The Social Sciences 11 (6): 985-990, 2016
ISSN: 1818-5800
© Medwell Journals, 2016

Evaluation of Theoretical Approaches Related to Collective Identity

Malek Malekshahi
National Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Abstract: By referring to oxford dictionary, it can be found that the word identity is rooted in Latin identitas (meaning similarity) and implies two main meanings. Its first meaning indicates absolute similarity. Its second meaning means distinctiveness. Considering rapid and wide spread changes in the global world, raising question and discussions about identity and its different dimensions, the identity future of societies in its different dimensions and their problems is one of the necessary needs. Therefore, in this study, we studied identity and particularly sociological approaches of identity. In this regard, we mentioned views of some sociologists about identity and studied attitudes of social identity.

Key words: Identity, social identity, social identity attitudes, collective sociological, dimensions

INTRODUCTION

Simon (2004) describes identity as a position in community. People assign different positions to them in community. Identity means awareness of person with his nature and social attachments and naturally, this awareness is related to values and meanings which are more preferred for person. Although, this awareness is achieved through process of individiualizing but it doesn't remain as an internal and personal feeling and has been collectively shown by showing homogeneities and heterogeneities of person with persons and other groups and is converted into a foundation for social communication and action (Jenkins, 1996). According to Holland (2001) identities are the key meanings which form mind of people and through which people become sensitive to events and changes of their living place. People tell others who they are and then try to behave as they expect collective identity means attachment sense of people to common affairs with special title. Such attachment causes sense of solidarity and formation of a collective unit which is separated from other (we) as we. In other words, collective identity indicates a domain of the social life to which person with pronoun "we" finds him attached, attributed and indebted to and against which he feels committed. Collective identities can be classified in sequential order from small and specific and large and general, for example from person with the same family, the same tribe or the same district, the same village, the same language, fellow citizen and fellow creature (Abdollahi, 1997). Identity is always various and plural but it can be studied in two levels: individual identity and collective identity. Individual identity is a function of exchange which person has with his environment. Therefore, individual identity means the actions which actor shows to him. These identities are the conscious self-perceptions as personal distinctiveness. In fact, when emphasis is on individual identity, interpersonal relation can be named and what distinguishes between one person and other persons. Theory of collective identity of intergroup behaviors was first introduced by Tajfel, Henry and Turner. This concept is result of membership of people in different social groups and reflects source of the social group to which person is attached. Such attachment forms a collective unit which comprises of people with common tendencies which distinguishes between them as "we" and (we) and other groups. The precondition for formation of "we" is the presence of "interaction" among people (Chalbi, 1996). Aim of this research is to assess sociological approaches of collective identity which we mention later.

Statement of problem: Considering rapid and wide spread changes in the global world, raising question and discussions about identity and its different dimensions, the identity future of societies in its different dimensions and their problems is one of the necessary needs. Dealing with cultural and social dimensions of identity in society shows us a general view of identity because these two types of identity include main identity elements of people in each society. Propagation of different values, exposure to different thoughts and tendencies put the modern human in the abyss which he was alienated and forgotten (Mohammadi, 2001). Iran is a transitional or developing society. In such society, collapse of traditional systems and structures such as tribal and rural communities and expansion of urbanization, population and social movements and intensification of interactions between cultures, tribes and nations, most of people particularly the young have been placed against different and

sometimes contradictory local, national and global patterns. Many of these young people are involved in contradiction, confusion and uncertainty due to removal of traditional foundations or weakness or the lack of new civil structures or failure to recognize suitable patterns and find them confused between tradition and modernity. In such condition, anomie provides necessary ground for creation of identity crisis, mental frustrations, selfish individualism, particular collectivism, non-commitment, moral decline, deviance and disorder and social control, destruction of resources and violation of national benefits, violence and insecurity feeling, dissatisfaction and extroversion (Abdollahi, 1997).

It is clear that identity is result of communication and interaction with others. It means that there should be another person to make and perceive "I". "Self" is formed by understanding and communication with others and in sociability process. The concept of self has composed of two elements: one is individual identity and another one is collective identity. Individual identity includes those aspects of definition of "self" which regard us as unique persons and separate us as an independent entity from others. In fact, our individual identity originates from our unique experiences of our values, tendencies and feelings which are mostly rooted in our personal experiences. Our collective identity originates from common memberships in social groups (Chalbi, 1999). Process of globalization leads to supply of massive cultural sources of identity, endless identity making and identity diversity (from specific to general) by releasing social case from different constraints particularly land and state-nation because this process makes social relations and life dynamic, complex and fluid. The built identities are usually fluid, variables and relatively temporary (Robertson, 1992). In the present research, we search for collective identities.

TRIBAL SOCIABILITY, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND TRIBAL IDENTITY

One of the important variables which have been considered by the researchers particularly Foreign researchers in discussion of identity particularly tribal identity is the important issue of tribal sociability. Formation of tribal identity starts during socialization process and with childhood and is discovered during teenage and youth (Jenksin, 2002). People are always affected by this process but, it is natural that this effect is higher in life periods particularly; teenage and youth. According to attitude of symbolic interaction school and social learning theory, some factors such as family, peers, teachers, neighbors and media are very effective on sociability of people and among them, effect of parents is very considerable (Umana-Toyler and Gomez, 2004). Regarding ethnic group, positive or negative perception of ethnic group by children is affected by the messages which are conveyed by the parents Night. In ethnic sociability process, those who have more evident ethnic identity have more psychological compatibility than others. Ethnic sociability is defined as the extent to which family members directly or indirectly teach their children regarding their ethnicity (Umana-Taylor and Shin, 2007).

THEORIES OF SOCIOLOGISTS ABOUT SOCIAL IDENTITY

One of the known attitudes about sociological issues is theory of social identity which has been developed by Turner and Haslem (2001), theory of social identity in fact includes two related but different theories: theory of social identity and theory of self-categorization. Theory of social identity discusses intergroup communication and particularly intragroup bias and social struggle while theory of self-categorization has been based on psychological group and processes of union and cooperation and social impressibility. The main hypothesis of theory of categorization is that social identity is almost able to prevent its orientation to personal identity. Turner has suggested a theory of social identity of group behavior by distinguishing between social identity (defining "self" through membership in social category) and personal identity and elaborating "self" through attitudes and personal ideas. People define themselves with membership in common social category. Here, there is a perceptional emphasis on intra-group similarities and extra-group differences in different dimensions. People socially categorize themselves and others which adds to the perceptual identity between themselves and members inside group and adds a perceptual differentiation among members inside group and outside groups. We study views of some sociologists about identity, meaning and concept.

Durkheim: Durkheim as sociological founder mentions that societies based on mechanical solidarity have special identity and because people of a sector have been exhausted completely, they have special identity of that sector. On the contrary, the societies based on organic solidarity have more general identity and become more complex by breaking sector borders. According to him, members of society seek to fulfill needs and reach common goals. For this reason, it is necessary to create beliefs as collective contract. State, nation, religion, party

and other social institutions are created. According to his theory, when these laws are established in society, they will be regarded as social behavior, affect mind of people and turn into a value which will be shown finally as a collective conscience (Tanhaee, 2004).

Ferdinand tonnies: For tonnies, community is a natural and local unit. People dependent on this community create a type of social system and organize their relations in it. Spirit of this society is emotional and informal, loyal and has natural solidarity. In such order, "we "is the determining and identifying axis. People attribute them to "we" and feel committed and obliged to it. According to Tunis, humans are certainly neither rational nor irrational. Instead of emphasis on destiny of human, he pays attention to social relations. His known typology of social relations shows considerable change of the pre-modern to modern society. Tunis regards attack of modernity as change in nature of human communities from community to society. According to logic of Tunis, trust-based relations are only available in community.

Parsons: Parsons following Durkheim believes that human identity is structured and changes from the start of life and during the entire existence continually in relations with culture and community. Of course, these systems inspire different identities in person. For example, a sort of particular identity is internalized in person based on attachment to and dependency of roles on each other in family system but a type of mutation will be created in emotional dependency of person when he/she enters youth period and studies in higher education centers. Parsons as the most known theorist of integrative functionalism sought to draw the principles according to which American society converges, the known theory in his era was general digestion theory in which all microcultures should be digested in the entire society. Therefore, it can be said that American society of parsons period forms holism period.

Goffman: Identity is one of the main issues in works of Goffman. For him, people haggle about their identities in the framework of interactive order and show image of themselves to others to mobilize their interactive skills to be accepted by others.

Richard jenkins: He defines identity as result of continual process between self and other and believes that internal-external dialectics means that acceptance of recognition by others is as necessary and important as the recognition itself in formation of identity in addition to the person's recognition of self. Internal-external dialectics means the process which is composed of all identities including individual and collective identities and social identity is manifested as social action because people consciously follow their goals and intend to achieve special identities successfully. The internal-external dialectics model leads us to conclude that what people think about us is not less important that what we think about ourselves. Undoubtedly, we not only know ourselves but also know others and be known by them with the internal-external dialectics between self-concept and public image. Therefore, this makes identity. According to Jenkins, time and place are regarded as source of identity making (identification of one thing means that we include them in time and place) (Jenkins, 2002).

Horton cooley: He thinks that when we speak about society, we refer to general characteristic of people while when we speak about people; it seems that each person is separate from others. For him, nature of human is formed only in relation to others. He regards all things indebted to social experience and in case this experience is invalidated, human will not be formed. "Self" is thought by Cooley to be result of controversial process between person and society which is formed in social and controversial experience of society. He also believes that human nature will not be formed until human who makes his identity is formed. He thinks that individual identity is formed while process of "looking glass self" is formed which is defined as the self-image which an individual forms by imagining what others think of his or her behavior and appearance. Therefore, "self" of individual identity appears in a socialization process based on exchange of relations and is reflected in awareness of person (Tanhaee, 2004). As theories of Cooley show, identity of human is not formed without others that is human becomes aware that "self" is distinct from other and knows his identity when communicating with his peers.

Guy rocher: For him, people seek to develop their identity through different environments to which they belong that is people introduce them to others based on what is called social personality and this identity determines a place for people in society and provides unity and integration with existence and action of person (Ashrafi, 2000).

For them, language is an index for group identity. People divide the world into various social groups and in this regard, they use some indices for making their positive collective identity one of which is language (Davari, 2007).

Huntington: Huntington believes that every person has multiple identities resulting from relationship, profession,

culture and institutional, land, educational, ideological identities etc. which may compete with each other or reinforce each other. Identity at every personal, tribal, ethnic and civilization level is defined only in relation with other. The extensive levels of civilization identity mean deeper awareness with civilization differences and necessity of keeping the things which separate "we" from "others" (Huntington, 1996). Theory of Huntington is also important because trust of people in them has become weaker due to increasing changes in social prestige, elements and foundations but culture will arouse culture of people more than other factors due to its relatively stable elements and aspects to create a type of security and stability in life for them through communication with culture and formation of their cultural identity.

Anthony giddens: Giddens is one of the sociologists who pays attention to social structure and person and has made the highest effort to unite micro and macro levels. He believes that because personal identity is made during socialization is a type of social identity. For him, personal identity forms the route which human should pass during the period which is called life through modernity. Everyone in his life has a biography which reflects social and psychological information about his possible lifestyles. Therefore, we not only have such biography but also live based on it (Gidden, 1999).

ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

When social identity becomes important compared with personal identity, people find themselves less through individual differences but more through similarities of intra-group self personalization and this is self personalization. The known attitudes and theories of identification are introduced at macro, micro and combined levels.

At macro-level, structuralism theory or social reality is introduced. According to this attitude, although social system has composed of individual actors, it doesn't play role in final analysis of these actors and are passive and affected by structural (economic, social, cultural and historical) conditions. In fact, actor in this attitude is the creature of social system. On this basis, identity is regarded as a social reality affected by social structure and conditions and person doesn't play effective role in formation of his identity. Changes in identity are also dependent on environmental changes and identity doesn't change until there is change in environment. Analysis unit of structuralists is structure and they prefer structure to person in the theory. Therefore, they define identity as what leads to people and groups' recognition of each other that is people introduce each other with a series of fixed characteristics which make them different. This school emphasizes on the principle that each whole is composed of the parts which are combined with each other and parts will change in case of change in whole.

Durkheim: Durkheim as a classic sociologist introduces concepts of organic and mechanical solidarity and mentions that social order has been based on regulation of rules and supervision on observance of feelings and common values and strengthening of collective conscience as basis of social solidarity. Societies based on mechanical solidarity have special and concrete identity and people of that sector have been exhausted in it. For this reason, they have special identity of that place and sector. On the contrary, societies based on organic solidarity have more general identity and its people have more general identity due to more freedom and independence and passage through ethnic, tribal and national borders.

Functionalists' attitude is known at microlevel which regards identity as a phenomenon which is being created or a new phenomenon which will not be fixed at any time and place and is being formed and changed unlike attitude of structuralists. Functionalists believe that human from the beginning of social life has a fundamental core or a primary relative identity which creates new identities every day in the course of socialization and interaction with others.

According to followers of this school, identity is never perfect and is being created every day. Analysis unit of functionalists is person and they prefer person to society in the theory.

Stryker as one of the theorists of this attitude discusses commitment of person in his theory. He mentions that people have a degree of dependence on it in each of their identities and the more the degree of commitment or dependency, the more the hierarch of that identity will be. This degree of commitment to an identity is dependent on the factors: to what extent do others and culture of society evaluate that identity as positive? To what extent do others expect a person who is dependent on this identity? In addition, how extensive is relation of people with the person who is dependent on this identity? Unlike, the classic sociologists who pay more attention to structure or regard person important, the contemporary sociologists deny such dualism (micro and macro) or they regard it less important considering the new questions which they have in their mind. Difference of these sociologists in discussion of identity is due to their difference in ontological and attitudinal fundamentals and their attitude toward society. According to the

syncretistic sociologists, society is the area for association of micro and macro elements which are manifested as legalization of pluralism and acceptance of the presence of different collective identities (Tavasoli and Ghasemi, 2005). Giddens as syncretistic sociologist has performed one of the most known and comprehensive efforts to combine functionality and structure and wants to explain theory of identity considering theory of structuring. It means that the actor evaluates his activities in social structure reflectively and effectiveness and change of social conditions of people result from their ability to reflect their behavior.

CONCLUSION

Due to importance of identity, this subject has been considered by different fields such as philosophy, history, geography, linguistics, literature, anthropology, social psychology, politics, sociology, etc. and varied literature about it has been formed. Concept of "identity" has been linked with names of Ericson and Tajfel and many studies and development of identity models such as Finney model, Marcia four-dimensional model, Umana model etc. have been performed based on research of these two thinkers (Umana-Taylor and Gomez, 2004).

Concept of identity is one of the most complex concepts of social sciences and has different meanings. This word and other related terms have been considered by different scientific fields considering source, subject, goals, study field, analysis level and research instrument (Maghsoodi, 2007) and caused any research in his special position to have a special definition of this term and the related terms. According to Giddens, identity is source of meaning for the actors. Sheikhavandi calls it a set of signs, material, biological, cultural and mental effects which lead to distinction between persons, groups or capacities and cultured (Sheikhavandi, 2000). The concept of identity has different dimensions and sections such as job, gender, national and ethnic identity which was discussed in this paper. One of the known attitudes about identity of sociological issues is the theory of social identity. Durkheim as the sociological founder mentions that societies based on mechanical solidarity have special identity and people of a sector have been exhausted in it. For Tunis, community is a natural and local unit. The people dependent on this community create a type of social system and organize their relations in it. Parsons following Durkheim believes that identity of human is structured and changes since the start of life and during his existence continually in relations with culture and culture. According to Goffman, people haggle about their identities in the framework of interactive order and show image of themselves to others to mobilize their interactive skills to be accepted by others. Richard Jenkins defines identity as result of continual process between self and other and believes that internal-external dialectics means that acceptance of recognition by others is as necessary and important as the recognition itself in formation of identity in addition to the person's recognition of self. Horton Cooley thinks that individual identity is formed while process of "looking glass self" is formed which is defined as the self-image which an individual forms by imagining what others think of his or her behavior and appearance. Therefore, "self" of individual identity appears in a socialization process based on exchange of relations and is reflected in awareness of person. Huntington believes that every person has multiple identities resulting from relationship, profession, culture and institutional, land, educational, ideological identities etc. which may compete with each other or reinforce each other. Giddens is one of the sociologists who pays attention to social structure and person and has made the highest effort to unite micro and macro levels. He believes that because personal identity is made during socialization is a type of social identity. The known attitudes and theories of identification are introduced at macro, micro and combined levels. Based on results of reviewing theoretical attitudes and experimental sources related to identity, it can be said with emphasis on microlevel attitudes that identity is a social case which becomes meaningful in community and others. Formation or change of it is dependent on different factors and conditions in micro and macro level and interaction of these two levels. Another point which should be mentioned is that a person can have several identities and their presence beside each other doesn't mean a type of conflict or negation of each other but these identities can interact with each other and one of them dominates dependent on different social conditions and situations on which basis persons recognizes himself and toward which the person will have sense of attachment and commitment.

REFERENCES

Abdollahi, M., 1997. Collective identity, its dynamism and change mechanism in Iran. Tehran Iran. Sociology Assoc. Lett., 1: 61-81.

Ashrafi, A., 2000. Social identity and prevention of deviations. J. Soc. Sci., 1: 18-19.

Chalbi, M., 1996. Order Sociology: Theoretical Elaboration and Analysis of Social Order. 1st Edn., Nei Publication, Tehran, Iran, Pages: 358.

Chalbi, M., 1999. Ethnic Identities and its Relation with National Identity in Iran. Social Affairs Office of Ministry of the Interior, Tehran, Iran.

Davari, A.N., 2007. Symbols of Iranian identity and Persian language. National Stud. J., 2: 3-25.

Gidden, A., 1990. The Consequences of Modernity. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, USA.

Holland, D., 2001. Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds. Harvard University Press, USA., Pages: 138.

Huntington, S.P., 1996. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking Of World Order. Simon & Schuster Inc., UK.

Jenkins, R., 1996. Social Identity. Routledge, London, UK., ISBN-13: 9780415120531, Pages: 206.

Jenkins, R., 2002. Social Identity. Nashr-e-Shirazeh Publication, Tehran, Iran.

Mohammadi, G.A., 2001. Globalization and identity crisis. National Stud. J., 10: 14-20.

Robertson, R., 1992. Globalization, Social, Cultural and Global Theories. Sage Publication, Tehran, Iran, Pages: 205.

Sheikhavandi, D., 2000. Formation and Establishment of Iranian Identity. Islam and Iran Recognition Center, Baz Publication, Tehran, Iran.

Simon, B., 2004. Identity in Modern Society: A Social Psychological Perspective. Blackwell, Oxford, UK., Pages: 222.

Tanhaee, H.A., 2004. Introduction to Sociological Schools and Theories. 3rd Edn., Marandiz Publication, Tehran, Iran, Pages: 720.

Tavasoli, G. and Y.M. Ghasemi, 2005. Collective identity and globalization. Iran. Sociology J. Social Sci. Lett., 15: 1-26.

Turner, C. and S. Haslem, 2001. Social Identity, Organization and Leadership. Lawrence Erlbaum Association's Publishers, London, UK.

Umana-Taylor, A.J. and B.M. Gomez, 2004. Developing the ethnic identity scale using eriksonian and social identity perspectives. Identity Intl. J. Theory Res., 4: 9-38.

Umana-Taylor, A.J. and N. Shin, 2007. An examination of ethnic identity and self-esteem with diverse populations: Exploring variation by ethnicity and geography. Cult. Divers. Ethnic Minority Psychol., 13: 178-186.