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Inquiry for Identity as a Result of Structural Transformations in Modern Society: in the Search of the Elusive Meaning

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Abstract

The relevance of this topic is determined by the increasing uncertainty of the anthropological context of the development of the information society, which triggers the new identification models. Therefore, the authors turn to the analysis of the anthropological alternative, which sets the trend for the formation of positive anthropo-images of human identity and images of the future in the context of the modern era of transformations, choices and challenges. Socio-cultural and systematic approaches are leading in the study of the problem and they allow us to integrate the data on the essence, structure and content of identity available in various branches of science as a complete element of self-identification and consider its procedural aspects as determined by environmental influences.

The expediency of research logic transition from one-dimensional projections to multidimensional interpretations in the discussion of identity problems is justified. According to the authors, the result should be a revision of the structural and substantive certainties in the description and interpretation of identity problems as not complying with the contemporary requirements and the plans of anthropological projects of a future person and that it is crucial to work with the procedural characteristics of identity, which reflect its mobility, flexibility and intended incompleteness.

The presented conclusions explain research procedures for describing elusive meanings of multiple identities and anthropo-images of the future in the situation of empirical diversity of the world and transformations of personality.

Keywords: anthropological alternative, identity, personality, antropo-image, socio-cultural reality.

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Introduction

Crisis condition of identification personal structures under the circumstances of "fluid" modern age (Bauman, 2000), that can be characterized as uncertain, multiple, complicated, intense with opportunities and restrictions, providing every person with the boundless selection or inducing to refuse them and to lose subjectivity (Zaitseva, 2016), determine the request of modern identity to search for the answers to the question not only concerning the nature of the human "I" , but the necessity of penetration into a larger gnosiological context of studying values and meanings, a person's social behavior patterns, images of potential social and personal future. Growing uncertainty of modern socio- cultural situations of an individual's development in the context of modern era of challenges and transformations determine the necessity of consolidation and effort integration of the entire sociocultural knowledge searching for new possible identification personality models (and furthermore, groups, communities etc. if needed). There is no coincidence that growing interdisciplinarity of using the concept of identity is analyzed in relation with both new restrictions and new opportunities (De Fina et al., 2006; McAdams et al., 2011). In the first case, the researchers naturally appeal to the fact of historical and cultural conditionality both of the necessity of identity formation and specific ways of its development (Belinskaya, 2018). In the second case, the emphasis is placed on those characteristics of modern social reality, which, to the most extent, are relevant to a person's permanent search of his or her existence, realizations of continuous selection of his "I" (Sokolova, 2014; Swann, 2005).

We suppose that any separation from the new realty, any attempt to block yourself out can result into personal and public defeat. The emerging universal civilization dictates new rules of life and behavior to an individual, sets up the task and universalization of his consciousness, his way of communication with other people. And, since the identity issue was always updated in the consciousness both of scientists and society during the periods of transformation, crisis, uncertainty, when the questions aroused concerning norms, values, standards that will be in demand tomorrow, and how norms and principles of behavior will be transformed (Smirnov, 2013). In this situation the difficulties of interdisciplinary conceptualization are inevitable. The appearance of two interdisciplinary journals in the middle of 90s oriented on the analysis of the identity issue - " Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power" and " Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture"- can be considered to be the evidence of relevance and necessity of solving the questions raised. In Russia the identity studying is carried out by every researcher independently, there is no institutionally standard discussion regarding this question. In this connection we note that plurality and volatility of the identity interpretation in the science today lead to the constant

clarification of understanding of the identity concept that begins to mean too much/ little, which, as a result, leads to the eluding of its meanings and/or losing its meaning altogether.

In the situation different expert groups set up the question: is the anthropological alternative possible? That is the opportunity of a person's existence that:

• sets another opposite trend of changing a person- the changes that are aimed not at self-destruction, but transformation; since the changes are inevitable, they can lead to self-destruction and environment devastation or these changes can be directed into positive constructive creative course.
• suggests the formation of a new man's Image, new Image of a man's future, the Image of the future that is hand-made and is created by himself.

The above-mentioned positions update the question of the preservation of generic entity, which cannot be considered outside the context of the problem of his identity preservation in the terms of accelerating technological progress and structural transformations of modern society. Our analysis of the questions indicated above is based on the idea concerning heterogeneity of socio-cultural dynamics where observed and exaggerated dominant discourse trends coexist with less visible, local and latent trends, which generally create non-obvious diversity and heterogeneity, lability of the value system, being typical of transitive society. The problem is in the absence of tools allowing to notice implicit transformations. Consequently, "fluid" modernity is fraught with different kinds of surprises for a person's identity.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The goal of the research is theoretical understanding of anthropological alternative, keynoting the trend for the formation of positive anthropo-images of a person's identity and the image of the future in the context of modern era of transformation, choices and challenges.

Literature review

The growing interest in identity issues in recent years is a significant feature of a large complex of different disciplines, not only social (anthropology, sociology, political science, ethnology, etc.), but also natural (medicine, initially). In the Humanities, there are two main traditional ways of understanding identity, according to Brubaker (1972): non-flexible and flexible. Simplifying these concepts, we can say that the non-flexible concept is based on the search for stability, integrity, uniformity of identity. The flexible concept emphasizes the variability, fragmentation, and multiplicity of identity.

The theoretical understanding of identity by representatives of various branches of social and humanitarian knowledge is developed in the context of traditional logical schemes for considering this phenomenon: intersubjective or intrasubjective, respectively, the sociological and psychoanalytic approaches, according to Erikson (Schwartz, 2001).

In the context of the intersubjective approach (representatives of the cognitive by Piaget) (DeVries, R., 1997), socio-cultural approaches (Cooley, 1992), the theory of social identity (Tajfel, 1974), social representations (Moscovici, 1981), epigenetic concept by Erikson (Schwartz, 2001), the theory of self-categorization (Turner, 1994), impression management (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985), the concept of intersubjectivity by Schutz (Zaner, 1961), the model of external-internal dialectics of identification by Jenkins (2014), in the concept of social identity by Yadov (1995) identity is determined by the place that a person occupies in the symbolic organization of society and his attitude to other people, consciousness (self-consciousness) is considered as a consequence (result) of interiorization and understanding of these influences.

From the standpoint of intrasubjective approach (psychoanalysis (Freud, 1989; Boss, 1983), existential psychology by Jaspers (Wallraff, 2015), etc.), humanistic psychology, etc.), identity is determined to a greater extent by the processes of consciousness (self-consciousness), but is considered rather as an objectively present reality in which acts of consciousness are manifested and implemented and which often has a negative impact on the processes of self-consciousness and self-determination.

The systematic historical analysis of approaches to the problems of identity is given by Zakovorotnaya (1999). Identification as a cultural phenomenon was considered by Castells (1983), Flier (2011).

We also note that a certain "blurring" of the concept of identity today is also due to the fact that at the level of empirical research, attention is usually paid to an increasing number of particular aspects of the identification process – gender, professional, ethnic, religious, etc. Naturally, these studies are barely related to each other due to differences in their theoretical and methodological foundations, which makes it difficult not only to correlate empirical data on the regularities of identity dynamics, but also the possibility of any theoretical generalizations.

Methodology

The indicated issue will be considered from the standpoint of socio-cultural and interdisciplinary approaches and based on the main non-pedagogical concepts of identity of foreign and domestic researchers. The study is speculative, given the set of ideas and theories of identity research within the

conditions of social transformations (Belinskaya, 2018; Sokolova, 2014; Swann, 2005), the analysis of post-industrial society (Castells, 1983; Bauman, 2000), as well as Bourdieu's (1993) and Baudrillard's (1998) ideas concerning identity transformations in the postmodern culture. The chosen review logic of presentation does not imply a detailed analysis of the selected concepts and theories. The study is based on the most significant mechanisms and tools that have an interdisciplinary connection. Our task is to emphasize anthropological and pedagogical meanings.

Results

We share the outlook that socio-cultural impact on the identity formation is manifested in three main levels: universal (humanity, universal values, civilization development); macro-social (social groups and communities, norms and values inside them); personal (person, his personal preferences and personality).

On a personal level, personality is a creator of his or her individual identity. In this case socio-cultural reality surrounding a person acts as a mediator between him and the world, modifying his perceptions and interpretations, playing the major role in "encyclopedia of a person's knowledge and beliefs, in the history of his cognitive, emotional and social experience", and in his communication contacts (Bauman, 2000).

In fact, the process of a person's becoming and development has dual (external and internal) determination. On the one hand, to one degree or another all the researchers studying identity accept the impact of environmental influences on its formation. On the other hand, being a part of self- identification, identity is determined by the processes of reflection, identification, understanding, self- determination, etc. Taking into the account binary determination of the process concerned, identity can be interpreted as some social resultant, which contains both a person's individual characteristics and features universal for this culture. A modern researcher of identity issue, the Professor of Guildford University M. Barrett, noted: "… the correct unit of analysis is "child- plus- socio-cultural context". In other words, we need to explore a cognitive-developing child who is placed inside the specific social niche that is constantly changing itself in the process of a child's growing up" (Barrett et al., 1999). While interacting and encountering with other people, the person gradually acquires various socio-cultural experience, which was conscious or unconscious for a person. That is how socio-cultural identity is formed. It appears to be "the element of self- identification manifested in a person's feelings, understanding and realization of his certainty and continuity in the processes of adoption, internalization and interiorization of cultural models, which are defined as significant by social institutions, communities, groups, individuals" (Shakurova, 2007).

The results of the theoretical research analysis and a large volume of empirical data allow us to formulate the issue of the situation that revolves around the main object of world changes, around the person himself, his own identity:

● Ordinary basic ideas about a person become outdated; a person experiences radical changes concerning both his social identity forms and his physical, bodily, gender forms, etc.

● The trends of a person＇s radical changes are not updated independently but with a person＇s active participation: cases of transgression, suicidal phenomena, the destruction of the environment are getting more frequent. Otherwise speaking, the tendency of self- destruction and the destruction of the standard institutions of existence that form a person (a family, marriage, morality, a law, culture, core values etc.) is getting more prominent.

● A priory the principle of pluralism as outlook of information society is related to postmodern ideology and it is characterized by relativism of values and loss of sustainable guidelines in the heterogeneous and fragmented world. It determines actual failure of postmodernism to create sustainable identification models and, consequently, causes identity blurring.

Therefore, "the assemblage point" of identity and human meanings about images of the future are getting more and more elusive and unattainable.

Among the fundamental differences of views concerning the essence of identity, we can mention the question of the relation between the internal and the external in the nature of the studied phenomenon.

Nowadays the major part of the researchers try to avoid extreme judgments. The intersubjective approach supporters consider the external influence as the main, but not the only source of identity formation; the interactionism representatives admit that deep understanding of "I" is inseparably associated with the deep understanding of the society and their interdependent relation.

The external influences are reasonable both as themselves and as the forming image of "generalized other". So, since the birth a person doesn't possess any system of criteria to evaluate himself. An individual learns them from others and, thereupon, forms his private system of criteria and views. The influence of the important others increases in the relation to the components of "I-concept" that do not have sufficient bases for proper conclusions or that are estimated by others with clearly pronounced unanimity (De Fina et al., 2011).

This interdependence is interpreted as a paradox: the individual is aware of his own identity only if he looks at himself from a stranger's side: " < …> it clears up another man's point of view and position in relation to us because we apply someone else's position and point of view to ourselves" (Turner, 1994). "Generalized other is a representative of a personality in the society. Even being alone a man is able to organize his behavior taking into account the generalized other's standards. The generalized other < …> is closely connected both with self-control and social control", A Strauss wrote (Strauss & Mead, 1964).

The society influence determines such identity characteristics as stability (Bugental & Gunning, 1955), autonomy (Laing, 1972) and conceptuality.

However, the role of external influence should not be absolutized. Identity is determined not only by where, when and with whom a person comes into contact, but also by internal awareness, internal listening of a person. The range of "internal listening" manifestations is wide: from selectivity to the desire of separation.

Given that, global complication of socio-cultural space was accompanied by norms, customs, values, behavioral styles and ways of life differed around the world while the subcultures once separated from each other by conventional borders had to mix and inevitably interact, which caused potential conflicts on the one hand, but on the other hand, created new forms of tolerance. However, from the methodological point of view, the context where identity was being formed became almost more informative than biographical tracking of a person's life trajectory. Thus, aspiration to wholeness combined with diffuse socio-cultural characteristics of reality in the context of analysis of the content changing of so-called "dilemmas of identity" becomes especially difficult in the new socio-cultural reality because they have changed their content so drastically by the present times that they have almost lost their original opposition and are inclined to stay latent and elusive, hardly subjected to strict scientific analysis and interpretation. Aiming at the attempt of the theoretical search of a person's positive identity anthropo-images and the image of the future in the context of "dilemmas of identity" resolution, we will consider them sequentially.

1. "Differentiation –integration": sets up the question about the uniqueness of our identity. In other words, how significant are the individual differences, how, when and where does a person look for the basis of his uniqueness? How does general social space with the preserving social role-based structure and actual social notions about desirability and acceptability of various identity aspects specify "general features", some similarity of identification results?

Accordingly, the configuration of a man's personal and social identities is made contingent not only on constantly continuing mutual transitions social / personal in accordance with a particular option of a social comparison, but also on the process of their incessant revaluation conducted by a person. The latter is

actualized from the point of view of the content of dominant social ideas, and as a result, the very distinction of personal and social identities loses sense considerably.

Reduction of internal uncertainty is achieved by a person through the experience of continuity of any of his identities that both unify him with the others and emphasize his uniqueness. Moreover, nowadays distinctness and uniqueness of identity are understood by the researchers as a derivative of "unthinkable for me". So, from Benson's point of view, identity reflects not just what a person considers to be a part of himself, but what /whom he doesn't consider himself to be and what he won't do under any circumstances, whereas the last-mentioned are determined by social feelings- disgust, contempt, fear, shame, guilt (Benson et al., 2003).

2. "Constance- variability": How is a person's experience of self-identity and continuity of his existence in time and space correlated with permanent variability, plurality and, consequently, with potentiality of his own identities? Today we also can observe a gradual refusal of accuracy of the original antithesis. With a certain degree of conventionality, we can consider that its focus was the question of identity development- does some constant "core" of self-image remain intact during our life (and if the answer is positive, to what degree)? Accordingly, the process of identity development was understood in the history in various ways. Originally it was interpreted as "intensification of integrity": it is suffice to recall Erickson's and Fromm's concepts (Schwartz, 2001) concerning "I" as a person's integrated instance as well as the requirement to attain arranged (conflict-free) social "I" as the main task of a personal development in Hoffman's (1994) theory of social drama and in other, more contemporary, identity models in connection with interactionism.

The process of identity development was understood as "multiplication of I" with the approval of cognitivists' approaches. So, in Turner's concept, the objective plurality of the reasons for self-categorization due to its both interpersonal and intergroup context specifies the final identity plurality (Turner, 1994). Today in the situation of "fluid modernity" of postmodernism the idea that nowadays the absence of universal wholeness makes identity fundamentally multiple has become generally accepted. In this connection identity, plurality become the reflection of high contextuality of its manifestations: for example, Barrett's "polyphonic identities" (1999). The ideas of identity development as of the process of continuous "multiplication of I" also turned out to be naturally inseparable from the potentiality of any identification.

3. "I as a social context": is a person a genuine subject of designing his idea of the world (and himself as a part of it) or are these ideas the product of external environment and are they defined purely social? It emphasizes the degree of freedom/ restriction that is given to a person as to a social object in various

models and theories of identity. Originally, this opposition was specified as the opposite of the personal and social image of identity but it also loses its acuteness. First, as cognitive-oriented researches developed, the opposition between the personal and social extremes of identity was excluded all by itself. The original Turner's idea (1994) concerning its reciprocal relations first turned into the position of the highest "sociality" of any identifications in Moscovici's (1981) school of social images and then, thanks to the development of Swann's verification theory (2005), into the position of their " non- interdependence". It was empirically proved that the personal and social identities can be considered as equivalent in the case of any external threat aimed at self-image.

In other words, it was shown that the processes updating one of the identities lead to the same process of the other: if we question his personal characteristics, a person aspires to manifest himself in compliance not only with a personal but also with a social identity and in reverse order. As a result, now the most specified idea is that the designing process of a man's identities is so mediated by his other personal general dispositions (some kind of resources and potential),   that the original meaning of this opposition is just lost. Therefore, it is noted that in many aspects identity is the result of our ability and readiness to navigate in the increasing flow of information. Accordingly, being at most "in tune" with the present time, the information style of identity is stressed out as the aspiration to get the greatest amount of information in the situation of choice, before taking the decision concerning the importance of any aim for a person himself, in the situation of the significance of one or another position and value, the direction of his development.

In other words, we can see that obviously in the terms of the dichotomy the researchers' attention is focused on one extreme, on a personality, making some choice and, thus, self-determining in constantly changing conditions of his own social daily routine. Therefore, today priority of a narrative approach to identity studying seems to be non-accidental according to which formation and development of identity exist only in the form of ontogenesis where the personality constantly designs the perception of his own wholeness and continuity based on the understanding of various life experience. Discursive nature of so-understood identity allows it to change during interaction, to be at most oriented to the context of some communicative situation, constantly reconsidering the reasons of self-categorization and we cannot oppose a personality and the social context in this interpretation. They are equally included in an aggregated dialogue space.

In this connection, the issue of identity study can be carried out effectively with the support of methodology of latent changes, which helps to study the complicated and transforming socio-cultural reality in the flows of their natural blending and interaction, for identity in its development demonstrates inconsistency and variability.

Discussions

Thus, we want to emphasize that the content and dynamics of the construction of theoretical images considered in this article reflect the development of normative and interpretative characteristics of social education, as well as the level of pedagogical conceptualization of problems of identity and social education as a whole.

Consequently, we want to ask and invite the reader to ponder: does the education system today form clear cultural stereotypes of the individual, the development of strict moral principles and norms of behavior? Does education help a growing up person answer the questions "Who am I?"," Why did I come to this world?", "What is my purpose in life?". What should educational and social institutions do to ensure the preservation of the cultural basis of society and the implementation of positive anthropo-images of human identity and the image of the future? (as well as prerequisites for the revival and reproduction of national culture).

Conclusion

Obviously, in the modern transitive society identity is the fate neither for one particular individual nor for the whole nation any more. Moreover, it is selected out of different and contradictory possibilities. Contextuality becomes fundamentally important methodological base of identity conceptualization, or rather, identities. Empirical world diversity, "acceleration" of time and" compression" of space as the integral features of the modernity form that context of " fluid modernity" where multiple identities "grow". They define a person's life choice and motivate individual and collective behavior. If complications and differentiations of the social reality promote the understanding of local identities, the globalization focuses on the identity crisis, its controversial nature, instability and latent conflict, in its turn, leading to the appearance of new identity forms.

In this way, discussing identity issue we observe the transition from one-dimensional projections to multidimensional interpretations. As a result, in the end today the opinions reflecting continuity of any identity manifestations and intended 'incompleteness" appear to replace the structural and contextual certainty in identity understanding. This shift in conceptualization is due to the dynamic of modern social space: "the search for identity" in the studies of the last decades became the attempt of understanding how a person in real life situation confronts uncertainty of modern society's transformations.

In conclusion, we emphasize that we offer only one of possible research logics based on understanding and description of multiple identity and the definition based on methodology of latent changes of research

procedures on capturing and retaining of its elusive meanings in the situation of a person's transformation and his anthropological alternative of images of personal and social future in the context of contemporary challenges and transformations of socio-cultural reality.

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