Psychological Factors of Destructiveness in Formation of Personal National Identity

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Abstract
The article explores the topical issue of the study of psychological factors in the formation of national identity, and the evaluation criteria for its constructiveness and destructiveness. The article presents the results of the empirical investigation held under the auspices of the research team of Russian State Social Institute in a number of countries within the former Soviet Union and beyond. The interpretation of the empiric data has enabled the authors to reveal the existing regular correlation between the national consciousness of a person and the characteristics of his/her psychosocial development. The authors familiarize the readers with their view of the nature and psychological mechanisms of formation of the destructive national identity.

Keywords: national identity, destructiveness of formation, distorted national identity, forming factors

1. Introduction
1.1 Introduce the Problem
The interest in issues of personal national identity, its essential rational meaning and processual dynamical characteristics, the mechanisms and factors of its formation, evaluation criteria for its constructiveness and/or destructiveness, is primarily due to the socio-political events that have occurred in recent years in several countries within the former Soviet Union and beyond. The revival of nationalist and neo-fascist ideas and beliefs, the expansion of extremist sentiments (especially among youth), the development of social attitudes oriented to the harassment of people on ethnic grounds and to violence against them, dictate the urgent need for the unveiling of its fundamental psychological nature and the elaboration of effective countermeasures against the growth of interethnic tensions, the determination of limits of normal and pathology in the development of national identity of a person.

The contemporary researches on the problem of national identity and the related problem of nationalism as the reflection of the destructiveness of its formation address its various aspects.
Thus, for instance, M. Laruelle brings up the issues of state sovereignty and independence, the development of their national idea (narrative), defining the national identity of the citizens as the prerequisite for the formation of the civil society (Laruelle, 2012).
On the contrary, Ernest Sternberg studies the essence and the content of the new radical ideology that has been developing in a number of countries under the influence of the group national consciousness, and points out its potential danger (Sternberg, 2010). Francesco Ragazzi performs the comparative analysis of the diaspora policies, and comes to the conclusion about the regular character of the upsurge of nationalist ideas within the contemporary society (Ragazzi, 2014).

The purely psychological studies suggest disclosure of psychological laws, mechanisms and factors of interpersonal relations, determined by their national identity and peculiarities of the development of national consciousness as a certain psychological new formation of an individual. Juan M. Falomir-Pichastor and Natasha S. Frederic draw attention to the negative side of heterogeneous ingroup identities. Analyzing the phenomenon of national self-identification, they reveal the regularities of immigrants’ distorted perspective, and the influence that the prejudices exert on building of relationships therewith (Falomir-Pichastor & Frederic, 2013). The research of I. Griffiths and R. Sharpley discloses the curious impact of nationalism on the tourist-host
relationship (Griffiths & Sharpley, 2012).

Also, P. Worge goes thoroughly into the problem of rise of nationalism in the post-communist Russia, having studied, in particular, the “crowd” effect, its psychological mechanisms for influencing an individual, which lead to a transformation of patriotic ideas into the nationalist ideas and beliefs (Worge, 2012).

The researches held by the abovementioned and many other scientists associate, one way or another, the nationalist problem with the problem of national identity of a person.

1.2 Specification of Problem

The study of psychology of national identity as a specific socio-psychological phenomenon is interdisciplinary and throw back to many centuries ago, beginning on the ancient history: Herodotus, Hippocrates, Tacitus, Pliny, Strabo, etc., having its efflorescence periods (late XIX-the early XX century: S. A. Arutiunov, R. Benedict, N. A. Berdyaev, W. Wundt, L. N. Gumilev, M. Lazarus, V. S. Soloviev, etc.) and experiencing nowadays the new wave of focused attention: Y. V. Bromley, D. Bruner, L. M. Drobitseva, M. Segall, G. U. Soldatova, T. G. Stefanenko, etc.

A study of the national identity of a person is based on psychological theories of correlation between consciousness and self-identity, developed through two approaches: scientific and humanistic.

The natural sciences approach implies the study of the internal and the external factors that determine the formation of self-identity of a person.

Thus, W. James has developed the integral concept of stream of consciousness as the continuous process of changing of different mental states. According to this concept, personal self-identity is a holistic formation consisting of such structural elements as personality and “Self” which are developing as a result of individuals’ sensual experience and emotions accumulated during their daily vital activities (Raigorodsky, 2000).

G. Mead and T. Shibutani have investigated the formation of “Self” in the process of social cooperation of a person with different social groups and playing different social roles, the way that the process of formation of personal identity has been related with the peculiarities of social environment (Shibutani, 1998).

Modern psychology traditionally applies the integrative attitude, where consciousness and self-identity of a person are being considered as the whole entity; with this many researchers identify the interrelated cognitive, emotional-evaluative and behavioural components therein (R. Burns, W. James, D. Raigorodsky etc.).

However, in the modern psychology there are different points of view at the dominance of certain components within the structure of a person’s self-identity.

A. G. Spirkin, for instance, considers a conscious person be capable of the correct interpretation of reality and dominating their behaviour on this basis (Spirkin, 1972).

By I. S. Kon, the consciousness means a complex of psychological processes, which underlines the cognitive component as the dominating one (Kon, 1984).

To understand the essence of national identity and its correlation with the personal identity it is important to consider the study of I. I. Chesnokova, who indicates the two levels of self-identity: “Self-Self” and “Self-Another” (Chesnokova, 1977).

Within the humanistic approach (J. Bruner, A. Maslow, C. Rogers, V. Frankl, E. Fromm etc.) the self-identity of an individual is being considered as the process of their constant self-improvement (Maslow, 1997; Rogers, 1994; Frankl, 1990)

Thus, the problem of national identity as one of the types of personal self-identity has different theoretical and methodological background for its research.

1.3 Importance of the Problem

One of the priorities of the researches of national identity has been the study of correlation between an individual and a nation. L. N. Gumilev sees such correlation in a certain way of living, social regulations, cultural traditions that form a certain energy field which determines a sense of mutual affinity with ones (We) or alienation and antipathy to the others (not We) (Gumilev, 1993).

Some researchers consider national identity as part of the national consciousness and actually equate these two concepts. Thus, according to I. S. Vyrost national identity forms a part of national consciousness, and these two concepts correlate as the whole and the part (Vyrost, 1989). A. F. Dashdamirov points out the existence of ideological and psychological components of national identity, which therefore exists accordingly on the levels of
of society, individual and personality (Vyrost, 1989). L. M. Drobizheva states in one of her works, that «personal national identity is the realization (consciousness) by a subject of the whole multitude of their national (ethnic) linkage and their relationship thereon» (Drobizheva, 1989). She highlights that national identity is not just the awareness of a subject of their ethnic identity, but includes also the national auto-stereotypes (concept of the essential properties of their ethnic community), national stereotypes (concept of other nations), national interests and knowledge (Drobizheva, 1989).

The contemporary world science and culture possess an extensive knowledge about the nature and structure of national identity (Bonkalo, 2014; Kekeeva, 2009; Stefanenko, 1999; Sukharev, 1997), about factors and mechanisms of its development, its levels, technology and the conditions for its purposeful conceptualization (Griffiths & Sharpley, 2012; Putilov, 2008). However, following a certain existing scientific tradition, most researchers consider the national identity of the person as a major condition for mental health and harmonious development of the personality (Drobizheva, 1989; Leontiev, 1983; Stefanenko, 1999; Stolin, 1983).

2. Method
2.1 Organized and Methods of Study

Under our auspices there have been conducted a series of empirical studies among the various members of nationalist organizations of Russia (The national socialist initiative (NSI), Restruct, Russian national unity (RNE), Guards of Christ, The national Union, The National socialist party of Russia (NSPR) and Movement against illegal immigration), Ukraine (Ukrainian House, Patriots of Ukraine, White pilot, Trident), Belarus (The Edge, White Legion, Young Front), Latvia and Lithuania (Names, Defenders, etc.). The control group consisted of the students of same countries who did not share the nationalist ideas. The sample groups were equalized by the socio-demographic characteristics of the examinees.

The study has been conducted on the basis of a complex of methods comprising the questionnaire methods (questionnaire, interviewing, survey), testing, projective methods, semantic differential; the results of the survey and the psycho-diagnostic quizzes elaborated by the authors have formed the stimulus material.

2.2 The Organizational and Methodical Basis of the Study

The organizational and methodical basis of the study were the following psycho-diagnostic methodologies: the questionnaire “The sensual profile of personal national identity” (T. I. Bonkalo); the methodology for definition of interethnic intolerance (T. I. Bonkalo); the methodology for definition of political intelligence of an individual (E. A. Petrova, V. Shelest); the methodology for definition of a self-concept, which represents a standard procedure of calculation of the rank-order correlation between the “real Self” and the “ideal Self”; the methodology for study of the communicative attitude (V. V. Boiko); the methodology for definition of the level of behavioural self-regulation (V. I. Morosanova); the test “Self-attitude of a person” (V. V. Stolin), the methodology of a study of moral reliability of a person (T. I. Bonkalo), the methodology for definition of the subjective locus of control (J. Rotter), the methodology of definition of the infantilism level (A. A. Seregina).

3. Results
3.1 Ethnical Feelings of Youth of Former Soviet Union (CIS Countries)

The results of this large-scale and long-term research allow us, firstly, to affirm that according to the formal characteristics the level of development of national identity of the examinees of the first (experimental) group has considerably exceeded that of the youth who did not belong to any nationalist organization.

Thus, examining, for instance, the content of the affective component of national identity, we have found out that members of nationalist organizations in Russia as well as abroad experience only the positive feelings in connection with their belonging to a titular ethnic group: the feeling of pride (97.86%), satisfaction (79.94%), admiration (76.48%), superiority (82.35%), whereas the students who did not share any nationalist opinions and beliefs have been mentioning, apart from the positive feeling of pride (58.64%), the resentment (21.18%), shame (7.96%), disappointment (22.44%).

It is of interest as well to consider the results of research of interethnic intolerance as a special personal characteristic reflecting willingness to aggressive actions towards representatives of another ethnic group.

The results of the comparative analysis of percentage distribution among the two groups of examinees evidence, first of all, the higher general level of development of interethnic intolerance among the members of nationalist organizations than that of the young students who did not belong to a nationalist movement. Thus, the 74.19% of examinees of the experimental group have been characterized by a tangible level of development of interethnic intolerance, which is expressed by their willingness and capability to manifest extremism and nationalism.
The comparative analysis of the empirical data has proved that the percentage distribution of respondents of the two research groups in connection with the level of development of interethnic intolerance differentiate at the reliable competitive rate ($\chi^2 = 518.28; p < 0.001$).

At the same time, conspicuous is the fact that the 62.10% of young students who did not belong to the nationalist movements were characterized by the initial level of development of interethnic intolerance, which suppose their aptitude to manifestation of intolerant behaviour against representatives of other ethnic groups. Moreover, 11.29% of young people in the control group have evidenced the critical level of development of interethnic intolerance, and the 23.39%-a tangible level.

Analysis of the empirical data allows us to assert the existence among the modern youth of the latent intolerant attitude towards representatives of another ethnic group.

### 3.2 Ethnic Stereotypes of Youth of Former Soviet Union (CIS Countries)

The greater differences between the two research groups have been found out during the investigation of auto- and hetero-stereotypes of the examinees that had been conducted by use of the “semantic differential” (Table 1).

#### Table 1. Results of the investigation of hetero-stereotypes of modern Russian youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal qualities</th>
<th>Central Asia</th>
<th>Transcaucasus</th>
<th>Ukraine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG</td>
<td>CG</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-Alien</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm-Aggressive</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave-Coward</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardworking-Lazy</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite-Rude</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful-Insolent</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neat-Untidy</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest-Arrogant</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant-Repugnant</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that this survey has been conducted through the example of Russian youth, and therefore there have been constituted the characteristics of those nationalities that are most frequently presented on the territory of Russian (the experimental group consisted of the members of nationalist youth organizations, while the control group were presented by the students who did not share the nationalist ideas and opinions).

The hetero-stereotypes in the experimental group have a larger negative pole than those in the control group. Honestly significant differences among the two groups of examinees have been detected in the indexes of perception stereotypes in connection with immigrants from Transcaucasus and Central Asia, which evidences a higher level of development of cognitive and emotional components of interethnic intolerance among the members of nationalist movements than that of the students who did not belong to any nationalist organization.

At the same time it also draws our attention the fact that the control group has provided the data which allows us to ascertain that nationalist ideas have been quite developed in the midst of modern Russian youth.

The results of investigation of degree of acceptance of other ethnic groups by the young people allows us to assert that modern Moscow youth establishes a rather large distance with representatives of other ethnic groups (Table 2).

However, it is worth mentioning that Russian students on the whole are not that radical in the perception of their possible crossings with the citizens of Europe and USA as the members of nationalist organizations.

Similar investigation has been conducted in the States of former Soviet Union with a small sample group. By results of such investigation it may be concluded that the members of nationalist organizations in these countries are predisposed negatively towards only a certain ethnic group.

Thus, in Republic of Belarus there has been detected an extremely negative attitude of nationalistically disposed youth towards USA representatives, and the Ukrainian nationalist youth featured negative attitude towards the Russian nation, with the prevailing negative characteristics of Russians given by both experimental and the control groups in 2014, such as: “aggressive”, “greedy”, “always hungry”, “imprudent”, “alien”, “zombified”.
Table 2. Results of the study of degree of acceptance of foreign citizens by examinees of two research groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic groups</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>+0.901 &gt;50%</td>
<td>+0.889 &gt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukranians</td>
<td>-0.338 &lt;50%</td>
<td>+0.124 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarusians</td>
<td>-0.104 &lt;50%</td>
<td>+0.653 &gt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>+0.187 &lt;50%</td>
<td>+0.432 &gt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>-0.886 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.224 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>-0.431 &lt;50%</td>
<td>+0.367 &gt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>-0.911 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.762 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijanis</td>
<td>-0.986 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.887 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgians</td>
<td>-0.909 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.456 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>-0.974 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.824 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>-0.981 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.874 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
<td>-0.988 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.881 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>-0.708 &lt;50%</td>
<td>-0.566 &lt;50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the conducted researches prove the necessity of the conceptual comprehension of this problem of transformation of patriotic opinions into nationalist and extremist sentiments.

The following research confirms such conclusions.

3.3 Correlation between National Identity of the Youth and Their Personal Socio-psychological Characteristics

The study of peculiarities of development of cognitive and behavioural components of national identity has enabled the researchers to come to the conclusion about the heterogeneity of its substance for the examinees. For example, the members of nationalist organization are more prone than their coevals to be interested in the history of their country, the customs and traditions of their nation, however, the level of adequacy of such knowledge shall be much lower than the same index fixed in the control group (t = 4.33, p < 0.001).

The major differences among the examinees were found out during the study of the peculiarities of their personal identity: self-attitude (t = 4.78, p < 0.001), adequacy of self-esteem (t = 6.22, p < 0.001), behavioural self-regulation (t = 5.14, p < 0.001), self-actualization (t = 7.88, p < 0.001). In this case the indices in the control groups are higher than those in the experimental groups.

Furthermore, the members of nationalist organizations show generally a low level of critical thinking, (t = 2.78, p < 0.01), political (t = 4.89, p < 0.001) and emotional (t = 2.34, p < 0.01) intelligence, the objective locus of control for failures (t = 2.99, p < 0.001) and interpersonal relations (t = 2.54, p < 0.01), rather high level of infantilism (t = 4.04, p < 0.001) and social immaturity (t = 3.33, p < 0.001), low level of moral reliability (t = 4.69, p < 0.001) and civil responsibility (t = 8.24, p < 0.001).

Noteworthy are the results of research of negative communicative attitude of the two research groups, whereas such results do not prove any honestly significant differences registered in different countries (Table 3).

Table 3. Competitive analysis of indexes of communicative attitudes in the two research groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative attitudes</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veiled cruelty</td>
<td>8.8 ± 0.9</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.6</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unveiled cruelty</td>
<td>7.8 ± 0.8</td>
<td>4.8 ± 0.5</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justified negativism</td>
<td>7.6 ± 0.8</td>
<td>4.4 ± 0.5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grumbling</td>
<td>5.2 ± 0.5</td>
<td>4.5 ± 0.5</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative communication experience</td>
<td>8.2 ± 0.8</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.6</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indexes of manifestation of veiled cruelty towards other people have been considerably higher among the examinees of experimental group than among the control group (t = 2.04, p < 0.05). The major part of non-nationalist modern youth has been prone to trust in other people and to establish the confident and cordial relationship with them. The indexes of unveiled cruelty towards a certain category of people have also been
considerably higher among the examinees of experimental group than among the control group \( t = 3.04, p < 0.01 \). Nationalist youth did not dissemble their negative characteristics and negative feelings in connection with representatives of some ethnic groups: their conclusions have been sharp, unambiguous and definitive.

The experimental group has also manifested rather high indexes of such communicative attitude as the “justified negativism in people’s judgement” which evidences their negative feelings in connection with the forced interactions with a certain group of people. However, the disposition towards making ungrounded generalizations in the area of human relationships and observations of social reality was more peculiar to the examinees of the experimental group (young people with the destructive, distorted national identity) than to the control group \( t = 2.33, p < 0.05 \).

By and large, the emotional instability, high frustration, interethnic intolerance, veiled cruelty, conformity proneness and heightened suggestibility in combination with super-valuable concept of their own nationality and intolerance to representatives of other ethnic groups,-altogether are more the characteristics of the members of nationalist organizations, than those of the youth not sharing their ideas.

4. Discussion

The study of personal characteristics of leaders of nationalist movements and their national identity has highlighted the existence of different types of such leaders. According to our research, more of them (42.37%) are characterized by the developed intelligence but the destructive national identity, which is manifested in its distortion, the discrepancy between national values and universal human values and priorities, with latter submitted, in their perception, to the mythical, primitive ideas of genetically-caused superiority of one nation over the other.

The results of the long-term researches allow us to claim that the formation of national identity, patriotism and beliefs will only be constructive and undistorted under the condition that all the measures taken to propagate the ideas of national unity and prosperity, pride for one’s country and its historical past, would be carried out simultaneously with the general development of a person, of their moral and spiritual, axiological, emotional-volitional, motivational and cognitive spheres. Otherwise all information about national achievements, patriotic slogans and appeals may have the opposite effect, by launching the psychological mechanisms of transformation of patriotism into nationalism.

5. Conclusion

The destructiveness of formation of national identity is therefore determined by the factors of general development of a person. In this connection we can assert that it is not the national identity being the essential requisite for person’s mental health, but the mental health, adequacy and comprehensiveness of personal enhancement shall be the precondition for constructive interiorization of patriotic ideas and opinions, and for blocking of any distortions of socialized national identity.

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