Chapter 8
Multiple Social Identities in the Post-Soviet Context

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Introduction

The collapse of the USSR in 1991 led to the formation of newly independent countries, namely, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. After becoming independent, these countries faced various challenges. Some of them had no experience of existing as separate, independent states, and their local populations had no experience of being dominant and responsible ethnic groups in their "own" independent states. Others had a specific and controversial history of a relationship with Russia during both the USSR period and the subsequent post-Soviet era (Abdelal, 2002). For some countries, the dissolution of the USSR was an act of receiving freedom and an opportunity to get rid of the "Soviet" identity (Berg, 2002), while others faced a need to urgently develop and incorporate entirely new identities (Schatz, 2000). However, for all these countries, this historical event played a crucial role in the formation of social identities that now exist in the post-Soviet space.

Social identity is based on the concordance of individual interests, values, and attitudes with those of the group. Identification occurs with "real" groups (family, work collective, city), as well as with "symbolic" groups (nation, country, the world as a whole). In transitional periods, the social identity with the closest social environment increases (Yadov, 1995). This chapter evaluates social identity in three parts. First, based on early studies, we analyze how the collapse of the USSR triggered the mechanisms of the formation of new identities and the main trends of identity changes in the post-Soviet space. Second, we provide an overview of studies of different kinds of identities and their impact on attitudes and intercultural

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relations in post-Soviet countries. Third, we present some recent studies of identity changes in the post-Soviet space.

Crisis of Social Identity After the Collapse of the USSR and Its Consequences

Social identity is a complicated and diverse phenomenon for two reasons. First, it developed and evolved in different fields using different methodologies. Second, it became an umbrella term for the social identification processes for gender, professional, ethnic, religious, regional, or national aspects. Thus, "identity" became an integral part of psychological concepts such as motivation, meaning, and reflection. As a result, there is a legitimate question of how to define boundaries of identity research. Recently, scholars have begun to pay special attention to this problem. Some of them restricted the interdisciplinary character of the identity phenomenon (Rasskazova & Tkhostov, 2012) and opportunities of interdisciplinary analysis (Sokolova, 2014). Others dwell on the problem of identity crisis in the situation of radical social change (Andreeva, 2011; Belinskaya, 2015) or specify methodological approaches to a crisis (Asmolov, 2014) and socialization (Martsinkovskaya, 2014). Klimova (2002), when studying identity crisis, concluded that in a changing society, people are freed from the old identity and are forced to engage in self-identification – to compare, choose, and create new commonalities – focusing on the coincidence of personal values with those offered by a particular community. An individual recognizes the society as being "their own" not only because they share its goals but also because the ways of achieving these are morally acceptable for them.

Obviously, a central aspect of identity remains the problem of volatility or sustainability, which, as many scholars acknowledge, has two underlying causes: First, the question of whether one's ideas about oneself are consolidating and integrating personality constants – the unchanging "core" – or whether this reality is volatile and multiple (Belinskaya, 2015) and, second, the understanding of the volatility/stability of the "self" is inextricably linked with the social and historical concepts of a person (Martsinkovskaya, 2014).

Belinskaya (2015) elaborates on the idea of multiplicity and potentiality of identity from two perspectives: through (a) a more detailed understanding of the cognitive processes underlying the formation and development of identity and (b) increased attention to its situational and contextual manifestations. The specificity of the domestic "identity crisis" is associated with the actual absence of an image in which the personal and social future is emphasized. The instability of society has affected almost all aspects of social identity (Danilova & Yadov, 2004) in that the hierarchy of social identities is also becoming particularly mobile (Ilyin & Mikhailova, 2012).

The Vectors of Changes in the System of Self-Identification After the Collapse of the USSR

The years after the USSR collapse yielded much research on changes in values, attitudes, and identities of people in different post-Soviet countries (Lebedeva et al., 2018). During the Soviet period, the so-called "Soviet" identity was the most inclusive social identity, uniting all citizens of the USSR regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation. This Soviet identity lost its importance after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Other different inclusive identities replaced it: national, religious, regional, republican, and place identity. We present five common vectors of changes in the system of self-identification from the theoretical analysis of early sociopsychological research, conducted in several of the newly independent states: Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan (Lebedeva, 1996).

Vector 1: From Stable to Unstable (Diffusive, Uncertain) Identity The transitional character of self-identification was shown in Russia and Eastern Ukraine by Pavlenko and Korzh (1998). The authors pointed out the mixed character and discrepancy of the social identities of Russians and Ukrainians. The structure of the social identities of Eastern Ukrainians was presented as more conflicting and unstable than that of the Russians, as it consisted of two ethnocultural components: Ukrainian and Russian. Soldatova (1998), who studied interethnic tensions in the Russian Federation republics (Tuva, Sakha, North Ossetia, and Tatarstan), stated that the common national (Soviet) identity had been split and disappeared.

Vector 2: From Uniform to Diverse Within this vector, varied and diversified systems of social categories for self-identification replace the limited number of previous social categories. Stefanenko (1998) wrote that the experiment for obtaining social uniformity resulted in the annihilation of many social groups, such as the nobility, peasant communities, parishes, and different political parties. The dogmatic ideological machine of the Soviet era meant that people knew only the one state, the one party, and the one youth and children's organization. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the system of self-identification changed towards the diversity of social categories during the first years. In her 1996 research of interethnic relations in the Baltic countries, Lebedeva revealed significant variation in identification among Estonians, Lithuanians, and Russians: citizens of the world, Europeans, Soviet citizens, citizens of their own republic, many kinds of ethnic and religious identifications, as well as local identifications, among others (Lebedeva, 1996). Other works show a similar picture in other post-Soviet countries (Pavlenko & Korzh, 1998; Soldatova, 1998).

Vector 3: From Collectivistic to Individualistic (Uniqueness) Orientation There was a decrease in the significance of global social categories (e.g., ideological, civil) in favor of more specific, individual, and unique ones (e.g., gender, age, ethnic, religious, and professional). Kuzmickaite (1996) showed the increased significance of identification with Lithuania or a local region in comparison with more global

(world or European) communities. In her research, Soldatova (1998) pointed out the growth of specific group characteristics (e.g., refugee, jobless, vagrant) and subjective individual features (e.g., plodder, maker) among the respondents from different ethnic groups in the Russian Federation. Research in the Baltic states also revealed the increase of more unique personal characteristics (e.g., passionate fisherman, skilled lover) in comparison with global ones (e.g., citizen, human being; Lebedeva, 1996). It is evident that the collapse of the social system of care resulted in individuals' highlighting their personal survival and the everyday tasks associated with these.

Vector 4: From Need for Positive Self-Esteem to Search for Meaning and Understanding This vector means that to adapt to a changing reality, people in an unstable society tend to define themselves through social categories belonging to that which is not prestigious or respected (often quite the contrary). Such a choice means that self-identification through these categories is more truthful, realistic, and, consequently, more adaptive. It also increases the feeling of control over one's life. In unstable circumstances, the search for meaning and understanding answers the central question of self-identification – "Who am I?" – much better than the search for the positive distinctions of one's group. Research shows the growth of negative self-identification: social outcast, alien, second-class citizen, without kin, without a homeland, refugee, jobless, or vagrant, among others (Lebedeva, 1997; Soldatova, 1998). A clear understanding of one's real position in the world, combined with unexpected negative evaluations from members of other groups, probably gives an individual better grounds for necessary decisions concerning their future life.

Vector 5: From Polar Dichotomies to Antinomy Unity (Ambivalence) The final vector focuses on how strong positive or strong negative evaluations (e.g., the Black-White dichotomy) of social realities have been replaced by an interpretation of these realities as inwardly ambivalent, consisting of both positive and negative components. For example, Andrushak's (1998) research in Uzbekistan revealed that the change of status of both ethnic groups (i.e., growth of Uzbek status and reduction of Russian status) resulted in the growth of ethnocentrism in both groups. It means that even such a positive tendency as the improvement of the status of certain ethnic groups may lead to negative consequences (Andrushak, 1998). The research on the New Russian Diaspora in post-Soviet countries (Lebedeva, 1997) showed that the role of the so-called syndrome of imposed ethnicity was ambivalent. On the one hand, it promoted attitudes for separation or assimilation among ethnic Russians. On the other hand, it stimulated the search for a positive ethnic identity and biculturalism. In any case, it forces individuals to solve the problem of cultural and ethnic self-identification in search of an adequate and positive social identity in the changing world. This often starts with the negative evaluation of one's own ethnic identity (there were strong correlations between ethnic self-identification and negative feelings attributed to own ethnicity). An individual might obtain a positive group or ethnic identity by joining a "respectable" social group through migration towards their ethnic homeland, assimilation within the dominant group, or

recategorization with a more respected subcultural group such as the Cossacks (Lebedeva, 1997; Tatarko, 2002).

Thus, we can notice that the vectors of changes in post-Soviet societies from global, uniform, and polar self-identification to those that are more diverse, unique, and ambivalent are the symptoms of stabilizing the processes in people's consciousness through times of turbulent change.

Research on Different Types of Identities

Next, we discuss some prominent social identities in the post-Soviet space: ethnic identity, religious identity, civic identity, and regional identity. It is important to note that the list of social identities presented here is not exhaustive but rather representative of the most prominent identity aspects relevant in the post-Soviet space.

Ethnic Identity or Ethnic Self-Consciousness

In Russian studies, the problems of analyzing ethnic identity from the standpoint of the ethnic group were raised, based on the broader concept of ethnic self-awareness in the works of ethnologists, historians, sociologists, and psychologists (Arutyunyan, 2009; Arutyunyan et al., 1999; Drobizheva, 2010; Soldatova, 1998). The studies of ethnic self-awareness conducted by scholars from the Russian Academy of Sciences remain the object of large-scale empirical research at the junction of ethnosociology, political science, and social psychology. The methodology of these studies is based on the principle of interaction between the society's structural characteristics, the ethnosocial and ethnocultural environmental features, and the individual's cognitive-motivational sphere. This approach provides a multidimensional study of ethnic identity as a complex social and psychological phenomenon.

Stefanenko (2009) wrote about a terminological ambiguity between the concepts of *ethnic self-awareness*, *ethnic identity*, and *ethnicity* in Russian literature because, in most studies, they were used as synonyms. In Western works, the concept of ethnicity is used with ethnic minorities, whereas in Russian literature, such specification is absent (Ryzhova, 2008). In most works, ethnicity and ethnic identity are used as equivalent concepts, while ethnic self-awareness is usually separated from ethnic identity (Arutyunyan, 2010; Stefanenko, 2009). According to Arutyunyan (2010), this division depends on whether or not this process is conscious.

Components and Types of Ethnic Identity   Researchers identify *cognitive*, *affective*, and *behavioral* components in ethnic identity (Lebedeva, 2014). The cognitive component refers to certain notions of what in "own" ethnic groups is different from the "others"; these components are called *ethnodifferential features* (Lebedeva, 2014). The study of such ethnodifferential features, namely, language, religion, values, customs and traditions, myths, and history, as well as their contribution to the

formation of ethnic identity, is of particular interest to researchers (Bogatova, 2009; Drobizheva, 2006; Stefanenko, 2009). Thus, Achkasov (1999) stressed the crucial role of language as a form of categorization of culture that found its confirmation in empirical studies (Dontsov et al., 1997; Pavlova, 2015). Language is regarded as the link between generations and the main way of transferring knowledge and cultural traditions (Achkasov, 1999). Based on this position, some later researchers wrote that the prevalence of English in the Russian discourse contributed to the formation of a kind of *supraethnic identity* – "citizen of the world" (Aleshinskaya & Gritsenko, 2014).

A feature of research on the components of ethnic identity is the consideration of the emotional component through the prism of *valency* and *certainty of identity*. Here valency concerns the positive or negative attitude to one's ethnic group, and certainty of identity is the clarity and depth of ideas about one's ethnic group and the clarity of awareness of belonging to it (Tatarko & Lebedeva, 2009).

Arutyunyan et al. (1999) divided ethnic identity into seven categories that determine how an individual relates not only to one's group but also to other groups: (a) *normal identity* (a positive image of one's group in combination with a tolerant attitude to other groups), (b) *ethnocentric identity* (high significance of one's own ethnic identity), (c) *ethno-dominating identity* (beliefs about the superiority of own group combined with discrimination of other groups), (d) *ethnic fanaticism* (exaggerated ethnic identity followed by the exaltation and devotion to own ethnic group's goals), (e) *ethno-indifferent identity* (lack of interest in ethnicity as a whole), (f) *ethno-nihilism* (complete denial of own ethnic identity), and (g) the *ambivalent* or *multiple identities* (the combination of two or more ethnic identities).

The studies of ethnic identity can be conventionally attributed to the following areas: the ethnic identity of the national majority, the ethnic identity of ethnic minorities, as well as migrants from the post-Soviet republics. Ethnic minorities in Russian studies are primarily understood as ethnic groups smaller in number than the national majority (Drobizheva, 2010). It is therefore possible for minorities to be both "Indigenous" peoples of regions and groups of people who have arrived from other countries and are living in the territory of Russia. The additional direction is the study of ethnic identity in diasporas in the territory of Russia. According to Popkov (2003), the diaspora identity is fragmented and combines elements of several cultures – native and host – as well as linguistic, religious, and regional identity. Several researchers note that the collective ethnic identity of the diaspora is a fundamental factor of the its existence (Mukha, 2013; Popkov, 2003).

The Role of Historical Events in the Formation of Ethnic Identity Stefanenko et al. (2017) found that cultural memory – being the link between the past, the present, and the future of the social group – ensures the continuity of social identity. The authors inquired how the continuity and maintenance of social identity were carried out from generation to generation. Particular attention was drawn to the memory of the traumatic past of the group, such as repression and deportation, as this contradicts the widespread view of social identity as a tool for achieving positive individual self-esteem based on a positive image of the group.

Quite often in empirical studies, ethnic identity is considered in conjunction with religious identity. These components always interplay with one another (Bogatova, 2009; Pavlova, 2013, 2015; Shcherbakova, 2009).

Religious Identity

The sociologist of religion, Mchedlov (2006), remarked that during periods of national calamities and ideological confusion, the role of ethnic and religious identities sharply increases. Pavlova, in her studies (2013, 2015), found that among representatives of five Muslim ethnic groups of the North Caucasus (viz., Chechens, Balkars, Kabardians, Ingushes, and Adygs), religious identity is the second most pronounced identity after ethnic identity. At the same time, for many respondents, these two identities are merged into one. Studies show that in Russia, the relationship of ethnic and religious identity exists at the associative level: to be Russian means to be an Orthodox Christian; to be Chechen is to be a Muslim (Mchedlov, 2006).

Types of Religious Identity   Some researchers made attempts to develop typology of religiosity or religious identity. For instance, Mchedlova (2008) distinguished *internal religiosity* (faith itself) from *external religiosity* (following traditions and rituals). Borisov (2014) identified several manifestations of religious identity: *hyper-positive identity*, associated with religious fanaticism and narcissism; *positive religious identity*, related to positive acceptance of one's confession and tolerant attitude towards others; *negative religious identity*, indicating a negative perception of one's religious group; and the fourth type, *atheism*. Ryzhova (2012) noted that the modern Orthodox identity of Russians has lost its religious character and acquired cultural features. The critical concept of Orthodox identity is not faith, but Orthodox traditions and national culture. Ovcharov (2012) found that only 7% of the surveyed Orthodox Russians strictly followed religious traditions (e.g., Lent). For the majority of modern Orthodox people in Russia, religion is not related to faith in God, but to following moral norms (Khukhlaev & Shorokhova, 2016).

Relations of Religious Identity to Values and Attitudes   Many authors have studied the interrelation between Orthodox identity and values. Lepshokova et al. (2016) found that the religious identity of Russian Orthodox adolescents in Kabardino-Balkaria is positively related to the similarity of the parent-child values. Shcherbakova (2009) found that the religious identity of the Orthodox respondents was positively related to the tolerant intergroup attitudes and negatively related to the negative ones. A study of the relationship between religious identity and the economic attitudes of Muslims and Orthodox Christians (Efremova, 2010) showed that a strong religious identity is associated with the denial of the importance of money in both groups. At the same time, Muslims have productive economic attitudes related to the strength of their religious identity and Christians with the positivity of their religious identity. Frequent formal religious participation, as well as a

high level of expression of one's religious identity, positively influences individual psychological well-being (Efremova, 2010; Lepshokova, 2012).

Civic Identity

Multidimensional Understanding of Civic Identity Civic identity has actively been studied by Russian sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, and teachers (Drobizheva, 2006). At the same time, until the 1990s, it was included in the concept of "national self-consciousness" (Ivanova & Mazilova, 2008). At the moment, civic identity is understood as a multicultural and ethnic structure operating with supraethnic, global values (Arutyunyan, 2009). Several large-scale studies at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences dedicated to the formation of a general civil Russian identity in Russia have been conducted since the late 1990s (Yadov, 1995). According to the data of the late 2000s, the "common state" is still the main factor of citizens' consolidation. However, the second most important factor is "responsibility for the future of this country," which bears an appreciable emotional content (Semenenko, 2015). Sociological studies demonstrate the growth of the significance of civil identity throughout the country. According to the data of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in 2011, 95% of respondents felt themselves citizens of the country, and 72% experienced a significant closeness to Russia (Marshak, 2015).

Relationship of Civic Identity with Ethnic Identity A feature of the Russian state-civil identity is its stable relationship with ethnic identity (Arutyunyan, 2009; Ivanova & Shulga, 2010). According to Drobizheva (2008), in regions where the ethnic Russian population dominates, up to 80% of respondents considered themselves Russians. A similar "united" civil-ethnic identity is characteristic of the Tatars (Drobizheva & Ryzhova, 2016). Nevertheless, in their combined identity, the Tatars give the predominant role to ethnic group, while the ethnic Russians attribute it to citizenship. The work of Maksimova and Morkovkina (2016) found that among the inhabitants of the border regions of Russia (i.e., the Far East and southern Siberia), civil identity dominated over all other types of social identity, regardless of ethnicity. In contrast, among the representatives of the peoples of the North Caucasus, civil identity was poorly expressed and ranked below ethnic and religious identities in the hierarchy of identities (Usmanova, 2013).

In the context of the national and cultural diversity of the peoples of the Russian Federation, the study of the relationship between civil and ethnic features is of particular importance. Combinations of different facets of civil and ethnic variables can constitute both constructive and destructive profiles of the social identity matrix and are of academic interest as a separate subject of research. For example, Murashchenkova (2013) explored the relationship between different types of civic identity, based on the combination of patriotic and extremist components, with characteristics of ethnic identity. She found that higher levels of self-perception as

a patriot resulted in clearer ethnic and cultural affiliation and higher positive self-esteem. However, a clear-cut idea of one's ethnic belonging and its positive evaluation, combined with pronounced ethno-isolationism, ethno-fanaticism, and ethno-egoism, takes the form of patriotism with a fluctuating extremist orientation. Civil indifference is combined with more pronounced ethno-nihilism and ethnic indifference. There is, therefore, a close positive connection between the civil and ethnic identities of Russians, and one strengthens the position of the other.

Among representatives of ethnic minorities, pronounced ethnic identity, on the contrary, weakens civil identity. However, a variety of factors that affect the peculiarities of the combination of civil and ethnic identity set several other patterns. Thus, Phinney (1990) found evidence that the ethnic identity of the majority is less pronounced than that of a minority and may, for a long time, be in a diffused state. In the research of Bocharova (2014), correlations between civil and ethnic identities among the members of different ethnic groups (Russians, Armenians, Kazakhs) provided the basis for determining the different types of relationships between these two identities: complimentary, ambivalent, and conflicting.

Structure of Civic Identity and Its Relationships with Attitudes Civic identity is often differently operationalized. Some researchers rely on a two-factor model of civil identity (i.e., patriotism and nationalism; Efimenko, 2013; Grigoryan & Lepshokova, 2012). Grigoryan (2013) showed civil identity in Russia in three independent dimensions (i.e., nationalism, pride in the achievements of the nation, and pride in the sociopolitical system in the country). Vodolazhskaya (2010) has argued for five components (i.e., common historical past, the name of the civil community, language, culture, and rallying emotional experiences), and Drobizheva (2008) added common territory to these.

Grigoryan and Lepshokova (2012) introduced the empirical model of the role of national (civic) identity and attitudes towards immigrants in the economic beliefs of Russians. Using structural equation modeling, they revealed that patriotism was connected with positive attitudes towards immigrants, while nationalism was connected with negative ones. There was a positive relationship between subjective economic well-being and positive attitudes towards immigrants. Tatarko and Lebedeva (2009) found that high civic identity was positively associated with economic well-being and – among young people – with psychological well-being and satisfaction with their lives. Ryzhova (2008) found a relationship between the expression of civic identity in different ethnic groups within Russia and positive intergroup attitudes. Sanina (2013) found that a developed civic identity contributed to the successful socialization and well-being of individuals. Tatarko (2012) considered civic identity as a component of society's social capital. Multiple regression analysis showed that such characteristics of civic identity as valence (the degree of positivity) and strength (intensity), along with other components of social capital, related to productive economic and democratic political attitudes of Russians. In general, we can say that empirical studies have shown that a positive civic identity is a necessary condition for the successful existence of both individuals and modern Russian society as a whole.

Regional Identity

Concept of Regional Identity in Russian Science The study of regional identity in Russian science emerged in the 1990s. The collapse of the USSR intensified the processes of understanding the problem of the integrity of a region as a sociocultural and administrative-territorial unit.

In sociology, there is no consensus on the content of regional identity. Krylov (2010) viewed regional identity as a systemic set of cultural relations associated with the notion of "home grounds." It combines both spatial aspects and aspects of internal energy, the forces of identity where the term *local patriotism* is appropriate. Eremina (2011) viewed regional identity as based on a reflexive sense of personal self-identity and integrity, continuity in time, and space. Regional identity is manifested in the influence of peculiarities of the local climate and landscape on local people. Therefore, a symbolic connection of the inhabitants with the surrounding space occurs (Eremina, 2011). In a stable society with a stable national (civic) identity, regional identity does not come to the fore in the hierarchy of territorial identities. Under normal conditions, it manifests itself in the formation of a certain system of values and norms of behavior of the inhabitants of the region, regardless of ethnicity. In conditions of weakening or crisis of national (civic) identity, regional-ethnic identity can compete with it and, having received a political shade, threaten the unity of the country (Eremina, 2011).

Drobizheva (2011) considered the emergence of regional identity as a form of psychological protest against universal unification, which is a natural phenomenon in conditions of modernity and postmodernity. Amid the unification and common "Europeanization" of culture in the ex-Soviet countries, people often feel a need for regional identification (especially in the Asian parts of Russia). At the same time, from the psychological standpoint, this process can be considered as a phenomenon of *psychological contamination*, whereby the need for regional identity is actualized by the popularity of regionalism in neighboring countries and regions (Bespalova, 2008).

In multicultural regions, the common regional identity might unite different ethnic and religious groups. A study by Baranov (2016) determined the trends of the transformation of regional, ethnic, and religious identities of the Crimean community during the reunification with Russia (between 2014 and 2016). The regional community of Crimea is multicultural, with a clear segmentation among the Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar communities. Russian ethnic identity of Crimeans is unique, but it is integrated into the larger Russian ethnic and civil identity. The manifestation of Ukrainian identity in Crimea is the weakest one. Intergroup distances are asymmetric: The Russian and Ukrainian communities demonstrate the closest proximity; the least proximity is among those of the Russian and Crimean Tatars. Radical Islam or ethnocentric projects may disrupt the constructive balance of identities. Some strategic measures have been suggested to reintegrate Crimea and Russia, based on the principles of strengthening civil and regional identities, and an equal dialogue of the ethnic and religious communities (Baranov, 2016).

What Makes Regional Identity Important Among the factors that contribute to the greater importance of regional identity, researchers most often recognize the following:

1. **Ethnic specificity of the region:** Differing from the neighboring ones, it gives a "naturalness" to the corresponding identity. In this connection, some authors point out the importance of ethnic homogeneity of the territory (Pen'kovcev & Shibanova, 2007). Others, noting that this specificity is neither indispensable nor sufficient basis for the formation of a regional identity, recognize that it can strengthen "the demand for the latter on the external and internal markets" (Gel'man, 2003).
2. **The development rates of the territory in social and economic terms and the associated higher standard of living of the population:** This circumstance prompts the elites to formulate an identity policy (Busygina, 2006, p. 163). In some cases, it is the low economic potential that impels local authorities to intensify the development of a regional image-building strategy (Bogatova, 2016).
3. **The marginality of a region and its special geographical location:** Remoteness from the center often acts as a factor leading to a smaller manifestation of the sense of belonging to a country and the strengthening of local points of attraction. This can be facilitated by the presence of external borders, especially if the territory had passed from one state to another in the past. Regional elites often use some specific location (e.g., the intersection of East and West) or climatic conditions as a tool for constructing a local identity (Makarova, 2017).
4. **"Stability of administrative-territorial division" and "degree of the rootedness of the population"** (Pen'kovcev & Shibanova, 2007) **of a region:** Long-lasting boundaries of territories contribute to the formation of people's belief in their naturalness, the primordial existence of the corresponding communities. However, active migratory flows growing with globalization can begin to erode the ethnocultural homogeneity of the population, which negatively affects regional identification.
5. **The presence of a central city:** Traditionally, cities had been "the centers of wealth" and sometimes possessed "political autonomy" (Busygina, 2006). Stable territorial ties of the population have been formed and are still forming around them, and many modern "advanced regions" are formed precisely around large (or medium) urban agglomerations with rapidly growing suburbs.
6. **The activity of elites, the coincidence of their strategies with the interests of the majority of the population:** The efforts and willpower of the leading agents of the regional level and their ability to profitably represent their territory to the outside world and to put forward and implement social and cultural projects lead to increasing the prestige of owning the corresponding identity (Makarova, 2017).

Thus, it should be stressed that the part of the strategy of the authorities that is related to the image building of a place and its external representation is denoted by the term *regional branding*; the same actions are aimed at the formation of the territorial community and the "*identity policy*" (Tsumarova, 2012).

Problems in the Study of Regional Identity From the academic perspective, the issue of the formation and development of regional identity is far from being resolved both from methodological and methodical viewpoints. In the conditions of the federal structure of the state in different periods, regional identity can obscure civil and ethnic ones by acting as the main factor in identifying a person in the community. It acts as a process of interpreting regional uniqueness (Mukha, 2013).

There is a high degree of regional identity in the regions of Russia: About 39% of Russians feel a sense of closeness to the place where they live (Korepanov, 2009). Some researchers connect the strengthening of regional identity with the response to the "identity crisis" and the increased need for protection of one's unique identity and self-esteem (Akayeva & Borisov, 2012). Others (see Achkasov, 2005) explain the growth of regional identity by the concept of "internal colonialism" – a social situation in which the Russian periphery feels exploited by the center. Makarychev (1999) identifies three ideologies or myths, stimulating the growth of regional identity: (a) the "ethnic myth," in the regions with a strong Russian national idea; (b) "Moskvo-struggling myth," in the regions with motives of confrontation with the capital; and (c) the *myth of the* "last turn," in remote regions of Russia. These myths reflect the variety of the new search for inclusive identities since the collapse of the former Soviet identity. The first myth is about maintaining strong common civil identity. The second myth is about searching for their own new collective identity, independent from the central power associated with Moscow. The third myth is typical for very remote regions as the Far East or Kamchatka, where people felt more connected with neighboring countries than with central Russia.

A separate area of Russian science is the study of the contribution of the geographical (spatial) component in the formation of regional identity. Turovskiy (2003) developed the concept of *cultural landscape* – a phenomenon that includes a geographical component, landscape, and cultural content. The cultural landscape is a key component of regional identity.

Studies of Social Identity in the Context of Modern Sociocultural Changes

Some studies on the changes of contemporary social identities on the post-Soviet space are presented in the book *Changing Values and Identities in the Post-Communist World* (Lebedeva et al., 2018). In one such study, Lepshokova and Lebedeva (2018) demonstrated the important role of social disidentification with large inclusive categories in the acculturation preferences of ethnic majority and minority members in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic (KBR) in the North Caucasus. Social disidentification (national for the Kabardino-Balkar majority and regional for the ethnic Russian minority) makes a significant contribution to the explanation of acculturation preferences of both minority and majority group members. The distancing of the ethnic majority groups of KBR from Russia as a state leads to intolerant attitudes towards ethnic Russians living in the KBR. However, the level of national disidentification among ethnic majority group members, as well as the

levels of regional disidentification among ethnic Russians in KBR, is extremely low, and mutual acculturation attitudes are largely positive. Nevertheless, this research sheds light on the distractive power of possible disidentification for peaceful intercultural coexistence and successful mutual acculturation in rapidly changing social-political contexts.

Concerning variations in identities across generations, Galyapina and Lebedeva (2018) revealed changes in multiple identity structures among three generations of Ossetians and ethnic Russians living in the North Ossetia-Alania Republic. They showed that the patterns of correlations between group identities among three generations of Russians, as well as Ossetians, suggest two bases for identification: Russian national background and North Caucasian Republican background. Republican identity serves as a bridge between the two largest inclusive identities (national identity and regional identity) among three generations of Russians, as well as among Ossetians. Its role is significant in this multicultural republic because national identity is more pronounced among Russians, while regional identity is stronger among Ossetians, and the republican identity is the basis for uniting different groups regardless of their ethnicity.

Isaeva et al. (2018) found that identities that are more inclusive (national and ethnolinguistic) are positively associated with interethnic attitudes and practices, while the opposite was found for ethnic identity in Uzbekistan. This pattern suggests that social identities can be used to include some and exclude others. Because the Russian-speaking population in Uzbekistan is culturally diverse, profound knowledge of the cultural context is needed to understand the complex patterning of identities and interethnic habits and preferences. More research is needed to understand different Russian-speaking ethnic groups. The Uzbek context illustrates how structural variables of society (such as the nature and history of linguistic diversity and the power differential of the ethnic groups) can influence individual and group identities and interethnic habits and preferences.

In her study in Moldova, Caunenco (2018) noted that the ongoing process of self-determination of the Moldavian majority is the result of its change in status to that of a nation-state. Young Moldovans have a close cultural distance to the Romanian, Russian, and Ukrainian groups. The important ethnic markers shared by the young Moldovans, which bring them close to the other ethnic groups, are a common history, religion, and region of residence. The author concluded that it is crucial to think about the ethnic matrix of the Republic of Moldova, as ethnic groups can contribute to the building of a common future once they achieve a consensus.

Conclusion, Implications, and Future Directions

This short review of identity changes in post-Soviet countries demonstrates that it is important to consider the relations between the observed changes in identities in specific populations and the widespread worldwide changes in socioeconomic level and degree of modernity (Inglehart, 2016). Other factors that may affect these

identity changes are the dominant economic, political, and social structures (Rupnik, 1988), the status of majority or minority, and the long-term history of intergroup relations and religiosity (Fontaine et al., 2005). This means that in the long perspective, we need to develop a multilevel approach to study the multiple predictors and consequences of social identity changes in order to understand the deep nature and functions of social identification. As it continues to denote the integrity and identity of the human cognitive world, the concept of identity demonstrates inconsistency and variability. In this regard, we conclude that it might be productive to conduct the study of identity with the support of the qualitative methodology of latent changes and antinomies. These methodological developments might facilitate the study of complex and transforming cultural and psychological realities in the streams of their natural mixing and interaction.

Implications

The research on changing social identity in the post-Soviet space allows us to outline some possible practical implications of these studies for preserving interethnic peace and harmony in multicultural countries. Special attention should be paid to the development of a positive, unifying national (civil) identity, for which it is necessary to increase the ethnocultural competence of the members of all ethnic groups. It is necessary to facilitate access to historical memories and monuments of majority culture for representatives of ethnic minorities and migrants, which would help them to know and understand it more deeply. A similar introduction to the cultures of other peoples could be carried out for the members of majorities. Such measures will contribute to the mutual intercultural integration and the formation of a positive civic identity. Familiarity with the cultures of neighboring peoples and the experience of positive interethnic relations can lay a kind of psychological barrier to the formation of biases and stereotypes among Russians in the future.

It is also recommended that a special program be developed for schoolchildren and students that includes training in intercultural relations with exercises aimed at developing common collective identity in friendly communication and interaction based on grounds other than race, ethnicity, or religion.

Future Directions

It is important to note that not all identities mentioned in this section have been accounted for in this chapter, and this might provide some basis for future consideration. Possible areas of identity research in the future may include studies of positive inclusive identities in multicultural societies, their compatibility and incompatibility, as well as predictors and triggers of such disidentification and identities incompatibility. Analysis of changes and development of "global" identities, for example, "European" or "Asian," is a furthermore important direction for future research. We see significant research potential in the development of intergenerational research of

social identities in the post-Soviet space, as each generation is formed in new socio-cultural conditions and the inclusive identities of older generations lose their appeal to younger ones. Which foundations for social identification are becoming the leading ones in the context of digitalization and new global risks associated with social isolation (e.g., pandemics) can also be an intriguing challenge for researchers of social identity in rapidly changing global world.

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