Sociocultural Identity in a Transitive Society

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Abstract—**The article discusses the specifics of sociocultural identity expression in adolescence. Discussed is its role in the mental development of a person. It is uncovered that personality formation is largely dependent on the social environment as well as the conditions promoting its transformation.**

Close attention is paid to the analysis of uncertainty and variability of modern society as the basic components of transitivity. The difficulties of transitivity peculiar to a modern person are highlighted. The place of sociocultural identity in the structure of personal development is determined.

Culture as a universal component of the social evolutionary development contributes to the solution of universal problems the humankind is facing and to the actualization of human reserve resources.

The study involved 488 adolescents (234 males and 254 females, aged between 12 and 15 years). The research shows a lack of positive attitudes formed in relation to the current place of residence, the dependence of professional preferences on the national policy of the state, the dominant role of culture in personal development. Teenagers fully accept the social attitudes of their ethnos with respect to the family and the future couple.

A distinctive feature of adolescence is a positive attitude to all components of social space as well as the desire to maintain constructive relationships with the social environment and to express themselves through forms and methods characteristic of their ethnic group.

Keywords—Sociocultural identity; transitive society; globalization; self-determination; self-actualization: social space; adolescence.

I. INTRODUCTION

The specificity of today's society development reflects its growing and expanding uncertainty affecting all aspects of people's life. However, developing through a chain of bifurcations, it is not only instability that society demonstrates, but also its viability [1]. In addition, life is constantly creating uncertainty (entropy). Any attempt to get isolated from a new reality will inevitably lead to personal and social defeats. Therefore, the deeper individuals master their universal values – the more they are acquainted with their own identities, the brighter their personalities are, and the more successfully they are socialized into modernity.

The transitivity of society implies not only social transformations but also their impact on changes in social values and ideas, the vagueness of social norms and attitudes.

Different aspects of transitivity are associated with various difficulties for humans. Variability and uncertainty are associated with violating the integrity of identity in its individual components and in its temporal perspective. The multiplicity makes it difficult to choose the group of identification and the direction that is the space of socialization.

The globalization of modern society promotes the development of a universal transnational culture. New realities of cultural development indicate that the determinants of development for people are now the quality of life, communicative competences, informational socialization, network literacy, and self-expression [2, 3, 4].

It is not only that the sociocultural context of development determines the transformation of values in a society: it is also acting as the antinomy to globalization and cultural diversity. Therefore, in order to achieve self-fulfillment and success in society, a person must have formed a planetary identity (knowledge of languages, norms common to the entire world community, world achievements in different areas of activity) [5], as well as sociocultural identity (conscious acceptance or non-acceptance of cultural norms, patterns of behavior, value orientations of a particular society) [6]. It is necessary to note the fact that the formation of sociocultural identity takes place in constant comparison of personal characteristics with the existing cultural traditions in a multicultural environment.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Systematic studies of identity as a phenomenon began in the early twentieth century. Since then, it begins to be perceived as an attribute of a human personality, a necessary component of it, and the topic of many fundamental research activities.

The sensitive period for identity formation is the age between 11 and 20 years when there is a struggle between the positive pole of identification of "I" and the negative pole of confusing roles. Besides the fact that a person must accumulate all knowledge about him- or herself (son/daughter, brother/sister, friend, intelligent, handsome, purposeful, cheerful, etc.), he or she must comprehend them, establish a connection with the past and build a future perspective [7]. Identity is one of the most significant personal characteristics

contributing to the achievement of harmony and personal freedom. However, the dominant over all needs is the need to communicate with the society or to avoid loneliness, which can only be achieved by shaping the social identity of the individual [8].

In modern society, culture is implementing the general evolutionary task which is the survival of society (group) and an individual. Culture is a multilayered phenomenon that can be analyzed as a tool for solving universal human problems, a certain mode of thinking or "mindset", a layout of specific cultural practices particular for a certain society at a given point in time and place [9]. The current situation in which a person solves a certain task can actualize various forms of behavior that are commonly regarded as "cultural-specific". Any situation and any environment shape expectations of how events should unfold. However, the culture itself performs the "selection" of legitimate forms of behavior, using the metacognitive mechanism of regulation based on feedback.

The formation of sociocultural identity begins with the self-determination of an individual as a member of a certain social group, in which he or she then acquires the norms, values and behavioral stereotypes. Such interaction results in the formulated internal regulators of human social behavior [10].

The new situation of transitivity is typical for all generations, but it becomes most significant in adolescence. Therefore, the study of sociocultural identity will make it possible to determine the peculiarities of positioning in the impartial and biased personal spaces of adolescents, as well as to better understand the mechanisms of socialization in a multicultural and transitive society. Theoretical positions are correlated with the data of empirical research.

The study of socio-cultural identity was conducted in 2018. 488 adolescents (234 males and 254 females) took part in the research, the average age of the subjects - 14 years old. All the respondents are trained in the municipal educational organizations of Murmansk.

The study of sociocultural identity was carried out using the "Sociocultural Identity" [11] questionnaire, which allowed to analyze attitudes towards one's ethnic group, place of residence, language, culture, family or peers, and the "Social Space" [12] method which made it possible to determine attitudes towards various aspects of social space.

The study was conducted with the voluntary consent of the participants. To achieve greater sincerity, diagnostics was performed anonymously. Interested persons were provided with the results of the study.

III. RESULTS

Adolescents are lacking some shaped positive attitudes to their own ethnic community since only 1% of respondents identify themselves through belonging to their current place of residence. A characteristic feature of this age period is dissatisfaction with the surrounding society and the preference of other ethnic groups (35% of adolescents declared their desire to change their country of residence). It should be noted that 35% of respondents cannot identify with any particular place of residence, so they give it a qualitative characteristic: I dream to live for enjoyment, in a historic and clean city, at sea, in a world without wars. Only 30% of adolescents identify themselves with their own ethnic group, but at the same time, they choose megacities (Moscow, St. Petersburg) as the future place of their residence.

A significant role in the formation of socio-cultural identity is played by the national policy of the state. Murmansk region is one of the subjects of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. This is a region with extreme climatic conditions (difficult temperature conditions, the presence of Polar day and Polar night, cyclonic weather, oxygen deficiency), low population density, border location and simplified visa regime with the European Union and NATO countries. Therefore, the majority of adolescents in the future see themselves as lifeguards, military, police, and doctors. One-third of teenagers have no clear ideas about their future profession (I don't know, I want to work at a good job, work at home). It is noteworthy that 25% of adolescents indicated not a profession they would like to master, but social roles (good person, father, loyal friend).

According to the opinion of most adolescents, culture helps them to better understand their place in society, develop, learn new and interesting things, feel pleasure, and express themselves in society. However, 20% of adolescents could not determine what kind of assistance they receive from their own culture. Despite the significant role of culture in the development of personality, it prevents adolescents from impartially looking at the world, thinking, understanding people of other nationalities, and abandoning stereotypes. Most often, adolescents identify culture with the language, so they consider it as an insurmountable barrier when communicating with representatives of various ethnic groups.

An integral part of the culture is the natural environment of the native land. Despite the adverse climatic conditions of the Arctic, almost all respondents (90%) evaluate it emotionally and positively: very rich and beautiful, wonderful, cool, unforgettable, bright, special.

Expressing their attitude to society, adolescents indicate that "my people" are kind, great, best, compassionate, honest, the pride of my country. At the same time, some percentage of respondents (15%) believe that their people are not so beautiful, stupid, consist of not quite adequate people.

Family, being the first institution of socialization, is not only shaping the sociocultural identity of a person, but is also stimulating personal development throughout the entire life. Teenagers want to see their future couple as kind, honest, responsible and healthy. The declared personality traits depict orientation towards social norms as well as complete identification with them.

The structure of social space includes the attitude to the place of residence and study, culture, country, informational space, social environment, oneself and one's own activities

[12]. Table I presents the structure of social space in adolescence.

TABLE I. THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL SPACE IN ADOLESCENCE (%)

My attitude to …	positive	ambivalent	negative
the place of residence and study	66	25	9
the culture and country	61	30	9
the informational space	56	23	21
the social environment	79	16	5
the oneself and one's own activities	78	16	6

Adolescents have a positive attitude towards all components of their social space. They demonstrate the greatest trust in themselves and their activities (78%), as well as their social environment (79%). Adolescents accept the values and behaviors of their parents and grandparents, so blood relations prevail over the rest. In the conditions of the surrounding transitive reality, the family is seen as the guarantor of reliability and protection against external threats to them. Adolescents are focused on the establishment of constructive relationships in society.

The formation of worldview and view of oneself, first of all, depends on the structure of interpersonal relations in the reference group for the teenager and the behavior of the most significant for them members of the group.

It is necessary to mention the respondents' positive assessment of mutual aid, their own responsibility, and their education. They understand that well-being and social success depend on their own efforts, conscious activity, and positive attitude towards society.

An important thing in the analysis of the social space structure is the attitude towards culture, country, and the people. Adolescents take the forms and methods for self-expression and self-knowledge that are characteristic of their ethnic group (61%). At the same time, 30% of respondents are indifferent not only to the lifestyle that their social environment leads, but also to its material and social values. They do not identify themselves with the environment on a psychological level.

The informational space is a combination of knowledge and information that is emerging from and constantly changing in society, reflecting the worldview of people. It is not tied to a specific territory and has a pronounced social context. Only half of the adolescents demonstrate confidence in information obtained through the global Internet, mass media, agents of secondary socialization. Most likely, such results are due to the level of education, the negative attitude to the information of significant people, as well as the immature need to constantly receive new information.

IV. CONCLUSION

Modern transformations contribute to expanding the understanding of the sociocultural identity phenomenon, indicating that it belongs to a specific time and place. At the same time, constant changes in social values, the vagueness of norms and attitudes make it difficult to shape and develop not only sociocultural identity but also social space. However, the variability and excessive complexity of society as a dynamic system and the interaction of different cultural practices provide maximum stability and alternatives to personal development [13].

Shaping positive sociocultural identity in adolescence is facilitated by the culture of one's own ethnos. It helps adolescents to be themselves, to understand others, and to communicate in terms of fluid transitivity. Dissatisfaction with the current place of residence forms a strong desire in adolescents to change it. It is the social environment that is the determining factor for the development of their socio-cultural identity.

Social environment determines the structural components, the focus, and acceptance of the socio-cultural identity by an individual. Social support received by adolescents in the form of information helps them to realize their own value and importance for the loved ones they have, to preserve their psychological health and well-being, it also facilitates adaptation, and stimulates personal development.

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