identity versus societal roles has been topic of interest in this research. Having in mind that identity represents the unique shaped human being, this research challenged the intensity of acceptance societal roles and the nature of social roles according to the characteristics of personal and societal identity.

The concept of identity is a modern one. It appeared in the 18 century when the conflict among individuals and society raised. In the 19 century, the accent was on the process of individualization. That is the process of transformation from heteronymous to autonomous locus of control was processed on ontogenetic and also phylogenetic level. In a modern society there is multiplication of identities as the society structure multiplied itself (gender identity, national identity, political, religious... and many more). Traditional society does not have the problem with multiple identities. In traditional society, social status of individual concepts is fixed. In a modern society, individuals have been faced with many choices. The problem of identities is a relevant field of research in modern society, having in mind that there is a tension between singular and plural identity on individual and collective level. Other issues concerning identity arise with the extension of the process of globalization. The tendency of global society is to construct one general model of identity which will be released from any type of history member of collective memory (Golubovic, 2000).

The concept of identity

Human is personal and societal being at the same time, so, the concept of identity is connected with the question of interconnection between the individual and collectivity aspect.

Identity, as it was defined in a Psychological vocabulary is *the feeling of sameness in important determinant attributions*. In psychology, identity of personality has two basic directions: first, similarity and differentiation with other persons and second as a subjective feeling of sameness beside relevant changes of personality in time framework. Personality itself has the feeling of personal and relatively persistent sameness (Krstic, 1991).

Laing in "Self and Others" clearly accented the interconnection of personal identity and others. According to him, integration and construction of identity suppose somebody else. Namely, there is complementarity between "me" and the "other" and that means that every relationship consumes definition of "me" from the "other" perspective and definition of the other from the side of "me" (Laing, 1961).

Identity as we now in psychology is known and derives mainly from the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is one of the best-known theories of personality in psychology. Much like Sigmund Freud, Erikson believed that personality develops in a series of stages. Unlike Freud's theory of psychosexual stages, Erikson's theory describes the impact of social experience across the whole lifespan.

One of the main elements of Erikson's psychosocial stage theory is the development of **ego identity**. Ego identity is the conscious sense of self that we develop through social interaction. According to Erikson, our ego identity is constantly changing due to new experience and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others. In addition to ego identity, Erikson also believed that a sense of competence also motivates behaviors and actions. Each stage in Erikson's theory is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life. If the stage is handled well, the person will feel a sense of mastery, which he sometimes referred to as **ego strength** or **ego quality**. If the stage is managed poorly, the person will emerge with a sense of inadequacy (Fulgosi, 1987).

Shaping the identity is a process which is pretty much connected with the experiences considering the societal world. During this process many aspects of identity become differentiated. So we have: national identity, gender identity, political identity etc. But in this process of identity differentiation, there is always the feeling that there is the core, the unchanged feeling about itself sameness during the time and experience. This concept has been derivated by Arieti's theory of personality. Arieti distinguished two types of personality: the generalized one

and the specific. The first one has been characterized by the belief that the self is independent on specific incarnations: belief such as "I am a teacher, but if I were a doctor or a farmer, I would be the same person". The specific type of personality anchors the inner self to specific aspects of one`s personality and adheres to beliefs such as "I cannot imagine having a different ethnic identity and remaining the same person" (Arieti, 1967)

This Arieti's theory nicely fits with the centre - periphery model of believes given by Rokeach. Rokeach found that our core believes are more difficult to change than those that are peripheral (Laponce, 2004). The core beliefs of the generalized personality are that the self is multiform and not permanently anchored in any one of these forms, while the specific personality has a core belief of anchorage in some exclusive and non-changeable identity.

The start point of this research was Arieti's personality theory and Rokeach's concept of core and peripheral values. The main interest in this research was to find the interconnection among "the core" presented by personal and social identity and identification with some societal roles.

The ideas about researching societal roles rose from the Laponce research, which considered the intensity of the attachment and identification of the self with some societal roles. Laponce has a tendency to explore the minority effect and societal roles. His hypothesis was that respondents who are minority in the country where they live, will be much more attached with their ethnicity.

How can we define personal identity? From own personal experience and self-awareness we know that it is there, in side of us. It's a fact of conscious life, as common as the word "I." But it is hard to define it.

Personal identity means - seeing the self as distinct and different from others. The person is guided by her/his own goals rather than the group's goals (Stets & Burke, http://wat2146.ucr.edu/papers/02a.pdf).

Social identity usually is determined as sets of meanings that an actor attributes to it while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. Social identities are at once cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine `who I am/we are' in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations" (Wendt 1994).

Research has been conducted among students, so it is important to notify some developmental tasks regarding this period of lifespan. According to the developmental psychology, students are in a period of *early adulthood or period of decision years,* they are the youth. Youth is an "optional" period of development in which an individual is legally an adult but has not yet undertaken adult work and roles.

According to the developmental psychology, main developmental tasks for this period are achievement of independence from parents, identity stabilization, intimacy, and emotional stability, responsibility for self and others, and also establishing citizenship responsibility. This period is marked with the final preparation for adult roles. Youth attempt to crystallize their vocational goals and to establish sense of personal identity. Their needs for peer approval are demised and they are largely psychologically independent from their parents. The shift to adulthood is nearly complete (Gormly & Brodzinski 1990).

Goals of the research

The primary goal of this scientific research project was to identify the hierarchy of different societal roles among students and the intensity of bonding with different social roles, groups or affiliations.

Another goal of this research, besides identification of hierarchy of societal roles among students was, identification of inter connection between societal roles and identity.

Research framework

In spring 2011, the research team from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research conducted research within the scientific research project *Perception of identities among the student population in Macedonia*. The survey included students from State Universities in the Republic. The sample counted 451 subjects, 156 male and 295 female; age from 18 till 25 years; Ethnicity: 234 Macedonians and 201 Albanians. The sample was occasional and the research was applied collectively on the classes.

Instruments

To achieve the research goals two instruments were applied.

- AIQ Aspects of Identity Questioner (Cheek & Briggs, 1981, 1982). This instrument has many versions. Some of these versions, beside a scale for personality identity orientation and social identity orientation scale had few more: collectivity identity scale and relation identity scale. In this research we included two scales:
- Personal Identity Orientation. This scale contains 9 items on a seven point Likert scale;

- Social Identity Orientation. This scale contains 6 items on a seven point Likert scale.

Cronbah's alpha for Political Identity Orientation scale is 0,84 and Cronbah's alpha for Social Identity Orientation scale is 0,80. This findings show that both scales have high consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Questioner (two scales together) was 0,83.

The other instrument which was used was **Questioner for attachment to different social roles** (Laponce 1996). Laponce determined the personality as a bundle of roles: fathers, sons, teachers, non-voters and so on. According to him, *the self is a theatre where the roles are the actors and, on the stage of the self, specific selves play their roles either one at a time, or by two or three or more, but rarely with all of them holding hands, as for a curtain call.*

- The 13 roles, identities, or characteristics of self were run through a grid of 4 scales (the equivalent of 4 acts) used to locate each role between polar opposites on a seven-point Likert scale. In the order in which they presented, the scales measured:
  - The level of common interests
  - The level of solidarity
  - The psychological difficulty of envisaging a change of the identity concerned: change of religion, sex, nationality, political party….
  - The importance attached to each role or identity

The roles which were included in the research were the following: gender, age; nationality; profession; religion; preferred political party; state or province of birth; city of residence; university; ethnic group; class; family and close friends.

Hypotheses

General hypothesis: The level of personal and social identity orientation will determine the level of attachment to different social roles.

Given that the connection to the various social roles is defined by four aspects such as common interests with others, a sense of solidarity with others, attitude towards changing the social roles and significance (importance) of the specific role of individuals, we can single out four specific hypotheses:

First sub hypothesis: The level of personal and social identity orientation will determine the position of their common interests with people belonging to certain social groups (13 according Laponce)

The second sub hypothesis: The level of personal and social identity will determine the sense of solidarity towards people belonging to certain social groups.

The third sub hypothesis: The level of personal and social identity will determine the position on the possibilities and difficulties of changing certain social roles.

The fourth sub hypothesis: The level of personal and social identity will determine the position on the importance of certain social roles for individuals.

Results of the research

AIQ (Aspects of Identity Questioner) in its original form has a few subscales (this depends on the type of this scale modification). In this research we included two subscales: Personality Identity Orientation Scale and Social Identity Orientation Scale. **Personal Identity Orientation** refers to the orientation toward its self, which depends on personal attitudes and values. Self is an object of attitudes formation. **Social identity Orientation** refers to the orientation toward its self, which is determined by other attitudes and values.

Correlation between the two subscales showed high positive value 0,297 (p< 0,01) which means that personal and social identity orientation are positively related.

Table 1 presents the percentage of respondent's answers according to Personality Identity Orientation Scale.

Table 1. *Percent of respondents on Personal Identity Orientation Scale*

Personal identity orientation		
High	Middle	Low
81.9%	17.6%	0.5%

As it can be seen from the obtained data, the highest percentage of respondents had high scores on Personality Identity Orientation scale, which means that highest percentage of respondents highly evaluated their personal values, personal goals and hopes, personal thoughts and ideas etc. for the sense of who they are.

Table 2 presents percentages of respondent's answers according to the Social Identity Orientation Scale.

Table 2. *Percent of respondents on Social Identity Orientation Scale*

Social Identity Orientation		
High	Middle	Low
62.9%	32.6%	4.4%

The highest percentage of respondents belongs to the group with high scores on social identity orientation scale, which means that the highest percentage of respondents highly evaluated their popularity, physical appearance, reputation etc. for the sense of who they are. But, it can be seen also that there is a significant percentage of respondents which belong to a group on the middle level on the social identity orientation scale. These findings suggest that respondents (in comparison with the previous data presented in table 1), have evaluated their popularity, physical appearance, reputation etc. (social issues) lower for the sense of who they are in comparison with personal issues like personal values, personal goals and hopes, personal thoughts and ideas etc. For the students, personal issues are more important than social issues for their sense of who they are.

Results for the hierarchy of social roles

Hierarchy of roles have been detected according to following questions (given in Laponce Questioner)

1. Common interests (with which societal roles one feel to have common interests);
2. Solidarity (the level of solidarity toward each of the offered societal roles);
3. Role changes difficulties (how hard will be to change each of the offered roles);
4. The importance of a role for the personality (how any of offered roles are important for the respondent).

Table 3 presents findings according to the estimated hierarchy or roles according to the respondent's answers on Laponce's Questioner.

Table 3. *Hierarchy of roles according to the four different questions (common interests, solidarity, role changes difficulties and importance of the role for the personality)*

	Common interests	**Solidarity**	**Role changes difficulties**	**Importance of role for personality**
I.	*Family* (M=5.71)	*Family* (M=6.44)	*Family* (M=6.56)	*Family* (M=6.60)
II.	*Close friends* (M=5.57)	*Close friends* (M=6.21)	*Gender* (M=6.19)	*Close friends* (M=6.36)
III.	*Gender* (M=5.44)	*Profession (student)* (M=5.64)	*Close friends* (M=5.94)	*Religion* (M=5.91)
IV.	*Age* (M=5.21)	*Gender* (M=5.51)	*Religion* (M=5.83)	*Profession (student* (M=5.86)
.....	.....	.....	......	......
XIII.	*Political Party* (M=3.83)	*Political Party* (M=3.64)	*Political Party* (M=3.06)	*Political Party* (M=3.23)

Results show that social roles with which the students are mostly bound (roles that students see the most common interests with, roles with which they feel great solidarity, roles which are hard to change and roles that seem most important for the students), expectedly are: family, close friends and gender. But in the first four positions religion, profession (student) and age emerged also. Preferred Political Party is the role that students least bound with. The remaining six roles are somewhere between the mentioned roles.

The first three tables give general input in the research's findings. These tables give description of the estimated scores achieved on two scales and the general hierarchy of roles. Hierarchy of roles refers to the importance which students give to any of 13 appointed societal roles.

The next findings refer to the clarification of previously pointed research hypothesis. The general hypothesis challenges the interconnection between the level of personal and social identity orientation with the level of attachment to different social roles.

To explore this interconnection statistical test which was used is regression coefficient. Regression coefficient was calculated for all the 13 roles and for scores of two scales (personal identity scale and societal identity scale). Table 4 shows results for determination of the roles acceptance according to the social identity orientation and Table 5 show results for determination of the role acceptance according to the personal identity orientation.

Table 4. *Regression coefficients (societal identity orientation and roles)*

SOCIAL IDENTITY ORIENTATION				
Standardized B coefficient	**Common interest**	**Solidarity**	**Role changes difficulties**	**Importance of the role for personality**
Gender		0,110*		0,124**
Ethnicity	0,149**	0,166**		
Religion	0,153**	0,175**		
Political party	0,141**	0,165**		
Place of birth	0,121*	0,125**		0,101*
Place of residence	0,168**	0,165**		
Class (social)		0,150**	0,167**	

*= p < 0,05;   **= p < 0,01*

Students with high social identity orientation feel solidarity for 7 from 13 social roles, they see common interest with 5 different social roles, 2 social roles are important for them and with only one social role they would have difficulties to change it. Namely, highly developed social determinants of the personality (individuals with high social identity orientation) will contribute to the development of:

- position on larger common interests and a greater sense of solidarity to the people of the same ethnicity, same religion, political party, place of residence and birthplace;
- greater importance and greater solidarity to the people of the same gender and birthplace
- greater solidarity to the people of the same social class and attitude about the difficulties of changing the class to which they belong.

Table 5. *Regression coefficients (personal identity orientation and societal roles)*

	PERSONAL IDENTITY ORIENTATION			
Standardized B coefficient	**Common interest**	**Solidarity**	**Role changes difficulties**	**Importance of the role for personality**
Gender		0,186**		0,164**
Age		0,168**		0,209**
Nationality		0,231**		0,210**
Ethnicity		0,223**		0,175**
Profession (student)	0,204**	0,153**		0,179**
Religion		0,144**		
Political party				
Place of birth		0,149**		0,182**
Place of residence	0,113*	0,224**		0,201**
University		0,136**		0,165**
Class (social)		0,168**		0,253**
Family	0,148**	0,155**	0,156**	0,183**
Closed friend	0,125**	0,280**	0,288**	0,286**

*= $p < 0,05$;   **= $p < 0,01$

Students with high developed personal identity orientation feel solidarity for almost all 13 social roles, 12 social roles are important for them, they see common interest with 4 different social roles, and with only two social roles they would have difficulties to change them. Namely, highly developed personal determinants of personality will contribute to the development of:

- great sense of solidarity for all the social roles except political party;
- greater importance for all the social roles except political party and religion;
- Family and Close friend are social roles that students see common interest with and would have difficulties to change.

Discussion and Conclusions

The survey started in order to clarify the relationship between self-identification and the existence of the "other". It meant a response to the question of the relation

between "Who Am I" and "Where do I Belong". The results first described the students "What are they." The Tables 1 and 2 showed that most students are individuals with highly developed personal and social identity orientation, which would mean that when they define themselves- personal determinants (like personal ideas, thoughts, morals, desires ..) will be important, but also social determinants (their popularity among others, their physical appearance, attractiveness ..). However, comparison of the impact of personal versus social determinants- show that personal determinants are more important in creating the image "Who am I". Furthermore, Table 3 shows the social roles that students are most connected with and thus answering the question "Where do students belong." Predictably, the most important social roles for students are: Family, Close friends and Gender, but also Religion, Age and Profession (as student). The results of Tables 4 and 5 have proved the general hypothesis which stated that the personal and social determinants of self (core beliefs) will determine the relation to various social roles (13 in the survey). But this relation is very complex.

If we consider individual hypotheses separately, we can say that:

The first sub-hypothesis predicted that: The level of students' personal and social identity orientation will determine the position of their common interests with people belonging to certain social groups (13 according to Lapons), and we can say that this **is partly confirmed**. Social identity orientation (Sio) will affect the intensity of common interest of 5 different social roles, while Personal identity orientation (PIo) will affect the intensity of common interest of 4 different social roles.

The second hypothesis predicted that: The level of personal and social identity will determine the sense of solidarity towards people belonging to certain social groups-it **is confirmed**. SIo will determine the sense of solidarity with 7, and PIo with 12 social roles.

The third hypothesis predicted that: The level of personal and social identity will determine position on the possibilities and difficulties of changing certain social roles-can say that **it is not confirmed**. SIo will determine difficulties for changing only one social role, while the PIo will determine difficulties for changing only 2 different social roles.

The fourth sub-hypothesis that predicted that: The level of personal and social identity will determine the position on the importance of certain social roles for individuals- it **is partly confirmed**, only in the case of PIo. SIo will determine whether only two roles are important to students, while PIo determines whether 11 roles are important to students.

CONCLUSIONS

- Except for the political party, students are bound for almost all offered social roles- the average score for all 12 social roles were above 4. This finding perfectly fits, actually corresponds to the life stage where they belong. The top four were: family, close friend, profession and religion;
- Almost 82% of the respondents have high scores on the scale of Personal Identity Orientation (persons who have positive attitudes and values toward themselves) and almost 62% of the respondents have high scores on the Social Identity Orientation Scale (persons who valuated social acceptance for their own self acceptance);
- The personal identity orientation and the social identity orientation are not unrelated. If someone has a highly developed personal identity orientation- it means that he or she has a highly developed social identity orientation. The correlation coefficient is highly significant;
- The personal and social determinants of self (core beliefs) or Personal and Social Identity orientation of the students will determine the relation to various social roles (13 in the survey). But this relation is very complex, multidimensional and different depending on different social roles and different aspect of relations to social roles. Persons with high personal orientation give importance to many more social roles, and they feel solidarity with more social roles in comparison with persons with high social orientation. With one word, personal identity orientation toward self more than social identity orientation determine the attachment to social world of the personality: high personal identity orientation causes stronger attachment with many social roles. Family and close friend, which appear not to depend on social identity orientation, now, in the case of persons with personal orientation- are the most important social roles in every aspect.

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