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**Conceptual analysis of national
and ethnic identities**

Identity is one of the basic concepts in which social scientists have been interested during last decades. Social identity, particularly national and ethnic identities as its forms, is widely applicable topic that determines harmony, unity, integrity of the people and the nation. Every community and every individual as known accept collective ideas and norms forming their own identity, which is contributed to the unity of society. This paper includes a sociological analysis of identity and national identity in particular, the basic elements and functions of national identity, the interrelationship between national and ethnic identities. It is also discussed the positions of sociological analysis about the role of national and ethnic identities in society. Authors analyze the structure of national identity and define its social, political, cultural and economic dimensions. They underline important functions of national identity such as cohesion and solidarity between people, creation of mass awareness and common purpose for people in a society, improving people's political culture and determination the position of people in the political system. The contemporary world is considerably globalized and national identity plays a vital role in global solidarity and belonging to the greater identities at the world level. The national identity crosses the ethnic and tribal identities and results to the distinguishing between different citizens of the countries based on their civil characteristics. Each human society is include various ethnical, tribal and racial individuals and groups and each of these groups has their own particular identity which sometimes results to the social conflicts and lead to the social crises. In order to prevent crises; societies require the common identities which include all ethnical and tribal groups and bring social balance. The balance in the society is obtained while the members of the society seek for common social, political and economic activities based on a common identity. Today the modern and developed societies have obtained their common identity while the underdeveloped counties still facing ethnical, and tribal conflicts.

Key words: conception of identity, national identity, ethnic identity, ethnicity.

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**Ұлттық және этникалық
теңдестіруді
концептуалды талдау**

Мақалада теңдестіру және ұлттық теңдестіруге әлеуметтанулық талдау жасалынады. Соның ішінде, ұлттық теңдестірудің негізгі элементтері мен қызметтері, ұлттық теңдестіру мен этникалық теңдестіру арасындағы арақатынас қарастырылады. Сонымен бірге, қоғамда ұлттық және этникалық теңдестірудің ролі туралы әлеуметтанулық талдау позициялары талқыланады. Авторлар ұлттық теңдестірудің құрылымына талдау жасап, және оның әлеуметтік, саяси, мәдени, экономикалық аспектілерін анықтайды. Авторлар ұлттық теңдестірудің басты қызметтерін көрсетеді. Олар: адамдар арасында біртұтастық пен ынтымақтастық, қоғамда адамдар үшін ортақ мақсат пен бұқаралық сананы қалыптастыру, халықтың саяси мәдениетін жақсарту мен саяси жүйеде адамдардың позицияларын анықтау.

Түйін сөздер: теңдестіру концепциясы, ұлттық теңдестіру, этникалық теңдестіру.

Шеденова Н.У., Ахмади Р.
**Концептуальный анализ
национальной и этнической
идентичностей**

Статья включает в себя социологический анализ идентичности, и национальной идентичности в особенности, основных элементов и функций национальной идентичности, соотношение между национальной и этнической идентичностями. Также обсуждаются позиции социологического анализа о роли национальных и этнических идентичностей в обществе. Авторы анализируют структуру национальной идентичности и определяют ее социальные, политические, культурные и экономические аспекты. Они подчеркивают такие важные функции национальной идентичности, как сплоченность и солидарность между людьми, создание массового сознания и общей цели для людей в обществе, улучшение политической культуры народа и определение позиции людей в политической системе.

Ключевые слова: концепция идентичности, национальная идентичность, этническая идентичность, этничность.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

Introduction

One of the concepts that are nowadays the major concern of humanity is the identity of individuals and groups. National identity has a special importance rather than other collective identities, because it includes aspects like culture, community, politics and economics that ethnologists, sociologists, scholars of political science and economics have studied about. National identity is very important for all of the world nations. National identity is the factor of integration and collective spirit to a nation, and also it's a symbol between the nations. In fact, the consistency and continuity of a nation life with dignity and freedom depends on the national identity.

National identity roots deep in the history and culture of a nation and combines the nature of individuals in the society.

This quality doesn't belong to a specific nation, but to all great nations and civilized societies in the world. Even in cases where people lost their land and displaced, still they maintain their own national identity and collective identity, and they believe themselves dependent on their own identity.

Main body

The concept of identity

The subject of identity returns to the beginning of human history. Humans have always used their identity for definition and identification of tribe, ethnicity and nationality and they have also followed identity which distinguishes their differences to one another. In fact, identity is the answer to the question "who is" and "how to identify". The answer to these questions distinguishes one person from another, and also their values are distinguished from one another. It also shows the irrelation to a particular group and finally defines their collective identity and shows «who is?» and which society they belong to.

Identity means existence. Identity is the instrument of identifying the individual; that means the collection of personal traits and behavioral characteristics of the individual recognized as a social group and that distinguished from others. National and ethnic identities are the types of collective identity that means the sense

of national and ethnic integrity, feel loyalty to it and sacrifice for it.

The concept of identity and its interpretation always changes according to the socio-political developments of human societies. Humans, along with his personal identity, have the collective identity that links them to a larger collection. This collective identity is consistent with the political form of human life. When people lived in tribal societies, their collective identity was seen in relation to tribe and tribal values. Also the development of tribal life to a new political unit revolutionized the concept of collective identity. The formation of empires created a new concept of collective identity which the personal and tribal identities absorbed in to collective identity.

Identity is a process of conscious response to any individual or community or nation that responds to their own questions from their past i.e. what was and what is. In other words, which people, nation and race they belong to? Where is their origin from? What culture and civilization they had? What role they have in the development of world civilization? And what political, economic and cultural position do they have in the world today? Finally, the values which inspired from their historical identity, to what extent will be effective in substantiation of social, political and cultural community objectives in this discussion. Therefore, when national identity flaunted as an important concept that latent emotion in national societies according to a volition and awareness located the base of a political, cultural and economic plan. The new civilization has provided the instruments for this awareness and emergence of national consciousness.

National identity is only one of the several forms of collective identity. «The types of identities that people choose for themselves», writes Sandra Juryman, «tend to fall into a few categories: regional, religious, racial and linguistic». In her usage of the term, national identity is the politicized form of ethnic identity that develops when an ethnic group adopts a common political identity and their ethnicity is no longer just a cultural or social identifier» [1].

Different definitions of the term identity provided by social scientists but among them are many common features.

Shaikhavandi argues that identity as a set of symptoms, the effects of physical, biological, psychological, cultural causes the recognition of one person from another person, of one group from others, qualifications of other qualifications and culture of the other cultures [2].

In my opinion, identity twins is with a sense between the individuals of groups. Therefore:

Identity is a set of characteristics which determine one's inner feeling. The sense of identity includes different feelings like sense of unity, compatibility, belonging, value, independence and trust formed based on the existent will [3].

Durkheim, a French scientist discusses of collective identity, as a title under the collective conscience: collective consciousness is beliefs that members of a group, clan or community shared among themselves. They, from this point of view, are collective and nobody alone knows or has all of them, only all of the people together know and have them all. In other words, collective consciousness is the common beliefs of the members of a collective or a community as a group, clan or society together [4].

Components of the identity is formed of two parts: cognitive (mental) and psychological (emotional). The mental part (beliefs) consists of a set of values, beliefs, norms, symbols and attitudes. The emotional part (feeling) also involves complex feelings, love and hatred, desire and reluctance, belonging, commitment and responsibility. The existence of these components and awareness cause the formation of type «I» in an individual or in a community like (category, group, and society) [5].

It is necessary to begin by observing that national and ethnic identities are not our only identities. Instead, we all have a large number of different identities. These various identities are rooted in different aspects of our self-perceptions. Some of our identities are what may be called «social identities». Social identities are those identities which are derived from our membership of social groups (such as our nation, our ethnic group, our religious group, our gender group, our occupational group, the organization that we work for, the sporting clubs or teams that we support, etc.). When our membership of one of these social groups forms a salient part of our own self-concept in such a way that we attribute emotional significance and value to that group membership, we may be said to have acquired a subjective identification with the group.

The acquisition of the plural identities, such as -popularly known- family, tribe, ethnic group, community, country, patria ('national terrain' in Smith's writings), nation, gender, class and civilization, are constructed within the process of socialization. By the way, different sorts of identities fall into three categories. First one of these categories is the universal identity that is some traits which distinguish the people from the no people and be shared by all people without any discrimination. Second one is the group identity that is shared identity by some people. Third one is the individual

identity that is distinctive and sui generis traits of a sole individual [6].

The conceptual analysis of national identity

Discussion about national identity was the product of socio-economic changes within Europe. These changes considered from two main aspects: the first, the events in Europe, such as scientific revolution, Renaissance and Reformation collapsed the identity of the old European humans completely and those created to them astonishment and perplexity.

On the other hand, the emergence of new political units under title «nation-states» confronted previous political structures and collective identity from that to crisis and caused the formation of a new concept of collective identity, named national identity. During this period, the main element of identity was «self-knowledge» that became the source of profound crisis to the old identity. The new design of national identity should be limited to a period of political formation of international system in the two centuries ago; on that time which the governments tried to establish cohesion, national unity and quell internal crises by sociological studies for nation-building, and or according to views of some experts, in framework of power balance theory feel the necessity of weaken rival states or hostile and had attention to stimulate their nations and ethnic groups which live in country.

In the psychoanalytic theory of which Erikson (1959) is an exponent, ego identity is “the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego’s synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safe guarding the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others [7].

Development of national identity has a long and complex process. Factors like: Geographical, ethnic, linguistic, religious, economical, historical stories, ceremonies, and customs together make a nation’s identity in the all over and centuries. Then in the form of education and generally culture in widely, transfer down from one generation to other generation, such as milk to give from mother to child. Therefore, the Iranian people, Germans, French, Chinese, Hindi, English, Arabic, etc. recognize by theirs identity. Although all of them are equal in the sense of humanity, but others are recognized on the basis of their identity, the factor of this relevant identification to their national virtues that is national identity.

National identity comes into existence when the nation is considered a relevant object for human experience. Such experiences can be of the most divergent kinds, e.g. war or democracy. Accordingly, national identities can be very different. An identity

taking common destinies, real or imagined, as its point of reference tends to emphasize lineage and ethnicity, while an identity taking common values as its point of reference tends to emphasize the principle of territory. The individual simultaneously can have multiple identities, personal and social. The identities can be more or less overlapping, with different emphasis depending upon the situation [8].

The history also specially has a great role in national identity of a nation. The root of identity of a nation is in history of nation. National identity is a speduncle that all of cultural components find unity by that. History shows how a common autobiographical existed for us. And why the unite fate is to all in advance? Subscription of people in Nature located by foundation of a unity.

If attend to a common historical heritage continually, national identity will be superior than to multi-ethnic identities and national unity will not weaken with existing to multi-ethnicity, As long as religious sects, political and specific social stratum don’t monopolize power exclusively, and whith tyranny and hegemony-seeking, didn’t destroy freedom, a sense of solidarity and Coexistence.

In the process of political development (that should promises of a lawful society, and admittance and respect to the rights of individuals and groups) the creation of an integrated sense of loyalty and unity among all individuals and groups with respect to common principles and values of the society on the basis of «National Identity» is necessary. Common principles and values mean briefly as life, property, honor of the people, territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the country. Whereas authority and ability of a country to protect these principles and values against threats is defined as «national security». This is “national identity” which always fortifies loyalty between the people and gathers them under the mutual interests of the society. But an important question is which «national identity» can perform such a function? Obviously, in a diverse society (in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural) an identity is successful and functional that its «national» feature involves all ethnic, religious and cultural identities of that land and not deny them. Establishment and consolidation of national unity, without reference to national identity and its definition is not possible.

A very salient set of cultural codes in the contemporary world are schemas related to national identity. According to Anthony Smith, national identity is the most fundamental of all identities because it is a product of «natural» continuity from pre-existing ethnic origins, conscious manipulation

through commemoration, ideology and symbolism, and a «need for community». Most other social scientists are keener on more social constructivist notions of national identity but, nevertheless, argue that people consider national origin as an important part of their identity, and perceive others through the nationality lens. In collective efforts, people use these categories to «demarcate political communities, claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to «the people» of a country» [9].

The ethno symbolist approach lays special emphasis on the subjective components of national identity, while simultaneously underlining the sociological bases of collective cultural identities, like ethnics and nations.

«National identity», according to Smith, ‘involves some sense of political community, history, territory, patria, citizenship, common values and traditions’ [10, p. 9]. He argues that ‘nations must have a measure of common culture and a civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together in their homeland’ [10, p.11]. Adding that, the agencies of popular socialization – primarily the public system of education and the mass media – have been handed the task of ensuring a common public mass culture, an idea central to Ernest Gleaner’s own theory of nationalism formulated in his seminal book *Nations and Nationalism* (1983).

Smith considers national identity as multi-dimensional concept and lists five fundamental attributes:

- 1 historic territory or homeland
- 2 common myths and historical memories
- 3 a common, mass public culture
- 4 common legal rights and duties for all members
- 5 common economy with territorial mobility for members.

If the nation is constructed then logic dictates that national identity is too. National identity «infuses citizens with a sense of purposefulness, confidence and dignity by allowing them to ‘feel at home» [11].

I argue that national identity is a modern phenomenon of a fluid and dynamic nature which by means of sharing a particular set of common characteristics is led to the subjective belief that the society members are ancestrally related.

Belief in a common culture, history, traditions, symbols, relationship, language, religion, territory, and destiny have been invoked, with varying intensity at different times and places, by people claiming to share a particular national identity.

Generally, national identity is applied to citizens of a nation-state. There are other cases,

however, where national identity is shared among individuals belonging to a nation without a state of their own. Memories of a time when the nation was independent, endured collective oppression, or attained international leadership, together with the current desire for self-determination, strengthen a sense of common identity among those who belong to the nation, even if it lacks a state. National identity reflects the sentiment of belonging to the nation regardless of whether it has or does not have a state of its own [12].

In my view, national identity has five aspects: psychological, cultural, territorial, historical, and political.

National Identity is the type of unity feeling, companionship and empathy with political system which is made not only in appearance but will be accepted by heart of the people and their obedience.

Elements of national identity

Having a common language, geographical dependencies and common economic dependencies are factors which make people who have lived for a long time together have the same experience and somehow common worldview and ambitions. Usually these people have lived together, they have had happiness and joy feelings together and they have suffered together. That is what we can call “common psychological combination” or national personality and identity.

In some researches there have been discussed of four categories such as national, religious, social and human values as the constituting factors of national identity:

1. National values include all of cultural properties like land, language, national symbols, traditions and national literature.
2. Religious values are all of religious culture properties which exist within the society.
3. Social values focus on social principles and rules which should be observed for the solidity of the society.
4. Human values are all of human rules and principles which should be observed for survival of human race aside from any social and geographical limitation.

The important point in combination of these four values is the share they have in this combination. Sometimes each value has an equal share but sometimes the share of one of them is more than others.

A number of traditional scholars in political, social and geographical sciences each has considered one special element as the main component of national identity. Geography believes «common land» and «common history» as the major component,

social sciences consider «common language» and «common religion» as the major component, but political science emphasizes on «common political structure», «nationality and nation» and «civil society». Surely, identity is a combination of these elements plus other common cultural elements such as: arts, traditions and customs.

In fact, the elements of the identity are those that connect a person to a larger collection by the name of nation or nationality and nationality is a “form of common feelings raised from excitement and enthusiasm, intimacy and especial glory pertinent to the motherland”. So we can say that the first element of identity is awareness and the second is interest in the community to which the person belongs. Hence, as the identity takes an intellectual aspect, thus inevitably it is not apart from culture.

So, generally, we can base the national identity on two subjective and objective elements:

The subjective element emphasizes on the existence of beliefs and considers identity as the result of a human society’s belief in having common properties and belongings. Accordingly, existence of subjective beliefs free of objective realities becomes the basis of forming national and ethnic identities.

While the objective element emphasizes on the role of objective realities in formation of these identities but the objective element roots from two cultural (culture-based) and political (government-based) attitudes. The culture-based attitude observes the cultural variables like language, religion, culture, literature, art, traditions, customs and beliefs of a nation that are generated during long periods (history). This attitude, through relying on subjective elements of the identity, considers common cultural values and public belief in them as the cause of identity formation. Within a cultural frame, people with common language, religion and culture will share a common identity as a result of sharing the so-called elements. In other words, these elements and symbols are indicators which can help to understanding the subjective element of identity.

According to Montesquieu, the whole spirit of a nation (its national identity) is: «the way of being, performing, thinking and feeling of a special community as the geography and history have created. The whole spirit of a nation is not a minimal cause like others but a result of total physical, social and moral causes.

In this regard, we can say that social justice is one of the most important bases and factors for strengthening the national identity while class differences are the ruining agent of the national identity. In societies where

the public welfare is provided the national identity will also best able and solid.

Functions of national identity

National identity realizes next basic functions in society:

National solidarity and integrity

National identity can strengthen the social compatibility and national solidarity using symbolic properties such as language, religion, historical background and common benefits. Integrity means joining and collecting a society’s components and its small units into a more correlated whole in a manner that those small, scattered and different elements’ abilities and powers joined together manage to solve transitive period crises through public support of the political system. Therefore, national identity due to its determining role in areas of culture, society, politics and even economics, is among the very comprehensive concepts and yet legalizing the politico-social order and will brings about correlation and internal integrity of a political system.

2. National awareness and orientating the social life

National identity in addition of creating unity among the society’s individuals defines their collective objective and path. Governments induce their considered value system to the society members through education, advertising and other society-agreed tools. Among which, national identity is an axis variable in defining the collective values and norms of a society’s individuals. Actually, the preliminary aim of national identity which is national unity and solidarity is not possible without the function of orientating the national identity, because national solidarity and unity should necessarily be based on common aim, where without common aim and direction we cannot retain the correlation among the members of a group and totally ethnic and national societies.

3. Determining the functions of political culture

Political culture is specific aspects of society’s common culture that explains the relationship between society and the political system. When we talk about political culture of a society we imply a particular political system that has been domesticated based on the people’s attitudes and values of that society. Environment of a political system is surrounded by a series of values, norms and symbols, and awareness about a political system is highly dependent on familiarity with the dominant values available in that environment. Therefore, proper understanding of political processes in different societies requires efforts to understand the cultural bases of these societies. Meanwhile,

national identity which contains national cultures elements can bridge between cultural values of social environment and political actions of the governments.

Ethnic identity

The national identity debate on the concept of the nation. But about ethnicities it should be said that «Max Weber believes that ethnic groups are human groups holding subjective beliefs in common ancestors» [13].

Another definition of ethnicity says that «ethnicity is a specific human population with a shared ancestral legend, shared memories, cultural elements, linking with a historical land or homeland and a share of interests' sense and responsibility» [14, P.1].

As we have definitions for national identity, we have also several definitions for ethnic identity some of which are briefly mentioned below:

Dr. Nasser Fakoohi says: Most social scholars believe that when we have a language which is different from national language and also there is a collection of cultural traditions, cultural history and land territory, this collection could be known as an ethnicity [14, P.2].

So we can see that language has an important role in here and is considered an important identity determining factor for ethnicities.

«Ethnicity is a human-racial group which has a specific language, culture, lifestyle and special group desires within the frame of a great racial branch as such it can easily be detached from its other racial groups» [15].

Also we can consider the most important characteristics of a real nation as having real common ancestors, a shared name, shared land and language, shared land areas, shared values and so on.

Ethnic identity is a special collection of objective, subjective, cultural, social, ideological and spiritual causes that is expressed in a human group and distinguishes it from other groups; because this identity should be coincident with the reality of this group.

In this way, we can also see very clearly the similarities and differences issue in ethnic identities and another important issue is the sense of belonging of a person to an ethnic group: Holmes defines ethnic identity as a person's sense of belonging to an ethnic group that has its own special cultural heritage, values and policies [14, P.2].

The next important issue which somehow was referred in national identity part is the rate of accepting the group's values by heart by the individuals which due to the specific conditions of

the ethnic groups, it can be observed in these groups more intensively.

Therefore, does this mean that multi-ethnic nations can never have integrative sociocultural bonds? If there is any cultural dimension that can transcend the ethnic and religious differences, and establish the bonds across ethnic lines that will provide a means for a sense of national identity, it is that of language. This is because it is language that enables a person to be culturally ethnically rooted and yet to reach out communicatively at a national level - it provides the bridge between the «segmental attachment» and the «civil ties of the nation» [16].

Relationship between national identity and ethnic identity

In this part, for proper recognition of the relationship between national identity and ethnic identity it is necessary to know a little about the formation process of national states in the world. But it should be noted that formation of national state have always been joined with national culture and as mentioned earlier we should differentiate between national state and national identity.

Throughout the history and between developed countries national culture have been created based on contrast and even against with local cultures. For example, the French Revolution caused that ethnic languages go under pressure and eventually eliminated. Ethnic cultures were also pushed aside and even this has been associated with a lot of massacres.

But it did not happen in developing countries like that because there is more than one hundred years difference between national states formation in developed countries and developing countries which this span caused the formation strategy of national state and nation which was performed in developed countries not applicable in developing countries. Because in this time span human rights were established and one of the pillars of human rights is a right which gives to the human groups the right of preserving their cultural identity, it means everyone can have their own culture and language. So the national states of the Third World could no longer behave as developed governments had done. It means they should have behaved more democratic and recognized the rights of subcultures.

So the important point is to distinguish between the ethnic groups in developed countries and developing countries as we have seen, the process of formation national culture in these countries is quite distinct and has followed separate routes.

How is the relationship between the national identity and ethnic identity? Do they have a direct relationship with each other or indirect?

National identity is the person's identity and sense of belonging to one state or to one nation, a feeling one shares with a group of people, regardless of one's citizenship status. But ethnicity or ethnic group is a socially defined category based on common culture or nationality. Ethnicity can, but does not have to, include common ancestry, appearance, cuisine, dressing style, heritage, history, language or dialect, religion, symbols, traditions, or other cultural factor.

Nowadays national borders are crucial in terms of national identity and usually national identity isn't more than one in each country. But this national identity has subsets such as social identities, corporate, education, religious and ethnic.

Also another definition reads: «National identity means passing through traditional identities, including religion, ethnicity, and tribe to pervasive identities. According to this, national identity is an identity which the people identify themselves by attaching to specific geographic and certain governmental system instead of their own ethnic and tribal belongings. National identity shall be that much comprehensive that should not create a conflict between the primary identity (ethnic person) and inclusive identity (national). Accordingly, we can consider a particular nation, geography and a certain governmental system as the main features of the national identity» [17].

Conclusion

The results of this research suggest that national identity is a multidimensional phenomenon. According to sociological perspective, national identity aspects are: social, historical, geographical, political, religious, cultural and literary. The social aspect of national identity refers to a sense of belonging, shared memories and commitment to the national community. The historical aspect attends to

memories, events, characters and historical leaps. The geographical aspect attends to bounds in the plans and specified territory. The political aspect of national identity depends to system, values and political unit of the national state's legitimacy. The religious aspect of identity compares the common religion and faith to its religion. Cultural and literary aspects are related to customs, myths, folklore, art, architecture, language and national literature.

Among other collective identities is the ethnic identity within which the components and indicators of ethnic identity such as adherence to ethnic identity, sense of belonging and commitment to the land, history, language, literature and cultural heritage, ethnic figures and heroes are considered.

National identity means passing through traditional identities, including religion, ethnicity, and tribe to pervasive identities. According to this, national identity is an identity which the people identify themselves by attaching to specific geographic and certain governmental system instead of their own ethnic and tribal belongings.

The recognition of components and indicators of national identity is very important for every country for them to be integrated and united. Because national identity is a concept that tries to reduce the conflicts available in group and ethnic identities and align them under a higher identity i.e. national identity. National integrity and unity requires the adoption of national identity from common elements of various ethnic identities in the society, otherwise, the elements of national identity will be unfamiliar for ethnic identity and consequently the sense of belonging and commitment of ethnicities to it will be reduced. Therefore, one of the most important mechanisms to strengthen the national identity in order to bring about unity and collective integrity and also to preserve the ethnic identities is to adopt the policy of «unity in diversity».

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