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The Problem of Youth Self-Identification in Modern Dagestan Society

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Abstract

Introduction. The study of the problems of self-identity formation of Dagestan youth in a multi-ethnic confessional environment is relevant in modern conditions. The purpose of the article is a comprehensive analysis of the problem of youth self-identification in the Republic of Dagestan through the prism of interaction of key social institutions, identifying the role of the institution of the family, the educational environment, the language situation and digital reality as key factors affecting the process of self-identification of modern youth.

Materials and Methods. This study is based on the methodology of systematic analysis and synthesis of relevant scientific publications on this issue. Such general theoretical methods of scientific research as analogy, generalization and systematization were used.

Results. Research shows that ethnic identity in Dagestan continues to be the core element of self-perception, but its content and formal markers are significantly transformed. Empirical evidence suggests the complex nature of the interaction between family attitudes and the values of a multinational environment. Along with ethnic, linguistic, cultural components in the formation of identity, religious identification remains one of the basic elements of the formation and development of the personality of a Dagestani. The identification environment in Dagestan is a system where traditions and innovations coexist.

Discussion and Conclusion. The analysis suggests that the problem of youth self-identification in Dagestan is not reduced to a binary choice between tradition and modernization. What is meant here is the formation of a complex, multi-level and situationally determined hybrid identity that integrates various, sometimes contradictory, elements. A modern young Dagestani man or woman often combines several identities: local (clan, village), ethnic (Avar, Dargin, Lezgin, etc.), all-Dagestan (as a resident of a multi-ethnic republic), all-Russian civic and, increasingly, global (through digital environments and academic mobility). The contradiction between traditional and global values, being a creative conflict, acts as a catalyst for personal growth and the formation of multicultural competence.

Keywords: self-identification, youth, Dagestan, ethnic identity, educational environment, language situation, traditional values

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Проблема самоидентификации молодежи в современном дагестанском обществе

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Аннотация

Введение. Исследование проблем формирования самоидентичности дагестанской молодежи в условиях полиэтноконфессиональной среды является актуальным в современных условиях. Целью статьи является комплексный анализ проблемы самоидентификации молодежи в Республике Дагестан через призму взаимодействия ключевых социальных институтов, выявление роли института семьи, образовательной среды, языковой ситуации и цифровой реальности как ключевых факторов, влияющих на процесс самоидентификации современной молодежи.

Материалы и методы. Данное исследование основано на методологии системного анализа и синтеза релевантных научных публикаций по данной проблематике. Использованы такие общетеоретические методы научного исследования, как аналогия, обобщение и систематизация.

Результаты исследования. Как показывают исследования, этническая идентичность в Дагестане продолжает оставаться стержневым элементом самовосприятия, однако ее содержание и формальные маркеры значительно трансформируются. Эмпирические данные свидетельствуют о сложном характере взаимодействия между семейными установками и ценностями многонациональной среды. Наряду с этнической, языковой, культурной составляющих в формировании идентичности одним из базовых элементов становления и развития личности дагестанца остается и религиозная идентификация. Идентификационная среда в Дагестане является системой, где сосуществуют традиции и инновации.

Обсуждение и заключение. Проведенный анализ позволяет утверждать, что проблема самоидентификации молодежи в Дагестане не сводится к бинарному выбору между традицией и модернизацией. Речь идет о формировании сложной, многоуровневой и ситуативно обусловленной гибридной идентичности, интегрирующей различные, порой противоречивые, элементы. Современный молодой дагестанец или дагестанка зачастую совмещает в себе несколько идентичностей: локальную (род, село), этническую (аварец, даргинец, лезгин и пр.), общедагестанскую (как житель полиэтничной республики), общероссийскую гражданскую и, все чаще, глобальную (через цифровые среды и академическую мобильность). Противоречие между традиционными и глобальными ценностями, будучи креативным конфликтом, выступает катализатором личностного роста и формирования мультикультурной компетентности.

Ключевые слова: самоидентификация, молодежь, Дагестан, этническая идентичность, образовательная среда, языковая ситуация, традиционные ценности

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Introduction. Modern Dagestan society is characterized by exceptional ethnocultural diversity, which creates a unique context for identification processes in society. The relevance of the study of the problems of youth self-identification in modern Dagestan society is due to the unique symbiosis of traditions of the multi-ethnic and confessional environment with modern global values. Trying to correlate themselves with a particular social group, modern Dagestan youth is forced to balance in the conditions of dynamic interaction of traditional Caucasian values, a complex system of interethnic relations and the growing influence of global trends. The purpose of the article is a comprehensive analysis of the problem of youth self-identification in modern Dagestan society through the prism of interaction of key social institutions. To achieve the goal, the following tasks are set: to analyze the content and dynamics of the ethnic identity of Dagestan youth; to identify the role of the family and the higher education system as complementary factors in the formation of identity; to determine the place and role of religious identification in the general system of social identification of young Dagestanis; to assess the impact of the language situation, in particular, the problem of preserving native languages and the dominance of the Russian language as a means of interethnic communication on the processes of self-identification; to describe the impact of modern digital technologies on the identification process of Dagestan youth.

Materials and Methods. This study is based on the methodology of systematic analysis and synthesis of relevant scientific publications on this issue. Based on their analysis, the dynamic interaction of ethnic, religious and cultural identities is considered. Such general theoretical methods of scientific research were used as analogy, generalization and systematization, which make it possible to move from describing specific manifestations of identity to understanding it as a complex, structured socio-psychological and cultural phenomenon.

Results. Research shows that ethnic identity in Dagestan continues to be the core element of self-perception, but its content and formal markers are significantly transformed. On the one hand, the family retains its role as a key institution for the primary transmission of ethnocultural models, where «national identity develops at an early age in the process of upbringing in the family and is based on a certain tradition or its elements, cultivated as “representation of tradition” [1, p. 275]. On the other hand, immersion in a multinational educational environment within the republic, and especially in universities outside Dagestan, contributes to the formation of a more flexible, multicultural consciousness, “erosion” of rigid ethnic borders.

Empirical evidence suggests the complex nature of the interaction between family attitudes and the values of a multinational environment. The study involving Dagestan students of Moscow universities demonstrates that family values representing ethnic experience and the values of a multinational environment actively interact, and their interaction becomes one of the key factors in the ethnic identification of a person throughout life. At the same time, the gender specificity of this process is noted: “in most cases, women are more conservative and more likely to remain committed to ethnic behavior derived from the family or their ethnic environment” [1, p. 275].

However, by senior years, there is a leveling of statistically significant differences in the assessment of traditional values between young men and women, which confirms the hypothesis of the transformative effect of prolonged stay in a foreign culture environment. According to D.G. Saibulaeva, in the structure of the personal identity of modern students, identity statuses are dominant, characterized by a low level of their development, orientation towards social and family ties to the detriment of the orientation towards self-determination, independent choice and self-realization [2, p. 136].

Along with ethnic, linguistic, cultural components in the formation of identity, one of the basic elements of the formation and development of the personality of a Dagestani is religious identification. “The foundations of identity are laid in the family, and then in the process of further socialization, self-identification with a particular religion is already more independent. The very process of forming a religious identity within the framework of social identification of a person is bilateral. Since religion affects the general socialization of a person, and elements of social identification are manifested in the formation of religious identity, correlated with a specific religion, culture and lifestyle. Under the influence of religion, the foundations of the value preferences of the individual are laid, the most significant nuances, views, principles on which their daily existence is based” [3, p. 322].

The linguistic situation in Dagestan, characterized by a complex interweaving of ethnic and linguistic markers, is of particular importance in the context of self-identification. According to available data, more than 25 Dagestan languages are in serious danger of extinction according to UNESCO classification. The historically established ethno-language system, where the differences between some dialects are so great that their speakers sometimes do not understand each other, led to the need for a mediator language [4]. If in the past this function was performed on the plain by the Kumyk language, in the mountainous Dagestan by the Avar language, now the Russian language has unconditionally become the language of interethnic communication. This creates a complex identification node: the native language continues to act as a powerful symbol of ethnicity and a “means of ethnic self-identification”, while the Russian language is an instrument of social mobility, access to education and integration into the all-Russian space. As a result, translanguaging, that is, the ability to switch freely between language codes, is a characteristic feature of modern Dagestan youth.

The identification environment is a system where tradition and innovation coexist. In the age of high technologies, the virtualization of society leads to a change in the hierarchical relations between local and global processes [5]. In the information society, what the traditional society was based on is destroyed – the integrity of ethnocultural being, the loss of the usual ways of transmitting information from the older generation to the younger one. The connection of generations is minimized, since peer communities or virtual space now become a connecting factor [6, p. 41]. Passion for social networks, life for show have become an integral part of the life of Dagestan youth. The identity of a person is transformed along with the changes taking place in the modern world, the criteria for identification are expanding, some of which are irretrievably lost, but at the same time, in order to maintain our selfhood, a certain stability is needed that fixes us in the new sociocultural reality [7, p. 141]. Trying to adapt to a rapidly transforming world, young people want to find basic identifications for themselves.

The identity space can simultaneously include ethnic, regional and civic levels, coexisting and actualizing depending on the context. Multilevel identification implies belonging to a complex culture, for example, to Russian or Dagestan. The great poet of Dagestan Rasul Gamzatov, determining the meaning of this phenomenon, said that in Dagestan he is Avar, in Moscow – Dagestan, and abroad – Russian. The multilevel structure of identification is a prerequisite for the stable existence of any multi-ethno-confessional society [8, p. 72].

Discussion and Conclusion. The analysis suggests that the problem of self-identification of youth in Dagestan is not reduced to a binary choice between tradition and modernization [8, 9]. What is meant here is the formation of a complex, multi-level and situationally determined hybrid identity that integrates various, sometimes contradictory, elements. A modern young Dagestan man or woman often combines several identities: local (clan, village), ethnic (Avar, Dargin, Lezgin, etc.), all-Dagestan (as a resident of a multi-ethnic republic), all-Russian civic and, more often, global (through digital environments and academic mobility). The contradiction between traditional and global values, being a creative conflict, acts as a catalyst for personal growth and the formation of multicultural competence. The threat of the disappearance of languages is an anthropological problem that requires finding a balance between the functional necessity of the Russian language and the preservation of the unique linguistic heritage of Dagestan.

Study limitations are due to its descriptive nature and reliance on secondary data. For a deeper and more representative analysis, new large-scale empirical studies are needed directly in the Republic of Dagestan using qualitative and quantitative methods. Prospects for further research are seen in the study of the specifics of identification processes in the digital environment, as well as in the development of pedagogical models that contribute to the harmonious integration of Dagestan youth into the all-Russian community while maintaining the ethnocultural diversity of the region.

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