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**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary
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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VECTORS OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AND IDENTITY CONTINUITY**

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Abstract

Dangers and risks of modern societies greatly differ from those of previous epochs. These threats are not limited in spatial-temporary and social terms and are acquiring global proportions. They are becoming less quantifiable, less subject to forecast, prevention and avoidance; they jeopardize ontological security of the subject. Since the subject's personal experience does not effectively address these challenges the images of the collective unconscious are being actualized. Thanks to them vectors of searching for strategies to provide psychological security get activated. One of significant aspects of psychological security is subjects' identity continuity including ethnic identity. Such identity is realized through subjective experience of sameness and continuity of one's own personality accompanied by social recognition of this sameness and continuity by others. A sense of identity contributes to being sure of purpose and meaning of life, confidence in the ability to be socially recognized and supported, which is fundamental for the development of subjects in an unpredictable world. The survey on perceptions of belonging to ethnic groups as a result of changes in the respondents' place of residence and status showed that a sense of belonging plays a compensatory role in the face of anxiety factor, and identity continuity is a positive determinant for the subjects' psychological security. The development of these principal issues will allow for designing optimal parameters of identity continuity maintenance as a mechanism of psychological security provision.

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1. Introduction

A crucial feature of the present-day world is that it is characterized by intensive transformative processes that change political and economic landscapes, the system of social ties and institutions thus posing a substantial threat to personality psychological security. Ontological security that expresses autonomy of control over human actions as part of an anticipated chain of events is being eroded. “The lack of security takes the lead, starts to determine motives for an individual’s social behavior through rebuilding and rearranging this motivation and specifically transforming other groups of his basic needs, psychic characteristics and personal traits” (Dontsov & Zotova, 2013, p. 81). Zotova (2017) also stated that “a risk society” prevailing in the current situation actually threatens man’s “ontological security”. The nature of this modern era’ crisis has troubling consequences. In particular, “the overall climate of uncertainty fuels human anxiety” (p. 197-198).

Giddens (1984, 1991) offering the term “ontological security” believed that a sense of security is related to order and stability. Emerging threats lead to subjective exaggeration of risks, ignorance of moral aspects of problems and difficulties that are unfolding (Giddens, 1991).

Ontological security is based on the confidence that “the majority of people have continuity of their own identity, in the permanence of social and material world around them” (Giddens, 1990, p. 92). These circumstances are basic for a socium living conditions determining the formation of the parameters of everydayness protection. The problem of psychological security goes beyond not only socio-historical but also spatial-temporary scales, and in search of sources of security and identity continuity it is appropriate to have regard to archetypical components of culture which express not only past experience but also aspirations of the future. The forging of identity is a non-stop process of making decisions and choices with regard to one’s values, beliefs, and solidarity with the group (Waterman, 1982). Here the ideas of Goffman (1963) about the specificity of I-identity as the person’s subjective perception of himself in the space of life, his continuity in the life situation are taken into account. And the substance of “identity policy” embraces not only identity dynamics in the course of social interactions but also foresight to prevent threats to personality security.

While external threats to security are more or less obvious and, hence, can be analyzed scientifically internal threats are not easy to differentiate. This task becomes more complicated when the basis of the subject’s inward mental life which is largely determined by the collective unconscious involving basic matrixes that define key criteria of human existence is affected.

The arrangements of life experience in the individual’s ego “...prepare him for a blow should discontinuity both in his organism, or in his environment occur; equip him with the ability to foresee both external and internal dangers...” (Erikson, 1996, p. 10). A number of research efforts show that subjective wellbeing correlate with identity continuity to a great extent (Beiser & Hou, 2006; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012; Sani, Bowe, & Herrera, 2008). In complicated as well as in extreme situations generating threats to personality psychological security identity continuity can contribute to subjective wellbeing preservation (Jetten, Haslam, Iyer, & Haslam, 2010).

2. Problem Statement

A review of the academic literature indicates that identity continuity correlates with subjective wellbeing in the positive continuum, however, the nature of the linkage between identity continuity and personality psychological security is worth examining.

3. Research Questions

Can identity continuity act as a positive determinant for individuals' psychological security?

4. Purpose of the Study

To identify whether identity continuity can exhibit compensatory and protective functions.

5. Research Methods

In the analysis of the interrelation between psychological security and identity continuity a psychoanalytical treatment of personality identity examination that involves the formation of a sense of personal sameness with a certain ethnic group and self-fixation of historic continuity in time and space as vectors of psychological security has been applied. An inter-disciplinary character of the issue required using several concepts and notions employed in culture-historical, socio-cultural, axiological, socio-philosophical approaches. In addition, the survey on how the respondents perceive their ethnic identity and belonging to a respective group before entering and after graduating from the university, which in the half of cases implied the change of the place of residence was conducted.

In 2018, the survey was administered to 90 respondents, 60% – females, 40% – males aged 18-23. All the respondents have provided informed consent to participate in the research.

A brief questionnaire assessed their perception of belonging to ethnic groups before entering the university and then considered if they preserved their sense of membership on moving into higher education institution. The Hopkins scale was used to evaluate how often the survey subjects felt anxiety, and, hence, experienced a threat to their psychological security (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

6. Findings

On the basis of ethnic constants a new world picture is constructed providing adjustment and emotional perception of ontological security. At the level of the collective unconscious there exist the constants of ethnos mentality which present archetypical instruments of experience (obtained from the external world) streamlining and stabilizing.

According to the survey results average estimates for perceiving identity continuity were quite low (-0,30), although a sense of belonging had a positive correlation with identity continuity on moving into higher education institution which was not associated with anxiety (-0,23). The study revealed that a sense of belonging to ethnic groups can play a compensatory role upon occurring anxiety factor and upon providing identity continuity. The data obtained and the results of other surveys (Beiser & Hou, 2006;

Jetten et al., 2012) indicate that identity continuity is a positive determinant for personality psychological security.

Universal models to comprehend typical social situations and to construct appropriate to them interactions include We-image as an image of the “good root” specific to the ethnic group which is associated with a sense of security and continuity of existence. The positive representation of We-image is often realized with the help of socio-cultural symbols that reinforce the experience of a sense of personal sameness with the particular ethnos, subjective appreciation of this identity continuity perceived by other people verifying personal identity and historic personality continuity. And when the need arises the image of “others” – rival ethnic group – is created, and this image personifies an “image of the enemy”. In the mass conscious various misfortunes, troubles, dangers, discomfort, threats to identity continuity are associated with the image “they/others”. History suggests that members of other ethnic groups are believed to possess harmful magical power, and these suspicions used to be mutual between the rival ethnic groups.

In essence, the constructs “we” and “they” can be considered as an unconscious basis of group identity which is shaped in the process of conscious and unconscious group fixation of its difference from Others and solidarity of “ours” on the basis of interests and values. At the level of a social group identity continuity is linked with the group’ awareness and experience of its wholeness and self-identity, and at the individual level – with individuals’ perception and experience of their belonging to the group (Kurnaeva, 2006). A person’s emotionally-evaluative attitude towards representatives of the same and different ethnic groups determines the opportunity to perceive ethnic specificities based on the opposition of one ethnic group to another. According to Baumann (1996), the dichotomy “we” and “they” is only meaningful in putting one group against the other since “we” as holistic oneness emerges in its opposition to other cohesive groups with their values and norms. The revitalization of the ethnic archetype “we” induced by the need for shelteredness inevitably intensifies the archetype “they”. The interval between these archetypal constructs often stirs ethnic clashes and conflicts. Thus, with individualized “I” hyperbolizing, which acquires a frustrating role and gives rise to the revitalization of the archetype “we” another archetype “they” intensifies and is seen as a source of danger.

The revitalization of “we” and “they” archetypes can speed up the escalation of ethnocentrism generating negative images of “others” and adversarial attitudes towards them, in some cases they provoke xenophobia, one ethnic group superiority over other ethnicities, recognition of this ethnic group priority to resolve problems with a view of its benefits (Soldatova, 1998). This disposition correlates with the increase in group boundaries’ density, group consolidation, a tightening of sanctions against those who are willing to leave the group (Levine & Campbell, 1972) and acts a threat to identity continuity.

In the context of the study into vectors of psychological security the factor of conformity as a condition of the subject’s acceptance by the group members can be distinguished. Such factors of intra-group integration promoting internal homogeneity as norms and values are the indicators of conformity. Ethnicity represents a cultural system the integrity of which is provided by a specific complex of mental artifacts, and the person employing it acts as a representative of this ethnos (Kholmogorov, 2014).

Based on the works of C. G. Jung, J. Hillman, E. Fromm, A. Samuels and others the very process of self-identification is treated as an archetype. And ethnic self-identification is seen as a particular

manifestation of self-identification archetype: “It is an individual’s sensation of his mental conformity with a particular ethnos manifested through the collective archetype and actualized by a real linkage with this ethnos” (Zubachevsky, 2010, p. 108). An archetypal foundation of the process of ethnic self-identification is linked to the subject’s unconscious need to affiliate himself with some social group, to feel a sense of connection with other people, sense his roots, the link between generations, common history and culture (Fromm, 2011). The importance of the “conformity” archetype for psychological security is determined by the fact that a sense of ethnic identity does not only imply personal sameness with a set of mental artifacts related to a certain ethnos and the person’s being aware of his existence continuity but also his perception of other people’s recognition of this conformity and continuity by the group’s accepting or failing to accept the person into the group. “The focus on informal ties allows them to build up more flexible strategies and feel in security” (Zinchenko & PereLygina, 2013, p. 108).

7. Conclusion

Indicating vectors of psychological security Fromm (2011) points out that the practical task for a person is not so much to feel secured as to have the ability to endure security absence, to minimize subjectively perceived loss of its absence. It is determined by the fact that human existence is fraught with dangers and there are only two ways that allow people to adapt to live under these conditions. The first way resides in an individual’s involvement into a group, in particular, into an ethnic group. The other way is determined by a person’s ability to develop his activity-driven forces enough to relate himself to the world without drowning in it.

The revitalization of ancestors’ experience contained in the collective unconscious triggers a vector of regressive mental energy for finding strategies to provide psychological security. This process is pronounced in ethnic “we” strengthening, which is realized through restoration and growing relevance of ethnic norms, behavior stereotypes, values characteristic of a particular ethnos. Therefore, there occurs the intensification of a layer of the collective unconscious where the image of ethnic “we” is located (Dreev, 2010). The intensification of the image of ethnic “we” is associated with the fact that growing needs for ethnic security define, on the one hand, the emergence of ethno-affiliative, status-based and archetypal motives within the ethnic group; on the other, they are accompanied with frustration caused by other ethnic groups. The pronouncement of these motives together with generally low level of group frustration correlated, in its turn, with the growth of ethnic intra-group solidarity (Soldatova, 1998). Under these conditions the level of interrelation between a sense of security and identity continuity increases at the individual level.

Threats to psychological security caused by changes in the established ethnic and social dispositions can be overcome through timely replacement of lost identity by a new, more stable and basically sustainable one, and this is ethnic identity historically anchored in the deep of an ethnic culture. The state of social discourse that is decaying results in “social degrouping” sharpening a protective function of identity continuity.

Upon shaping identity parameters the intensification of the construct “we” actualizes communication of the ethnos’ dramatic and sacrificial past and symbols associated with its self-identification and power. In its turn, the revitalization of the construct “they” occurs due to translation and

multiple repetitions of negative images related to other ethnic groups' representatives, symbols tied up with their negative representations, which enhance the formation and reinforcement of different stereotypes, bias and prejudices thus increasing a cultural distance between opposing ethnic groups altogether with neutral and even allied ones. With its considerable contribution mass neuroticism and frustration are developing; dissatisfaction, danger and fear are being fuelled. These feelings are compensated by manifestations of hyper identity with all its negative consequences. Besides, tragic events of the past become reinterpreted, often not in line with historic events; new social myths are created providing a prism through which the character of existing inter-ethnic relationships and the strategy of their development are negatively evaluated.

Identity continuity acts as one of the most important elements constituting a platform of personality psychological security as it actualizes the mechanism of the individual's belonging and solidarity with particular values, norms, traditions; lays the foundation for perceiving oneself as a group member in the format of one's continuity in life situation; eases anxiety as a threat to psychological security.

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