Identity Formation Processes in emerging adulthood from cultural perspective

Nino Skhirtladze, Nino Javakhishvili
Ilia State University

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Identity- Erickson, Marcia and further developments

• Erickson viewed personal identity as the set of goals, values and beliefs that one shows to the world. It includes aspects of self that identify an individual as someone different from others.

• Marcia’s model defines identity in empirical terms of exploration and commitment.
Further developments of Marcia model - Identity Dimensions (Luyckx et al 2008).
Further developments of Marcia model - Identity Dimensions (Luyckx et al 2008).

• Later, a fifth dimension, ruminative exploration
• - “Worrying and obsessing over making the perfect choice” –
• was added
  (Luyckx et al 2008, Ritchie et al, 2013)
Identity exploration

• Direction and sameness of identity is achieved by the completion of adolescence which is characterized by moratorium, exploration and experimentation (Erikson 1968).

• In some parts of the world the issue of identity formation is still in the foreground of a person’s psycho-social life in emerging adulthood life stage, which lasts until mid twenties (Arnett 2011).
Emerging adulthood

- One of the stages of psychosocial development,
- Unfolds between the adolescence and adulthood stages.
- Introduced by Jeffrey Arnett
Psychological aspects of emerging adulthood

• Time for identity explorations and making choices (Arnett 2011).
• Time of instability
• Self-focused period
• Age of feeling in between adolescence and adulthood
• Time of possibilities
Cross-cultural perspective

• Identity research is quite extensively done in USA and some western European countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany).

• Comparisons of results of these countries show that the main line of identity development is quite similar, although contextual factors contribute to some differences (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Meca 2013).
Cross-cultural perspective

• Identity research in other parts of the world (Asia, Former Soviet countries, and etc) is in very initial stage (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Meca 2013).

• The identity formation process in these countries, may be specific considering socio-cultural, historic and political conditions, which are quite different from the USA or Western Europe.
Cross-cultural perspective

• The research conducted in East Asian countries (Berman, Yu, Schwartz, Teo, & Mochizuki 2011) showed that structure of personal identity is not similar to American one.

• Specifically, the results showed that the exploration process goes on differently in Asian countries.
Our contribution

Study of identity formation processes by Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) in Georgian emerging adults
DIDS adaptation and results

• Participants
• 695 Georgian students from Ilia State University, representatives of different departments. The age varied from 17 to 31.
• Mean age was 22.13 (SD= 2.5).
• distribution by gender - 69 % females and 31% males.
Instrument - Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) (sample items)

- **Commitment making**
  - Decided on the direction I want to follow in life
  - Know what I want to do with my future
- **Identification with commitment**
  - Plans for the future offer me a sense of security
  - Because of the path of life I have mapped out, I feel certain about myself
- **Exploration in breadth**
  - Try to figure out regularly which lifestyle would suit me
  - Think about what to do with my life
- **Exploration in depth**
  - Work out for myself if the goals I put forward in life really suit me
  - Think a lot about the future plans I strive for
- **Ruminative exploration**
  - Doubtful about what I really want to achieve in life
  - Hard to stop thinking about the direction I want to follow in life
DIDS adaptation and results

- Translation - Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) was parallel translated, reviewed by the group of experts and final version was composed.
DIDS adaptation and results

- **Reliability of DIDS**: Cronbach’s alphas of the 5 subscales ranged from:
  - .711 – for exploration in breadth,
  - .610 - for exploration in depth,
  - .760 – for commitment making,
  - .730 – for identification with commitment and
  - .710 – for ruminative exploration.
## Inter-scale correlations

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<th>IC</th>
<th>EB</th>
<th>ED</th>
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<td>.340**</td>
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<td>-.258**</td>
<td>-.182**</td>
<td>.669**</td>
<td>.479**</td>
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</table>
DIDS adaptation and analysis

• **Factorial Validity**
• Confirmatory factor analysis results showed poor fit of our data with five dimension model. The fit was evaluated using three indices:
  • the chi-square statistic,
  • the comparative fit index (CFI),
  • the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).
DIDS adaptation and analysis

- Exploratory factor analysis
- A principal component analysis with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) has been applied.
- Results of the principal component analysis yielded four factors explaining 52.5% of the total variance. The first factor explained 21.7% of total variance, second factor 20.8%, third factor 5.9% and the fourth factor 4.2%.
DIDS adaptation and analysis results

• Factor 1- Commitment : DIDS Georgian version did not differentiate the two commitment dimensions - commitment making and identification with commitment dimension created one factor.

• Factor 2 - Exploration: The results show that four items of exploration in breadth and four items of ruminative exploration create one factor in Georgian sample.
DIDS adaptation and analysis results

- Factor 3 – Exploration: 2 items from exploration in depth. Both have in common a part with “other people”.

- Factor 4: 2 questions from exploration in depth, 1 question from exploration in breadth and one from ruminative exploration - these three questions are very much like each other in Georgian version.
DIDS adaptation and analysis

• The most unusual from other countries is the composition of factor 2 from both - exploration in breadth and ruminative exploration scales.

• We suppose that exploration process in Georgian case is connected with instability and tension and goes on differently from other contexts where identity processes are studied.
Discussion

• Possible explanation might lie in specifics of Georgian context.
• Georgia is a former Soviet republic. The generation of current emerging adults grew up in the post-Soviet context without so called “Iron Curtain”, separating the country from the most parts of the world.
Discussion

• The extent of flow of information and exposure to the culture and life-style of most of the ‘Western world’ significantly increased during the last decades. Some changes are reflected in value system development (Sumbadze, 2011).

• Nevertheless, we suggest that some Georgian contextual factors still limit opportunities for identity exploration for emerging adults, that makes exploration process different from the way it goes in Western countries.
Contextual factors – labor market

- Georgia experienced the time of transition from communist to free-market economy, resulting in high unemployment rate and low wages.

- Somewhat different from developed countries, young people find jobs easier than their parents’ generation, also they earn more:
## Contextual factors - jobs

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<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-55</th>
<th>56+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to USD 50</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 51 - 100</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 101 - 250</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 251 - 400</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than USD 400</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contextual factors - education

• The percentage of young people receiving higher education has been maintained over the years starting from communist times (80 ies of the XX century) and fluctuates around 20% (Geostat 2010).

• This percentage has not increased mainly because population can not afford paying for higher education (only 30% receives state scholarship)
Contextual factors education

• Flexibility in higher education was introduced via reforms starting from 2004, like major and minor specialties, but not fully implemented.

• Neither universities, nor employers understand the concept.
Contextual factors

• Family life patterns - Young people do not usually settle separately from parents even after they got married, correspondingly, they do not live separately when they become students (Surmanidze and Tsuladze, 2010).
Contextual factors

• Gender roles: Georgia is traditionally considered a masculine culture (Gadua, 1999; Javakhishvili and Bregvadze, 2000; Javakhishvili and Kholomeriki, 2003)

• The most unacceptable items are the liberty of sexual behavior for woman: ‘to have sexual relations before marriage’ and ‘to cohabit with a person of the opposite sex without marriage’ (Javakhishvili 2008).
Discussion

• In terms of Exploration opportunities this means that Georgian economic life presses young people to make lifelong choices, and prevents them from engaging in exploration processes.

• in the condition of poor economical resources young people are expected to start working to support their families, or, to study, if their family is well off enough not to ask for their children’s money.
Discussion

- Also, Georgia might be considered as a highly structured, tight society that respects norms and adherence to norms more than in Western societies.
- Family life patterns, still prevalent in Georgian society, suppose much lesser distancing from parental influence in adolescence and emerging adulthood then it is in Western countries.
Discussion

• Attitudes to pre-marital partnership and gender roles also contribute to limited opportunities for exploration in the domain of romantic relationship which is an important aspect of personal identity.
Literature


- **Arnett** Jeffrey, Jensen 2011. Emerging Adulthood(s) The Cultural Psychology of a New Life Stage in Arnett J.A.(ed) *Bridging Cultural and Developmental Approaches to Psychology*. Oxford University Pres


Literature


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Literature


• **Kuchukhidze Marina 1999.** Gender Stereotypes in Georgia. Georgia Today, pp.12-17 (in Georgian)


Literature

- **Pkhakadze** Rusudan 2002. Problems of women sexuality and ways to solve them. Gender Problems in Georgia, Tbilisi. (in Georgian)
Literature


Thank you!