## Erika Prijatelj

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology, Poljanska cesta 6, SI–1000 Ljubljana
erika.prijatelj@rkc.si

# Identities of Human Self

## From the Standpoint of Guindon's Personal Identity Formation Approach

**Abstract**

*Introduced by a philosophical overview and briefly from the point of view of social sciences, mainly represented by Mœssinger, the main part of the paper is a psychological presentation of self and identity. The presentation is focused primarily on human individual identity. The concept of individual identity, as comprehended today in the West, is the fruit of a long development of understanding of the human person from Augustine, the Reformation, the Enlightenment; and, later on, from Erikson, Freud, Mœssinger, Dubar, Martin, Parfit, Guindon and others presented in the paper.*

*However, according to Guindon, human identity is understood as a totality of physical, performing, individual, psychosexual and psychosocial identities. In this paper we are going to focus particularly on each facet of self-identity as presented in Guindon's system.*

**Key words**

individual, psychosocial, physical, performing, psychosexual identity, self, person, psychology, consciousness, process

## Introduction

From the point of view of humanistic studies, identity represents a paradigm of complexity. It is consequently not surprising that several definitions of identity exist. All the definitions agree that identity evolves continuously, and that it is at the same time the result of auto processes (genetic, biologic, affective, cognitive…) and the process (relational, communicational, historical, cultural, professional…) that forms a system of cyclic causativeness among them. Consequently, identity is a biopsychological, communicational and cultural construct, which makes it one of the elements of a ramified system that connects other identities with each other.

From a psychological point of view, identity is understood as an entity of criteria, required to define a certain subject and its internal sentiment. The sentiment of identity consists of various senses: the sense of uniformity, harmony, affiliation, value, autonomy and confidence. All these contribute to the formation of a person's will to exist and give the existence a meaning.

In this paper, I will present the development of human identity and the understanding of the self. In the last part, I will primarily focus on various identities

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of the human self, in relation to the actualization of its psychological power, which is the approach delineated by Guindon.[1]

# 1. Philosophical overview

## 1.1. A brief historical overview of the understanding of personal identity

The evolution of Western theorizing about self and personal identity can seem to divide neatly into three phases: from Plato to John Locke, from Locke to the late 1960s, and from the late 1960s to the present. During the first or Platonic phase, the dominant view was that the self was thought to be the highest entity and to survive bodily death as a simple immaterial substance. During the second or Lockean phase, the dominant view was that the self should be understood not as a simple persisting substance, whether material or immaterial, but as a constantly changing process of interrelated psychological and physical elements, later phases of which are appropriately related to earlier phases. The third or contemporary phase is recognized by three developments.

The first of these developments is that the Lockean *intrinsic* relations view of personal identity has been replaced by an *extrinsic* relations view which is sometimes called the *closest-continuer* to *externalist* view. According to the older intrinsic relations view, what determines whether a person at one time or at some other time in her life is the same person is how the two are physically and (or) psychologically related to *each other*. According to the more recent extrinsic relations view, what determines whether a person at one time or at some other time in her life is the same person is not just how the two are physically and (or) psychologically related to *each other*, but how they are related to everything else, especially *everybody* else.

The second development since the late 1960s is the traditional *metaphysical* debate or the re-emergence of the question of whether personal identity is primarily what matters in survival. Philosophers have faced the possibility that people might cease and be continued by *others* whose continuation the original people would value as much as they would have valued their own continued existence.

The third major development has been a challenge to the traditional *three-dimensional* view of persons according to which a person can be wholly present at a given moment. It was suggested that this three-dimensional view should be replaced with a *four-dimensional* view according to which only time-slices or stages of persons exist at short intervals of time.[2] In fact, the idea that identity is not what matters primarily in survival is still a debatable question. This revolutionary idea was endorsed by Shoemaker,[3] Nozick,[4] and Parfit.[5] Later, several other philosophers like Lewis,[6] Sosa,[7] Unger,[8] and Martin[9] have argued persuasively for the traditional idea that identity *is* what matters primarily in survival, or at least that it is a precondition of what matters. This second view[10] is also a standpoint in my study.

## 1.2. Development of the comprehension of human interior, and consequently of individual identity

If we take a closer look, individual identity, as it is understood by a contemporary Westerner, is the result of a long evolution of the definition of the category of the *self* (*moi,* in French) in connection with the evolution of the

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notion of the person. According to Mauss, it was only at the end of 18th century that the expression *person* gained its present meaning, as used, among others, in the *Declaration on Human Rights*. "When we say that someone is a person, we mean, among other things, that this being has an individual consciousness and individual freedom",[11] i.e. the right to have his own opinion, conviction and choices. It is just in the consciousness of the self that Hubbeling[12] saw the basic characteristic of the concept of a person. By taking various philosophical systems into consideration, Hubbeling listed a series of criteria defining the concept of a person: a person has a free will that enables him to make independent decisions and to express personal freedom; it is a space of moral and aesthetic values that give the person the sense of responsibility. A person is capable of creating a *you–me* relationship both with another person and with a group or community. Like Mauss, Taylor[13] also contemplates on the self within the human person, and sees three stages, or three periods, in the development of this concept: Augustine, Reformation and Enlightenment.

1

J. Guindon, *Vers l'autonomie psychique*, Mediaspaul, Montréal 2001.

2

R. Martin & J. Barresi, Introduction: Personal Identity and What Matters in Survival, in: R. Martin and J. Barresi (eds.), *Identity and What Matters in Survival*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2003, 1–6.

3

S. Shoemaker & R. Swinburne, *Personal Identity*, Blackwell, Oxford 1984.

4

R. Nozick, *Philosophical Explanation*, Blacknap Press, Cambridge 1981.

5

D. Parfit, Personal Identity, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 1971a, 3–27; D. Parfit, Personal Identity and Rationality, *Synthese*, Vol. 53, 1982, 227–241.

6

D. Lewis, Survival and Identity, in: A. Oksemberg Rorty (ed.), *The Identities of Persons*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1976; D. Lewis, Survival and Identity, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 1, 55–57, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1983.

7

E. Sosa, J. Kim, G. Rozenkrantz, *A Companion to Metaphysic*s, Wiley–Blackwell, Hoboken 2009.

8

P. Unger, *Identity, Consciousness and Value*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992.

9

R. Martin & J. Barresi, Introduction: Personal Identity and What Matters in Survival.

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"What really matters fundamentally in survival? That question – the one on which I focus – is not about what should matter or about metaphysics. Rather, it is a factual question the answer to which can be determined, if at all, only empirically. I argue that the answer to it is that in the case of many people it is not one's own persistence, but continuing in ways that may involve one's own cessation that really matters fundamentally in survival. Call this the surprising result. What are we to make of it? According to several philosophers, not much. I argue that these philosophers are wrong. What best explains the surprising result is that in the case of many people one's special concern for oneself in the future is not fundamental, but derived. I explain what this means. Finally I explain why the task of explaining empirically what matters fundamentally in survival is in some ways more like a meditative quest than a traditional inquiry in western philosophy or social science and, as such, is best answered not by psychologists, but by philosophers." R. Martin, What Really Matters, *Synthese* 162 (3), 325 –340, 2008.

11

M. Mauss, Une catégorie de l'esprit humain : la notion de personne, celle de "moi", *Sociologie at anthropologie*, 6[ème.] édition, PUF–"Quadrige", Paris 1995, 333–362.

12

H. G. Hubbeling, Some Remarks on the Concept of Person in Western Philosophy, in: H. G. Kippenberg, Y. B. Kuiper & A. F. Sanders (eds.), *Concepts of Person in Religion and Thought*, de Gruyter (retailer), Berlin–New York 1990, 9–24.

13

C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.

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### 1.2.1. Augustine

The first period is characterized by the idea of Augustine, who tried to draw a parallel between the opposites of interior and exterior, and the platonistic opposites of soul and body, immaterial and material, eternal and changeable, etc.[14] Before Augustine, Plato did not need to talk about the interior in order to talk about the soul. According to Plato, the opposite immaterial–material, equalling the opposite soul–body, does not cover a spatial opposition; as far as the soul is concerned, the material world is as equally "exterior" as the immaterial world of ideas. If, therefore, the immaterial soul opposes the body, it would be exaggerated to see the soul as purely immaterial, compared to the body. Here it is of course taken into consideration that certain thoughts and emotions emerge within the person, so that the person can consider them "per se", especially because they are not necessarily seen by others. The above does not oppose the concept of the self as the central organizing agency.

According to Taylor, Augustine made an important step in the understanding of the human inner structure, in which he sees a meeting place with God.[15] To him, God does not only represent a transcendental body illuminating the soul from the outside, but is primarily an inner light that makes the soul see and helps the person make decisions.

### 1.2.2. Reformation

The period of the Reformation brought evaluation of daily life[16] and at the same time rejected intervention. As far as redemption is concerned, it became clear that it is something depending on an individual and his relation with God. Every human being is personally responsible for his actions, which actually represents a new stage in the constitution of modern self. Evaluation of daily life means that the destiny and the future of individuals do not depend only on their participation in certain groups, teams or corporations. Although it took some time for the change in mentality to become apparent at the institutional level, the period of the Reformation provided the right circumstances for an individual to be treated as a subject, in other words: the idea of self became a crucial characteristic of human individuality.

### 1.2.3. Enlightenment

Undoubtedly, the 18th century was a period that contributed significantly to the modern understanding of human identity. By insisting on an inner encounter with God, Augustine paved the path to the constitution of the *inner agency*, the soul, which in the Middle Ages became a privileged partner in the communication with God, while with Descartes it became an independent organizational centre. In a way, further final development of the Cartesian system broke the link between reason and the world. The view of the world was one from Galilee's perspective, i.e. mechanical and functional; as from that time on, the reason is capable of observing from the outside. This is possible because man has an inner agency with its own dynamics, capable of thinking and making conclusions, independent of the body, which, like other objects of the world, is subject to the laws of mechanics.

Parallel to this process, the 18th century encouraged people to live in accordance with nature,[17] which is considered to be a constituent part of humanity: a human being, before becoming a cultural animal, derives from nature. To Rousseau, nature is an inner tendency or an inner voice; by obeying it, we are

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doing what is right.[18] He goes on to assert that, by obeying a law one has prescribed to oneself, a citizen achieves "moral freedom".[19] Moreover, in a civil society "a form of association" would bring together people where each one has chosen to "obey only himself". But, actually, the question remains, particularly when one disagrees with the majority: does he obey himself when he obeys the general will? Rousseau argues that the democratic process has enabled all citizens to discover the content of a general will that they share.[20] Not only Rousseau does invoke three types of freedom (natural, civil and moral) but he also relies on a fourth conception: the "republican freedom" by which he explains that, while each citizen is constrained to obey the general will, he is thereby provided with a guaranty against "all personal dependences".[21]

## 2. Identity from Mœssinger's point of view of social sciences

Some years ago, Pierre Mœssinger critically said that psychologists were more interested in "self" than in identity. Identity activates and encourages the link between an individual and the community, or in other words, the understanding of identity requires an interdisciplinary approach. According to Mœssinger, psychologists reduced the study of identity to the study of identification and to the discovery of the approach that objectivized and materialized the identity. Instead of such static psychological approach, Mœssinger suggests to combine psychological and sociological approaches, which he believes is the only method that gives the identity the recognition of its primary and essential characteristic: to be a process, and processes are never directly observable. This does not deny that identity represents a tendency that corresponds to the interiorized ideal, but emphasizes the fact that identity includes a demand for social relations.

The formation of identity, therefore, is the result of the pressure created by a group, including the manner of defining individual roles within the group, as well as the pressure by the subject's conscious and unconscious identifications. The interaction of both forces forms the process of identity, where it cannot be predicted which force will have a stronger effect on the development of identity. Various mechanisms can be involved in the process of identity formation, and the final result depends on the strategy of the group, as well as on the individual. Such mechanisms can be a reduction of dissonance, and can be regulators formed by shame as well as longing – which creates a double pressure.

In spite of a well-founded reflection with which Mœssinger dealt with the question, his view requires two excessively strict conclusions to be criticized.

14
Ibid., 121 and 128–129.

15
Ibid., 140.

16
In this context, Taylor uses the expression "affirmation of ordinary life", meaning that the Reform gave a value and a meaning to everything and everyone: work, family life (not only to consecrated life), etc. Ibid., 211–218.

17
In this context, 'nature' does not mean 'the environment'.

18
C. Bertram, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rousseau/.

19
J.-J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right*, Book 1, § 8.

20
Ibid., Book 4, § 3.

21
Ibid., Book 1, § 7.

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The first criticism refers to identification. Mœssinger reproaches psychologists for their static approach to identity, and also for "overlooking a person's leading mechanisms, i.e. those that form the dynamics of a person's identifications."[22] Mœssinger's criticism is justified, as far as categorization and fixation of individuals with labels is concerned, e.g. woman, single mother, homosexual, Negro, actor, American, etc. It would be exaggerated to state, however, that psychology ignored the aspect of identity process. In fact, the mere construction of identity of the human self presupposes an identification process, which is not reduced to labelling. An example would be a psychological study of a child's development which gave all dynamic value to the concept of identification.

My second criticism refers to the limitation of culture to sociality. Mœssinger realized that identity could not be properly understood without its contents, however, he practically said nothing about those, but only mentioned that "contents refer to the inclusion of individuals into wide social systems."[23] Although it is correct that the "self" is an entity of characteristics, which are at the same time individual and social,[24] it is important to underline that other identities of the human self exist (which will be presented in chapter 3.2) that were overlooked by Mœssinger.

## 3. Psychological presentation of identities of the human self

### 3.1. Understanding the self

According to psychoanalytic theory, identity is the consequence of the formation of the self. Psychoanalyst Freud postulated a hypothetical ego. Although he first used the term in the sense of the conscious *I* or self, Freud's truly distinctive meaning of *ego* is the hypothetical entity – or, more accurately, group of functions – he later postulated as the central player in his tripartite structural theory of the unconscious: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*.

Of the three, the ego may be closest to consciousness, but Erikson has insisted on its intrinsically unconscious nature. "We become aware of its work but never of it."[25] Indeed, as an unconscious inner organizer of experience, the ego does for us what we could never consciously do for ourselves. Erikson explains:

"Only after we have separated the *I* and the *selves* from the *ego* can we consign to the ego (…) the domain of an inner agency safeguarding our coherent existence by screening and synthesizing (…) all the impressions, emotions, memories, and impulses which try to enter our thoughts and demand our action, and which would tear us apart if unsorted and unmanaged by a slowly grown and reliably watchful screening system."[26]

Jung explicitly defines *ego* as the centre of consciousness. Though this meaning of ego differs radically from Freud's, it is a particularly straightforward use of the word, equivalent to *I* .[27] For Jung the self is the subject of the total psyche, both conscious and unconscious. Postulated rather than experienced, the self is Jung's entry in the hypothetical field, an ideal personality hinted at in the dream symbolism of a mandala.

In contrast to Jung's self, in my study I will refer to a conscious, immediately experienced reality. I consider the dynamic, dipolar self, and distinguish the dialectical subject "I" and object "me" poles within this embodied, *first-person* reality of the conscious person.

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### 3.2. Four identities of the human self from the standpoint of Guindon

Undoubtedly, the question of identity today lies in the centre of psychological and cultural changes that the modern world is facing. In 1968, Erik Erikson accurately predicted that the study of identity would become as important in our time as sexuality was in the time of Sigmund Freud. Identity is the focus of Erikson's consideration of the entire life span. His understanding of identity is both subjective and objective, individual and social. While it includes a subjective sense of sameness and continuity as an active, alive individual, it also has a social side in the expectations and traditional values of the community in which the young person, for example, seeks role integration.

In her work *Vers l'autonomie psychique*,[28] Guindon[29] defined a person as an entity of physical, performing, individual, psychosexual and psychosocial identity. In the continuation, we will retain Guindon's concept of identity of the human self, but enriched with some additions by other authors.[30]

### 3.2.1. Physical identity

"Physical identity is crucial for the achievement of autonomy; it is the foundation on which all other identities of the human self rest",[31] and it is at the same time "the basis and the privileged support to the sensation of identity".[32] Human physical identity is the one that develops first, as it is being formed

22
P. Mœssinger, *Le jeu de l'identité*, PUF, Paris 2000, 110.

23
Ibid.

24
Ibid., 112.

25
E. H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Norton, New York 1968, 218. The meaning of 'conscious' and 'unconscious' are very tricky. Although this distinction is commonplace in psychology and ordinary language, it would usually be more accurate to distinguish within consciousness between that which is explicitly objectified and that which is tacit and unobjectified. Unlike the strictly unconscious growth of toe-nails, much that we characterize as *unconscious* is conscious but unobjectified, and can in various ways be rendered explicitly conscious. On the twilight of what is conscious but not objectified, see B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* Herder and Herder, New York 1972, 34.

26
E. H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Norton, New York 1968, 218.

27
W. E. Conn, *The Desiring Self*, Paulist Press, New York 1998, 44.

28
J. Guindon, *Vers l'autonomie psychique*, Médiaspaul, Montréal 2001.

29
Guindon was Erikson's collaborator of long standing in the field of development of the actualization of human life force, university psychology professor and founder of the International Institute for Integral Human Formation in Montreal, Canada.

30
A theological explanation of individual facets of the human self, based on the trichotomy of Greek Fathers, adds spiritual identity – the source of meaning for a human being – to physical, performing, individual, psychosexual and psychosocial identity. In this context, spiritual identity does not mean religious identity. From the point of view of spiritual identity, life is something personal that is linked to a secret, something we cannot finally master or manipulate. Religion is a radical recognition of the existence of A(a)nother, it is openness and seeing beyond oneself, but it is also conquering loneliness, isolation and lack of meaning. (Cf. E. Prijatelj, *Psihološka dinamika rasti v veri*, Znanstvena knjižnica TEOF, Ljubljana–Maribor 2008, 371.)

31
J. Guindon, *Vers l'autonomie psychique*.

32
E. Marc, La construction identitaire de l'individu, in: *Identités : l'individu, le groupe, la société*, coordonné par C. Halpern et J. C. Ruano-Borbalan, Éditions Sciences humaines, Auxerre 2004, 35.

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from the very beginning of a person's existence. It is extremely important to the person, as it represents the source of his self-confidence. The formation of psychical forces at the level of physical identity enables a person to exercise all his talents and limits, while developing his physical points of orientation, and gives a meaning to the body.

"In fact, the body is the only space that is relevant to the person; the more successfully one builds one's physical identity, the better one can develop a friendly relationship with oneself."[33]

Only when a person really becomes capable of satisfying his physical needs, it means that he is capable of making independent decisions, enabling him to live in harmony with his body. "The meaning that one attributes to the endeavours to achieve the proper attitude towards oneself helps one develop love for oneself."[34] This form of love is "diametrically opposed to an egocentric attitude"[35] where a person expects that the environment will take care of the person and his body. Moreover, proper care of the body means that a person develops self-confidence and eventually also inner harmony and serenity, which makes the person open and available to others.

One does not choose one's own body. One has to domesticate the body that one has been given, to "give" it a personal identity and accept gradual changes of the body. To love oneself means to accept one's natural reality, and at the same time be fully responsible for one's physical and psychical health. Only a person who is able to respect his body and search for personal equilibrium at the level of his strengths and limits is capable of respecting other people, accepting their differences and, if required, helping them in the search of personal firmness. Because of the love for oneself, one can establish a mutual and loving respectful relationship with others, without being too indulgent or too demanding.

In spite of the huge progress of humanity, which especially in the Western world has created decent conditions for people to meet their physical needs, people frequently have considerable difficulties related to the formation of their physical identity, and consequently with the development of (self)confidence. The ideal of beauty and health that the developed society imposes on people with very strict criteria has become so strongly imperative that it is difficult for an individual to resist, meaning that it is difficult to maintain a proper distance and to discover freely the language of one's own body as an intimate and very frank companion. All this severely shocks a person's physical identity, which is also the carrier of other expressions of the human self. In the Third world, in extremely poor countries, the development of the basic human identity is complicated in another way.

### 3.2.2. Performing identity

At the level of performing identity, a person discloses his personal way of acting, learning, thinking and expressing, and strives for productivity. The decisions that the person makes enable him not only to define in detail, adapt and deepen his natural way of acting, but also to learn new methods that expand the person's flexibility in his relation with the environment. One is aware of one's various possibilities to intervene and the discoveries are directed to expressing a personal note in the approach to things and projects. This gives birth to the feeling of pride, which grows stronger the more the person proves to master the resources used in a concrete experience.

The performing identity, which from the point of view of developmental psychology begins to evolve between the first and third years of age, is a source of human self-affirmation.

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"The feeling of healthy pride protects a person from the feelings of doubt or shame, and also from the need to prove oneself in front of others or to compare oneself with others in order to exist in one's own eyes, and helps the person interiorize the meaning of his dignity."[36]

Appropriate differentiation and personal points of orientation with regard to the manner of acting in the tasks that one performs must correspond to the stage of life that one is in, because this helps the person actualize his life forces, namely hope, will, reaching goals, competence, loyalty and love.

Thus, the performing identity is developed by means of awareness of a person's manner of acting, learning, communicating etc. It is also developed with suitable ways of achieving goals that one sets for oneself or that are suggested by others; by anticipating more and more accurately the manner of acting in achieving one's own goals, taking into consideration the presence of others and concrete circumstances; by planning the manner of acting in approaching the goal in order to cooperate without obstacles when facing an unexpected situation; by choosing combinations and possibilities to achieve the goal so that one uses methods of acting and creating possibilities that take into consideration the changing circumstances and anticipate the near and distant future.

In relation to the performing identity, it is necessary to point out the issue of professional identity. The latter is presently "facing a crisis caused by changes in professional socialization, related to uncertainty regarding employment and to changes in the contents and methods of work".[37] The classical structure of a reference group is disappearing. Modern ways of youth are to a large extent characterized by their struggle for asserting and affirming themselves in the field of work and employment. More and more frequently crises arise because young people do not have the opportunity to enter the world of labour and to find their place in the appropriate socialization environment where this facet of their personal identity could be shaped, preventing the young from entering adulthood in an usual and conflict-free manner. Moreover, while in the past most mature people had a stable professional career, we can see today that a stable career has increasingly been replaced by the so-called transitional career, i.e. transition from permanent to temporary employment or unemployment or vice versa. All this leads to objective uncertainty, and consequently to radical changes in the formation of the human performing identity.

### 3.2.3. Individual identity

Individual development, which begins to form parallel to psychosexual and psychosocial identity – that is in the third development stage, i.e. between three and six years of age – is formed on the basis of one's presence for oneself, in conformity with one's orientation points in the physical and performing area, and essentially contributes to the formation of personal identity. Prior to the development of the individual identity, a person gains experience how

33
M. Borstein, *Well-Being – Positive Development across the Life Course*, Erlbaum, Mahwah 2003, 529.

34
J.-L. Hétu, *L'humain en devenir*, Fides, Montréal 2001, 42.

35
J. Guindon, *Vers l'autonomie psychique*, 399.

36
J. Saint-Paul, *Estime de soi, confiance en soi – Les fondements de notre équilibre personnel et social*, Inter-Éditions, Paris 1999, 73.

37
J. Muršak, Kriza poklicne identitete: vloga poklicnega in strokovnega izobraževanja, *Sodobna pedagogika – Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2009, 154.

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to maintain his strong points and reveal himself as a producer or performer of something. With the new step, i.e. with the development of individual identity, one recognizes oneself in one's capabilities and abilities, personal values and interests, in what one has learned and gained. This knowledge is not linked to the contents of the experiences any longer. What a person knows and is able to do is a constituent part of the person; it can be applied every time that the person chooses to make a personal contribution.

The form of identity in which a person discovers who he is as an individual makes it possible for the person to engage with other people within a certain group. The person is capable of assuming his position in the society and seeing himself as a person with something to give to others, and the same time making decisions in accordance with his own orientation points.[38] A person's individual identity reveals itself "in a selfless way, that is to say by giving unselfishly and without expecting anything in return," based on personal values.

"The individual identity as the source of a person's self-respect forms a link between the person and the environment and enables harmonic cooperation between the two subjects."[39] An adult sees himself completely separated from the environment, but can at the same time open up to the environment "with his talents and with confidence in his body and his way of acting."[40] When he decides on a certain project, he starts acting and trusts in what he knows he is capable of. He knows how to adapt his actions to the requirements and shows his capability to be mobile in maintaining the correct balance of his powers. In his research or intellectual work, he demonstrates a personal emotional tone and expresses his creative and innovative capabilities.[41]

### 3.2.4. Psychosexual identity

"The awareness of who I am as an individual is the main prerequisite to discover myself as a sexual being."[42] Gender identity is primarily reflected in the body, on a physical, physiological and genital level; it is also reflected by the way of acting, thinking, expressing oneself, using one's talents, approaching other people and intervening within a group. The psychosexual identity is the source from which a person can contribute in accordance with his gender. An individual's psychosexual identity is the more harmonious the more support it finds in the body, which is the means of expressing the whole personality; the freer he is in implementing meaningful ways of acting and connecting with others, which becomes a challenge and an opportunity to make suitable adjustments in cooperation with people of the same or the opposite sex, the more one affirms oneself and recognizes the meaning of one's specific contribution, which at the same time becomes the means for opening up to other people.[43]

A person's gender identity clearly shows that a human being is a dyadic reality: it is male and female. In order to reach mature differentiation of one's psychosexual identity, one must first discover one's own way of forming relationships that is typical of one's gender, i.e. "intrusive for a man, and inclusive for a woman".[44] From the point of view of psychosexual identity, man and woman together are invited to complete the dyad, and consequently, to complement each other.

It is a woman's mission to discover how she can use her various observations to encourage others to cooperate. In this way she becomes a person who gathers others around herself and creates an encouraging atmosphere, where everyone feels respected and wishes to contribute their personal share. She must remain loyal to the goal she is pursuing and use appropriate tools, taking

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into consideration not only the logic dictated by the goal, but above all the diversity of the persons she wishes to include in a certain activity or process.

Likewise, a man must also discover his tendency to focus primarily on his goal, which is the motor that drives his choice of methods of intervention that will enable him to reach the goal in the fastest possible way. His task is to synthesize and to create a vision of the whole, from which he deducts the logic of his activity, and to pursue his goal paying more attention to logical means than to sensomotorical modalities of intervention enabling the cooperation of other people.

People who decide to change their gender for various reasons provide a new challenge for psychology. As we have seen, the formation of gender identity is not limited to the male or female appearance of a person. It is namely extremely important and necessary that people who have changed their gender are able to form a completely new psychosexual identity, which is by no means achieved only by means of surgery and hormone pills.

### 3.2.5. Psychosocial identity

We agree with Chauchat who claims that "human individuality cannot develop outside of social order, or put otherwise: an authentic and healthy human identity can only be a social one".[45] The psychosocial identity, which begins to develop after the second year of age, and more intensively after the third year of age, is expressed by "openness to the environment and to other people." To an individual, it represents a source of reciprocal, selfless or universal love – depending on the person's life stage and level of development.

At the level of social identity, a person is primarily understood as a member of a certain group. His relations with others are manifested in projects in which he collaborates and cooperates with other people, which require trying to be mobile, learning to find one's place in the society, and taking care of renewing one's forces. When a person performs the tasks that are typical of his particular life stage, he encounters various changes, adapts to new situations and responds to new challenges. When making a decision, one tries to identify what is important to him and finds the purpose of his participation in various social and cultural circles. By self-improvement, an individual's efforts become better coordinated with his personal priorities, which increases his inner freedom and helps him actuate his psychological power.

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"At the level of psychosocial identity, a person must constantly refine himself and grow internally, because this is the only way he can mature in inner harmony and interiorize the sense of uniqueness of each human being."[46] Eventually one ceases to pay attention to the roles of other people, but increasingly discovers his fellow human beings in their inner dynamics and value. This leads to seeing others in a broader sense, through their behaviour, ideas and approach – to collective work.

The basis of psychosocial identity is the knowledge of oneself in various past periods, meaning that one should be aware of his successes and steps already made, as well as of the areas where his personal weaknesses lie. Being there for oneself enables one to discover the qualities of others, and to practice personal mobility regarding manners of intervention. This helps the person reach greater personal freedom in interpersonal relations and achieve greater respect for the dignity of each person, regardless of the circumstances they live in and their social status.

### Conclusion

It has to be pointed out that establishing an identity is a permanent process that begins in the first days of human life, and is thereafter formed and re-formed in every life stage and in all walks of life. The study of the formation of an individual's identity, therefore, requires appropriate processing of all aspects of an individual's life where that individual experiences or searches for his personal affirmation: physical, performing, individual, sexual and social.

Identity processes develop through various socialization stages and are subject to identification with other important subject and reference groups into which an individual enters. In line with the dissertation by Dubar,[47] we may state that successful identity formation is one of the main indicators of successful socialization and education processes. Clearly, the process of socialization, as well as the process of identity formation, is multi-layered. Identity can evolve only through interaction between an individual's experience and his actual position, as it is represented by his social environment. The latter consists of various social groups that he joins in various areas of life. Consequently, identity results from social interaction and self-definition. Identity represents a virtual space that does not exist in a tangible form, but is something that we believe in and that we as individuals (subjects) must express in order to live and act among others and with others.

In order to form our personal identity, we need each other, and we also need to touch the limits of others. The less limits that the world sets, and the more we avoid facing each other, like for example at Facebook where everyone can change identity any time, the harder it is for individuals, groups and nations to form their identity. When we touch each other, a reaction starts within us and challenges us, which is necessary in order for inner changes to begin, and for a genuine and clear personal identity to be formed.

From the psychological point of view, interpersonal relations are crucial for the development of a healthy personal identity. The world we live in today consists of spaces and non-spaces. In this context, space means that we meet others, that we belong, that we respond to challenges and grow. Non-space means the absence of all that. An example: a railway station, a machine that provides a service, but we do not form each other as humans in the process. Today, people increasingly tend to live in a fluid space where relationships are standardized.

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For these reasons, and for several others, a homogenous identity is disappearing in modern society. This means that a person has one face in the family – i.e. a certain behaviour, values, communication language, etc. – another face on the street, a third one at school or at work, in a political party, etc. One example would be young people who start their afternoon as ardent scouts, and end their evening in a discotheque or somewhere in the subway, influenced by drugs. A conglomerate of various identities can tear up a person in the end.

Mutual harmony is the ideal of individual facets of the human self. But even if such mutual harmony is achieved, what does it really mean? "When are we finally?" the poem *Sun Stone* by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz resounds in the existential unrest of human questioning. When, which I, which you, which we is it that really evaluates life, when do our insights and our recognitions have a real value that transcends the limits of the narrowest context? I am convinced that there exists a moment – a rare and unforgettable one – that de-contextualizes our experience of the self, when for a brief moment we are overwhelmed by a "forgotten amazement by the fact that we are", as another verse from the *Sun Stone* goes.

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## Erika Prijatelj

## Identiteti ljudskog sebstva

**Sažetak**

*Uvodno s filozofskim pregledom, i ukratko s aspekta društvenih znanosti predstavljenih uglavnom kroz Mæssingerovo djelo, glavni dio ovog rada je psihološki osvrt na sebstvo i identitet. Fokus je primarno stavljen na čovjekov individualni identitet. Pojam individualnog identiteta, kako ga se danas shvaća na Zapadu, plod je dugog razvoja razumijevanja ljudske osobe od Augustina preko reformacije, prosvjetiteljstva, Eriksona, Freuda, Moesingera, Dubara, Guindona i drugih o kojima će biti riječ u radu.*

*Međutim, prema Guindonu, ljudski identitet se shvaća kao ukupnost fizičkih, performativnih, individualnih, psihoseksualnih i psihosocijalnih identiteta. U ovom radu ćemo se fokusirati na svaki aspekt identiteta sebstva kako su predstavljeni u Guindonovom sustavu.*

**Ključne riječi**

pojedinac, psihosocijalno, fizičko, performativno, psihoseksualni identitet, sebstvo, osoba, psihologija, svijest, proces

## Erika Prijatelj

## Identitäten des menschlichen Selbst

**Zusammenfassung**

*Eingeleitet mit einem philosophischen Überblick und gerafft vom Standpunkt der Sozialwissenschaften aus - hauptsächlich vonseiten Mæsingers geschildert - fungiert der Hauptteil dieses Papers als eine psychologische Rückschau auf das Selbst und die Identität. Der Fokus wurde vorrangig gelegt auf die menschliche individuelle Identität. Der Begriff der individuellen Identität, wie man ihn heutzutage im Westen ausdeutet, entstand als Frucht einer dauerhaften Auffassungsentwicklung bezüglich der menschlichen Person, seit Augustinus über die Reformation, Aufklärung, Erikson, Freud, Moesinger, Dubar, Guindon und die Übrigen aus dieser Arbeit.*

*Laut Guindon wird jedoch die menschliche Identität ausgelegt als Gesamtheit physischer, performativer, individueller, psychosexueller sowie psychosozialer Identitäten. In dem Artikel vertiefen wir uns im Besonderen in jedweden Gesichtspunkt der Selbstidentität, wie in Guindons System interpretiert.*

**Schlüsselwörter**

Einzelmensch, psychosozial, physisch, performativ, psychosexuelle Identität, Selbst, Person, Psychologie, Bewusstsein, Prozess

## Erika Prijatelj

## Identités du soi humain

**Résumé**

*Introduite par un aperçu philosophique, et brièvement du point de vue des sciences humaines, essentiellement représentées par Moessinger, la partie prinicipale de cet article est une présentation psychologique du soi et de l'identité. Le focus est mis sur l'identité individuelle de l'homme. La notion d'identité individuelle, telle qu'elle est entendue aujourd'hui en Occident, est le fruit d'une longue évolution de la compréhension de la personne humaine, depuis Augustin en passant par la Réforme, les Lumières, Erikson, Freud, Moessinger, Dubar, Guindon et d'autres, qui seront évoqués cet article.*

*Cependant, selon Guindon, l'identité humaine est comprise comme totalité d'identités physiques, d'exécutant, psychosexuelles et psychosociales. Dans cet article, nous nous concentrerons en particulier sur chaque facette de l'identité de soi telle qu'elle sont présentées dans le système de Guindon.*

**Mots-clés**

Individu, identité psychosociale, physique, d'exécutant, psychosexuelle, soi, personne, psychologie, conscience, processus