

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IDENTITIES OF THE THREE GENERATIONS OF RUSSIAN POPULATION (ON THE BASIS OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH)

Vasilii Timerjanovich Sakaev
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Russian Federation

ABSTRACT

The object of the study was the identity of three generations aged 20-49 years who, because of objective reasons have its different configurations. To test the hypothesis, a representative survey of the population of Naberezhnye Chelny aged 20-49 years was conducted. It is established that for most respondents "Rossiyanin" is "any citizen of the Russian Federation, regardless of ethnicity", but a third of respondents follow another approaches. Generation of 20-29 years has most nationalist views, generation of 40-49 years has migrant-phobia position, and most tolerant is generation of 30-39 years. Only 20.8% of the respondents used the term "Rossiyane" in everyday communication, and, mostly, the Russian respondents and the generation of 40-49 years. The majority of respondents believe that national and state identity is most important. This is followed by local, religious, ethnic and regional ones. For men it includes religious and ethnic identity for women – local and regional. Religious identity is the most important for middle and older generations. The second important identity for the majority of middle and older generations are regional and ethnic identity, and for the younger generation – local identity. The majority of respondents consider Russia as "state of Russian citizens, regardless of ethnicity", but the third held a nationalist or anti-migrant position. The greatest support for these positions is received among young people aged 20-29 years, among the Russian respondents and among men. Supporters of the civil approach (civic identity) dominate in all subgroups of respondents, but have the greatest weight in the age groups 30-39 and 40-49 years. These results correlate with data of such scientists as O. Malinova, V. Tishkov, F. Sheregi, M. Farukshin, K. Zamyatin and others, as well as the results of our surveys of previous years. Thus, these generations have significant differences in the hierarchy of identities, in understanding of the nature of the Russian state and of the concept of "Rossiyane". Multicultural structure of the population and different socio-historical experience of generations make difficult the formation of Russian identity. The most important task now is to strengthen it by promoting supra-ethnic understanding of its essence. The results help to specify measures of identity politics based on the characteristics of the generations.

Keywords: *Russian population, civic identity, national identity, ethnic identity, identity of generation*

INTRODUCTION

Identity is an important mechanism of socio-political mobilization, and an effective tool for analysis of the socio-political situation of individuals, groups and communities [1-4]. It can be applied to study the activity of different political actors [5].

The process of formation of Russian identity is an important scientific problem, due to the breakdown of the former identification construct "Soviet people" and the development of the concept "Rossiyane". For more than twenty years it was inculcated in the consciousness of the population, but how it was rooted? How it was perceived by the non-Russian peoples of Russia, such as Tatars – the second largest ethnic group?

Russian identity has a strong correlation with the Orthodox culture. How may this fact affect the degree of perception of the Russian identity by the peoples who profess another religion? How do the Tatars, who are the Islam believers, consider the Russian identity?

What place in the identity of the population has regional and local identity, taking into account geographical diversity of the territory?

It can be assumed that the generation educated in the Soviet system, and the generation formed in the new Russian state, have different configurations of identity. Perhaps the older generation rejects the concept of "Rossiyane" as artificial, and the generation formed during the collapse of the USSR and formation of Russian statehood, are able to perceive it positively?

To find answers to these questions, the author conducted a sociological research aimed at defining the specific of identity of the different generations of the population of Naberezhnye Chelny. This is a relatively young city with half-million population, where a sharp increase in population occurred in the 1970-1980s during the construction of the truck-building engineering complex. Then, for 20 years, the population increased almost 10 times due to migration of workers from other regions of the USSR. Therefore, Naberezhnye Chelny is a certain "mirror", "litmus paper" of identification processes occurring in Russia.

The object of the study was the population of the city in the age of 20-49 years, which conventionally was divided into 3 generations: "the generation of Brezhnev" (who were born in 1966-1975), "the Gorbachev generation" (born in 1976-1985), "the generation of Yeltsin (born 1986-1995).

The author hypothesized that the different generations, because of objective reasons, have different correlation of levels of identity (nation-state, ethnic, religious, regional and local). Generation of 1966-1975 years (40-49 years) held socialization in the heyday of the Soviet Union and was the bearer of the values of the Soviet people. Generation of 1976-1985 (30-39 years) were socialized in conditions of growing crisis and the subsequent collapse of the USSR and formation of Russian statehood that was reflected in the eclectic nature of his values. The worldview of a generation 1986-1995 (20-29 years) was formed in the conditions of Russian statehood. Each of the generations has its own system of values, which is reflected in the correlation of levels of identity, as well as in relation to its key concepts. The author suggested that generations emerged in the Soviet era and educated in an international spirit, have a greater tolerance. The assumption will be tested by comparing the differences in the generations' understanding of the essence of Russian statehood and identity.

Thus, in the study, the following tasks were solved: to identify differences in relation to the concept "Rossiyane"; to identify the differences in the configuration of the identity types; to investigate and compare ideas about the ethnic component of the Russian statehood.

METHODS

The parent population for the study was the population of Naberezhnye Chelny aged 20-49 years (234824 people), the sample amounted to 768 people, reflecting it's representatively by gender, age and ethnic characteristics of population. For large validity of the sampling a quota method was used based on the number and structure of the population in the city districts. The confident sample is 95%, the confidence interval – 5%.

The structure of the sample: men – 47.4% women – 52.6%; 20-29 years – 35.7%, 30-39 years – 37.8%, 40-49 years – 26.5%; Russians – 44.8%, Tatars – 47.1%, other ethnics – 8.1%.

RESULTS

Dominated option for the question of the essence of the concept "Rossiyane" was "all Russian citizens, regardless of nationality", but almost a third of respondents adhere to more nationalistic approaches. The view that "Rossiyane" are only ethnic Russians is supported to a greater extent by the generation of 20-29 years, the view that it is only the indigenous population of the country (including ethnic Russians) – by the generation of 40-49 years. The most flexible position was taken by representatives of the generation aged 30-39 years, where the largest part supported option "Rossiyanin" is "any citizen of Russia, regardless of ethnicity". Apparently, this generation, preserves the values of the Soviet international identity, and does not perceive Russian identity as an ethnic identity. Almost a quarter of respondents aged 20-29 years, mostly ethnic Russians, haven't formed views about the nature of the concept. Part of the Tatars, especially in the generation of 20-29 years, believes the concept "Rossiyanin" synonymous with "Russian", thereby seeing it as a version of the Russian ethnic identity, not a supra-ethnic civic identity .

For almost 50% of the respondents the concept "Rossiyane" is irrelevant, and only 20.8% of respondents try to use it in daily communication. Most actively it is used by the generation of 40-49 years, which can be explained by the need of the "Brezhnev generation" in analogy to the term "Soviet people", which united the society earlier.

As one would expect the concept "Rossiyanin" is used more often by Russian than by Tatar respondents. The limiting factor for the Tatar respondents here is possibly its association with a Russian ethnic identity. At the same time for part of Russian respondents, the concept "Rossiyanin" is as a kind of attempt to substitute the Russian ethnic identity and, apparently, is also rejected.

We haven't found significant gender differences in the perception of the concept "Rossiyane", but have found ethnic and age differences. In the generation of 20-29 years the proportion of actively using the concept "Rossiyane" is the same, but in generations of 30-39 years and of 40-49 years among the Russians this proportion is significantly higher than among the Tatars.

The majority of respondents called the national (nation-state) identity as the most important, further, according to reducing the number of respondents, followed local, religious, ethnic and regional identity. On the second largest position respondents more often placed regional, ethnic or local identity. It is typical that to the last point many respondents placed religious identity. Religious and ethnic identity is more important for men, and the local and regional – for women, religious – for the middle and older generations.

Although national identity prevails in all generations, but in the age group 20-29 years it is more evident for Russians, in the generation of 30-39 years – for Tatars. In the generation of 40-49 years, it is expressed stronger than in the "Yeltsin generation" where many have called local or regional identity as the most important. Also, for the older generation of Tatar respondents the ethnic identity is expressed more strongly, than for the Russian respondents of the corresponding age.

It was established that the second most important identity for the middle and older generations are regional and ethnic identity, whereas for the younger generation – local identity .

Religious identity received the largest share as most important in the generation aged 30-39 years. It should be noted that a smaller proportion of the middle and older generations of the Tatars, if compared to the Russian, put religion to the last place in the hierarchy of identities .

Index method has confirmed that the most important characteristic for the respondents is to define themselves as citizens of the Russian Federation (the index value of 2.29). Secondly, the respondents defined themselves as residents of their city (2.98). Next, in descending order of importance, respondents identified themselves with the representatives of their ethnic group (3.05), with the inhabitants of the region (3.13) and with representatives of their religion (3.49). When dividing the respondents on an ethnic basis, it is possible to see that the Russian respondents expressed stronger local identity, and Tatars – ethnic. Religious identity of the Tatars is expressed a little stronger.

Perception of themselves as citizens of the Russian Federation is mostly strongly expressed in the generation of 40-49 year olds. National identity of the Tatars in the generation of 20-29 year olds is expressed much weaker, with a more evident religious identity.

Among the responses to the question about the nature of the Russian state, prevailed "the state of Russian citizens, regardless of ethnicity" (50.1%), but 12.6% of the respondents hold a nationalist approach ("the ethnic state of Russian people"), and 18.5% – migrant-phobia position ("the state of the ethnic Russians and other indigenous peoples of Russia"). The greatest support for the nationalist approach is among young people, mostly among female respondents. Supporters of migrant-phobia approach are concentrated mainly among the Russian and Tatar young men, but also among the Russian respondents of both sexes in the age group 30-39 years. Supporters of the civil approach (civic identity) dominate in most subgroups of respondents, but have the greatest weight among the Russian respondents of both sexes in the age groups 30-39 and 40-49 years of age, among the Tatars – at the age of 40-49 years.

Mostly it was difficult to answer this question for men-Tatars in the age of 30-39 years, and among the Russian respondents of both sexes aged 20-29 years.

DISCUSSION

The results indicating the prevalence of the national-state identity, correlate with previous studies. In 2009, among the Russian youth (14-30 years old) 69% called themselves citizens of the Russian Federation [6, 74], and the data of the Levada Center showed 57% of respondents [7, 12]. Our study in 2014 revealed that 57% of student youth of the city think so. Therefore, we should recognize the fact that about 2/3 of the population of Russia has a strong national (nation-state) identity.

Our study has also revealed that for a quarter of respondents, ethnic or religious identity still remains more important, that means that they have no deep relationship with Russia as a state. This is confirmed by the data of the Levada Center that the most important identity to 16% is ethnic, but for the 10% – religious identity [7, 12]. We have also established the high importance of local identity among young people, especially for the Russians, but ethnic and religious identity for the Tatars.

A number of studies have recorded a higher importance of the national identity for Russians if compared to other ethnic groups [6, 79]. We have found that this identity is of comparable importance for the Russians and the Tatars (54.9% and 50.0%). Therefore, one cannot argue that for "ethnic minorities of the Russian Federation the civic identity with the state, which preserved in its title the name of the titular ethnic group, is difficult" [8, 241]. Here it is possible to agree with M. Farukshin that ethnic identity must not necessarily contradict the civic identity and that they could coexist harmoniously in the frames of a reasonable ethnic policy [9, 127-128].

We noted the serious polarization of views on the concept of "Rossiyane" as the part of supporters of the civil approach to Russian identity (51.3%) is not much higher than the part of its opponents (31.3%). For example, 12.5% believe that "only the representative of the Russian people" can be called "Rossiyanin". This proportion is comparable to the report "National Identity and the Future of Russia" of 2014, where

the figure of 16.0% was called [8, 30] and also with the results of our study of the identity of youth in 2014.

V. Tishkov points out rightly that the Tatars have never recognized themselves "Russians" in the ethnic regard and perceive national identity only as "Russian citizens" ("Rossiyane") [10]. We have also found out that only 17% of Tatars used the concept of "Rossiyane", that is possible due to their relation to "identity" as a "Russian identity."

Our research revealed that more than half of the respondents identified Russia as a "state of citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of ethnicity", but 31% believe that it is "only the Russian ethnic state" or "state only of the indigenous population, including Russians". This is comparable with the share of people who consider the concept "Rossiyane" only as ethnic Russians or only the indigenous population of the country. In the late 1990s surveys recorded 11.7% of the population, calling Russia "the state of the ethnic Russians" [8, 245]. Our study revealed a similar proportion of supporters of such assessment (12.6%), which means keeping the shares of adherents of the transformation of Russia into the ethnic state. It is important, for what reasons, almost 12% of the respondents – Tatars have also chosen this answer. Does this mean a rejection of Russian identity as ethnically alien for them?

It should be noted actual discussion in the scientific literature about the nature of "Russian identity". "Russian identity" is regarded as "political nation", as "civic-state identity" as "a combination of ethnic and supra-ethnic identity (civilizational basis)" [11]. Although the Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993 has invested in the concept of "Rossiyane" supra-ethnic context, meaning by this notion all Russian citizens, regardless of ethnic origin, but in the 1990s and early 2000s against it actively acted as representatives of ethnic minorities, and part of Russian nationalists [11]. But both of them feared the loss of their own ethnic identity. We observed that 50.9% of the Russians and 46.7% of the Tatars at the age of 20-49 years have supported the view that "Rossiyane" is primarily a civic nation. A focused identity politics under President D.A. Medvedev promoted the strengthening of civic understanding of the Russian identity. Then the steps were taken to ensure that civic identity became dominant in the hierarchy of identities, but lately, unfortunately, there has been a shift to understanding it as a combination of "civic-ethnic nation" and "ethnic nation" [12, 41]. This inconsistency allows characterizing the formation of civic identity of population of Russia as an unfinished process [13, 10]. Our study also emphasized its incompleteness, since 1/3 of population of Russia don't perceive the "Russian identity" as a dominant and do not accept it as a supra-ethnic characteristic that unites the citizens of the country. Moreover, the rejection of civic perception of the "Russian identity" is viewed both among the Russians and among the ethnic minorities. It is required to do more active efforts aimed at creating a tolerant and civic approach to Russian identity, focusing on young people and minors, as groups with relatively high level of intolerance [14, 878]. It is difficult to answer if it would be possible to implement it, especially in the face of rising Russian nationalism. But, without a complete formation of civic identity, it is impossible to talk about stability of the Russian state and society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work is performed in accordance with the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

1. Giddens A. *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern time.* – Stanford, Cal.: Stanford Univ. press, 1991. 256 p.
2. Taylor C. *The politics of recognition // Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition / Ed. by A. Gutmann.* – Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton univ. press, 1994. PP. 25-73.

3. Burke P. J., Stryker, S. (2000). *The Past, Present and Future Theory. Social Psychology Quarterly. Vol. 63. Vol. 4. PP. 284-297.*
4. Burke, P. J., Stets, J. (2000). *Identity theory and theory of social identity. Social Psychology Quarterly. Vol. 63. No. 3. PP. 224-237.*
5. Abdelal, R., Herrera, Y. M., Johnston A. I., McDermott, R. (2006). *Identity as a variable. Perspectives on politics. Vol. 4. No. 4. PP. 695-711.*
6. Sheregi F. *The youth of Russia: sociological portrait.* – M.: CSEM, 2010. – 592 S.
7. *National Identity and the Future of Russia: Valdai Discussion Club Report, February 2014.* – Moscow, 2014. – 69 S.
8. Sheregi F. *Sociology of policy: applied research.* – Moscow: Center of social forecasting, 2003. – 688 S.
9. Farukshin, M. H. (2015). *Interaction of ethnic and civic identities. Kazan pedagogical journal.* – No. 1. – S. 125-130.
10. Tishkov, V. (2008). *The Russian people and national Identity. Russia in Global Affairs. Vol. 3. URL: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/print/number/n_11287*
11. Malinova, O.Yu. (2010). *Constructing of macro-political identity in post- Soviet Russia: simvolicheskaya policy in transforming political sphere. Politeks.* – No. 1. – S. 5-28.
12. Zamyatin K. (2016). *The Russian political regime change and strategies to diversity management: a multinational Federation to a nation-state. Journal of Ethnopolitics and minority issues in Europe. Vol 15, issue 1, PP.19-49.*
13. Protsyk, O & Harzl, B. (2013). *Introduction. Managing Ethnic Diversity in Russia. O.Protsyk & B.Harzl (eds.). Abingdon: Routledge, PP. 1-12.*
14. Sakaev, V. T. (2016) *Problem of xenophobia and migrant-phobia in the youth environment (according to materials of sociological research of students' opinion). Man In India, 96 (3), PP. 873-880.*