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**Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL CIVIC IDENTITY IN  
ADOLESCENTS**

Tatiana Bepalova (a), Olga Tenyaeva (b)\*, Sergey Kudinov (c)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Ryazan State University named after S.A. Yesenin, Ryazan, Russia, barbos070276@yandex.ru

(b) Ryazan State University named after S.A. Yesenin, Ryazan, Russia, tenyaeva\_ov@mail.ru

(c) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, Russia, rudn.tgu@yandex.ru

*Abstract*

The psychological nature of personal civic identity remains underinvestigated. Issues related to its motivation, the mechanisms of its formation, its implementation, etc. remain unsolved. The paper presents a theoretical review of modern approaches to the investigation of personal civic identity. It deals with psychological aspects of personal identity as a psychological phenomenon. The author employs her own methodology of investigating self-assessment of personal civic identity in adolescents. The research involves 208 humanitarian students of Ryazan State University named for S. A. Yesenin (Ryazan, Russia). The research indicates that there are only a few people showing high-level personal civic identity. Students of this category are characterized by a formed axiological sphere, which presupposes deep understanding of their civic stand, independence in their life choices, willingness to develop into members of civic society. People with low-level civic identity are characterized by extreme egocentricity and self-oriented motivation, underdeveloped self-regulatory functions, rigid thinking, stereotyped behavior patterns. Due to these features, their life is aimed at achieving self-important goals with no desire to perform socially significant activities. All this hinders the development of their civic stand and civic identity. Adolescents with mid-level civic identity experience an existential crisis caused by indefinite social roles, underdeveloped motivational, cognitive, volitional, and moral aspects of their personality, as well as an external locus of control leading to low personal activity and civic stand.

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**Keywords:** Civic identity, personal civic identity, civic self-identity.



## 1. Introduction

Identity as a complex phenomenon is investigated in a number of disciplines, such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and others. Social psychologists H. Tajfel and J. Turner investigate intergroup relations to perform intergroup comparison. Further popularization of these phenomena can be found in the works of E. Erikson, who defines psychological identity focusing on its dynamic character, stressing its intricate connection with cultural and social aspects. The scholar introduces the term identity crisis to describe a state associated with dramatic social change.

Civic identity is discussed in works of many foreign and Russian researchers. According to Dyakova (2017), interdisciplinary analysis of the category of identity, its structure, its characteristics and manifestations has enabled Russian researchers to accumulate plentiful theoretical, methodological and practical material (p.5).

The interdisciplinary nature of civic identity research is highlighted in works of philosophers, psychologists, political scholars, educators and sociologists. Some scholars investigate the correlation between civic identity and other identities, such as ethnic identity, religious identity, political identity.

Badmaev V. N., Batyrev D. N., Lvova M. A., Omer S. O., Spitsyna T. V., Titova V. V., and others treat national identity in its close correlation with civic identity. Sergeev V. V., Kuznetsova L. V., Philippova E. L., Kozlova A. A., Filonova G. N. and others define civic identity through the prism of patriotism and civic consciousness. Kapitsyna V. M., Pankratova S. A., Telnova N. A., Semenenko I. S., Fadeeva L. A., Lapkina V. V., Panova P. V., Popova O. V. and others focus on the political aspects of civic identity.

Civic identity in various groups has been studied by Shikova (2009), Grishina (2002), Akhmetishina (2015), Loginova (2010), Pozdeeva, Trostinskaya, Evseeva, and Ivanova (2017), Demidova and Mokhorova, (2018), Karwowski, Zaffar, Phillips, Sullivan, and Laws (2018), Demidov and Mokhorov, (2018), Xu and Yang, (2018) and others. Avksentyeva and Aksumova (2013) focus on the multifaceted character of personal civic identity.

Being formed by society, one's personality is influenced by the outer world and can exert its influence on it. Passing through the prism of one's personality, external influences get refracted. Permeating one, they get interiorized and shape new aspects of one's personality, civic identity being one of them. According to Malinova (2009), it is essential that scholars should analyze those markers of identity which maintain one's life space and sustain development.

Sanina (2010) believes that in modern conditions of globalization and transformation, subjective perception of identity, predetermined by former traditions, are subject to dramatic change.

Solving problems associated with identification and self-identification, conscious identification undergoes profound transformations. As Petrakova (2017) puts it, human cognitive activity is of great value, for analyzing identification through cognition of the world and self as a part of the universe, one can view identification as a process of self-identification.

In various spheres of social life, personal identity is predetermined by a person's inherent need to participate in strategic planning and policy development, with priority given to an ideologically significant task of civic identity formation and its acceptance as a value of Russian mentality. Only then can civic identity be treated as a genuine resource of personal integrity and integrity of state.

According to Asmolov (2008), vigorously promoted civic identity can “function as a kind of ‘social glue’ binding the social links to smoothen the interactions among Russian people” (p.73).

Yaroslavskaya (2015) maintains that it is necessary to generalize national identity as a key component of the national purpose. The scholar underlines that both real and illusory achievements of citizens and the state reflect people’s basic interests. Therefore, the overall national goal is never abstract, for it reflects national identity of the country and its people. She believes that human society is based on human consciousness and activities and enables the development of independence and subjectivity of a person.

Sanina (2010) maintains that civic identity enables people to attribute priority to national interests. Therefore well-shaped civic identity secures political and spiritual consolidation of society.

Analyzing civic identity, it is necessary that we should pay attention to the peculiarities of civic identity formation typical of multiconfessional societies and to the peculiarities of personal identity transformation under the influence of sociocultural factors.

Civic identity formation in the conditions of globalization is discussed in works of Arutyunyan (2009), Semenenko (2012), and others.

Investigating various aspects of civic identity, modern authors sum up the results of various projects analyzing Russian identity in its regional diversity, taking into consideration Russian national identity formation and focusing on the notions of state identity and civic identity.

According to Knyazev (2008), the system of personal relations is a psychological mechanism of civic consciousness formation. It is represented by three strata, each stratum encapsulating a system of characteristic relations and determined by them: the first stratum (macrostructure) encompasses a person’s attitude to the state, its history, policy, economy, culture; the second stratum (mesostructure) encapsulates a person’s attitude to state structures, organizations, state representatives; the third stratum (microstructure) encapsulates a person’s perception of self as a citizen, as well as a person’s attitude to other citizens, their family, friends. Therefore, according to the scholar, civic identity is a social competence which encompasses both “the content, i.e. the unity of cognitive, volitional, emotional, regulatory, motivational, axiological, behavioral, and personal components and the form, i.e. a structure encapsulating content knowledge, emotional and volitional regulatory processes, axiological aspects of the competence and readiness to its implementation” (Knyazev, 2008, p. 18).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Modern tendencies of Russian society development foster a person’s willingness to actively participate in social life and state policy. However, it is not advisable to consider it universally accepted in all social strata. Active citizens with a pronounced civic stand willing to influence political, economic, and social spheres of social life are motivated by self-respect which ensures their devotion to the Motherland. Ivanova and Mazilova (2010). underline that civic consciousness must be imprinted on the nation and endow people with the feeling of belonging to their national community.

### **3. Research Questions**

Analysis of various works in the sphere of civic identity enables us to make a conclusion that scholars have not come to a common frame of mind concerning the semantics of this phenomenon. Each author understands the notion of civic identity in relation to his/her own academic interests.

According to some authors (Pavlenko & Korzh, 1998, and others), the transformation of human ideas about their position in society under the influence of social changes has become one of the most popular topics for investigation. Others (Kiselev & Smirnova, 2001) think that scholars usually address the problem of civic identity when they investigate how social changes and political situation in one's country and in the world influence one's personal self-consciousness.

It is necessary to note that modern study of personal civic identity is primarily of sociological and political nature and not purely psychological.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Investigate the psychological content of personal civic identity.

### **5. Research Methods**

The author's methodology of personal civic identity allows evaluating the level of personal civic identity formation (general index) and the degree of manifestation of its components: civic self-identity, moral mindset, social distance and agency. The Civic self-identity scale includes such characteristics as self-esteem, self-referentiality and self-consciousness.

Civic self-identity is understood as the ability to consciously affiliate oneself to civic society, preserving one's unique self, which sets personal behavioural constraints of a citizen and denotes the direction of civic identity formation.

The Moral mindset scale includes patriotism and the Image of Motherland integrated index.

Moral mindset is a set of ideas which are based on one's social interaction experience and directed towards the standards of morality, ideals and values taken from the outer world and subjectively perceived by an individual.

The Social distance scale includes such characteristics as national self-determination, acceptance of the language and tolerance.

Social distance is understood as a frame, a social structure denoting an individual's location in space and setting the degree of individuals' closeness to others or detachment from them.

Social distance scores show if the respondent has formed a social distance comfortable for self-realization and civic stand manifestation.

The Agency scale includes responsibility, internality and activity.

Agency is understood as human ability to consciously and persistently change the world and themselves. These changes are associated with activity, purposefulness, self-regulation, and self-determination.

The methodology includes 23 pairs of contradictory statements evaluating the peculiarities of respondents' civic stand. It allows denoting the levels of manifestation of general index of personal civic

identity and of its separate components united in scales. The level of scale formation is calculated by the method of standard deviation (standard deviation –  $\sigma$  - sigma).

The research involves 208 humanitarian students of the Ryazan State University named for S. A. Yesenin. The homogeneity of selection is explained by its representativity.

## 6. Findings

The research shows that the majority of respondents have a medium level of the general index of personal civic identity and each of its components (Table 1). This means that they have a sense of belonging to society. Therefore, they aim at forming their civic consciousness, civic-minded personality reinforcement and development. However, various inner and outer stimuli prevent them from being active enough in defending their point of view, their goals and values.

**Table 01.** The percentage of the general index of the formation of personal civic identity components

|               |          | Personal civic identity components |        |                 |                     |               |
|---------------|----------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|
|               |          | Moral mindset                      | Agency | Social distance | Civic self-identity | General index |
| <b>Levels</b> | High     | 6%                                 | 6%     | 4%              | 4%                  | 4%            |
|               | Enhanced | 12%                                | 18%    | 16%             | 18%                 | 16%           |
|               | Medium   | 64%                                | 58%    | 62%             | 54%                 | 64%           |
|               | Reduced  | 8%                                 | 10%    | 8%              | 20%                 | 6%            |
|               | Low      | 10%                                | 8%     | 10%             | 4%                  | 10%           |

The general index reflecting the degree of personal civic identity formation is differentiated for a small amount of respondents at high (4%) and low (10%) levels. A limited number of students with a high level are characterized by a personally formed system of values, which includes a developed civic stand, denoting their vital aims and civic way of life.

A high level of personal civic identity reflects the presence of inner individual trend towards development as a responsible member of society possessing personal sovereignty. Clear and positive civic identity forms a conscious attitude to life, allows formulating long-term goals, in other words, it performs a motivational function.

10% of respondents with low-level personal civic identity have a low insight level, less flexible thinking and lower communicative efficiency, which interfere with their public spirit development and formation of their sense of belonging to society and state.

Analysis of the level of manifestation of personal civic identity components allows determining its psychological structure.

Thus, 6% of young people have a high level of the Moral mindset component. They have a system of thought, ideas and feelings that ensures engagement with various social problems, a sense of civic duty, trust, civic dignity and confidence in the necessity of one's civic stand realization. A personality is characterized by sovereignty, has its own world view and spiritual freedom. Spiritual development of a personality depends on emotional comprehension and realization of the phenomenon of Motherland through personal responsibility.

10% of respondents with low level of personal civic identity do not try to become engaged in social problems. They do not have a formed sense of civic duty, dignity and personal sovereignty. Their personality is spiritually underdeveloped because of absence of emotional comprehension and realization of the phenomenon of the Motherland and creation of its image.

6% of students have a high level of the component “Agency”. They are able to take responsibility for realization of their civic stand. They also possess active life stance, based on purposefulness, motivation, awareness, emotionality and creativity.

8% of students with low agency level do not take responsibility for realization of their civic stand, which is denoted by their habit of explaining negative events by external factors. They are characterized by an unwillingness to actively make decisions connected with civic choice.

6% of students have a high Social distance level. This proves that they possess national self-identification, a formed sense of belonging to a state; adhere to the state identity, national idea and national symbols. They develop a love for their native language, which is based on an ideological component of a personality and its maturity, developed worldview and the image of Motherland. They acquire the ability to formulate and defend their civic stand with ultimate respect to that of others.

10% of respondents with a low level of the social distance component fail to identify themselves with their national culture, language, history and society. They do not have a completely formed personality of a cultural heritage bearer, taking responsibility for transmission and distribution of their native language and its correctness. They are not able to realize their civic stand completely and protect their point of view without hurting other people’s moral and ethical views, their worldview or ideology.

4% of respondents show a high level of the Civic self-identity component. They consciously affiliate themselves to civic society and are at the same time motivated to develop their own civic stand while showing ultimate respect for their interests and those of others. They strive for self-understanding and comprehension of social events from the perspective of their own unique experience. They are aware of themselves (of their own thoughts, feelings and actions) and of their own behaviour as citizens.

At the same time, 4% of students have low-level civic self-identity formation. This shows that they do not have a developed civic self-consciousness and public spirit. They are not motivated to develop their own civic stand and inner worldview, including civic self-identity. They usually are not eager to take part in social life and do not perceive themselves as citizens.

## **7. Conclusion**

Thus, the research conducted according to an original methodology revealed the degree of manifestation of civic identity statuses of a personality in the form of a general index and identity components – civic self-identity, moral mindset, social distance and agency.

The results achieved allow us to conclude that youths’ civic identity, being central to the self-concept, plays the role of social glue that ensures the formation of the most complicated mechanism of personal identification.

The majority of respondents showed a medium level of the components manifestation. It points at the civic identity crisis experienced during one’s college years, which is predetermined by lack of rigidly defined roles, a reflective plan of one’s future and internal locus of control. A low insight level and

insufficient flexibility of thinking underlie infantilism in social behaviour and rigidity in formation of their life outlook.

The respondents' inability to fully understand the meaning and necessity of developing personal civic identity is connected with insufficient activity and prevalent pessimism. The unwillingness to leave one's comfort zone leads to personal resources being concentrated on solving some small local problems, without setting further goals and their achievement.

The harmonious personal development of a young person is impossible without experiencing an existential crisis, which becomes a stimulus for personal development and formation of their personal position. This process is denoted by independence in their life choices and finding a number of methods and ways of building stable social relationships and ideals and their implementation.

The development of motivational, axiological and emotional-volitional personal spheres in that period of time stimulates the formation of personal civic identity denoting the completeness of their life stance and self-concept necessary for psychological stability and productivity in modern dynamically developing society.

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