

CONCEPT 'ROSSIYANE' IN THE CONTEXT OF IDENTITY OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS (BY MATERIALS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH)

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Abstract: The paper is devoted to the problem of identity of the population in the Russian province. The subject of the study is the concept "Rossiyane" (citizens of the Russian Federation), its perception and connection with civil, ethnic, and regional identity. The concept "Rossiyane" was widely introduced into the political consciousness under the President B.N. Yeltsin, because it was considered as a basis for the formation of Russian civil identity, but then, gradually, withdrew from the political discourse of the country. The paper was prepared on the basis of the materials of a sociological survey conducted in 2014 in the city of Naberezhnye Chelny. Naberezhnye Chelny is a unique case, since its population was formed in the 1970s-1980s as a result of mass migrations and has a high degree of ethnic differentiation. During the study, three generations of citizens were distinguished based on the period of their political socialization: the Brezhnev generation, the Gorbachev generation, and the Yeltsin generation. Specificity of perception and use of the concept "Rossiyane" for different generations of townspeople has been determined, interrelations of the concept "Rossiyane" with different levels of identity have been established, the attitude of the Russian and non-Russian population of the city to it and its use in everyday practices, the role of this concept in the formation of regional identity and relationship with the level of patriotism has been determined. The results of the work will be useful for further study of the problems on formation of civil identity in Russia and expand the basis for further theoretical generalizations. The next stage of the work may be a comparative study of the specifics on formation of civil identity in different regions of Russia, as well as a study of the political consciousness characteristics for different generations of the Russian population.

Key words: civil identity, levels of identity, concepts, Russia, population, generations.

1 Introduction

By the term "Rossiyane" we mean citizens of Russia regardless of their ethnicity. Although the term "Rossiyane" is found in a number of official political acts, nevertheless, the attitude to it is ambiguous in Russian society (Vasiliev, 2008). The term "Rossiyane" has been known since the 16th century, but it began to be actively introduced as a political concept only under the President B.N. Yeltsin. Then it was considered as a basis for the formation of the Russian Federation civil identity and uniting a supra-ethnic construct. In the following years, under the Presidents of V.V. Putin and D.A. Medvedev, this term has disappeared from the country's public political discourse. However, according to the author, the positive potential of this concept is far from exhausted (Taylor, 1994).

Since identity is an important tool for analyzing the social and political situation of groups and communities in the modern world (Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1994), and defines the activities of various political actors (Abdelal et al, 2006; Tuan, 2017), it seems important to consider the connection of the term "Rossiyane" with a civil, ethnic and regional identity. It seems necessary to explore how this concept is rooted in the minds of the population of the Russian Federation province, especially in the national republic. What are the patterns of its functioning and is it possible to update it?

The object of the study was the population of the city of Naberezhnye Chelny at the age of 18-47. The subject of the study was the specificity of the formation of civic identity among different age groups of the city's population in the context of the relationship with the concept of "Rossiyane" (Burke & Stryker, 2000; Villalobos Antúnez, 2016).

According to the hypothesis, the age group of 1966-1975 birth (38-47 years at the time of the survey) has passed a process of political socialization in the heyday of the USSR and is the bearer of the Soviet people identity. The age group of 1976-1985 birth (28-37 years) was socialized already in the conditions of the crisis and the collapse of the USSR, as well as the formation of a new Russian Federation identity, which is reflected in the eclectic nature of their life values. The world outlook of the age group of 1986-1995 birth (18-27 years) was completely formed already in the conditions of the new Russian Federation

statehood. Therefore, each of the generations has its own identity and specific perception of the concept of "Rossiyane".

The author has already conducted research on various aspects of the formation of the population's identity in the city of Naberezhnye Chelny. In particular, in 2014, a study was conducted on the nature of the self-identification of the city's students (Sakaev, 2016) and the specifics of young people's perception of multinationality as a characteristics of the Russian Federation society in the context of the civil identity formation [9]; in 2016, a comparative study of the levels of identity, including civil identity, of different age groups of the city's population was carried out. This paper is a logical continuation of the studies listed above; it complements and expands the results presented in them (Burke & Stets, 2000; Villalobos Antúnez, 2016).

2 Methodology

The paper is based on the materials of a representative sociological survey conducted in 2014 in the city of Naberezhnye Chelny. Naberezhnye Chelny is a unique case for the Russian reality, as the population of the city was formed by 90% only in the 1970s-1980s as a result of mass migrations. In the national composition of the city's population, 45% were Russians and 47% Tatars; however, more than 100 ethnic groups are also part of it. This makes it possible to consider the population of the city as a certain impression from contemporary Russian Federation society, reflecting various ethnic, regional and social groups. In the course of the study, three conditional generations of townspeople were identified based on the period of their political socialization. Although common in demography is to consider the duration of a generation in 20 years, but the author considers the right to use an approach that combines demographic criteria from the historical periodization, reflecting the dynamics of the political development of the society. Thus, as a part of the citizens, three conditional generations were distinguished for 10 years each: the "Brezhnev generation", the "Gorbachev generation" and the "Yeltsin generation".

The research was conducted in January-February 2014 by the method of questioning. The volume of the general population was 234,824 people of both sexes from the age of 18 to 47; the total sample size was 384 respondents. The selection of respondents was conducted centrally among representatives of various social groups, such as students of educational institutions, municipal employees, employees of municipal educational institutions, health and culture, workers and employees of industrial enterprises of the city, law enforcement officers, etc., and, in general, corresponded to the social structure of the city's population.

3 Results

In the course of the survey, the respondents were asked the question "Do you use the term "Rossiyane" in your everyday communication?" Among all respondents, 9.5% said that they use the term regularly, 10.3% - from time to time, 35% - rarely, 44.8% - do not use the term at all. So, the totality of respondents actually divided into two parts: 55% use this concept anyway, 45% - do not use. As to gender identity, this term is more often used by men (57%) than women (46%). By age groups, the distribution is as follows: in the group of 18-27 years, this term is used with a frequency of 51.5% of respondents, in the group of 28-37 years - 59.9%, in the group of 38-47 years - 52.8%. Thus, it seems that the term is most commonly used in the middle age group. At the same time, gender differences are also traced here: the proportion of men using this term one way or another is always higher than the proportion of women. So in the group of 28-37 years the term "Russians" is used by 61.9% of men and 42.3% of women, in the group of 28-37 years - 67.6% and 52.7%, in the group of 38-47 years - 71.4% and 40.9%, respectively.

That is, the term "Rossiyane" somehow used by about half of the city's population, most often by men, and most of all in the middle and older age group (the highest proportion of those who use this term regularly turned out to be middle-aged men group - 14.7%, and the highest proportion of those who use this term periodically, was revealed in the older age group - 32.1%).

What are the reasons for these differences? Perhaps, this term is psychologically more similar to men, especially since the female version of this term - "Rossiyanka" is rare. As for the age features, they are obviously due to the fact that more than half of the respondents of the younger age group entered the period of political socialization after the resignation of the President B.N. Yeltsin who was the main supporter of this concept.

The following question about the prevailing self-identification of the respondents was received: 13.2% consider themselves primarily representatives of their people, 23.7% - residents of the city of Naberezhnye Chelny, 12.6% - residents of the region, 43.9% - citizens of Russia. At the same time, if we compare the results of the questions about the attitude to the concept "Rossiyane" and the self-identification of the respondents, we have obtained the following data. Among those who said that the term " Rossiyane " is regularly used by them, 48.6% identified themselves primarily as representatives of their people and only 14.3% as citizens of the Russian Federation. At the same time, among those who use this term periodically or occasionally, the majority of respondents identified themselves primarily as citizens of Russia - 61.8% and 48.8%, respectively. Among those who never use this term, the largest share (39.7%) is for those with a predominantly civilian identity, while those with an ethnic or regional identity dominate account for only 14.1% and 12.2% respectively. So, for most of the respondents, the dominant ethnic identity is not an obstacle to the use of the term "Rossiyane". At the same time, we see that in respondents with a dominant civic identity, a significant number also do not correlate civic identity with the notion of " Rossiyane " (in fact, every sixth respondent of a sample population). Perhaps, there are those among them who consider it right to use the term "citizen of the Russian Federation", as well as those who consider it more correct to use the term "Russians" (Ruskiye).

It is also interesting to relate the attitude to the concept "Rossiyane" to the language characteristics of the respondents, identified through the question of the language of communication with the family. Among those who use the term "Rossiyane" permanently, periodically or occasionally, the overwhelming majority indicated Russian language as such (60.0%, 61.8% and 42.4%, respectively). There is also a high proportion of respondents who use Russian and native (non-Russian) languages in equal measure, or mostly Russian, but also native (non-Russian) language, and at the same time, periodically or occasionally use the term " Rossiyane" (34.3%, 32.3% and 55.2% respectively). Among those who answered that they never use the term "Rossiyane", 42.9% speak with the family only in Russian, 6.4 % speak only in their native (non-Russian) language, 27.6% in Russian and native (non-Russian) languages in equal, 16.7% - mainly in Russian, but also in native (non-Russian) language, 6.4% - mostly in native (non-Russian) language, but also in Russian.

This means that, ethnic Russians and assimilated representatives of other nations prevail among those using the term "Rossiyane". At the same time, it is noticeable that among ethnic Russians there are many who reject this term. And likewise, among the representatives of other peoples with a strong ethnicity (speaking in the family circle in their native language or predominantly in their native language) there is also a group of those who do not accept this term and do not apply it.

Interestingly to compare the ratio of answers to the question about the use of the term "Rossiyane" with the level of patriotism. In particular, the respondents were asked whether you feel proud for Russia (Rossiya)? Among those using the term "Rossiyane" on a regular basis, 94.3% experienced a feeling of pride for the country always or often, another 5.7%

experienced this feeling sometimes. The distribution of answers among those who periodically use the term "Rossiyane" - 55.8% and 44.1%, and in the group of respondents who use this term rarely - 48.0% and 46.4 %. That is, a regularity is revealed that the more often the respondent uses the term "Rossiyane", the more likely and the more often he/she felt a sense of pride for the country. Moreover, we emphasize that this survey was conducted prior to the beginning of the "Russian Spring" in 2014 and the growth of patriotism in Russian society associated with this. Although, it was also revealed a lot of those who feel pride for the country always or often or sometimes, but do not use the term "Rossiyane" (31.4% and 50.6%, respectively). It is probable that they are Russians and representatives of other peoples with a strong ethnicity who reject this concept as not conforming to their ethnic identity, but at the same time remain patriots of the country. However, in the same group (not using the term " Rossiyane"), there are significantly more people who do not feel pride for the country - 17.9% (in other groups - 0% and 5.6% respectively). In this case, the rejection of the concept "Rossiyane" can be interpreted as a consequence of a low level of patriotism.

It is also interesting how the use of the concept " Rossiyane " is combined with regional identity. A question was asked about whether respondents consider themselves "Tatarstanians" (that is, do they feel a strong political connection with the region of Tatarstan). 97.2% of respondents who answered that they use the term " Rossiyane" permanently, simultaneously consider themselves "Tatarstanians"; it turned out to be 79.5% among those who use this term periodically; among those who use rarely - 84.8%. It would seem that there is nothing special in these results, since the contradiction between civil and regional identity is not necessary, they could be positively combined. However, among those who said that they never use the term " Rossiyane ", 78.8% of respondents also consider themselves "Tatarstanians" and, in this case, we can state a challenge that regional identity throws (most likely, reinforced by a strongly pronounced non-Russian ethnic identity) the all-Russian civil identity.

4 Discussion

It seems important to correlate the obtained data with the results of other studies concerning the city of Naberezhnye Chelny.

So, within the framework of the study on the opinion of the city's students held in 2014, it was found that respondents often make different meanings in the term "Rossiyane ". If half of the respondents adhered to a civic approach to this concept, the other half used it as an ethnic feature. At that, among the first there were more men and non-Russian respondents, and women and Russian respondents among the latter (Sakaev, 2016).

The study of 2016 showed similar results. More nationalistic positions were then demonstrated by the younger generation (20-29 years), whereas middle-aged people (30-39 years old) adhered basically to the civil approach concerning the notion of "Rossiyane".

In 2016, the concept "Rossiyane" was already irrelevant for almost 50% of respondents, and only 20.8% of respondents tried to actively use it in everyday communication. And the most active people which used it was the generation of those who was 40-49 years (Sakaev, 2016).

In 2016, the concept of " Rossiyane " was more often used by Russians than Tatar respondents. At the same time, for some of the Russian respondents, it seemed an attempt to substitute the Russian ethnic identity. At the same time, in the generation of 20-29 years, the share of those who actively used the concept "Rossiyane" among Russians and Tatars was approximately the same, and in generations of 30-39 years and 40-49 years this share among Russians was significantly higher than among the Tatars.

Thus, the comparison of data from different years indicates a gradual reduction in the use of the term "Rossiyane " in

everyday practice. As before, this concept is mainly used by people of senior and middle age and, mainly, Russians; and it is less relevant for youth. Gender differences in the use of the term identified in 2014, in 2016 was not already so clearly manifested. For the majority of Russian and non-Russian respondents, the notion of "Rossiyane" does not conflict with their ethnic identity and they can be combined, what was confirmed by the data of 2014 and 2016. We managed to identify a certain correlation between the use of the term "Rossiyane" in everyday communication and the level of patriotism, but this issue needs further study, since the events of 2014 seriously changed the nature and level of patriotic attitudes in society. As for the correlation between the concept "Rossiyane" and regional identity, it should be noted that most respondents do not have antagonism between them, but for persons with a pronounced ethnic identity it seems that a regional identity can provoke such a contradiction.

5 Summary

To summarize, we note that the concept of "Rossiyane" is undoubtedly gradually being supplanted (especially after the events of the "Russian Spring") from public discourse and replaced by the concept "Russians". The processes in the political sphere, including the adoption in 2018 of the law on the selective procedure for the study of the state languages for the peoples of Russia, emphasize the policy taken by the federal elite to strengthen the Russification of the country and the strengthening of "Russianness" at the heart of Russia's statehood as opposed to the former, more tolerant approach. The latter was precisely associated with the concept of "Rossiyane" which emphasized the multinationality of Russian statehood. It is logical that the consequence of this was the weakening of the position of the "Rossiyane" concept in the political consciousness of the population, what was partly recorded by the comparison of the data of 2014 and 2016.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, the author would like to emphasize that, nevertheless, the potential of this concept for Russian political reality has not been fully exhausted, given that those generations are still participating in the active political life of the country so far, which took it deep enough (the "Gorbachev generation" and the "Brezhnev generation"). Changing the domestic political situation in the country can easily make this concept again in demand, especially if its return will be associated with a more successful and popular politician than President B.N. Yeltsin in the 1990s.

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