Formation of Socio-Cultural Identity of Young People: Modern Communications and Historical Foundations

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Abstract—**This article takes an attempt to conduct a philosophical study of the socio-cultural identity of teenagers as a sustainable socio-psychological state. In the course of the development of territorial, ethnic, socio-cultural identity, the formation of ideas about oneself as relating to a certain type of culture, national mentality as well as place and time of life occurs. The authors reveal and show on the specially selected material the interrelation of the youth socio-cultural identity, various types of communications and the national mentality. A special attention is paid to the dominant factors of the Russian mentality formation and St. Petersburg identity as significant historical and socio-cultural foundations of the formation of youth identity in the article.**

Keywords—*socio-cultural identity; communicative act; self-presentation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In postindustrial society it is very important for the young people to understand their own belonging to a particular culture, tradition, social sphere   because it helps to overcome such modern forms of individualism as social orphanhood, birthlessness, groundless existence, the crisis of self-localization in society, social autism which are becoming serious problems primarily for the modern society. Different forms of isolation, indifference to people and environment, various manifestations of life, despondency, etc. are a serious socio-psychological problems arising under the influence of modern civilization. In such manner a person reacts to the alienation of civilizational values imposed by the media, advertisement and lifestyle. This social pathology directly affects the life of a person, his environment, family, their viability and sustainability. Therefore it is so important for the young man to obtain realization and success in various fields of life to understand everything about himself and to ask himself a question "who are you?". And above all, it is important to understand what is one's relationship with society, culture and history. The educational system plays a major role in the realization of this connection and interdependence.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH METHODS

Socio-cultural identity can be defined as a stable socio-psychological state of a social subject (individual, ethnic group, community, nation, etc.) expressing the subjective attitude to himself, other people and environment. This is manifested in behavior, way of thinking, dominant values, methods of communication (conscious and unconscious) with the people. In the formation of young people and teenagers, socio-cultural identity ideas about oneself as related to a certain type of culture, national mentality as well as to the place and time of their life are created. This process reflects the ability of the social subject to establish and realize his own specificity, dissimilarity, to determine (and sometimes save) his own face.

The authors use the methods of comparative, phenomenological, hermeneutic structural-functional analysis. Some materials and facts from social psychology, psycholinguistics, history of philosophy, philosophy of education are used as a basis for argumentation. Completeness of the analysis is achieved by introducing semantic structures in the form of concepts and categorical schemes: sociocultural identity, mentality, national idea, communicative stereotypes, self-presentation, etc. allowing one to carry out a phenomenological description of the social and educational processes.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Appealing to oneself, presenting oneself as a kind of integrity with a certain character traits, traditions, peculiarities of historical development can be represented as well as a process and a result of self-determination of a social subject in the direction of understanding its difference from others and distancing from them. So the Greeks, for example, identified themselves distancing themselves from barbarians according to the principle of speaking Greek [1]. Orthodoxy introduced to Russia from Byzantium was affirmed through opposition to Catholicism [2; 3]. It should be noted that the formation of identity does not occur very often based on the principle of positive self-erase but on the principle of opposition to others [4]. In this way a specific perception of oneself as a part of the whole is formed, it manifests itself in the world perception, world outlook, emotional attitude towards the world, behavior and communicative acts. Thus, identity sets a certain automatism to the mental structures activities as well as to some unconsciously proceeding acts, manifested at the level of social psychology [5].

So Russian and American people demonstrate completely different types of behavior and communication in similar situations. For example, the Americans are surprised and sometimes indignant at the situation when the Russians delay the process of communication. But the Russians are offended at the overly brief communication that Americans often demonstrate. At the same time the Russians in this case act as representatives of a collectivist (or cathedral) culture where communications are the most important means of establishing relations. And the Americans act as representatives of an individualistic culture and demonstrate predominantly a pragmatic type of communication [6]. Due to the national peculiarities of their mentality, the Americans also do not like to "typify" their people; they do not like to use generalized statements in everyday speech either. The reluctance to be typical is one of the traits of their national character, one of the manifestations of American individualism. But the Russians, on the contrary, like to discuss the problems about the national culture, the national idea, the national mentality which is also reflected in the speech phrases they often use. But at the same time both Russian and American people demonstrate communicative democratism [7]. Experts in the field of linguistic psychology point out that the Russians show great communicative dominance, sincerity and emotionality in communication. They do not like pauses, they like to talk "heart to heart", give many assessments, like to argue, raise serious (even philosophical) questions in everyday communication, they are well-informed in many issues. In comparison with this, American communication is more businesslike, pragmatic. Americans are more truthful in providing information about themselves, they do not show curiosity, they are less informed about issues that do not affect them personally. Business communication among American people is more efficient and benevolent, emotionally restrained (than among the Russians). In self-presentation, the Russians demonstrate modesty and communicative pessimism. To the question "How are you?" they usually answer something like: "Thank you, everything is moving quietly…". At the same situation, the Americans usually give the following answer: "I'm fine! Thanks!". Russian people are not inclined to boast about their successes and achievements. The Americans prefer aggressive self-presentation. It is characterized by communicative optimism and holds a demonstration of their achievements [8]. Hanging diplomas on the walls of cabinets and offices are a manifestation of aggressive self-presentation. This practice came to Russia from the West not very long ago.

The identity and communicative behavior of students in American and Russian colleges and universities are also very different. American students lead a life which is rather isolated from each other, they try to do everything without help, they do not like to prompt. They follow the principle that everyone should cope with their own difficulties [9]. Russian students behave in a certain situation completely differently: they communicate closely with each other; strong friendship relations are established during their student years, which people value all their life long. The Russians appreciate the help of a friend and the support of friends in achieving success. Mutual support in the exam is also typical. American students demonstrate a different type of behavior in the exam, which can be defined as «every man for himself». Thus Russian students behave as representatives of the cathedral and collectivist culture, then American students as representatives of an individualistic protestant culture.

S. Huntington considers the following key elements of American culture: English, ten evangelical commandments, English ideas about the primacy of law, the responsibility of governors and the rights of individuals, protestant values — individualism, work ethics, the conviction that people can and should create a Paradise on the Earth. Millions of immigrants came to America being attracted by this culture, the economic opportunities that it opened as well as the assurance that anyone can go all the way to gaining material wealth from the very bottom to the top. The United States of America has become the "melting pot of nations". As a result, by the end of the twentieth century, America became *multinational* (70% - the representatives of the white population, 14% - Latin population, 12% black population, all others – are immigrants from Asia and the Pacific islands, etc.), *multi-ethnic* (there are no predominant ethnic groups) and *multi-religious* (64% of the population are Protestants, 23% - Catholics, 10% - are the followers of other religions, all others are atheists). The statistics cited by the American philosopher makes clear the well-known conclusion of Robert Kaplan: "America - that is its destiny - was born to die". What are the threats to the existence of American culture philosophers perceive?

The main danger is *multiculturalism* as an ideology that opposes the mono-cultural hegemony of Europe. This ideology leads to the marginalization of ethnic cultures which ultimately leads to excessive mosaic of American society. The American reality is so that cultural death can occur through self-destruction. American multiculturalism as the leading trend of American society can destroy the American society from inside. The revival of ethnic identities takes place against a new political and socio-cultural background in the United States. S. Huntington complains that instead of requiring schools to prioritize learning English, American culture and literature, American history, politicians insist on "transforming

schools into authentic democratic institutions" by focusing the interests of teachers and students on "subnational group cultures" pursuing a policy of multiculturalism in practice.

This policy contributes much to the cultural dispersion of society and it is a direct threat to American sociocultural identity. American culture is very young. But the fact that contemporary Americans practically don't have historical consciousness is a great danger for the existence of society. National history disappears as an academic discipline in educational institutions (colleges and universities). Experts also state poor knowledge of English among representatives of ethnic groups. Another American philosopher A. Toffler noticed the fact that millions of young people go through the educational system without being once prompted to think about their own value system, without having the opportunity to discuss these problems with teachers and their classmates. A positive point in this regard is the understanding by the American university community of the need to increase the share of humanities in higher educational system. The study of humanities is aimed at social adaptation and inculturation of young people.

The following levels of identity can be distinguished: individual, national, subnational, transnational, etc. The forms of identity include ethnic-cultural, sociocultural, territorial, group, etc. In this regard, identity appears as an internal picture of the human world, including ideas about its correlation with society and the surrounding world (nature, culture, history, politics, ideology, religion, etc.). It is implemented in shared values, attitudes, citizenship, stereotypes of behavior, lifestyle, language, etc.

We must pay attention to the fact that mentality is a collective way of the world perception underlying various types of relationships. It is characterized by relative constancy. Identity is the personification of this collective form according to place, time, socio-cultural reality, etc. If the mentality of a nation has been developing over the centuries, then the identity is influenced by situational changes being a more plastic mental formation. Even within the framework of one mentality, different identities can be formed. In this sense, one can speak, for example, about the identity of Petersburgers and Muscovites, of Siberian, of Caucasian identity, etc. Socio-cultural identity provides the strength of the nation, its ability to resist the forces of decay, provocations (internal and external), representing a coherent system of ideas, feelings, communicative behavioral stereotypes and worldview both in historical retrospective and in perspective [10]. The purpose of the study is to show on the specific historical material the interrelation of the typological features of modern communications of young people (including teenagers), taking into account their historical and cultural foundations.

IV. FINDINGS

Mentality as something fundamentally common underlies the conscious and unconscious, logical and emotional; it is a deep source of thinking, ideology, faith, feelings and emotions being a kind of personal predisposition to act and communicate in a certain way. Being formed in the course of the historical process, the mentality forms that spiritual and

behavioral specificity that makes the representatives of one nation different from other people. Therefore, it becomes an important factor in the process of self-identification [11]. National mentality is based on natural, geographical, geopolitical and socio-historical factors.

Russian philosophers and historians (V.O. Klyuchevsky, I.V. Kireevsky, A.S. Khomyakov, N.A. Berdyaev and others) identified geographical and social factors as dominant factors of the Russian mentality development. They attributed a spatial extent of the territory, dispersion of the population over the territory, unfavorable conditions for long and comfortable living, etc. to a *geographical factor*. They attributed a *hypertrophied statehood* to the social factor. Both factors were reflected in the mentality of the people — the routine of labor and super efforts during land development of the territory, asceticism and endurance, the patience of the original population, the dominance of state interests over personal, family and class interests, etc. Hypertrophied statehood is manifested in the ability to think on a national scale, to perceive state interests as one's own (and sometimes directly identifying oneself with the state) which in turn leads to a specific understanding of freedom in the context of the national mentality [12]. Freedom is understood as a duty, responsibility, internal moderation and general involvement and, therefore, as a moral value, as a truth in contrast to the West European bourgeois understanding of freedom as a person's right limited by the law [13].

This understanding of freedom is reflected in conciliarity as the principle of the organization of Russian spirituality, the national-psychological and historical dominant. Conciliarity means not only communality as a way of collective survival but the unity of the general and the individual. It is a unity that glows with a wealth of individual origins. This way of organizing spirituality is characterized by the absence of a complex of domination, subordination and enslavement of other (weaker tribes and nationalities), the imposition of one's values over another. The state has traditionally played the role of a guarantor of the unity of numerous tribes and nationalities. Therefore the Russian idea which was developed within the framework of this identity was essentially devoid of national limitations and is not connected with the intention of acquiring any benefits in the interests of the titular nation. But it was associated with the intention of serving, fulfilling the mediation, peacekeeping mission, the guarantor of justice and stability in resolving controversial (including international) problems which led to the development of long-term strategies in various spheres of life, "universal responsiveness", universal humanity, etc.

The state in its strategic interests remained supranational, responsible for the unity of the nation, at the same time increasing the dependence of the individual on the power and authorities, thus forming a submissive political culture (the need to submit to power, the expectations of good deeds from it and the belief that it will solve the actual problems of the present and future). This phenomenon was identified by N. Berdyaev as the "femininity of the Russian soul." The concentration of political life in the hands of the state affected the poverty of civil society whose functions were performed

by literature, philosophy, scientists, and political intellectuals in the end of the XIX and early XX centuries.

On the whole, the aristocracy of St. Petersburg as the historically established cultural capital, the most European city in Russia resisted the femininity of the Russian ethnos. Petersburg was originally built as a European capital. In this case we will agree with the opinion of one of our colleagues who asserted that only two cities can be called as truly European capitals: St. Petersburg and Vienna. Initially these two cities were built precisely as imperial capitals. In this sense, for example, Rome, Paris, London, etc. grew over the centuries; they were built up rather chaotically, their status changed several times. St. Petersburg was originally not only geographically a "window to Europe", but also a carrier of European identity. But European is usually understood as uniformity. Such homogeneity was avoided in St. Petersburg because it was the capital of the multinational Russian empire. Multiculturalism of the northern capital represented significant opportunities for creative, professional and intellectual people defining a new cultural type of the "St. Petersburg intellectual". The latter circumstance significantly minimized the element of femininity, historically established within the framework of the Russian mentality.

In the second half of the XVIII century and throughout the XIX century. St. Petersburg was the place where representatives of social strata focused on the values of liberalism felt comfortable enough — merchants, industrialists, entrepreneurs and intellectuals. The values of liberalism shared within these subcultures are: freedom, private property, human rights, individualism, competition etc. influenced the formation of the St. Petersburg identity along with the ideals of statehood. The liberal values that came to Russia from the West thanks to the reforms of Peter I were shared by a small stratum of the Russian intellectuals who were living quite compactly in St. Petersburg. Successful and realized people were considered sufficiently motivated to creative, professional, intellectual growth. Representatives of various confessions received opportunities for spiritual growth, improvement and realization: Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc. The European character of St. Petersburg is also manifested in its capacity for renewal, which gives it the right to be the cultural capital of Russia.

V. CONCLUSION

European civilization has the historical experience and a passion for renewal. Europe is a multi-regional territorial entity. The fact that Europe is now in crisis should not be overly disturbed because there was a kind of tradition of crises, renovation and reduction [14]. Society may face the problem of life and death, and it can also respond vigorously and creatively, thereby securing for itself the extension of life and achieving a new quality, setting an example that will inspire other regions. Europe has demonstrated remarkable economic, cultural, technical and technological vitality many times [15]. In recent centuries, the development of science and technology, to which the best minds have dedicated themselves, has eclipsed the spiritual values with which the majority of the population has linked the meaning of their life activity. In this vein, from our point of view, the problem of

the socio-cultural identity formation of the Europeans and Russians should be presented in student's courses of humanities at different levels of education.

The question naturally arises: to the life in what kind of society and what kind of world should we prepare our students who will have to join it professionally in the nearest future? What can we say about the post-crisis world? One of the realistic scenarios of such a world was proposed by Alvin and Heidy Toffler as the "age of spatial turbulence". They see a likely globalization scenario as a split, a slowdown in further economic integration. One should also not rely on the dreams of a linear progress and a fully integrated economy. So what awaits us in the nearest future? - Most likely it will be frequent upheavals in the labor markets, in technology and finance, a radical wealth shift will occur in the direction of Asia, the importance of "regional associations" will also increase. Thus, everything indicates that the world development will take place in the direction of reglobalization or deglobalization.

One of the curious interpretations of the category of wealth corresponding to the spirit of modernity belongs to Gabriel Zeid who defined this phenomenon as an "accumulation of possibilities". Any skill, knowledge, information will never be in vain and superfluous. Money should be considered only as a symbolic expression of wealth. Money invested in a quality education (with the appropriate motivation of the young man) will be multiplied many times over. In this regard, the role of education can be evaluated in a new way. Education itself is turning into the sphere where the state should combine their efforts with civil society and really enter a person's life by providing them with opportunities for personal development and professional improvement, retraining, advanced training, etc. This circumstances will become an important factor in the life of the young people who are preparing to enter professional sphere in the nearest future.

Acknowledgment

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