# SSOAR

# Open Access Repository
## www.ssoar.info

## Hierarchy of identities in the Macedonian multicultural society: findings from a survey of student population
Hristova, Lidija; Cekik, Aneta

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

# Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society:
# Findings from a Survey of Student Population

_____

**Lidija Hristova** and **Aneta Cekik**
Institute for Sociological, Political and Legal Research
Sts Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

_____

## Abstract

In multicultural societies as the Macedonian one, the attachment of citizens to particular identity traits is important for the democratic stability and peace. The aim of this paper is to find out how students from different ethnic origins in the R. Macedonia relate to their identity traits, especially to their national and ethnic identities, and relative to other identity traits. The basic assumptions are based on a phenomenon called "minority effect", according to which members of minority groups tend to attach greater importance to minority affiliations that are particularly important for their group identity (language, religion, ethnicity, tradition, etc.). Aside from importance of identity traits, the emotional and behavioural components of these attachments were also examined. The research results show that regardless of the ethnic origin, students attach greatest importance to their identities connected to their immediate social environment (family, friends), but also religion. In accordance with the "minority effect" hypothesis, religion and then ethnicity, are perceived by the ethnic Albanians as a strong cohesive and mobilising factor, whereas that is not the case with the ethnic Macedonians. When it comes to nationality, the responses suggest that for ethnic Albanians it has marginal importance (through the cognitive, emotional and the action component), while ethnic Macedonians show controversial relation to their national identity.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Aneta Cekik, Associate Professor
Affiliation:  Institute for Sociological, Political and Legal Research, Sts Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
Address: Blvd. Partizanski odredi bb, 1000 Skopje
e-mail: aneta@isppi.ukim.edu.mk

## 1. Introduction: Ethnic and National Identity

When it comes to social identity, one of the most exploited relationships in sociology and political science is the one of the ethnic (cultural) and national identity (identity arising from citizenship, of belonging to a national political community). Even the most superficial review of professional journals, academic publications, and analyses in the mass media concerning the cultural and political differences, point to hundreds and thousands of references to identity, suggesting an almost hegemonic position that the term/concept has in the academic, as well as outside of the academic discourse. (Malesevic, 2006: 31). The astonishing popularity of *identity* is probably due to many historical and social circumstances, but according to Maleshevic, the most important thing is that the identity virtually assumed the role of three important social concepts that faded away in the meantime - the concepts of race, national character and social consciousness.

The interest of the social sciences, primarily of the political science for these collective identities arises from the thesis that the sense of belonging, attachment to the group (ethnic or national)[1] is closely linked to the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of individuals to the social and political order. Most modern authors whose focus of interest is the national and/against ethnic identity, refer to the dichotomous division, under which there are two general models of nation: civil-territorial and ethnic-genealogical, where the first is the aspired, desirable model suggested by the modern (inclusive) western civil society. The alternative ethnic concept of the nation relies on common roots, language, customs, traditions (Smith, 1991: 10-12), meaning a model that primarily refers to common ancestry. The first is inclusive, based on the citizen concept and features liberal and cosmopolitan values, and the second is exclusive and can lead to violence and disintegration (Kohn, 1994; Ignatieff, 1993, according to Hansen and Hesli, 2009; Smith 1991; Miller, 2000). The idea of a dichotomy between ethnic and national identity, particularly between ethnic and civic nationalism found its support in the social identity theory, (Tajfel, 1970; Hogg, 2001, according to Hansen and Hesli, 2009). Liphart also talks about the serious challenge to democracy arising from the strong group attachments (Liphart, 1995 [1977]).

The basic assumption of the authors that support this dichotomy is that a strong attachment to the ethnic group leads to a negative evaluation of those out of the group caused by intolerance and lack of readiness to accept the *others* (those outside the group), (Hansen and Hesli, 2009; Barrett, 2010). Some authors emphasize that this negative evaluation of the *others* is often accompanied by a kind of favouritism or extremely non-critical attitude towards the members of their own group (Festinger, Tajfel in Horowitz, 1985), which in certain situations produces strong conflicts and catastrophic consequences for the development of democracy. This conceptual approach suggests the existence of two opposing models that exclude each other. That may be the problem conceptually, and much more politically. Given the fact that almost all societies are multicultural the problem seems universal.

These questions have preoccupied and still preoccupy the academic circles, opening the debate on multiculturalism as a (philosophical, sociological and political) concept (Kymlicka, 2004 [1995], Taylor et al. 2004 [1994] and others) and its sustainability. The two main categories of this global concept-recognition and redistribution - are differently interpreted and evaluated by the authors, which has raised

---

[1] There are different terms in the literature on the analysis of the issue of ethnic versus national identity. The terms that are also used for national identity are: *civic identity* or *citizenship* (in terms of attitude, commitment to citizenship), whereas the ethnic (i.e. the particular) is sometimes treated as religious, linguistic or cultural identity. .

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

controversy about the suitability and acceptability of the concept on theoretical, and even more on a political/empirical level[2].

The concepts of power-sharing, consociational democracy and other approaches related to constitutional engineering were particularly interesting for political science as they assumed redesigning the political systems in terms of a significant redistribution of political resources in multicultural societies (Liphart, 1995 [1977]; Horowitz, 1985; Gur and Harf, 1994; Sisk, 1996; Raynolds [ed.], 2002; Wolf, 2011).

As for empirical research, although worldwide the official definitions of the nation aspire to the civic model, the citizens still remain traditional in their views, as it is shown in the comparative analysis of F. Jones and F. Smith, which covers 23 countries (Jones and Smith, 2001). Apparently, despite the globalization, mass migration and cultural pluralism, ethnic/cultural background rank high on the scale of preferences of citizens, posing a question before the science how best to interpret the situation where the minority group possesses both a distinct identity, and a sense of belonging to a wider community (Miller, 2000). Most researchers of the problem of ethnic versus national identity suggest that modern nationalism and identities have never been fully constructed only according to one model. Rather, one could say that they express the deep dualism at the heart of any nationalism. Sometimes one component prevails, sometimes the other (Smith, 1991: 13; Laponce, 2008), That is closely related to the quality of political leadership, which can support and nurture them, as it can support and nurture polarized and conflicting identities (Linz and Stepan, 2008: 66).

## 2. Complexity of the National Identities: How to Approach the Research of These Identities?

Analyzing the relationship between ethnic and civic identity, Laponce (2008) warns of the danger of simplifying things. National and ethnic identities are not the only identities. All of us possess a wide range of identities (identity traits), rooted in different aspects of our self-perception. A particular problem is the lack of measurements which would relate to the relative importance attributed to our ethnicity or our nation, especially in comparison with other features of our Self and the social environment, such as profession, age, family, friends, etc. concluded Laponce (2008). (Another question is, whether the once established hierarchy of identities is of an enduring character or is subject to changes.) The next aspect that researchers need to consider in their research on ethnic and national identity(identities) is the relationship between them. Thus, Allen et al. (1983) suggest that civic identities are embedded one into another like the Russian matryoshka, the identification with the city is incorporated in the province, and this one with the nation (Salazar, 1998; according to Chastenay and Pagé, 2002). Finally, they are all mutually related and mutually influenced (Laponce, 2008).

Of course, despite the categorization offered by these authors, other models or categorizations can be found in the literature. Hesli and Hansen (2009), for example, proposed four categories of identity (civic, ethnic, hybrid and atomized), where the typologization is based on the commitment of individuals to the group and the tolerance towards those outside the group.

The next aspect in the study of multiple identities is the way of expression or, the experience of the attachment to the group identity. This is often referred to as a feeling of belonging, attachment or similar. But it is also important to know what the individual means by that. Does the attachment to a certain social group means at the same time sharing of the common values and interests or not; does the individual feel

---

[2] To mention, for example, that Europe came to withdrawing from the positions of multiculturalism in the statements of Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, as well as at the politicians in the UK. The global refugee and migrant crisis of 2015/ 2016 brought new and serious challenges for the concept, especially in Europe.

solidarity with other members of the group that would also involve readiness for joint action, etc. The behavioural or process - oriented component of identity is very important because it indicates how the group operates or will operate in the future (Caporaso and Kim, 2009). Its ideological power lies in its implicit collectivistic call for group solidarity (Collins, 1992 according to Malesevic, 2006: 10).

The variations that arise between individuals as a result of the different ways in which an individual identifies with a social group (Leach et al., 2008; Roccas et al., 2008, in Barrett, 2010) are empirically reachable. One person can rank high in solidarity and readiness for joint action with other members of the group, but low in terms of sharing the values of the group and vice versa. In any case, these cognitive dimensions of national or ethnic identity are very important in terms of predictions of future behaviour of the groups and the building of specific policies in the wake of such behaviours.

## 3. Hierarchy of Identity Traits
### 3.1 Methodological approach

This paper is based on the findings of the project "Perception of identities among the student population in the Republic of Macedonia" conducted by the Institute for sociological, political and juridical research in Skopje in 2011 (Hristova et al, 2014) which analyses several aspects of identity. Starting from the specifics of the Macedonian multicultural society, it was particularly important for the researchers to gain knowledge of how young people rank their identities, how are these attachments dispersed among the two largest ethnic communities in Macedonia - Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, and which factors account for the eventual differences.

The basic assumptions of the study are based on: a phenomenon called "minority effect", under which members of minority groups tend to attach greater importance to minority affiliations that are particularly important for their group identity (language, religion, ethnicity, tradition, etc.) (Laponce, 2004), and the certain interdependence between individual and collective identity.

The expectations of the minority effect arise from the theory of personality of Arieti (1967), upon which Laponce constructed the questionnaire, which offered more identity traits or affiliations which Laponce understands as social roles.[3] According to him, the individual is a link of roles and the Self is a theatre where roles are actors, and the script for our game is a questionnaire that sets on the stage the 13 (or more) different roles. His expectations have been associated with the so-called effect of minority, which means that people who have minority status in society attach more importance to the roles that are placed in such a (minority) status than to those that are in the dominant (majority) position.

The survey used a target sample consisting of 451 respondents. The institutions from which the respondents shall be recruited and the years of study were determined in advance, which resulted into a relatively homogeneous population. The sample included three public universities: the University " Ss. Cyril and Methodius " – Skopje (UKIM) (ethnically mixed), University "Goce Delchev" – Shtip (UGD) (dominantly Macedonian), Tetovo State University – Tetovo (DUT) (dominantly Albanian), and the student respondents were recruited from their social sciences faculties. The ethnic origin of students was primarily controlled, due to which the sample included 234 ethnic Macedonians and 201 ethnic Albanians. The remaining small number of students belonging to other ethnic communities was left out from further processing.

---

[3] The texts of both authors use in parallel several terms: identity traits, identities, roles (the later especially seen at Laponce).

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

The study of identity traits of students applied a questionnaire[4] which offered/defined 13 identity or affiliation traits: *gender, age, ethnic group, nationality, profession, preferred political party, birthplace, residence, university, class, religion, family and close friend*s.  Students were asked to respond according to their own perception of belonging to a particular social group/category. By using the seven-point Likert scale, the questionnaire asked  how *much importance* the respondent attaches to each category or identity traits, to what extent it believes that there are *joint interests* with others who belong to the same group, the extent of *solidarity* with those that possess the same identity feature, to what extent there is a *problem/difficulty to imagine that the one could change the identity corresponding feature*, the extent to which people sharing the same identity draws *are satisfied* with the attitude of society towards them.

In this type of research, it is realistic to expect that certain social indicators on the construct of identity of the individual will vary in different subgroups of the population, like for example, the adults in comparison with the young ones, those with higher education in comparison with those with no or low level of education, etc. Given the fact that the target group is the student population, specified as described earlier, many of the variables common to this type of research were not relevant to the research starting assumptions. In fact, the starting assumption is that the ethnicity of respondents would appear to be an important factor for their perceptions of their own social position in society, as well as of the importance of certain social relations that shape their everyday lives, or in a word, in the shaping of their identity. The basic research questions are as follows:

*"What is the hierarchy structure of identity traits of the student population in the Republic of Macedonia?"*
*"How stable is the hierarchy structure of identity traits of different sub-samples (ethnicity, gender, university)?"*
*"What behavioural consequences arise from the attachment to certain identity traits?"*

### 3.2. The relative importance of identity traits of the student population- research results

The studied student population has ranked the identity traits in the following manner (Table 1 presents the mean values and the ranks obtained for each identity trait for the entire sample). The first three places in the ranking are occupied by family, friends and religion, while the last three by political party, nationality and class, from which it is obvious that the studied population gives priority to its private life. The analysis of mean values gives us the opportunity to see the differences between the ranks, where family and friends stand out from the rest with very high mean values (6.60 and 6.36, approaching to the maximum - 7), whereas at the bottom of the table, significantly distanced from previous levels, is the political party with mean value of 3.23. The difference between this mean value and that of citizenship (nationality was ranked next to last) is 1.73 points, which also represents the biggest difference between two adjacent ranks. It is obvious that the student population of our sample attaches very little importance to the preferred political party in respect of any other identity trait. The middle of the table, with relatively small differences in the mean values, contains the other identity traits: gender, birthplace, place of residence, profession, etc.

**Table1.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance *(all respondents: N = 451)*

---

[4] The first two blocks of questions, of course, with necessary adjustments were taken from the research of Laponce and Gingras, who applied them to the student and high school population in France, Canada (Quebec), Belgium and Switzerland. Minor adjustment was made to the questionnaire which had 15, that is, 14 categories or identity traits. The authors mention that depending on the environment in which the study was conducted, they also made minor corrections of the instrument, including the wording.

| Identity trait | Mean value (1-7) | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Family | 6,60 | 1 |
| Close friends | 6,36 | 2 |
| Religion | 5,91 | 3 |
| Profession | 5,86 | 4 |
| Place of residence | 5,57 | 5 |
| Ethnicity | 5,51 | 6 |
| Gender | 5,47 | 7-8 |
| Hometown | 5,47 | 7-8 |
| Age | 5,37 | 9 |
| University | 5,28 | 10 |
| Class | 5,09 | 11 |
| Nationality | 4,96 | 12 |
| Political party | 3,23 | 13 |
| *Mean value* | 4,04 | |

The *comparisons* with the findings in the research of Laponce and Gingras (2000) are risky and could be subject to serious methodological comments. But considering that we are talking about the same population with the same age and profession (students of social sciences), and that the research is done in multi-ethnic societies will still allow for some general observations. First, a very general observation would be that there are several similarities, but also some significant differences. In the research of Laponce and Gingras (2000), family and friends are at the top of the hierarchy, interpreted by the analysts as an expression of a healthy society, while at the bottom are the political party and religion. Commenting on this ranking of the political party, they locate the reasons in the de-politicization and/or "*manifestation of the tendency of a non-ideological culture of the end of history, the end of ideology type*" (Gingras, 2003: 7; Gingras et Laponce, 2000). When it comes to the Macedonian social context, it can be said that the *minor importance* that respondents attach to the *political party* is due to the apolitisation (de-politicization assumes that respondents had have greater interest in politics in the past), which might be due to the age of the respondents (because of their age, they still have very little experience in politics), but also may be due to the anger and resentment with regard to the political life of the country. This research does not allow for verification of these assumptions.

In terms of religion, which has the next-to-last position in the research of Laponce and Gingras (2000), researchers commented that, given the general tendency in Western societies, it is expected that religion will increasingly lose its importance and will have lesser chances of being a factor of social integration. (They even think that it can be expected in a future research for it to be in the last place.) In the survey conducted in Macedonia, religion is somewhere at the top of the imaginary pyramid, right next to family and friends. Moreover, it is interesting to see to what extent the high ranking of religion is due to the strong attachment of the population to religious values and principles, and to what extent it is triggered/stimulated by the divided Macedonian multi-ethnic society.

Some of the researches conducted in Macedonia confirmed that the country belongs to the category of highly religious societies. In a survey from 2012, conducted on a representative sample of the adult population in the country, 77 % of respondents identified themselves as religious, 18.4 % as "somewhat religious", and less than 5 % said they were not religious. According to these results, the researchers conclude, the Republic of Macedonia is among the highly religious countries, recording similar rates of religiosity in countries like Moldova (77.1%), Poland (76.5%) and Croatia (76.5%), while

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

considerably different from neighbouring countries - Serbia (68.2 %) and Bulgaria (52.2%) (Cacanovska, 2014). According to Cacanovska (2014), in the case of the Macedonian society, religion is closely associated with the national/ethnic identity and politics. The most important indicator in this regard is the visible increase in the rate of religious people after the interethnic (Macedonian and Albanian) armed conflict in 2001, when the rate of religiosity climbed at 93,5%.

When it comes to comparisons, it is important to emphasize the difference in terms of citizenship, which in the research of Laponce and Gingras (2000) is at the top of the table, while in the case of the Macedonian research, citizenship (national identity) is ranked very low (this finding is paid special attention in the text that follows).

## 4. Factors of Influence
### 4.1 Ethnicity of the respondents and hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance

To what extent does ethnicity of respondents affect the modifying of the above analysed hierarchical structure of identity traits according to their importance? Is the impact of the minority syndrome confirmed? Speaking of the latter, identity traits that touch upon the minority status issue would in this case be the ethnicity, nationality and religion and would address the students of Albanian ethnic origin. Moreover, given the Macedonian social context, one would expect citizenship to be ranked lower, i.e. the Albanians to attach less importance to this identity trait as compared to religion and ethnicity, which are expected to be attached greater importance compared to the importance the students with ethnic Macedonian origin would attach. The results of the importance of identity traits for both ethnic groups are given below.

**Table 2.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance for Albanians and Macedonians (ranks and mean values)

| Identity traits | Rank | | | Mean value | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Macedonians | Albanians | Difference in ranks | Macedonians | Albanians | Difference in mean values M-A |
| Gender | 9 | 7 | 2 | 5,22 | 5,77 | -0,55 |
| Age | 11 | 9 | 2 | 5,17 | 5,63 | -0,46 |
| Nationality | 5 | 12 | 7 | 5,43 | 4,38 | 1,07 |
| Ethnic group | 7 | 8 | 1 | 5,28 | 5,71 | -0,43 |
| Profession | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5,74 | 5,98 | -0,24 |
| Religion | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5,55 | 6,33 | -0,78 |
| Political party | 13 | 13 | 0 | 3,03 | 3,45 | -0,42 |
| Hometown | 10 | 6 | 4 | 5,19 | 5,79 | -0,60 |
| Place of residence | 6 | 5 | 1 | 5,35 | 5,83 | -0,48 |
| University | 8 | 10 | 2 | 5,24 | 5,38 | -0,14 |
| Class | 12 | 11 | 1 | 4,92 | 5,28 | -0,36 |
| Family | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6,56 | 6,63 | -0,07 |
| Close friends | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6,49 | 6,21 | 0,28 |
| *Mean value* | | | | 5,32 | 5,57 | 0,42 |

The first finding is that we are talking about globally two nearly identical hierarchical structures where family and friends are at the top of the hierarchy ladder, and the political party, class, university, are at the bottom. Differences in the ranks are important for citizenship (the difference amounts seven ranks)

and birthplace (the difference amounts four ranks), where, as expected, ethnic Macedonians attach much more importance to the first identity trait than the ethnic Albanians. As far as the birthplace is concerned, for its higher ranking among Albanians, in this moment, and at this level of analysis, no explanation can be provided. And mean values confirm these findings, showing the significant differences between the students from different ethnic groups. Besides the already mentioned ones, we would here include religion and gender, where in both cases the ethnic Albanians attach greater importance to these identity traits. Ethnic group takes the middle place in the table.

The statistical processing of the results (t-test) identified statistically significant differences in 9 of the 13 possible positions (identity traits) which can unambiguously conclude on the relevance of the ethnicity of the respondents as a factor for the obtained responses (excluding family, profession and political party, where there are no statistically significant differences).

**Table 3.** Table of significance of differences in the hierarchy of identities according to ethnicity (Macedonians and Albanians)

| Importance | P > | t-test |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | 0,01 | -3.239 |
| Age group | 0,01 | -3.010 |
| Nationality | 0,01 | 5.802 |
| Ethnic group | 0,05 | -2.555 |
| Religion | 0,05 | -2.009 |
| Hometown | 0,01 | -3.727 |
| Place of residence | 0,01 | -3.085 |
| Class | 0,05 | -2.194 |
| Close friends | 0,05 | 2.331 |

## 4.2 Gender and hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance

The relation between the gender and the importance of identity traits is visible in much lesser number of cases compared to the ethnicity of the respondents.

**Table 4.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance in men and women (mean values and ranks)

| Identity Traits | Rank | | | Mean value | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Difference in ranks | Women | Men | Difference in mean values W-M |
| Gender | 5 | 11 | 6 | 5,81 | 4,83 | 0,98 |
| Age | 7 | 9-10 | 2-3 | 5,62 | 4,91 | 0,71 |
| Nationality | 11 | 12 | 1 | 5,20 | 4,50 | 0,70 |
| Ethnic group | 9 | 5 | 4 | 5,51 | 5,50 | 0,01 |
| Profession | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5,94 | 5,72 | 0,22 |
| Religion | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6,03 | 5,66 | 0,37 |
| Political party | 13 | 13 | 0 | 2,90 | 3,84 | 0,94 |
| Hometown | 8 | 6 | 2 | 5,58 | 5,27 | 0,31 |
| Place of residence | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5,76 | 5,22 | 0,54 |
| University | 10 | 8 | 2 | 5,42 | 5,03 | 0,39 |
| Class | 12 | 9-10 | 2-3 | 5,19 | 4,91 | 0,28 |
| Family | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6,77 | 6,27 | 0,52 |
| Close friends | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6,48 | 6,14 | 0,34 |
| *Mean values* | | | | 5,55 | 5,22 | 0,49 |

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

Both subgroups show approximately the same hierarchy of importance of identity traits, with the highest ranking again attached to family, friends and religion, while the lowest are the political party, class, nationality, university. The second conclusion would be that the greatest difference in ranks (six ranks) exists in the ranking of gender, where women attach to this identity feature/role much more importance than men (difference in mean values is about 1). This confirms the hypothesis related to the so-called minority syndrome, that there is awareness among women about their own minority status in society and that is why they attach to this identity greater importance than men who are in a so-called dominant or majority status. Third, there are other more significant differences between men and women which still does not significantly affect the hierarchy structure. They relate to age, nationality and family (for women they are more important than for men) and their preferred political party (it is more important for men than for women: the difference is 0.94), which does not prevent for it to take the unchallenged last place in both subgroups.

### 4.3 The university and the hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance

**Table 5.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to their importance at the three universities (mean values and ranks)

| Identity traits | Rank | | | Mean value | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | UKIM | DUT | UGD | UKIM | DUT | UGD |
| Gender | 6-7 | 8 | 10 | 5,41 | 5,77 | 5,35 |
| Age | 8-9 | 9 | 11 | 5,28 | 5,69 | 5,27 |
| Nationality | 12 | 12 | 6 | 5,02 | 4,13 | 5,48 |
| Ethnic group | 6-7 | 5 | 8 | 5,41 | 5,87 | 5,38 |
| Profession | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5,82 | 5,90 | 5,90 |
| Religion | 3 | 3 | 4-5 | 6,09 | 6,06 | 5,54 |
| Political party | 13 | 13 | 13 | 2,98 | 3,57 | 3,30 |
| Hometown | 8-9 | 6 | 7 | 5,28 | 5,84 | 5,47 |
| Place of residence | 5 | 7 | 4-5 | 5,48 | 5,78 | 5,54 |
| University | 10 | 10 | 9 | 5,14 | 5,43 | 5,37 |
| Class | 11 | 11 | 12 | 5,03 | 5,37 | 4,99 |
| Family | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6,65 | 6,59 | 6,53 |
| Close friends | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6,33 | 6,28 | 6,47 |
| *Mean values* | | | | 5,39 | 5,56 | 5,43 |

Explanation: Underlined are the cases in which there are no differences between the ranks of the three universities. In bold are the mean values where the differences between the two universities are above 0.50, as well as the bigger differences in ranks between the two universities.

When it comes to ranking, in the three cases (family, friends and political party) they received identical positions in the hierarchy of all three universities, which practically reflects the situation obtained by the general distribution of responses. Ranks are identical or very close when it comes to class, university and profession. When it comes to differences, they are the most important among the Tetovo State University and the University "Goce Delchev" and most visible when it comes to nationality and ethnic group, then religion, place of residence and birthplace. If we analyse the identity traits that are most relevant to the Macedonian multicultural society, it would confirm the hypothesis of minority syndrome, so the citizenship in the case of students of Tetovo University is ranked at 12th place, and at the University "Goce Delchev" on the sixth, the ethnic group has a greater significance for the students in Tetovo (fifth rank) than for the students in Shtip (eighth rank), and at the University of Tetovo, religion has priority (third

rank), in relation to the University in Shtip (4-5 placeIf an analysis is made of the obtained mean values for the three indicators that reflect the so-called minority syndrome, one can see that there are major differences between the Tetovo State University and the University "Goce Delchev" precisely for these three identity traits (citizenship, ethnicity, religion).

## 5. Hierarchy of Identity Traits According to the Five Studied Dimensions

So far, the focus was only on one dimension – the importance that respondents attach to the afore-mentioned identity traits or affiliations. We have already mentioned that the study analysed several dimensions of identity traits such as: common interests with members of certain groups, solidarity with members of the same identity trait, perceived satisfaction of members of a particular social group with the general conditions, and finally, the difficulty (psychological problem) to amend (radically) that identity trait or affiliation to a particular social group. Some of these dimensions (especially solidarity and the difficulty to imagine the change) indicate the deeply-rooted individual identities in the personality of the individual, as well as the presence of emotional and behavioural component among respondents in terms of individual identity traits.

The following table presents all the ranks obtained for each of the afore-mentioned dimensions for all identity traits given in the questionnaire. The question is whether there is relative alignment between the ranks of these five dimensions in each of identity traits or, in other words, whether the obtained rankings in all four dimensions are relatively close/or similar or there is a big difference between them, and how it can be interpreted.

**Table 6.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to the five studied dimensions (ranks for each of the dimensions)

| Identity traits | Importance | Common interests | Solidarity | Satisfaction | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 7-8 | 3 | 4-5 | 5 | 2 |
| Age | 9 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 5 |
| Nationality | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 9 |
| Ethnic group | 6 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| Profession | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| Religion | 3 | 6 | 4-5 | 1 | 4 |
| Political party | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Hometown | 7-8 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Place of residence | 5 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 10 |
| University | 10 | 7 | 10-11 | 6 | 12 |
| Class | 11 | 9 | 10-11 | 11 | 8 |
| Family | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Close friends | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |

The survey results indicate that those identity traits that are found on the top and bottom of the imagined hierarchical pyramid (by importance they attach) have the same or similar rankings in all five dimensions investigated. Thus, in terms of family and close friends, the respondents express the highest solidarity, recognise the most common interests with them, think they show great satisfaction with the general situation in society, but also the biggest problem or difficulty for possible change of the relevant attachment. Regarding the political party and citizenship, rather small differences are also noticed in the ranks or the same are absent, but the message these results are sending is that these identity traits have

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

the slightest relevance to the respondents, it would be the easiest to give up from (in terms of change), with the members of those groups the respondents identify the least common interests, would have shown the slightest solidarity, etc. One might assume that in the first case we are dealing with identities/affiliations which are deeply rooted in the personality of the respondents, to which they are emotionally attached and in respect of which it is possible to recognise the action component. By contrast, in the second case, the above identity traits are at the periphery of the personality and the respondents *invest* less in them (emotions, importance, readiness for action). Relatively large differences are observed among other identity traits in the ranking of separate researched dimensions. Perhaps it is necessary to mark the *low ranking of class affiliation in all five dimensions* that illustrates the contemporary situation that social position in society is a weak integrating force and weak mobilising factor, especially in comparison to religion and ethnicity.

For Macedonia, it was of particular importance to see the influence of the ethnic affiliation of the respondents on the hierarchy of identity traits in all five studied dimensions.

**Table 7.** Hierarchy of identity traits according to the five researched dimensions with the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians (ranks for each of the dimensions)

| Identity traits | Importance | | Common interests | | Solidarity | | Satisfaction | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mac | Alb | Mac | Alb | Mac | Alb | Mac | Alb | Mac | Alb |
| Gender | 9 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| Age | 11 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| Nationality | 5 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 7 | 11 |
| Ethnic group | 7 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| Profession | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 11 | 10 |
| Religion | 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Political party | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 13 |
| Hometown | 10 | 6 | 11-12 | 11 | 10-11 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 7 |
| Place of residence | 6 | 5 | 11-12 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 9 |
| University | 8 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 10-11 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| Class | 12 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| Family | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Close friends | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |

*The stability of the hierarchical structure* in both ethnic groups was observed in those identity traits that are *on top* of the hierarchical pyramid (family and close friends), as well as in those at the bottom (in particular political party, then the class). *For them, the ranks are equal in all five dimensions and there are* almost *no differences between the two subgroups*. It indicates that there is no connection between the ethnicity of the respondents with their views, then that family and close friends are more deeply rooted in the personality of the examined population than other identity traits.

Indicative differences between the subgroups were observed when it comes to religion and citizenship. *Religion, which is highly ranked according to its importance in both ethnic groups, keeps high ranking with the ethnic Albanians in all dimensions examined* (high degree of common interest, a high

degree of solidarity with others who belong to that group, particular satisfaction for belonging to the group and serious psychological problem to imagine changing it). When it comes to *ethnic Macedonians*, who also highly rank the religion, striking are the relatively low values for common values and solidarity. In the first case the rank is 6, while in the second is 9. This suggests that for ethnic Macedonians religion is not an important integrating force or a strong mobilising factor, compared to ethnic Albanians.

When it comes to nationality, the connection of ethnicity of the respondents and their views on citizenship is obvious. In the ethnic Albanians of the sample, Macedonian citizenship is ranked in all five dimensions at the bottom of the rankings (12th and 13th place), while a controversial relationship can be seen with the ethnic Macedonians. The importance which is attached to citizenship, the solidarity with the other members of the identity trait (citizenship) and the psychological problem to imagine its changing are ranked in the middle of the scale, whereas when it comes to recognising common interests with others who share the same nationality and satisfaction of the possession of such citizenship, lowest rankings were obtained.

## Conclusion

The obtained results suggest that respondents attach relatively high importance to all offered identity traits. The first three places on the hierarchical scale are those affiliations that are related primarily to the private life of the respondents (family, close friends, religion), and as last are the political party, class and nationality. The comparison with the research of Laponce and Gingras suggest that despite the similarities that are seen when it comes to the top and bottom of the hierarchical pyramid, there are significant differences. The differences relate primarily to religion, as well as with nationality, two identity traits of particular importance for a multicultural society. Nationality in the survey is ranked at the bottom of the hierarchical scale, while at the top is the religion following the family and close friends, which is in full contrast with the results obtained in studies conducted in Canada, Switzerland, Belgium.

The ethnicity of respondents and the university on which they study proved as variables that significantly influence the perceptions of the respondents. Namely, the findings confirm the general hypothesis of this research for the minority effect, according to which minority groups attach greater importance to those identity traits that mark their minority status in society (when it comes to ethnic Albanians that means ethnicity, religion, birthplace, and for women it means gender, age).

Special attention should be paid to the responses of the respondents pertaining to the five dimensions of attachment or belonging to a group. Apparently, first the religion and then ethnicity are perceived by the ethnic Albanians as a strong cohesive and mobilising factor, whereas that is not the case with the ethnic Macedonians.

When it comes to nationality, the responses suggest that for ethnic Albanians it apparently has marginal importance (through the cognitive, emotional and the action component), while ethnic Macedonians show controversial relation to their national identity. Namely, the importance they give to it, the solidarity they express with those who share the same nationality and the psychological problem to imagine its changing, ranked in the middle of the scale, and when it comes to recognising common interests with others who share the same nationality and satisfaction of possessing that nationality, lowest rankings were obtained.

These results could be interpreted in the sense that those affiliations that separate are more important to the respondents than those that unite. Since this research is among the first of this kind in

*Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekik: Hierarchies of Identities in the Macedonian Multicultural Society: Findings from a Survey of Student Population*

**EQPAM Volume 5 No.2 April 2016**
**ISSN 2285 – 4916**
**ISSN-L 2285 - 4916**

Macedonia, it would be good to be periodically repeated in order the eventual changes and the trends of development to be seen, especially related to the changes in the wider social context.

### References

Barrett M (2010) National and Ethnic Identities and Differences Today: A Psychological Perspective-Summary. *Athens Dialogues. 2010.* Identity and Difference. Period One.
http://athensdialogues.chs.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/athensdialogues.woa/wa/dist?dis=42.
Birnir (2007) *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics.* NY: Cambridge University Press.
Brubaker R, Loveman M and Stamatov P (2004) Ethnicity as cognition. *Theory and society* Vol. 33(1): 31-64.
Caporaso J and M-h Kim (2009) The dual nature of Euroepan identity: subjective awareness and coherence. *Journal of European Public Policy* Vol. 16 (1) 19-42.
Chastenay MN and Pagé M (2002) Cultural, provincial and Canadian identities of young adults in Quebec, New Brunswick and Alberta. Research report (on-line, accessed 10 April 2013).
Gingras FP (2005) La geometrie des appartenances dans les petites societies. Dans Boucher JL et Thériault J-Y (dir.) Petites societies et minoritiés nationals, Québec: Presses de l'Uniiversité du Québec.
Gross F (1999) *Citizenship and ethnicity: the growth and development of a democratic multiethnic institution.* Greenwood Press.
Gurr, TR, Harff  B (1994) *Ethnic conflict in world politics,* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press.
*Hesli V*L and *Hansen H* (2009) National Identity: Civic, Ethnic, Hybrid and Atomized Individuals, *Europe-Asia Studies,* Vol. 61 (1): 1-28.
Horowitz DL (1985) *Ethnic groups in conflict.* University of California Press, Berkley, Los Angeles, London.
Hristova L et all. (2014) *Perception of identities of the student population in the R. Macedonia,* Skopje: Ss. Cyril and Methodius University and Institute for sociological, political and juridical research. (in Macedonian)
Jones F, Smith P (2001) Diversity and Commonality in national identities: an exploratory analysis of cross- national patterns. *Journal of Sociology* Vol. 73 (1): 46-63.
Kymlicka W (2004 [1995]) *Multicultural citizenship.* Skopje: IDSCO. (in Macedonian)
Laponce J (2008) Research on Ethnies and Nations: Comparing is the way, but comparing what? Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 14/2008, pp. 223-238.
Laponce J (2004) Using a role by role interview to measure the minority effect: a note on ongoing research, *Social Science Information,* Vol. 43 (3), pp. 477-492
Lijphart A (1995 [1977]) *Democracy in plural societies- a comparative research*, STEP, Skopje (in Macedonian)
Linz, J., and Stepan, A., (1996), Problems  of  Democratic  Transition  and  Consolidation*:* South  America,  Southern Europe, and Post- Communist Europe. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Malesevic S (2006) *Identity as ideology: understanding ethnicity and nationalism*. Palgrave, Macmillan.
Miller D (2005) *Citizenship and National identity.* London: Polity Press.
Reynolds A (ed.) (2002) *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy,* Oxford University Press.
Sisk T (1996) *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* USA Institute for Peace & Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Washington DC, 1996
Smith A (1991) *National identity.* London: Penguin books.
Taylor C and others (2004 [1994]) *Multiculturalism- examining the politics of recognition*. Skopje: Euro-Balkan Press. (in Macedonian).
Wolf        S        (2011)        The        emerging        practice        of        complex        power-sharing,
http://www.stefanwolff.com/files/The%20Emerging%20Practice%20of%20Complex%20Power%20Sharing.pdf