

**FaR 2021****International Forum “Freedom and responsibility in pivotal times”****PRIORITY OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY:  
CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE OF MODERN GLOBAL  
PROCESSES**

Ildus Islamovich Zaylalov (a)\*, Venera Rifmirovna Zaylalova (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ufa State Petroleum Technological University, Branch of the University in the City of Oktyabrsky, 54a,  
Devonskaya St., Oktyabrsky, Republic of Bashkortostan, 452607, Russian Federation, ildus.61@mail.ru

(b) Ufa State Petroleum Technological University, Branch of the University in the City of Oktyabrsky, 54a,  
Devonskaya St., Oktyabrsky, Republic of Bashkortostan, 452607, Russian Federation, venera-zajjalova@mail.ru

**Abstract**

The paper considers the analysis of social and humanitarian studies associated with such a process of globalization in the modern world as “cultural and social identity,” which has an increasing impact on an individual self-esteem in opposition to national and traditional values, changing the structure of intercultural interaction and counteraction. Global processes directly entailed changes in various forms of identities that arise in the process of intercultural interactions. The forms of cultural and social identity that determine the qualitative level of interpersonal relations are an indicator of global consensus and multicultural unity of representatives of diverse national cultures. In connection with the process comprehension, the problem of increasing the ambiguous perception of cultural and social identity as an alternative to national identity arises. The study of the given problem makes it possible to objectively consider personal psychological and social issues that occur in various forms of identity. The analysis may subsequently affect the “significance” of the emerging individual self-esteem in new socio-cultural conditions and the society transformation. Axiological foundations of cultural and social identity act as those specific means of human activity that perform the function of a clearer orientation and self-determination of the individual in the environment and in the society development. In the context of social transformations, social and cultural identification is essential, which becomes the main criterion for assessing any phenomena of the socio-cultural reality surrounding a person.

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## 1. Introduction

In the 21st century, Western society is faced with new forms of social challenges, political contradictions, and racial intolerance and, as a result, national problems. Migration processes have exacerbated not only national problems in Western states, but also countries with historically strong traditions. It becomes obvious that the construction of a single world space with liberal-democratic values, leveling national-state borders, free from intercultural alienation, latent confrontations, and national conflicts, are postponed for undefined period. New trends in the formation of identity have recently emerged in the traditional and postindustrial world. The desire of many states to preserve their national identity and uniqueness, combined with increased personal individualism, the expansion of a fragmentary complex of knowledge about other cultures, and the intensification of political processes has intensified against the background of global changes.

Today's "interethnic renaissance" is mainly associated with a permanently increasing migration policy and the activity of representatives of various cultures and peoples, naturally leading to the struggle for a more convenient "place in the sun." In a globalizing world, cultural and social identity, contrary to national and ethnic identity, begins to seriously correct the processes of globalization. The surge of nationalism, as a response to the widespread propagation of Western liberal values around the world, is perceived as paradoxical by Western politicians. Many researchers behold the paradox of contemporary global processes in the following. On the one hand, the trend towards integration, internationalization of the economy, and interpenetration of cultures is evident, which, it would seem, meets the interests of the world's population majority (Tajfel, 1982). On the other hand, the tendency towards isolation, division, separatism - the preservation of those traditional values that allow speaking freely in native language, freely discuss one's pressing issues, freely choose own path of development is no less obvious.

## 2. Problem Statement

It seems that we should speak rather not about the paradoxical nature of global processes, but the crisis of scientific concepts. Globalization and nationalism simply do not lend to adequate description and explanation in the language applied by scientists. For instance, one of the most famous experts in this field, Gellner (1983), claims that "in the era of late industrialism, due to the growth of prosperity, the reduction of distances between cultures, the emergence of a global market and standardization of the life way, the intensity of nationalist passions is gradually decreasing" (p. 54). The events of the 21st century last decade have proved the premature of such conclusions (Flanagin, 2017). The problem lies in the awareness of the identity of the social group member which allows a person not only to determine his place in a social group, but also develop a system of values and beliefs on this basis that are adequate to contemporary socio-economic conditions. Consideration of identity in such a context has not yet found proper reflection in research works. In Western psychology, Curle's (1972) work is devoted to general issues of the relationship between personal and social identities. He uses the term "awareness identity" for personal identity, and "belonging identity" for social one. In his opinion, the "belonging identity" is very significant for maintaining the stability of a person living in a world in which values are changing at an insane speed. Identity unites all people's knowledge and their self-esteem, existing not only on a conscious, but also on

an unconscious level, reflecting the presented attitudes of a person's experiences in relation to the structure of his social functions and a specific interpretation of a particular value system for the formation of the personal meaning system.

### **3. Research Questions**

The reason of the paper is that social and cultural identity based on common human interests, colliding with traditional values, acquires a dual character - depending on which positions are stronger for a more comfortable existence and personality development. We can turn to the founders of the social identity theory (L. Schneider, J. Turner). They consider it as a level of self-categorization. Representatives of the interactionist school (J. Mead, I. Goffman), the school of social representations (S. Moskovichi, M. Zavalloni) examine social identity as one of the levels of I-relatedness (self-categorization, "I-concept").

Currently, any identity becomes a part, primarily, of a person's social identity. In our opinion, this is due to the introduction of various technologies in the field of communications, which allows an individual to compare and analyze his place not only in his social group, but also in the entire world community, and finding more acceptable ways of development as a person.

Researchers usually distinguish two main components in the structure of identity - cognitive (knowledge, ideas about the characteristics of own group and awareness of oneself as a member), and affective (assessing the qualities of own group, the significance of membership in it). The behavioral component of social identity, the construction of a system of relationships and actions in various intercultural interactions is also highlighted. Generally, intercultural interaction abroad is considered as a social structure that arises and exists owing to the purposeful efforts of politicians and creative intelligentsia. Cultural and social identity is often defined as the product of a conscious nation-building process undertaken by groups of elites to legitimize power and status. In other words, cultural and social identity is, first of all, a community of ideas about some features, and not its distinctiveness.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the paper is to define cultural and social identity in the form of a kind of "self-presentation", within the framework of which one person or a community of people evaluates their attitude to the outside world. As the German political scientist Neumann (1993) notes: "... identity is not a given, but an attitude that is continuously being formed and reformed within the framework of a certain discourse" (p. 78).

The tendency of scientists to consider intercultural interaction between peoples as a real social process influencing the course of the society historical development requires new differentiating characteristics (Vasilyeva & Sinagatullin, 2018). Besides, all researchers distinguish various factors as differentiating characteristics: on the one hand, the (conservative) presence and maintenance of collective memory, ideas or myths about the primary homeland (fatherland), language, values and norms, historical memory, religion, the myth of common ancestor, and real traits of national character and self-images, etc. (Zaylalova & Zaylalov, 2019). On the other hand, the (liberal) consolidation of universal human values,

equality of opportunity, freedom of choice, responsibility for all of humanity, and peaceful coexistence with nature.

## 5. Research Methods

The study of identity is a fairly traditional phenomenon for sociology, cultural studies, and political science. However, identification as a part of the entire human community and a sense of their involvement with the developments on the globe practically remained out of sight of scientists for a long time. Consider an example of a clear underestimation of the role of universal human consolidation: “The world of everyday life has a spatial and temporal structure. The spatial structure is of little interest to us here. Suffice it to say only that it has a social dimension due to the fact that the zone of my manipulation intersects with the zone of manipulation of other people. The temporary structure is more significant to our goal” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 176). Sociologists point out that

... the sociology of space is actually developing, but not so much by sociologists as by geographers. In general, everything is logical here: if geography is understood as a “science of space”, and social geography is understood as the science of human behavior in space, the placement of social institutions in space, planning of space, and the movement of people, ultimately, about their ideas of space, then the field of sociology of space will seem to be almost exhausted. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 177)

It should be noted that researchers approached the study of identity problems starting from the research of social and cultural environment in general, as a space that forms a specific culture and theoretical ideas about intercultural identity. Traditional research was based on the concepts of strictly limited in territorial, social, and cultural way. Experts and scientists believe that the “aggravation of “identities” occurs where two or more communities begin to claim the same historical, cultural, social, political, religious, and linguistic territory. Naturally, the “overlap of identities” is most clearly manifested in cases of political claims to disputed geographic territories (Karabakh, Transnistria, Cyprus, Catalonia, the former Yugoslavia, etc.). The strength of the territorial instinct is multiplied many times in the event that the territorial community is in a borderline position.

A point of view, according to which changing, dynamic phenomena are considered to be territorial identity, rather than fixed unchanging spaces with clear boundaries, is gradually emerging in the social sciences (Castells, 1997).

It should be noted that cultural boundaries often become a decisive factor in the formation of social identity (Vasilyeva & Nurutdinova, 2018). Social identity exists due to the fact that there is an objective possibility of “recognizing” oneself among others. Recognition is possible only if there is an opportunity to somehow compare this community with oneself, somehow distinguish it from others. “The concept of “We” manifests itself owing to the fact that there are some “They” that differ from the given “We” in language, culture, customs, and other characteristics” (Obregón & Tufte, 2017, p. 67). Thus, it is the existence of cultural boundaries that determines the formation of social identity: since any person in the contemporary world is nothing more than a part of a huge social group. Therefore, cultural identity is a set

of members of this social group accepting universal human values, being aware of their belonging to the world community, and being not held by any national boundaries (De Vos, 1983).

National boundaries have always been more permeable than cultural and social boundaries. National borders are more like our skin than impregnable fortifications. They are membranes through which the flow of vital forces moves connecting our existence with the existence of the rest of the world. We share common opportunities and vulnerability, as well as the behavior of other people and nations and the life of the surrounding biosphere that affect us. Our sovereignty should be perceived only in the context of this mobile interaction. At the same time, the permeability of borders does not mean the end of the national interest existence.

The Norwegian anthropologist Barth (1989) notes that ethnic differences remain despite the fact that the number of interethnic contacts is increasing, and their intensity is constantly enhancing. Moreover, ethnic differences persist even after a person throughout his life has the opportunity to change membership in a social or ethnic group. (p. 98)

The importance and resilience of an ethnos is also demonstrated by the fact that many social relationships become opposed after they pass across ethnic boundaries. Besides, in spite of the fact that ethnic groups often exist in a single social system, the differences between them are not erased. Barth (1989) argued that “the interaction of ethnic groups in the social system does not lead to the elimination of ethnic differences by changing them or acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite interethnic contact and mutual dependence” (p. 54).

Therefore, state borders perform not only the function of defining social and cultural identity nowadays, but also preserving national interests and sovereignty (Zaylalov & Zaylalova, 2020). In this respect, modern boundaries are deeply controversial. On the one hand, migration processes lead to various forms of social tension, on the other hand, unintended but decisive consequences (Brexit) can happen when borders are “tolerant.” If you look at the border, you know that the other world is behind it. In other words, the boundaries create a distinction between “friend” and “alien”, which is considered essential. The difference is both attractive and deterrent. On the one hand, it helps to create collective identity, but on the other hand, it threatens the existence of national identity (Garifullina et al., 2020).

## **6. Findings**

The analysis of the identity formation through self-assessment of a person or a social group that has not reached adulthood on the example of university students can be applied to indicate differentiating cultural and social factors. We proceed from the fact that young people at various stages of education have not yet formed sufficient analytical skills for an objective comprehension of socio-cultural processes around them shaping qualities that help them subsequently act as “experts” in the perception of the surrounding reality. It is self-esteem that is most categorical and honest in this age category. It is very important to establish the initial level of formation of students’ socially significant personal qualities in the shaping of their socio-cultural identity, namely, attitude to cultural, social, national, and personal values. The most essential point is the order of their consecution in the scale of “values” (Dibble et al., 2016).

A fan-shaped polling survey showed that young people generally give priority to “freedom”, linking this concept with the choice of a profession, freedom of movement, and freedom to express their thoughts, to live where they want. Opinions differ when answering the question: “How do you understand the word “responsibility.” Someone puts “responsibility for what he does” in the first place, someone - responsibility to be loved ones, someone to the country where they were born, and someone - depending on the priorities set by society and the state. “I’m at a loss to answer, or I never thought about it,” said the least of the respondents, but such answers took place.

The conducted analysis of the survey data showed that the formation of socially significant personal qualities of the group of students is mainly based on the concepts of social activity, creativity, self-confidence, and sympathy, adherence to principles, self-education, individuality, and tolerance. Patriotism, civic position, love for a small homeland, friendship, family are among the supplementary qualities that, according to students, should be formed (Yusupov, 2018). The conclusion is that it is required to consider the multi-level preparedness of students when implementing the system of forming socio-cultural identity, and rely on an individual approach in the process of educational work (Berry, 1986). This will correspond to a better self-esteem of the students and their relationship to the world around (Mukhtasarova & Safin, 2018).

We understand that the proposed study does not fully disclose this problem. However, the task of adults is to make society with its universal values more accessible, transparent, and understandable proceeding from the fact that students are the future of any country, and the younger generation is the development of the entire human community.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the phenomenon of cultural and social identity underlies the manifestation of an individual's attitude to those global processes that are taking place in the world, thereby ensuring the continuity of generations. It serves as the initial system of orientation in society, gives the individual a stable basis for dynamic interaction in contemporary society and is the most crucial factor in maintaining socio-cultural status in a multicultural environment.

Identity unites all people's knowledge about them and their self-esteem, existing not only on a conscious, but also an unconscious level, reflecting the presented attitudes in a person's experience in relation to the structure of his social functions. A specific interpretation of a particular system of values will allow forming an assessment of personal meanings. The emotional-cognitive process of uniting the subject with other representatives of the socio-cultural environment is the result of an attempt to combine the performed social roles. His psychological dispositions, along with patterns of behavior, are woven into cultural and social identity. Identity becomes a kind of attractor that admits modelling and designing the future for a person.

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