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Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF GREEKS LIVING IN DIFFERENT TERRITORIES

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Abstract

The article presents a study aimed at identifying the specifics of the social identity of Greeks from different territories. The study involved 96 people, divided into 3 groups: Greeks, born and residing in the territory of the Hellenic Republic; ethnic Greeks who repatriated from the countries of the former USSR; ethnic Greeks living in the territory of the former USSR. The results of the study show that for all respondents, regardless of place of residence, family ranks first in the structure of social identity. No significant differences were revealed between native and repatriated Greeks in the three main categories of social identity formation. The specificity of territorial and linguistic identity in the three groups was disclosed. Despite certain differences, the similarity of native and repatriated Greeks, as opposed to the Greeks of the diaspora, was revealed in different value orientations and preferences, which indicates the transformation of the social identity of the repatriated and its convergence with the social identity of the native population. A similar type of formation of social identity with the native Greeks is evidence in favour of the successful socialisation of the repatriated. The hypothesis of a correlation between the significance of family as a criterion of social identification with the level of resilience in conditions of resocialisation was confirmed. The coincidence of the priority identification categories for the repatriated Germans and Greeks suggests that this is a general type of social identification in the process of resocialisation of those who repatriated to their historical homeland.

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1. Introduction

Today the world is faced with a mass migration of people, which is observed in the context of globalisation, local wars and the global economic crisis, as a result of which there is a massive resettlement of people in search of more favourable living conditions. In the current situation of increasing human mobility and the growth of migration, it is of interest how a person undergoing a change in their living conditions, city, country, culture, copes with the requirements that make it necessary to adapt to new socio-cultural conditions of life. The external side of this process is connected with a person's ability to accept a new social situation, a new role and economic realities. At the same time, resocialisation, a striking case of which is moving to another country, culture, emigration, suggests that a person "switches" from one world to another (Berger & Luckman, 1995), which suggests changes in the image of the world and self image. Resocialisation involves a serious transformation of social identity and even the acquisition of a new social identity. In our work, we study ways of social identity transformation resulting from the process of resocialisation following the repatriation of ethnic Greeks, as well as features of the social identity of ethnic Greeks living far from their historical homeland. The specificity of studying the social identity of this particular group is that we are dealing with representatives of one ethnic group having the same historical roots, but different social experiences in recent decades, which, in our opinion, should determine the differences in socialisation and self and world image construction. It seems that such a study will highlight criteria that are important for successful resocialisation, while a comparison of the results with other ethnic groups, for example, with Russian Germans, will enable to highlight the most general mechanisms of resocialisation.

2. Problem Statement

The key concept of our study is the transformation of social identity as a result of resocialisation.

According to Erickson (1996), the main function of identity is adaptation in the broadest sense. Erickson considered the formation of identity as a process that establishes a synthesis of two identities: the social and the personal. Social identity is defined by Erickson as that personality construct that reflects a person's internal solidarity with social, group ideals and standards and thereby enables the process of self-categorisation: it concerns those of our traits based on which we divide the world into the similar and the dissimilar to us.

A great contribution to the development of the problem of social identity was made by the concepts of Tajfel (1981) and Turner (1994). One of the main concepts that we rely on in our study is the concept of social self-categorisation introduced by Tajfel (1981). The process of social self-categorisation is needed to systematise a person's social experience and orientation in social space, which allows them to determine their place in society. In his self-categorisation theory, Turner (1994) defines social identity through specific social categories internalised into the cognitive component of self-concept. According to these concepts, three stages can be distinguished in the formation of identity, corresponding to the three successive cognitive processes. At the first stage, social categorisation occurs, when a person defines themselves as a member of a certain social category, at the second stage, a person studies and assimilates

the rules and values of this group. And finally, at the third stage, a person develops a sense of identity with this group, is identified with it.

In our study, in addition to self-categorisation groups, we examined such components of social identity as territorial and linguistic identity. Golubeva and Konchalovskaya (2013) formulated the concept of territorial identity based on the ideas of P. Bourdieu on social space. They defined it as an attitude to their place of residence, as an emotional and social connection that is born in the framework of interaction with society and the environment. On the other hand, the role of language in the formation of social identity is ambiguous; there is probably a complex relationship between language, culture and aspects of social identity (Dontsov et al., 1997). Martsinkovskaya believes that by organizing experience, both individual and collective, language becomes an intermediary between a person and society, defining both ways of thinking and behavior (as cited in Martsinkovskaya & Solodnikova, 2018).

According to Andreeva (2004), people comprehend the world and themselves as an integral part of the world. They form their social identity, self-image within society. In the case of an abrupt change in their socio-cultural environment individuals have to go through the process of socialisation anew. Sociologist F. Giddings considered the successful functioning in society a criterion of successful socialisation (as cited in Belinskaya & Tikhomandritskaya, 2001). Giddens (1999), on the other hand, considered resocialisation to be a type of personality change in which the individual's behaviour changes. The internalisation of socio-cultural elements, social norms, values, behaviours adopted in a society in which resocialisation takes place, can contribute to the normal functioning of a given society and lead to successful adaptation.

In our study, the process of resocialisation was studied on ethnic Greeks who repatriated to their historical homeland mainly from the Russian Federation. It should be noted that the first Greeks appeared in the territory of modern Russia in antiquity, but referring to the present, the mass migration of Pontic Greeks to Russia took place during the period of the persecution of 1914-1924 in the Ottoman Empire. Various researchers estimate the number of refugees from 150 to 200 thousand people. In general, the Greek population of Tsarist Russia is estimated at 300,000 people, and according to other sources, in the 1920s, 700,000 Greeks lived in the USSR (Vergeti, 1993). The main migration waves from the USSR to Greece occurred in 1939, 1957, 1965-67, 1974 and since 1988. Consequently, mass repatriation took place during the period of perestroika and after the cessation of the existence of the USSR. As a result of these migration waves, less than 90,000 ethnic Greeks live in the Russian Federation today (Bespalova & Gubarev, 2018).

3. Research Questions

In the course of our research, we put forward the following assumptions: Firstly, we aimed at defining the similarities and differences in the structure of social identity of representatives of one ethnic group living in different territories. It was of interest to examine whether family, nationality and religion are the most significant categories of identification in the structure of the social identity of ethnic Greeks regardless of place of residence. Furthermore, the hypothesis of Greek language being mainly a means of cultural identification for the Greeks of the diaspora, as opposed to Greeks living in their historical homeland, for whom it primarily performs a communicative and cognitive function, needed to be tested.

A question was also posed whether for Greeks living in their historical homeland real and ideal territorial identity with respect to the country of residence would be the same, whereas for Greeks living in the territory of the former USSR there would be differences between real and ideal territorial identity. Finally, it was useful to disclose whether the level of hardiness among repatriates under conditions of resocialisation would be linked to the choice of family as the most significant criterion for social identification.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the social identity of Greeks living in different territories. In the study we examined the social, territorial and linguistic identity, as well as the characteristics of the hardiness among three groups of Greeks, formed according to their place of residence and the history of their migration.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Participants

The empirical base of the study consists of ethnic Greeks, who were divided into three groups: The first group includes Greeks who have lived all their lives in the territory of the Hellenic Republic, group "GR-GR" (32 respondents).

The second group includes ethnic Greeks who returned to their historical homeland from the countries of the former USSR, group "RU-GR" (33 respondents).

And the third group is made up of ethnic Greeks living in the territory of the former USSR, the vast majority of which reside in the Russian Federation, group "RU-RU" (31 respondents).

5.2. Methods

The following methods were used in the research:

- "The structure of social identity" by G.R. Khuzeeva (as cited in Martsinkovskaya, 2015).
- "Territorial identity" by M.M. Konchalovskaya (as cited in Martsinkovskaya, 2015).
- "Attitude to the mother tongue and a foreign language" by Martsinkovskaya (2015).
- "Hardiness survey" by S.R. Maddi edited by Leontiev and Rasskazova (2006)

6. Findings

6.1. Results of the study of the social identity of ethnic Greeks living in different territories

The hypothesis was tested in a pilot study of the structure of the social identity of the respondents using the method "The structure of social identity".

The hypothesis that family, religion and nationality will be the leading criteria in the social self-categorisation of ethnic Greeks has been partially confirmed. In all groups of respondents, family ranks first in the structure of social identity. Nationality is listed among the most significant criteria for the Greeks of the diaspora and the native Greeks. For repatriates, nationality is in fourth place. The hypothesis has not been confirmed regarding religion. Only the Greeks of the diaspora indicated it among

the important criteria for self-identification. The most important self-identification categories for native Greeks are: family, nationality and citizenship. For repatriates: family, citizenship and humanity, and for Greeks of the former USSR: family, nationality and religion. Only the group of Greeks from the former USSR indicated religion as an important criterion for self-identification (see Table 1).

Table 01. Average values and rating (in brackets) of each category for social identification for the three groups of respondents

Category	GR-GR	RU-GR	RU-RU
Family	3,19 (1)	3,11 (1)	3,38 (1)
Humanity	4,94 (4)	4,63 (3)	7,54 (9)
Citizenship	4,19 (2)	3,89 (2)	5,69 (4)
City	5,19 (5)	5,05 (4)	6,77 (8)
Nationality	4,19 (2)	5,05 (4)	3,54 (2)
Religion	7,75 (10)	6,26 (6)	4,08 (3)
Profession	5,56 (6)	6,47 (7)	6,31 (7)
Generation	6,56 (8)	6,53 (8)	6 (6)
Gender	5,88 (7)	6,63 (9)	5,69 (4)
Hobby	7,13 (9)	7,16 (10)	7,85 (10)

Using the Mann-Whitney U test no significant differences have been observed between the native and repatriated Greeks in the three main categories of the formation of social identity. Significant differences have been found between native Greeks and Greeks living in the territory of former USSR in the ranking of such categories as religion ($p=0,002073$) and citizenship ($p=0,019790$). Also significant differences have been observed between repatriated Greeks and Greeks living in the territory of former USSR in the ranking of such categories as religion ($p=0,003160$), citizenship ($p=0,021996$) and nationality ($p=0,016189$).

6.2. Results of the study of the linguistic identity of ethnic Greeks living in different territories

To study the linguistic identity of ethnic Greeks the method “Attitude to the mother tongue and a foreign language” has been implemented.

It was confirmed that for the Greeks of the diaspora, the Greek language is mainly a means of cultural identification. More than half of the respondents in this group are personally motivated to learn the language, since it is a means of identification with culture (see Table 2). The hypothesis is also confirmed by the fact that more than 40% of the respondents consider Greek to be their native language (see Table 3), although most of them believe that their knowledge of it is below average and only 3% of these respondents think in Greek, while 16% think in Greek and Russian (see Table 4 and Figure 1). In contrast to the Greeks of the diaspora, among the respondents of the other groups cognitive motivation in learning the language is predominant. As shown in table 3 Greek language is the main means of communication for those living in their historical homeland. However, almost all respondents consider that the knowledge of the language is an important element for the realisation of their national and cultural identity.

Table 02. Respondents' answers on factors contributing to language learning in percentages

Factors contributing to language learning	GR-GR	RU-GR	RU-RU
Cognitive motivation	43,8	45,5	19,4
Professional motivation	18,8	6,1	6,5
Personal motivation, means of identification with culture	3,1	12,1	51,6
Communication with relatives	12,5	9,1	12,9
Intellect and Memory	12,5	21,2	3,2
Knowledge of another foreign language	9,4	6,1	6,5

Table 03. The mother tongue of the respondents in percentages

Mother tongue	GR-GR	RU-GR	RU-RU
Greek	100	48,5	38,7
Russian	0	39,4	45,2
Greek and Russian	0	9,1	16,1

Table 04. The language respondents think in in percentages

Language	GR-GR	RU-GR	RU-RU
Greek	100	54,5	3,2
Russian	0	24,2	80,6
Russian and Greek	0	21,2	16,1

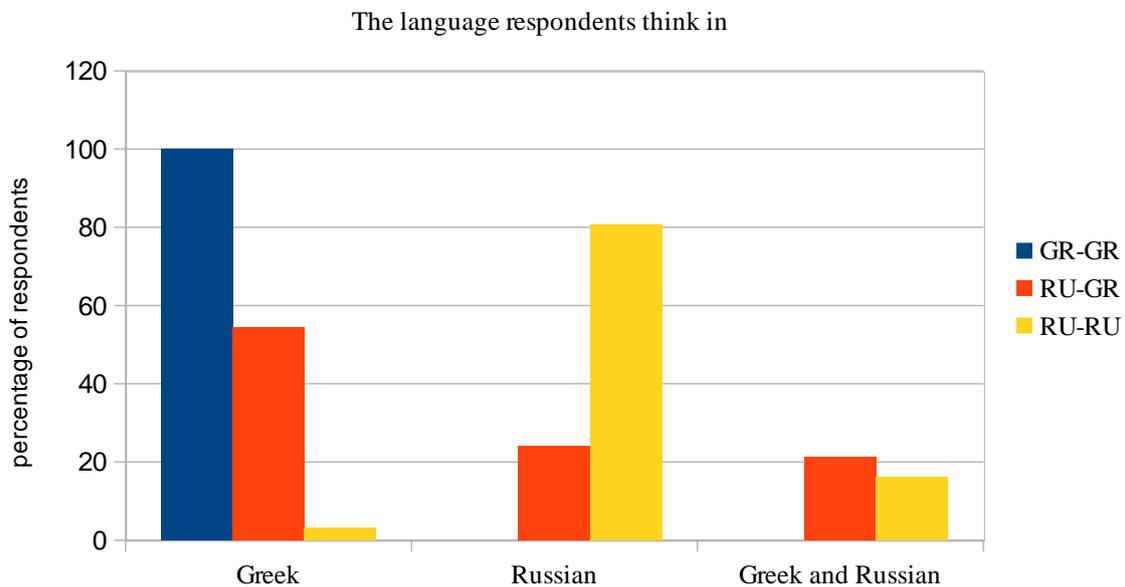


Figure 01. The language respondents think in

6.3. Results of the study of the territorial identity of ethnic Greeks living in different territories

A modification of the "Territorial identity" methodology was used to study aspects of the real and ideal territorial identity of the respondents. To establish their real territorial identity the respondents were

asked what was their favourite city. In parallel, to understand their ideal territorial identity the respondents were asked in what city they would like to live in.

The study confirmed the hypothesis that for the Greeks living in their historical homeland, the real and ideal territorial identity with respect to the country of residence will coincide. For the vast majority of native Greeks and for most repatriates, their favourite places were situated within their homeland. On the contrary, the Greeks of the countries of the former USSR were divided into approximately two halves, one of them indicated places from Greece, the other from Russia, a small part mentioned other countries. Significant differences between real and ideal territorial identity are observed among the group of ethnic Greeks in Russia, while for groups of native Greeks and repatriated real and ideal identities are very close (see Figure 2).

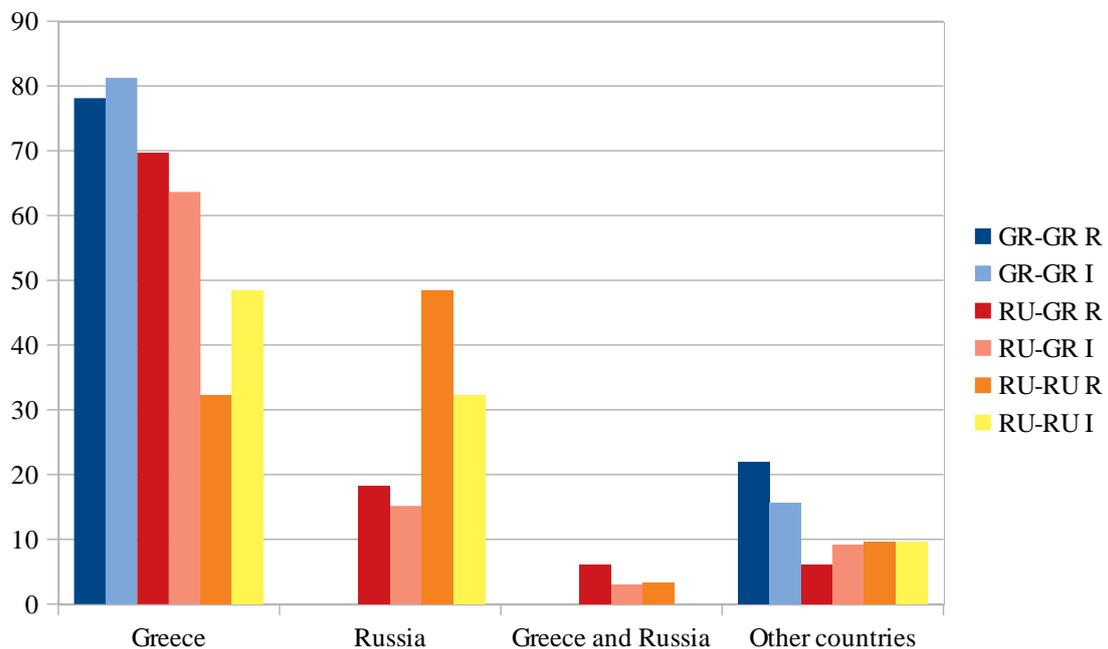


Figure 02. The darker columns correspond to the favourite city of each group, representing the real territorial identity. The lighter columns correspond to the city where the respondents of each group would like to live, representing their ideal territorial identity

6.4. The results of the study of the correlation between hardiness and the structure of social identity

Using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, hardiness and social identity indicators were checked for correlation. With a coefficient much lower than the indicator $r = 0.25$, which characterizes a very weak connection, obtained for all the respondents, we can say that such a correlation is practically absent when all respondents in the study are considered.

However, a correlation was manifested based on individual criteria in separate groups. A close to strong correlation with vitality was manifested in the group of repatriates who chose the family as a significant criterion for self-identification ($p=0,472$). Therefore, in this group, social identification through the family is associated with a high level of hardiness.

6.5. A comparison of the social identity of repatriated Greeks with the results of a study of the social identity of repatriated Germans

A comparison of the results of the present study to the results of a study on repatriated Germans conducted by Kiseleva and Orestova (2018). has been attempted.

It has been observed that for both repatriated Germans and Greeks the main categories for social self-categorisation are family, citizenship, and humanity. The ranking of these categories in the two groups is identical. Moreover, the percentage of Greek and German respondents who chose each category is close. The category "family" is in priority among 86% of Germans and 74% of Greeks, "citizenship" among 50% of Germans and 53% of Greeks, and "humanity" among 43% of Germans and 47% of Greeks. It can be assumed that this type of social identification may be characteristic of people who have repatriated to their historical homeland.

7. Conclusion

The results of the research suggest that family is the leading criterion in the social self-identification of ethnic Greeks independent of their place of residence. Other significant criteria include nationality, citizenship, religion and humanity. No significant differences have been observed between native and repatriated Greeks in the three main categories of the formation of social identity. However, significant differences have been found between Greeks living in the homeland and Greeks of the diaspora.

It was confirmed that for the Greeks of the diaspora, the Greek language is mainly a means of cultural identification, while for those living in their historical homeland Greek language is primarily regarded as a means of communication.

The results of the research have shown that for the Greeks living in their historical homeland, the real and ideal territorial identity with respect to the country of residence coincides in most cases. On the other hand significant differences between real and ideal territorial identity have been observed among the group of ethnic Greeks in Russia.

A correlation study has shown that under conditions of resocialisation the significance of the family as a criterion of social identification is related to the level of hardiness among repatriates.

Moreover, a comparison with data from a study on repatriated Germans has revealed that for both repatriated Germans and Greeks the main categories for social identification are family, citizenship and humanity.

Despite certain differences, the similarity of native and repatriated Greeks, as opposed to the Greeks of the diaspora, was revealed in different value orientations and preferences, which indicates the transformation of the social identity of the repatriated and its convergence with the social identity of the native population. A similar type of formation of social identity with the native Greeks is evidence in favour of the successful socialisation of the repatriated.

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