

## The empiric study of ethnic identity of the Tatar (based on the Republic of Tatarstan)

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the analysis of ethnic identity problem of the principal nation of Tatarstan (the Tatars). This work is devoted to the consciousness of their ethnicity in dependence on whether they live in polylingual or monolingual environment. It was experimentally proved that ethnic identification of the Tatars depends both on their social status (workers-intellecutuals, living in the countryside; workers-intellecutuals, living in the city) and on the environment of socialization (mono or bilingual environments). It means that they manifest their national ethnicity in different ways.

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### Introduction

In native ethnic psychology and ethnic sociology, the ethnic self-consciousness - the individuals' consciousness of their own belonging to a definite ethnos - has been the main subject of theoretical and empirical investigations for a long time. The traditions of study of ethnic self-consciousness have a vast theoretical and empirical base. This problem was actively and productively studied by Y.V. Arutyunyan, L.M. Drobizheva, V.S. Kondratiev, A.A. Susokolov. Later it was distinguished a notion of ethnic consciousness as a wider phenomenon, containing the whole aggregate of representations of the ethnos members about their own and other ethnic groups, including social-psychological stereotypes.

Ethnosocial representations can be classified as group representations, differing from the individual ones by their universality, consistency and inter-generational continuity. They are formed as a product of internal cultural socialization and in interaction with the neighboring ethnic groups. A major part of these representations is a result of perception of the nation's history, culture, traditions and statehood. A central place among ethnosocial representations is taken by the images of proper and other ethnic groups, which constitute the main content of ethnic identity as cognitive-motivational core of ethnic self-consciousness and implicitly present the subject's relations in interethnic contacts.

Ethnicity or ethnical identity are the quite new notions, came into common use only from the middle of the 20th century (the first use of the term ethnicity goes under the name of American sociologist D.Rissman in 1953).

The notion ethnic self-consciousness and ethnic identity are frequently considered as

synonyms, however, they are not exactly identical notions [1, p. 20].

Thus, ethnophor finds its place in multinational environment and produces the behavioral models inside and outside his group. The stability of positive ethnic identity of the subject creates an image of psychosocial safety and stability of existence. In other words, the ethnic identity is a result of cognitive emotional process of the individuum's self-determination in social space in relation to various ethnic groups. It is not only consciousness, but also evaluation, experience of his belonging to ethnos [2, p. 142].

Although at the same time the sensual sphere of national self-consciousness is connected with the person's understanding of his relation to cultural heritage and way of life of his nation in terms of self-determination as a representative of this ethnos [3 p.24-28]. This component of self-consciousness reflects motives, orientations, wishes, and the person's interest in self-development, in enrichment of "contact points" with culture, history and modern life of his nation.

People's understanding of their ethnicity significantly varies in dependence on whether they live in polylingual or monolingual environment. The situation of interethnic communication provides the individuum with the opportunities to acquire knowledge about the peculiarities of its own and other ethnic groups, promoting the development of interethnic understanding and formation of communicative skills. The lack of experience of interethnic communication conditions, on the one hand, less propensity for similar contacts, and on the other hand, less interest to proper ethnicity. Ethnic identity is perceived more distinctly, and the knowledge about different groups are acquired

earlier, if a man is being socialized in polyethnic environment.

The character of feelings, experienced towards proper group, and their relations reflect the dynamics of group image from the viewpoint of its attractiveness - unattractiveness, and influence on the relations with other groups [4, p. 38].

### Procedure

To reveal the described phenomenon, it was carried out the empiric investigation of ethno-contact group of Tatars, living on the territory of Tatarstan. The experimental investigation involved the representatives of Tatar nationality, grouped as per features of national and social status, (intelligence from public health service and education, and also workers of manufactures, transport and trade), place of socialization and place of residence (urbanized or rural environment, 200 people in total).

The transformation of ethnic identity of ethnophors was evaluated by means of scale procedure of G.U. Soldatova [4] in comply with three vectors: hypo-identity (ethnic nihilism, ethnic indifference); hyper-identity (ethnic egoism, ethnic isolation, ethnic fanaticism) and positive ethnic identity. The last one is characterized by the balance of mutual acceptance of proper and neighboring community that is why it gets the status of "standard".

The indices of ethnic identity were calculated as per the following formula:

$$P = \frac{(1n_1 + 2n_2 + 3n_3 + 4n_4 + 5n_5)}{5N},$$

where  $n_1, \dots, n_5$  is a number of replies in the questionnaire with the ascribed points from 1 to 5.

N is a number of respondents.

The fidelity of differences was determined as per Mann-Whitney U test for small samples.

### Main part

Based on mathematical treatment, the ethnical groups of Tatars had the determined statistically significant data, specifying the ethnic identity (The results of the investigation are presented in Table 1, 2).

From the numerical expressions of the representatives of bilingual layer of population, we can see, that the transformation of the Tatars' self-consciousness did not exceed the values of positive ethnic identity for their ethnic group [see positive ethnic identity 0,38-0,40].

It shows that the ethnophors, living in bilingual urban environment, the nation's interests, as a whole, prevail over the others. At the same time,

the indices of hyper-identity of the urban bilinguals, apart from social layers, are significantly higher than the ones of the rural people. In this case, we mean the indices of ethnic isolation, both of intellectuals and the representatives of workers.

**Table 1. The indices of ethnic identity (the TATARS bilinguals)**

		Hypo-identity		Positive ethnical identity	Hyper-identity		
		Ethnic nihilism	Ethnic indifference	Norm	Ethnic egoism	Ethnic isolation	Ethnic fanaticism
T A T A R S	Intellectuals	0,15	0,28	0,40	0,19	0,33	0,24
	workers	0,15	0,28	0,40	0,19	0,33	0,25
T A T A R S	Intellect.	0,17	0,22	0,39	0,18	0,18	0,22
	workers	0,18	0,26	0,38	0,24	0,21	0,25

This fact can cause tension in communication with representatives of other ethnic groups. It shall be noted that the representatives of urban bilingual environment have the extreme form of hyper-identity. If combined with ethnic isolation, it can testify about readiness to do everything for the sake of ethnic interests, denial of right to use the resources and social privileges by other nations, at that, all other actions are good, up to limitation of civil rights of non-title nations. Ethnic informing identity and ethnic fanaticism are frequently called nationalism.

The Tatars stronger manifest their ethnicity, which is more emotionally expressed by the representatives of humanitarian intellectuals [see Table 1]. The reason is the cooperative productive activity, where ethnicity turns out to be a subordinate feature. The leading qualities become the following: professionalism, personal orientations, age, social status. The Tatars historically differed by their national cohesion, especially when being in diaspora far from ethno-territorial motherland. In polyethnic communities they tend to form kindreds based on national property. The hyper-identity of bilingual Tatars, living in urbanized environment, can acquire the features of ethnic egoism and ethnic isolation. Similar hyper-identity of the Tatars with their own group in multinational cultural environment can be connected with the tendency for separatism with the relevant nation, and with orientation for separate development of ethnic traditions. The present hyper-identity, in our opinion, also testifies about different values, worked out by socialization. Thus, M. Rokich

fairly assumed that the sources of values are traced in culture, society and personality [5]. S. Shvarts and V. Bilsky give the similar definition of value, as "the notion" and "the persuasion" [6].

The representatives of **Tatar nation, living in multinational environment**, are undisposed to bright manifestation of their ethnicity, at the same time, the rural Tatars have the high level of hyper-identity, manifesting itself in ethnical egoism, ethnical isolation and ethnical fanaticism. Ethnicity, national background of the Tatars is considered as something important, absolute preference for their own over the rest. The result of hyper-identity is the isolation of representatives of neighboring ethnic groups. The reason is the primitive rural way of life, the relation to traditions and historical past, what is an integral part of rural behavioral model.

Based on the executed analysis of values of Tatar representatives, socialized in bilingual environment and living in urban and rural area, the following conclusion can be made:

1. ethnic Tatars express their ethnic identity brighter; the social and linguistic environment, where their socialization took place, are of no importance.

2. two categories of population manifest their ethnicity: rural Tatars of different social layers and the Tatars-migrants, placing themselves to urban intellectuals in the first generation. Understandably, that the period of adolescence is of maximum importance for formation of ethnical identity, when the personality formation finishes. Nevertheless, it is important, that the process of identity formation can never be finished.

The table data shows that the Tatars of different social layers, passing through socialization in monolingual environment and further living in urbanized environment, are less inclined to identify themselves, as a nation. It points to the fact that the urban ethnophors monolinguals, living in urban environment, are tolerant to the other ethnic groups, as well as to their own. Positive ethnic identity for this group of test people is simultaneously a condition for independent, stable existence and a condition of peaceful intercultural exchange with neighboring nation. The monolingual Tatars of this social layer are characterized by natural preference of their own cultural values, at that, they are ready for ethnic contacts with national ethnic neighbors (see Table).

**The urban Tatars-monolinguals**, considering themselves to be intellectuals in the first generation, are more inclined to indifferent relation to their own ethnic background. They demonstrate greater indifference to their ethnicity, than the representatives of the working class. Ethnic Tatars

are inclined to conceal their ethnicity, what can be seen as per the value of ethnic indifference (0,23). Despite the living in urbanized environment, the socialization took place in rural area. Emigrating from the rural area and being educated in the city, the Tatar monolinguals call themselves urban intellectuals. Here are traced their tendencies to build mutually acceptable relations with the representatives of neighboring nations, to borrow their elements of culture, world outlook and way of life. In other words, we are to speak about the linguistic, multicultural personality of this part of population, and about personality, incarnated into language and culture by the neighboring nation [7].

**Table 2. The indices of ethnical identity (the TATARS monolinguals)**

		Hypo-identity		Positive ethnical identity	Hyper-identity		
		Ethnic nihilism	Ethnic indifference	Norm	Ethnic egoism	Ethnic isolation	Ethnic fanaticism
T A T A R S	Intellectuals	0,1	0,23	<b>0,38</b>	0,10	0,11	0,7
	workers	0,09	0,19	<b>0,30</b>	0,14	0,15	0,16
T A T A R S	Intellect.	0,19	0,25	<b>0,43</b>	0,25	0,23	0,24
	workers	0,18	0,28	<b>0,40</b>	0,24	0,24	0,29

At the same time, the data of investigation showed that rural Tatars, whose socialization took place in monolingual environment, stronger manifest their ethnicity. In other words, M. Mid fairly noted, that "...the way of life, and the knowledge of the fact, how the original traditions and customs are used, and people are aware of objective facts of their existence - all this requires thorough investigation" [8].

Despite the social status, the representatives of this ethnic group tend to hyper-identity. It is traces as per the values of ethnic egoism, ethnic isolation and ethnic fanaticism (0,24-0,29), testifying about explicit separatism of the Tatar, about their drive for restraint and keeping the distance from neighboring cultures. This has a negative impact on inter-ethnic relations. A drive of any nation for isolation from other nationalities has economic and social-psychological background. Ethnic isolation is explained by the desire of national community to avoid assimilation, not to lose the uniqueness of their national culture.

Ethnic isolation is also conditioned by national formation of public character. For instance, over a period of many centuries, a drive of Chinese nation for isolation from penetration of European

civilization is explained, firstly, by persistent efforts of European countries to turn China into their colonial appendix, and, secondly, by the peculiarities of national character of the Chinese, namely by their conservatism and feeling of self-containment. The peculiarities of national character, in particular, the subtle senses of freedom and independence are the reason of isolated way of live of some nations. There is an obvious cause-and-effect link between the national formation of character, ethnic nihilism and ethnic isolation. Ethnic isolation is the manifestation of national character to no small degree.

Thus, based on the analysis of ethnic identity of Tatar and the data, presented in the table, it is possible to make the following conclusions:

### Conclusions

1. Self-identification of the rural Tatars manifests itself more brightly; the linguistic environment, where they were socialized, is of no importance; both rural and urban ethnophors, socializing in bilingual environment, underline their ethnicity.

2. Two categories of population state about their national identity more aggressively: the rural Tatars, irrespectively of the social layers, and the rural emigrants, considering themselves to be urban intellectuals in the first generation.

It also testifies about the formation of "individualism", which is a general sociocultural value both in whole and for individual representatives [9, H.Triandis, 1986].

1. The ethnic Tatars strongly express their ethnicity, which is represented in different degree in various layers.

2. It is more expressed in rural emigrants, who got higher humanitarian education and settled in urban environment.

3. The rural Tatars, irrespectively of the social layers, represented by them; the linguistic environment, where they were socialized, does not affect their self-identification. It is connected with the

person's identification of himself as a bearer of culture of his nation, being an important feature of self-consciousness [10].

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