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Particularities of personality identification in the contemporary socio-cultural conditions

The central goal of this article was to examine particularities of personality identification in the contemporary socio-cultural conditions. We have made theoretical analysis of the problem and we cite the results of our own research of personality identification in the groups of respondents from 12 to 20 years old. We suggest that the contemporary Russian culture can be characterized as a new type of communitarian culture and we find certain tendencies of post-industrial development in this culture. These theoretical propositions are supported by statistically significant data, received in the course of the study of particularities of personality identification in the contemporary socio-cultural conditions in The South Region of Russia.

***Key words:** cultural dynamics, socio-cultural approach to cultural dynamics, communitarian culture, socio-cultural conditions, vitally important sphere, personal identification.*

The optimal approach for researches in the contemporary socio-cultural conditions of personal identification in the context of social interaction is the socio-psychological approach of cultural dynamics. Methodological basis of this theoretical research of socio-cultural determinants of personality identification is the historical principle. Its main postulate is to examine the man in all the forms and ways of his development, as a socio-cultural subject and as a spiritual and material being at the same time. "Development, dynamics are the main instrumental principles in the methodology of the historicism, including all the forms of the real world changes, fixing the reality of these changes in our environment, showing the significance of this development, treating the development (human reality among others) as a value. That is the reason why the ideology of the historicism is of fundamental importance for the studies of laws of man's main abilities within time and cultural space at different stages of man's life" [7, p. 133].

"To find the perspectives of the socio-psychological approach of cultural dynamics, points out Kashima I., is absolutely necessary to formulate clearly the conception of culture" [2, p. 516]. Universal feature of any culture is the unity of traditions, containing elements of cultural inheritance: ideas, values, customs, attitudes, norms, which are kept and transferred from one generation to another, and updating, changes and creativity. The system of traditions reflects the integrity, stability of society organism. It



is forbidden to interfere, because sophisticated cultural mechanisms can be damaged. In such a situation a person with inner desire for stability and confidence in the future is extremely frustrated. In sixties E. Fromm and G. Markuse stipulated that contemporary society is depriving the personality of Superego's support, because Superego is destructed by the absence of traditional moral principles [10, p. 97].

One of the most wide-spread criteria, the cultures differ from each other, is based on the fact that the system of values, accepted in the one or the other society, brings to the foreground individual self-control and personal achievements or public obligations of solidarity. According to this criterion the cultures are divided into individualistic and collectivist ones [3, p. 249]. Individualism is the conception, establishing the priority of personal goals in comparison with group goals. Therewith self-identification is based on personal attributions instead of group identity.

Collectivism is the conception, giving priority to the goals of one or another group (as a rule, this is the family or working group) in comparison with personal goals. Personal identification follows this rule. Thus, Harry Triandis, Richard Brislin and Harry Gooi, show in their researches how embedded in culture individualism (or collectivism) affects Self-concept, social relationships [3, p. 250].

The main problem and difference of these conceptions is the problem of personality development, Self-concept formation and the problem of identification and self-identity. Individualism and collectivism are consequences of certain social conditions.

People differ from each other by their Self-concepts. Some people, especially in western cultures, accept the conception of independent Self, others, specifically in Asia and in the cultures of eastern countries, interdependent Self. Does Self-concept become more individualized when the East meets West? Some researchers, hoping to consolidate the best from collectivist and individualist values, try to substantiate the concept of communitarism, that must find balance between the rights of individual and the right of the society for prosperity. "They propose something middle between individualism of the West and collectivism of the East..." [3, p. 252].

In our research of socio-cultural determinants of personality identification, which was held in the South region of Russia, in Touapse during 2000-2005, using a sample of 1140 participants at the age of 12 to 20, we received the following data, testifying that the features appeared in Russian culture characterize it as a communitarian culture.

In our opinion, it was obvious if we take into consideration N.A. Berdiaev's words: Russia is "West and East, a separate part of the world, independent cultural phenomenon." [1, p. 9].

The main goal of our study was the search for possibilities of forming socio-cultural identification in the context of social interaction in present conditions.

First of all we examined features of forming and types of the formed identity, analyzed the main socio-cultural values, vitally important spheres, which are the objects of identification, carried out the comparative analysis of received data according to age criterion.



In the course of our study we received information, which reflects alarming symptom: our culture loses its traditional character that was a basic feature, the standard for personal identification. The answer to the question about traditional character of their relationships varies in different age groups: 22,2 % of respondents at the age of 12, 33,3% of respondents at the age of 13, 29,8%, of respondents at the age of 14, 33,8% of respondents at the age of 15, 14,3% of respondents at the age of 16, 30,8% of respondents at the age of 18 consider the traditional character as their personal trait. As we have already mentioned, the loss of traditional bases negatively affects personality development, due to deformation of «Super-ego», demobilize the will and interfere into creation of integrated Self-concept. With this theoretical analysis of the problem in mind, we can note that the destruction of traditions leads to deformation of cultural forms, which in their turn negatively affect cultural forms of thinking. This negative influence of socio-cultural changes needs further examination, because we cannot make a generalized conclusion based only on our study in one region taken separately, we are able only to point out that the study of this aspect is urgent nowadays.

In our study we have verified the hypothesis that standards of identification vary greatly according to the age criterion. Thus at the age of 12 to 18 we can observe restriction of vitally important spheres, as objects and standards of personal self-identification. After analyzing data, received using the method of sample comparison according to the intensity of attributes and the correlation of control variables, we have found 23 vitally important spheres, derived in the course of content-analysis, such as: culture, society, knowledge, nature, love, friendship, religion and etc. At the age of 12 the adolescents consider prevalent and pressing 12/18, at the age of 13– 17/22 (almost all of them), at the age of 14– 7/16, at the age of 15– 5/13, at the age of 16– 0/3, at the age of 17– 1/3, at the age of 18– ½ / 1. The factor analysis showed two significant factors of vitally important spheres, as standards of personal identification.

One of them represents the interrelation of culture, information, art, traveling, nature, religion and society. Such spheres as spare-time, family, property, wealth, power are included in this factor. Another factor combines such spheres as good job, education, love, friendship, money, knowledge. This last-named factor is of great importance, it is the reference point of personal identification in contemporary socio-cultural conditions.

This data partially confirm general contrary hypothesis, advanced in researches of social identification, under the supervision of V.A. Yadov at the Institute of Sociology of RAS during 1991-1994, about appeared tendency of society development according to post-industrial type, characterized by the predominance of goal-oriented and rational reference points of personal identification. The conducted studies demonstrate that under conditions of social crisis protective function of identification dominates the functions of self-expression and self-actualization. After overcoming the crisis situation the second function will be reinforced. Dynamics of corresponding significance of the objects of socialization depends on dynamics of overcoming of social and economic crisis. The development of mixed economy, market relations, development of



the non-state property will stimulate the reinforcement of goal-oriented mechanisms of identification and attenuation of value-oriented ones [11, p. 589].

So, according to the data of our study, there is a tendency of dominance of goal-oriented and rational reference points (factor 2), which have positive weak correlation with value-oriented reference points (factor 1) of personal identification. This testifies that new tendencies appear in socio-cultural space, typical for post-industrial type of society development. Orientation to the vitally important sphere "knowledge" is one of basic features of post-industrial society. However the post-industrial society also appreciates another important sphere, composing along with knowledge the main feature of post-industrial society, information. But our respondents ignore it or express distrust to its validity. Overwhelming majority of respondents (83% - the age group of 15, 16,17,18) only admit as the true information, the information downloaded from "Internet". "Knowledge" positively correlates with "education", but it is not true for all age groups, as the possibility to receive valid information and as the sphere of the key activity where you can actualize your possibilities and abilities. "Education" positively correlates with "good job" as the possibility of well-being.

The results of our study also confirm the theoretical and empirical conceptions of A. Vatterman, who suggests that identification is not a single act, but series of interdependent choices, through which the person accepts personal goals, values and believes. The works by A. Vatterman are mainly concentrated on value-will aspect of identity development. A. Vatterman thinks that identification is closely connected with personal identity, including the goals, values and believes, that person follows.

The goals, values and believes are elements of identity according to A. Vatterman. They are formed as the result of the choice between different alternatives in the circumstances of identity crisis period. They become bases for life direction, for meaning of life. In accordance with A. Vatterman's model identity development is not a linear process, it can go backwards, because it may return to a lower level. Even after achieving an identity, the man can experience a crisis and return to a diffusional state. The feeling of determination, complete identity gets destructed while values and believes lose their vitality, stop complying with requirements of the environment. If the person is able to cope with this crisis, then the person achieves again the identity. But if the person doesn't want to notice the changes and make efforts for personal research - then arises the danger of plunging into a diffusional state [4, 213].

We would like to underline that the results of our research confirm the existence of age identity crises, corresponding to age periodization by L. S. Vigotskii these are crises of 13 and 17. The crisis of 13 we call the crisis of identity sensitivity. Among large orientation to different standards, behavior patterns, "Nature Worlds" dominates and it transfers into "Belief world" and makes actual "World of Love and Friendship". The age of 13 is illuminated by "Belives"-it is saint and it is where romantic feelings and morals result from. At this age children are small personalities, they distinguish themselves from the nature and rush to the world of friendship and love. They are oriented to the society, to the interaction with other people, in which "Culture" along with "law and



right" plays the managing and control function, it is vitally important sphere of life. We realize that this age is the period of contacts with society with the help of family and parents. The perception of social environment depends on the family, parents and close friends. Children of this age name the family in their self-reports as a vitally important factor of their existence.

Crisis of 17 is first of all the crisis of socio-cultural identification. The person is open for direct contact with social environment. And social environment (our socio-cultural space) acts as an aggressor towards the youth. Self-concept, which is not completely formed, is exposed to aggressive impact of social environment. And as consequence we find nihilism and alienation from society. In our research it is reflected in the ignorance of society, information, (we mean mass- media), culture. The complete ignorance of pop music as a very aggressive factor, deforming personal identification. As a result at the age of 18, we observe the formed existential Self-concept with transcendence identity leading to unconscious alienation from socio-cultural space and plunging into existential values. It reveals itself in the choice of the "world of Love and Friendship" along with actualization of cognitive interest.

At the age of 16-17-18 they don't choose such categories as "People", "Society", "Culture" "Art", "Believes". We did not find the positive correlation between "Knowledge" and "Education" among 16-17 years old respondents, besides among 16-17-18 respondents there is no positive correlation between such categories as "Education", "Knowledge" and "Information"; we also can find reverse correlation between actual spheres as "Love" and "Friendship" and the sphere of "Law and Right". This testifies the fact that at this age these spheres are pressing and problematical. Identification with these spheres evokes significant difficulties. For instance, the education in contemporary socio-cultural conditions is a serious problem, which children start to realize from the age of 16 or maybe even earlier.

Love-Friendship-Knowledge are standards of youth identification.

The studies of femininity, masculinity and androgyny patterns according to Bem's method MF let us distinguish two age periods of crisis of sex identity and achievement of psychological identity - they occur at the age of 13 and 17. At the age of 13 children sharply change the orientation corresponding to their biological sex to androgyny patterns. At the age of 14 we continue to observe the incompatibility of psychological identity to biological sex, there is a distinctive deformation of sex identity, especially among girls (girls demonstrate masculinity patterns more often than boys demonstrate femininity ones, boys' femininity patterns are very rare) . At the age of 17 they demonstrate normal psycho-physiological orientation, the rate of androgyny is still high, but incompatibility of psychological identity to biological sex decreases. This tendency is reinforced up to age of 18. It is necessary to underline that incompatibility of psychological identity to biological sex have insignificant validity coefficient, so we can not make any conclusions. The date about the growth of androgyny have a very significant coefficient ($C3 = 0,68$), that testifies his high statistic validity. According to wide-spread conceptions, the individual is not obligatory representative of clearly de-



veloped psychological femininity or masculinity. The personality can absorb femininity and masculinity patterns. People of androgyny type combine both features harmoniously. They suggest that this kind of integration of femininity or masculinity features increases the possibility of adaptation. Besides the softness and concessions in social contacts, the absence of highly expressed dominant and aggressive tendencies do not result in reduction of self-esteem, on the contrary they are displayed alongside with high self-esteem, self-respect and self-objectification. In the studies (Lau Sing, 1989) it was showed that androgynes do not rank below male type in self-esteem or assessment of academic achievements or their own appearance [5, p. 112].

We think that observed tendency of androgyny pattern increase, which has according to our data, age dynamic, counts in favor of the hypothesis that androgyny as a psychological type, including the features of femininity and masculinity, is consciously formed as the way of more efficient adaptation to socio-cultural conditions. Nevertheless, there are some studies, assuming, that individualist cultures, particularly western cultures are characterized by "male character", masculinity is its typical feature (Richard Tarnass) [9, p. 237], and the collectivist cultures are characterized by femininity, for instance, Russia is characterized by female type of culture (N.A. Berdiaev, V.S. Soloviev, V.V. Rosanov) [6, p. 54]. Display of psychological androgyny indirectly testifies the appearance of communitarian features in the modern culture. The analysis of personal traits as standards of identification, typical for individualist and collectivist culture, also confirms that there is a tendency to create communitarian type of culture, combining individualist and collectivist features. We would like to attract your attention to the fact that studies of individualism and collectivism became very popular in cross-cultural psychology (M.H. Bond & Smith, 1996; Smitf & Bond, 1999). and have influence on social psychology. [3; 254]. Thus, our research showed the positive dynamics of personality development of adolescents, girls and boys, the representatives of new generation and the tendency of forming positive Self-concept through orientation to socio-cultural values. Perhaps we deal with a new variant of socio-cultural development, which distinguishes greatly from West Europe. It is based on integrity of traditional Russian culture and the main features of post-industrial, informational civilization of the West, America and eastern technologies. Based on empirical data we can say that in spite of the numerous studies of personal identification, this problem has a lot of unexplored aspects that's why it still has the status of "strategic problem" [8, p. 74].

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