

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

## Journal of Adolescence

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jado](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jado)

## Brief report: When does identity lead to negative affective experiences? A comparison of Turkish–Bulgarian and Turkish–German adolescents

Arzu Aydinli-Karakulak <sup>a, \*</sup>, Radosveta Dimitrova <sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup> Bahçeşehir University, Turkey<sup>b</sup> Stockholm University, Sweden

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Available online 23 October 2015

## Keywords:

Multiple social identities

Turkish–Bulgarian

Turkish–German

Youth

## ABSTRACT

We examine relationships between social identity domains (ethnic, national, and religious) and negative affect among Turkish–Bulgarian and Turkish–German youth. Path analysis confirmed a multiple social identities (MSI) factor that has negative relations to experiencing negative affect for Turkish youth in both countries. Beyond this negative relationship, the component of national identity showed a positive relationship to negative affect for Turkish–Bulgarians, but not for Turkish–Germans. Our findings indicate that beyond the generally adaptive effect of MSI on youth development, unique components of social identity may not always be an asset: In an assimilative acculturation context (i.e., Bulgaria), the endorsement of national identity was not adaptive. Our research therefore highlights the need for a contextually differentiated view on “healthy” identity formation among immigrants for research and practice.

© 2015 The Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Social identity refers to individuals' self-concept as a member of social groups, together with the emotional value attached to that membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Adolescents often belong to multiple social groups and the formation of social identity is crucial developmental task for them (Erikson, 1968; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Meeus, 2011). Yet, finding an answer to the question “who am I?” and navigating among multiple social identities while integrating these in a meaningful and coherent manner can become a challenge (Crocetti, Fermani, Pojaghi, & Meeus, 2011). This is even more the case for immigrant adolescents who navigate among multiple social groups that can be perceived as incompatible or undesirable in their country of settlement (Arnett, 2000; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), or lead to negative outcomes (Luyckx, Schwartz, Gossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011). It is therefore of great importance to understand immigrant adolescents' social identity formation and its negative outcomes in an acculturative context.

Extant research on multiple social identities often found that the feeling of belonging to and identifying with particular social groups has a positive influence on youth development; both when single domains of social identification are examined (e.g., ethnic identification; Smith & Silva, 2011) and when the accumulation of multiple social identifications is studied (Benish-Weisman, Daniel, Schiefer, Möllering, & Knafo-Noam, 2015). However, research so far has rarely examined whether

\* Corresponding author. Bahçeşehir University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, Çırağan Caddesi, 34349 Beşiktaş/Istanbul, Turkey. Tel.: +90 (0) 212 381 0432.

E-mail address: [arzu.karakulak@eas.bahcesehir.edu.tr](mailto:arzu.karakulak@eas.bahcesehir.edu.tr) (A. Aydinli-Karakulak).

youths' identification with multiple social groups can also be maladaptive in certain contexts. Moreover, studies also missed to examine the effect of accumulative multiple social identities and its domains simultaneously.

We address the above issues and examine relationships among national, ethnic, and religious identity and negative affect (e.g., anxiety, hostility) by comparing Turkish–Bulgarian and Turkish–German adolescents. First, we test relationships between MSI, its components, and negative affect in two diverse contexts of immigration to explore under which acculturation conditions the endorsement of particular social identities might be maladaptive. Second, in extension to prior research (e.g., Benish-Weisman et al., 2015; Dimitrova, Chasiotis, Bender, & van de Vijver, 2013, 2014; Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011; Smith & Silva, 2011), we examine effects of a combined multiple social identities (MSI) factor and its single components on negative affective experiences in one model; thereby identifying the unique contribution of each component, as the positive impact of feeling a sense of social belongingness (i.e., MSI) is controlled for.

### Components of multiple social identities (MSI): national, ethnic and religious identity

We build on developmental (Phinney, 1989), social (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and cross-cultural (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990) theory and research that view identity as a multifaceted construct related to affective outcomes. We base our reasoning on the notion of identity involving multiple identifications (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Haslam et al., 2008; Thoits, 2012). We focus on national, ethnic and religious identity because they are relevant to ethnic minority (Turkish) youth (Dimitrova et al., 2013, 2014) and represent significant social groups (ethnic and religious). *National identity* refers to identification with the mainstream culture in the country of settlement; *ethnic identity* refers to identification with the culture of origin, and *religious identity* to identification with religious groups, and sense of belonging to these groups.

Literature suggests that ethnic belonging and religion provide important sources of identification (Kiang, Yip, & Fuligni, 2008) and relate positively to well-being (Lopez et al., 2011; Smith & Silva, 2011). Yet, in the face of perceived group discrimination, a strong ethnic identity could also be disadvantageous, whereas a strong national identity might enhance ethnic minority groups' well-being, as adopting the majority culture (and giving up the culture of origin) may be the most beneficial acculturation strategy (Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010). Therefore, specific domains of social identity may not always be an asset for well-being, particularly if their effects are tested in relation to the adaptive effect of an accumulative MSI factor which offers a source belongingness and support (Haslam et al., 2008). We therefore examine the effects of an accumulative MSI factor and its components simultaneously, which allows identifying the unique and distinctive contribution of each identity domain for experiencing negative affect (as the generally adaptive effect of MSI is being controlled).

### Contexts of acculturation

Developing a sense of social self is closely related to the context in which immigrant adolescents find themselves (Erikson, 1968). Due to variable experiences of discrimination and imposition, rejection or endorsement of specific social identities youth are confronted with very different acculturation conditions (Dimitrova et al., 2015). Local immigration policies can both promote the development of stable and coherent identities, resulting in high levels of self-esteem and a clear purpose in life; and inhibit its development, leading to increased delinquency and feelings of anxiety (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal; 1997; Luyckx et al., 2011).

We aim at identifying whether and under which conditions of acculturation MSI, and its unique components, can take a destructive (or protective) role. To do so, immigrant youth of the same ethnic origin that are settled in receiving countries with different conditions of acculturation need to be tested. We selected Turkish youth in Bulgaria and Germany, as they represent the largest immigrant groups in both countries and provide distinct contexts of acculturation. Turks in Bulgaria represent an indigenous community, living in the country from many generations ago (Petkova, 2002), while Turkish immigration to Germany started in the 1960s as labor migration (Hunn, 2005). Hence, the grandchildren of these “guest-workers” represent the vast majority of today's Turkish–German adolescents, qualifying as third generation immigrants. Both immigrant groups are still characterized by their strong social ties to Turkish groups and culture (Petkova, 2002; Schultz & Sackmann, 2001). Similarly, both in Bulgaria and in Germany, Turkish immigrants are confronted with a rather unsupportive immigration context: While both groups have been experiencing persistent discrimination and prejudice (Boehnke, Hagan, & Heller, 1998; Kaas & Manger, 2011; Petkova, 2002), the pressure to assimilate to the host culture and to give up the heritage culture has been considerably higher in Bulgaria than in Germany, showing itself for instance in enforcing Bulgarian names (Dimitrov, 2000). Such enforced identities, however, may lead to psychologically damaging and dysfunctional outcomes, as positive role-identities are lacking (Thoits, 2012).

### Hypotheses

Building on previous research showing that integrating various social identities in a meaningful manner and establishing a coherent and stable sense of belonging lead to positive affective outcomes, we hypothesize that the combined MSI factor negatively relates to experiencing negative affect in both groups (H1). Due to the intensive pressures that Turkish–Bulgarians underwent and its consequences (Dimitrov, 2000; Thoits, 2012), we further propose that the endorsement of national identity will positively relate to negative affect among Turkish–Bulgarian (H2a), but not among Turkish–German youth (H2b).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/880578>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/880578>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)