

NININS 2020**International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****PROSOCIAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY OF RUSSIANS IN THE
CONTEXT OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the problem of the relationship of prosocial and national identity of a person in the context of global transformations in Russian society. Prosocial identity is formed under conditions of a conservatively traditional paradigm of social development and is characterized by the awareness of the existing universal values based on the principles of patriotism, cultural spirituality and social solidarity as a condition for ensuring the socio-psychological safety of a person and Russian society. The purpose of the study is to show that in the context of global transformations in Russian society, national identity is a predictor of prosocial identity. The study involved 186 students of Russian universities from the cities of Moscow, Tomsk, Ivanovo and Yekaterinburg. The participants were Russian men (34.5%) and women (65.5%) aged from 17 to 26 years ($M = 20.3$). Data were collected via the Internet on Google Forms. The responses received were processed using the SPSS 2 statistical software package. Regression analysis showed that national identity with citizens of Russia is a predictor of prosocial identity. The data of the European Social Survey (ESS8) were analyzed ($n=1975$ respondents aged 16–95 years ($M = 47$); 58.2% of women, 41.8% of men) to show the relation between the sense of national identity and indicators of prosocial identity.

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1. Introduction

In the period of global changes, modern man found himself in a situation of crisis of prosocial and national identity. Geopolitical, social, and economic problems exacerbate sociocultural risks in Russian society. The global context of modern Russian reality (economic and political convergence and conflicts, migration, development of sociocultural contacts) requires increased attention to the problems of prosocial behavior. The phenomena caused by sociocultural threats and destructive collective behavior lead to the destruction of a person's identity, the loss of its status as a subject of the socio-economic life of the state and the bearer of national traditions (Kislyakov et al., 2018).

Blurring of the traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and weakening of the unity of the multinational people of Russia by foreign cultural and information expansion, promotion of permissiveness and violence, racial, national and religious intolerance pose significant sociocultural threats to Russian society. Distortion of value orientations, loss of historical memory and negative assessment of significant periods of Russian history, a false idea of the historical backwardness of the Russian Federation have a destructive effect on formation of the national identity of Russians. A distorted national identity of the person causes alienation of the values, traditions and ideals of justice, solidarity and cooperation, traditional for Russian society, which determine the prosocial identity of the citizens of Russia. Prosocial identity is characterized by recognition of universal values based on the principles of patriotism, cultural spirituality, social solidarity as a basis for socio-psychological safety of a person and Russian society.

2. Problem Statement

The modern strategy for building and development of Russian society on a traditionally conservative basis implies a careful and positive attitude towards the values of one's own people and their way of life based on cultural and spiritual traditions that are meant to promote the national and civic identity of Russians. Prosocial identity of a person as a complex socio-psychological formation, which implies integration of prosocial value orientations, behavioral patterns and socio-personal properties underlying self-realization of a person in a team and the ability to be socially useful to society, is the national idea of its consolidation. To implement the idea of consolidating Russian society, it is important to justify the impact of national identity on prosocial identity.

3. Research Questions

The analysis of studies in the field of prosocial and national identity of the person showed that prosocial subjectivity increases if the intentions of voluntary behavior to assist people in need are shared by members of a group, community and state. In this regard, the subject of the study is the justification that the stronger the person shares the traditions and values of society, the more consciously he identifies himself with an ethnic group and the state, the more he is able to share value orientations, behavioral patterns and socio-personal properties that underlie prosocial identity.

Prosocial behavior is defined as ‘positive social behavior’, which includes helping behavior, collaboration, exchange, and social consensus (Martorell et al., 2011). Prosocial identity is characteristic of people who define themselves and their social groups (professional group, family, religious, ethnic, reference group, etc.) in terms of prosocial attributes that include helping, benefiting and sympathizing with others at a certain time in a certain structural and cultural context (Winter, 2017).

It was shown that people often exhibit more prosocial behavior towards members of their groups compared to other groups. Such group-based prosociality can reflect either strategic considerations regarding one’s own future results or the intrinsic value implied in the results of group members (Hackel et al., 2017). This conclusion can be extended to group affiliation on account of nationality.

It was established that prosocial measures can affect policies, legislation, and assessments of the general condition of society (Brookfield et al., 2018). This is reflected, in particular, in updating of the regulatory framework and systematic support for prosocial behavior in Russia (stimulating charity, supporting volunteering, etc.) (Kislyakov et al., 2019).

The study by Wenner and Randall (2016) proved that awareness of a sense of social cohesion is a predictor of prosocial behavior at any age. Thus, in Russia, the Silver Age Volunteers programs are actively supported, which include elderly volunteers in the system of voluntary practices, as well as numerous voluntary children’s projects that are effective for their socialization.

Based on the configurational approach, it was found that focus on strengthening the prosocial and collective identity of citizens determines a high level of prosocial behavior (Ramarajan et al., 2017).

The study of the helping behavior and prosocial motives of workers showed that they are important for the effectiveness of both organizations and society as a whole: voluntary help improves various types of social activities and contributes to the well-being of people (Choi & Moon, 2016). The authors of the study substantiate the need to teach people how to help others, and to educate their helping behavior. The analysis of the correlation of prosocial and competitive motives revealed that prosocial motivation of organizational behavior is more closely related to civic behavior towards others. Therefore, many organizations support hiring employees with prosocial motivation (Cardador & Wrzesniewski, 2015).

Numerous studies indicate a combined effect of personal motivation of assistance and collective norms of prosociality on development of prosocial identity and involvement in prosocial behavior (Kukhtova, 2011).

It is also known that social isolation weakens prosocial behavior (Twenge et al., 2007). Therefore, at the personal level, transformation of Russians’ value orientations towards prosociality can be interpreted as a spiritual compensation for social isolation (Rassadina, 2006)

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to show that national identity with Russians is a predictor of prosocial personality identity in the context of global transformations in Russian society.

5. Research Methods

Study 1. A modified method of Identification with All Humanity Scale by McFarland translated into Russian language and adapted by Nestikom was used to measure social identity (ethnic, civic, global) and prosocial identity. The questionnaire includes 9 points. Points 1–8 measure social identity (ethnic, civic, global). The respondent is asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 – ‘Not close’, to 5 – ‘Very close’) how much the proposed statement corresponds to his attitude to: people of his ethical affiliation – Russians (ethnic identity) (author’s modification of the method), citizens of his country – citizens of Russia (national identity), and humanity as a whole (global identity). The maximum number of points for each type of social identity is 40, and the minimum is 8. Point 9 measures prosocial identity. The respondent is asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 – ‘Absolutely not’, to 5 – ‘To a very high degree’) how much the respondent wants to help people in need (his closest associates, Russians, citizens of Russia, people living on our planet). The maximum number of points for prosocial identity is 20, and the minimum is 4.

The study involved 186 students from Russian universities in Moscow, Tomsk, Ivanovo, and Yekaterinburg. The participants were Russian men (34.5%) and women (65.5%) aged from 17 to 26 years ($M = 20.3$). Data were collected via the Internet on Google Forms. The responses received were processed using the SPSS 23 statistical software package.

Study 2. The second study included a secondary analysis of the data of the sociological study European Social Survey 2016 (ESS8) (https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/country/russian_federation). Russian residents (question code F61) were selected as a social unit in the database. Only those respondents were selected from the resulting sample who answered affirmatively to questions about national and prosocial identities (that is, excluding the answers ‘Refuse to answer’, ‘Difficult to answer’). As a result, 1975 respondents aged 16–95 years ($M = 47$) were selected for the study – 58.2% of women and 41.8% of men. For each variable, the scale scores were reversed so that higher scores indicated higher levels of construction.

To assess national identity, we selected the indicator of self-assessment of emotional affinity to Russia (question code C9), (from 0 – ‘I do not feel emotional affinity’, up to 10 – ‘I feel very strong emotional affinity’). To assess prosociality, the indicators used were as follows: from the Schwartz model of values, the value of helping others (question code HL) (from 1 – ‘Not important at all’, to 6 – ‘Very important’) and the perception of others as those willing to help each other (question code A6’) (from 0 – ‘People often care about themselves only’, to 10 – ‘People try to help each other’). The latter is indirectly related. Prosocial behavior is focused on compliance with norms (universal rules of behavior), one of which is the norm of reciprocity (help is provided on the principle of reciprocity). Thus, if people perceive others as prosocial, they will be motivated by the norm of reciprocity and will more likely exhibit pro-social behavior.

6. Findings

The results of the empirical study of social and prosocial identity of Russian students are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Students’ self-assessment of social and prosocial identity (Identification with All Humanity Scale, McFarland)

Scale	Mean value (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	‘Not close’ (1–2 points)	‘Close to some extent’ (3 points), %	‘Close’ (4–5 points), %
Ethnic identity – attitude to the representatives of one’s own ethnic group (Russians)	25.97	7.92	23.1	50.3	26.6
National identity – attitude to the citizens of one’s own country (citizens of Russia)	26.4	7.74	16.8	57.3	25.9
Global identity – attitude to humanity	25.54	7.7	27.3	50.3	22.4
Prosocial identity – willingness to help people in need	14.94	3.95	13.5	39.4	46.9

The more points the respondent gets on a certain scale of social identity, the more often he uses it as a guide in life. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents according to their dominant social identity.

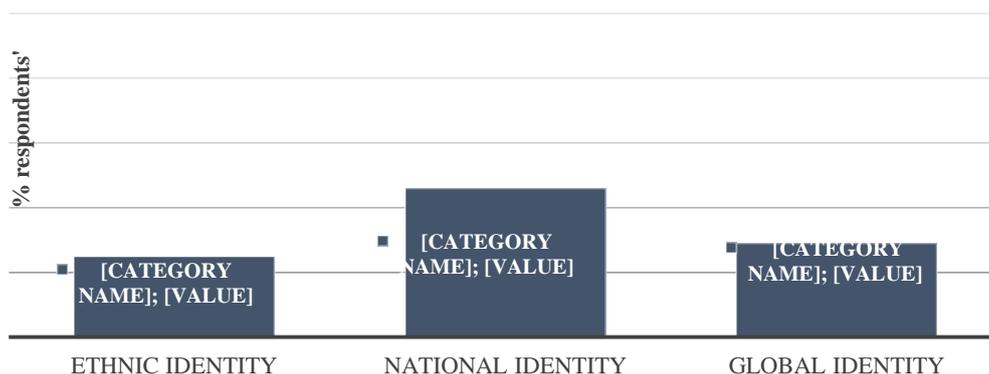


Figure 1. Percentage of respondents by the dominant social identity, %

The analysis of percentage of the dominant social identity and prosocial identity carried out by the method of contingency table showed the prevailing number of students with the dominant national identity and an average (21.1%) or high (19.5%) level of prosocial identity (χ^2 Pearson is 1.318, asymptotic significance is 0.858) (Table 2).

Table 2. The contingency table of the level of prosocial identity and dominant social identity

Level of prosocial identity	Dominant social identity			Total
	Ethnic	National	Global	
Low	3.9%	5.5%	5.5%	14.8%
Medium	9.4%	21.1%	11.7%	42.2%
High	11.7%	19.5%	11.7%	43.0%
Total	25.0%	46.1%	28.9%	100.0%

To determine the relationship between indicators of social and prosocial identity, we carried out linear regression analysis (stepwise regression) (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the regression analysis: dependent variable – prosocial identity; independent variables – scales of social identity (ethnic, national, global)

Predictors	β	p	R ²	F
National identity	0.435	< 0.001	0.484	73.28
Global identity	0.312	< 0.001		p < 0.001

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for indicators of national identity and prosociality, according to the European Social Survey 2016.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for indicators of national identity and prosociality according to the European Social Survey 2016 (ESS8)

Scales	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	'Low', %	'Medium', %	'High', %
Self-assessment of national identity	7.3	2.61	9	35.4	55.6
Perception of others as those willing to help each other	4.68	2.48	31.6	55	13.4
The value of helping others	4.33	1.2	7.9	44.2	47.9

7. Conclusion

The empirical study showed that modern Russian students equally identify themselves with representatives of humanity, citizens of Russia and representatives of the Russian ethnic group (half of respondents at a medium level, a quarter of respondents at a low level and a quarter of the students at a high level). The number of students with low national identity is fewer compared to those with low global and ethnic identity. The prosocial identity of most students is at the medium and high levels.

Regression analysis showed that national identity with citizens of Russia is a predictor of prosocial identity. Prosocial behavior is an important regulator of intra- and intergroup relations, since it provides not only stability but also advanced development of the state, society, and social group (Loginova, 2015). Global identity is also a predictor of prosocial identity. This is due to the fact that prosocial behavior is a universal norm of human behavior, along with sex-role, ritual and ceremonial, class, production, etc. (Shamionov, 2009).

Analysis of the data of the social survey ESS8 showed that according to the scale of 'Self-assessment of national identity', the majority of respondents show medium (4 to 7) and high (8 to 10) values. According to the scale 'Value of helping others', the respondents show medium (3 and 4) and high (5 and 6) values. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a direct correlation between the self-assessment of national identity and prosocial identity: the value of helping others: $r = 0.125$, $p < 0.01$; perception of others as willing to help each other: $r = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$.

Thus, the results of our empirical study are consistent with the data of the European Social Survey and show that the national identity of Russian people is a predictor of prosocial identity of a person. The national policy of Russia focused on the development of collectivism, social solidarity, moral feelings (justice, mercy and friendliness) through volunteering, philanthropy and other social practices is becoming an effective resource for the formation of national identity of Russian people and for strengthening national security.

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