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Regional Identity: Poliparadigmality of Reading

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of the changed paradigms in the study of regional identity in the context of global civilizational processes of the present: from ontological approaches to constructivist and anti-constructivist approaches, discourses of «social engineering», multiprojectivity and analysis of the region's identity as a «quasi-corporation».

Constructivist arguments in the study of regional identity are gradually becoming an intellectual mainstream in modern social theories. Within the framework of the constructivist approach, domestic researchers distinguish a number of variations, such as: political, cultural, instrumental, social constructivist. At the same time, in the newest explorations of regional identity, an anti-constructivist approach has emerged, proceeding from the fact that regional identity is still formed in the minds of citizens spontaneously, under the influence of the habitat and events of common history.

The discursive approach to regional identity rejects static approaches to the consideration of identity and focuses on the interdependent nature of the region and regional identity; focuses on the cognitive picture of perception of reality, taking into account the construction of a certain group of actors and is the most appropriate tool for reflecting a dynamic and volatile reality. In more detail in the article new discourses are considered – «social engineering», multiprojectivity and quasi-corporativity in the study of regional identity. At the same time, the diversity of discourses, in the author's opinion, generates not so much disagreements and dissonance of intersecting meanings as their complementarity.

Keywords: regional identity, identity, discourse, ontological approach, constructive approach, multi-project approach, discourse of «social engineering».

Research area: theory and history of culture.

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Региональная идентичность: полипарадигмальность прочтения

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Аннотация: Статья посвящена анализу сменившихся социально-теоретических парадигм в исследовании региональной идентичности в условиях глобальных процессов современности: от онтологических к конструктивистским и антиконструктивистским подходам, дискурсам «социальной инженерии», мультипроектности и к анализу идентичности региона как «квазикорпорации».

Конструктивистские аргументы при изучении региональной идентичности постепенно становятся интеллектуальным мейстримом в современных социальных теориях. Дискурсивный подход к региональной идентичности отвергает статичность при исследовании идентичности и акцентирует внимание на взаимозависимом характере региона и региональной идентичности; на когнитивной картине восприятия действительности с учетом конструирования ее определенной группой акторов: является наиболее подходящим инструментарием рефлексии динамичной и изменчивой реальности. Дискурсивность феномена региональной идентичности имеет ряд преимуществ: дискурс – порождение объективной реальности; многообразие дискурсов позволяет рассматривать феномен региональной идентичности как «гибридное» и синтезирующее образование. Дискурсивность создает резонанс и взаимодополняемость пересекающихся смыслов; неисчерпаемость дискурсов порождается множественностью текущих изменений региональной идентичности; а также дискурс – важное идеологически-ценностное звено коммуникационной цепи. Более подробно в статье рассматриваются новые дискурсы – «социальной инженерии», мультипроектности и квазикорпоративности в изучении региональной идентичности. Обращение к проблемам региональной идентичности как социо-, культуuroобразующих основ региона, фактора интенсификации его социальных процессов, залога его социальной устойчивости и выживаемости своевременно и актуально, поскольку ослабление и потеря идентичности способствует переходу от «эпохи обустроенности» к «эпохе бездомности» (М. Бубер).

Ключевые слова: региональная идентичность, идентичность, дискурс, онтологический подход, конструктивный подход, мультипроектный подход, дискурс «социальной инженерии».

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Introduction

The significance of a theoretical study of regional identity for understanding the formation and functioning of regions is determined primarily by the fact that it is the culture-marking basis of a region, a tool for recreating a specific collective sociality, which sets the standard for anthropological imagination and is a product of collective memory (Dokuchaev, 2011: 118–119).

As is known, the study of identity began in the framework of psychoanalysis from the 1920s, within the framework of sociology – from the 1930s, and it has been actualized in political science since the middle of the twentieth century. In the 1990s, the processes of globalization, which coincided with the processes of regionalization, as well as with the crises of two institutions of the industrial society – the national state and the

family, inevitably led to more attention to the local forms of identity, including the regional ones. The flow of interpretations of identity has become expansive, its research is avalanche-like.

In the 10s of the 21st century, new trends in the study of the topic of identity emerged: consideration of identity problems in the context of general civilizational processes; appeal to the features of the discursive practices of identity; understanding of the multi-level of its manifestation; introducing the problems of conscious identity construction into the scientific revolution; description of the regional practice of Russian identity, etc. Methodological problems of the study of regional identity were formalized, related to the native subjects, the degree of awareness and rationality of the regional identity; the formation mechanism; «temporal» and «spatial» parameters of the formation of regional identity; the degree of influence of identity on behavior; the degree of actualization in the mind; the degree of influence of the social parameters of the group to which an individual belongs, on the nature of his identification, etc. (Popova O.V. 2011: 13–29).

Such a multiplicity of new perspectives on the problems of regional identity led to the birth of new paradigms in the study of regional identity, which this article is devoted to the analysis of.

Theoretical framework

The early stages of the development of knowledge about identity were due to the ontological approach as an explanatory paradigm. According to this approach, it was possible to understand the essence of identity only by viewing it within the framework of a specific socio-historical and cultural context. While the fact of belonging / identification remained constant, the elements around which the sense of belonging lined up could change in accordance with changing social conditions. Identity included the allocation by the subject of its social value, the meaning of its being, ideas about the past, present and future, value orientations. At the same time, it was considered as a procedural phenomenon (Golovneva, 2014, 2015).

Gradually, the concept of «identity» was filled with different, but still correlated mean-

ings in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, cultural studies. The social aspect of identity was comprehensively studied by G.H. Mead, A. Tajfel, J. Turner, P. Sorokin, T. Parsons, M. Heidegger, E. Husserl, M. Scheler, and others. The fundamental ideas of identity research were E. Erikson's (Erikson, 2006), where identity was defined as the central integrative quality of adaptive human behavior in two aspects: «I am identity» and social identity. Many of Erikson's ideas are now applicable to the study of regional identity: the idea of identity crisis as a necessary step towards the formation of a qualitatively new, more mature identity; the idea of positive and negative identities (when individuals consider deception and false meanings in its forms), etc.

The main direction of the study of regional identity at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries was constructivism, which originated in the framework of the discourse of globalistics. The formation of the constructivist approach was greatly influenced by the provisions of the socio-constructivist theory, which goes back to the works of Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, Fredrik Barth, Pierre Bourdieu, Manuel Castells, Michele Lamont, etc.

In the constructivist interpretation, regional / territorial identity was a «bricolage» (C. Levi-Strauss term) of geographical images, local myths and cultural landscapes that form a mental mosaic at a specific point in time (Zamyatin D.N. 2011: 198). The last decade has given new concepts and a deep ontological, postmodern, constructivist, discursive understanding of regional identity in the works of P. Gurevich, M. Krylov, S.G. Pavlyuk, O.B. Podvintsev and others; young researchers – A.A. Alaudinov, M.V. Nazukina, A.M. Karpenko, N.A. Levochkina, I. Dokuchaeva and others. A number of our works are devoted to this problem (Kazakova, 2013).

Statement of the problem

In the context of postmodern theories, identity has ceased to be self-evident and has become detached from socially hematological entities. From metaphysical, it has become contextual. The emergence of the possibility

of changing identity, its changes in the usual, unchanging matters, the autonomy of existence. The mobility and variability of the identity code led to the emergence of new versions (Rashkovsky, 2011: 151–154).

The constructivist approach to the understanding of identity led to the understanding of identity as a synthetic phenomenon. He brought a number of new phenomena to the understanding of the nature of identity: the mismatch of cultural boundaries and processes of acculturation; the increasing role of the economic and political ideals of self-determination of modern man in relation to the «generic» features («blood and soil», language, religious affiliation, etc.); unlimited possibilities for manipulation of mass consciousness by the modern state; growth of tendencies towards regionalization of space, stimulating the appearance of hybrid forms of identity, etc. (Malygina, 2015: 223).

Methods

The discourse of the subject of regional identity is an unusually debatable and lively topic. There are several reasons for this: firstly, discursiveness rejects static approaches to the consideration of identity. Secondly, the emphasis is on the cognitive picture of the perception of reality, taking into account its construction by a certain group of actors. In the era of «social mobilization», primarily political, this is more than relevant (Alaudinov, 2015: 50). And finally, in the modern era, which is distinguished by the «compression» of time and information, discursiveness is most suitable as a tool for the reflection of a dynamic and changeable reality.

Regional Identity in Cultural Discourse

The discourse of the phenomenon of regional identity has a number of features:

Firstly, it is a product of objective reality, but on the other hand – discourses are created purposefully, constructed by the efforts of the political and cultural elite. That is why the phenomenon of regional identity is logical to consider as a hybrid entity, generated by various discourses.

Secondly, the diversity of discourses gives rise to both the discord of intersecting mean-

ings, and their complementarity, which expands ideas about the nature and diversity of regional identity.

Thirdly, the inexhaustibility of approaches to the concept of regional identity is due to its continuing changes in space and time. Because of this, regional identity is a constantly generated and changeable phenomenon, it can be injected, dispersed, split up, multiplied, actualized («articulated regional identity») and weakened («disappearing regional identity») (Golovneva, 2014: 203).

Fourth, discourse is an important agent of the communication chain. Discourse is ideological, since it is always the point of view of the speakers (Bogomyakov, 2007: 11).

A number of researchers conditionally generalize cultural discourses of regional identity into groups: philosophical, historical, mythological, political, religious, artistic, etc.

The philosophical discourse contains an essentialist idea about the conditionality of regional identity by a number of factors – territorial, ethnocultural, linguistic, religious, historical and cultural, etc. The instrumentalist idea talks about the basic functions of identity, such as psychological defense in the world of alienation and the mobilization of social groups to protect their interests. The idea of constructivists is about the spatio-temporal and situational relativity of the content of regional identity.

Within the framework of historical and mythological discourse, there is a tendency of regional subjects to actualize and raise the history and culture of their region (Bogomyakov, 2007: 199). Additional, expanded bases of social consolidation, «kinship paradigms» appear in the process of the formation of civil, national identities.

Political discourse is based on the idea of Henri Lefebvre that in modern reality space representations most often are as both representations of power and ideology (Lefebvre, 2015).

The discourse of regional identity takes a religious form when sacralizing objects, canonizing texts of «sacred history» and adhering to the power of custom and tradition relating to the religious history of the region.

Artistic discourse consists in the awareness of representatives of regional culture adherents of a certain artistic tradition, expressed in folk and professional artistic creativity. Particular importance in the construction of the image of the region here belongs to the local literature, which comprehends the history and present of the region in an emotional and sensual context, through «implantation», «feeling» in the events of past years, their subjective, personal assessment (Bogomyakov, 2007:11). (For example, a study on the «Ural matrix» of the writer Alexei Ivanov, where the features of «transformation», «labor», «captivity» accurately and characteristically describe the features of the Ural identity).

Regional Identity in the Discourse of «Social Engineering»

In recent decades, new forms of «project approach» have emerged in the design of regional identity, understanding of which occurs in terms of «region-building», «network concept», «new regionalism», etc. Constructed regional identity becomes an instrument of social and political mobilization of the population, a kind of «social engineering».

«Social engineering» is a sociocultural term that represents a set of approaches of applied social sciences focused on targeted actions to change the organizational structures that determine human behavior. Often social engineering is opposed to historicism as the principle of the evolutionary development of regions. Social engineering can be implemented in the context of social projects, with maximum involvement and responsibility for its implementation of all target groups. In this case, the formed regional identity, based on the application of the method of «measuring brand identity» by D. Aaker, can be considered in three ways: «region as a product»; «region as a person»; «region as a symbol» (Aaker, 2003: 97–99). Western scientific thought has formed a broad theoretical basis for constructing a regional identity based on looking at a region as a quasi-corporation, when the region is analyzed through similar features with a large corporate structure that implements its socio-cultural and economic

projects, has unique competitive advantages, etc. (Bazhenova, Bazhenov, 2015: 151–168). Such an approach makes it possible to view the region in a wider context of interaction and mutual influence of the internal environment of the region and world society, the global world.

The identity of the region in the «quasi-corporations» discourse

«Social Engineering» allows you to adapt the positions of the system-integration theory of the enterprise to the study of regional identity. In this case, in the opinion of E. Bazhenova and S. Bazhenov, seven layers are distinguished in the space of each region, combined into two systems: mental and functional (Bazhenova, Bazhenov, 2015: 151–154). The mental system itself includes the mental, cultural, institutional and cognitive layer. The four layers of the mental system form the socio-economic genotype of the region as an interconnected set of inherited and slowly changing characteristics of regional identity. The change of this structure occurs only in a relatively long-term period, and reproduction, preservation and evolution is provided by the internal mechanisms of heredity (Bazhenova, Bazhenov, 2015: 154–158).

The functional system includes organizational-technological, imitational and the historical layer (Bazhenova, Bazhenov, 2015: 151–154). According to scientists, a multi-project approach in promoting the unique characteristics of a region as a combination of commercially attractive projects inevitably causes a multiplier effect in its development.

Conclusion

Identity, according to S. Huntington, is as obligatory as it is not distinct, since it is an implicit set that is not amenable to rigorous definition and is not subject to standard measurement methods (Huntington, 2004:16). Nevertheless, the regional focus of cultural studies proves its heuristic potential for understanding large-scale phenomena and processes of research of regional identity.

Appeal to the problems of regional identity as a socio, culture-forming bases in the region,

a factor of intensification of its social processes, collateral social sustainability and survival, is timely and relevant since the weakening and loss of identity contributes to the transition from the «era of the equipped» to the «era of homelessness» (M. Buber).

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