

The problem of identification in mixed families

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Abstract. The article considers theoretical and practical issues of ethnic identification of the ethnic Tartars who reside in the Tyumen region. It provides a comparative analysis of the results of studies carried out in 2010 and 2013, which allowed identifying positive trends that took place in the ethnic self-consciousness of the Tartar population during the past three years. It also analyses the criteria of determining the ethnicity, the criteria, which make people of the same ethnicity closer and which differentiate them. The summary of the article is the conclusion that ethnic self-identification is rather stable and positive.

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Introduction

The problem of self-identification in Russia is of special importance for the residents of polyethnic regions, one of which is the Tyumen region. The processes that take place in the studied region actualize the priority of ethnic and civil values for various ethnic groups in the circumstances of polycultural diversity.

Digestion of ethnic values starts in the childhood during the initial socialization of a child in the family. In the development of an individual, the decisive element of the ethnic identity is the feeling of permanence and stability of ethnic characteristics, which is reinforced in the behavior and consciousness of the human at the age of 12-13. For realization of ethnic differences “beside mere perception, more complicated mechanisms of sociocultural identification and inter-generational transfer of information are required; therefore, formation of ethnic constance is ended by the process of stage-by-stage realization of the permanence of psychosocial characteristics” [1]. However, in the result of transformation of the Russian society, globalization and total informatization, which have resulted in collapse of the inter-generation connections mechanism, the realization of ethnic differences has strengthened. Consequently, as pointed out by Zheleznyakov A.S. and T.N. Litvinova, a considerable part of population loses its social reference points, their feeling of protection lowers, and the crisis of personality self-identification takes place [2, p. 380].

The stability of ethnic identity is interpreted from the perspective of the primordialist and instrumental (constructive) theories [3]. The representatives of the primordialist approach consider ethnic identity as an objective entity given by birth. This means that representatives of an ethnic group

comprise a system, in which each person is born and shares with other representatives of the ethnic group common objective symbols of the culture: language, religion, traditions, specific nutrition, clothes, and music [4].

Within the framework of this approach, the cultural-pluralistic and status and group approaches are identified, which describe the ethnocultural development and interethnic relations, which are the basis of ethnically mixed marriages. The analysis of scientific sources carried out by Khairullina N.G. gave her reasons to conclude that the majority of scientists keep to the cultural version of primordialism, which assumes that ethnicity means the cultural commonality, which is shared by the group members and has objective characteristics of belonging: territory, language, economics, race, religion, vision, and mental make-up [3, p. 61].

A. Smith identified six bases of ethnic identity: self-designation, belief in the commonality of origin, existence of historical memory, common culture, territory, the feeling of common solidarity [5]. He also formulated the factors, which ensure survival of ethnic groups in the modern world: 1) acquisition (and later – loss) of certain part of territory, which was perceived as “belonging to the people”; 2) history of struggle with various enemies, which serves the source of inspiration for future generations; 3) availability of organized religion for creating rituals and traditions, which form channels of continuity of the ethnic community; 4) the power of representation of the “ethnic recognition” [5, 6].

Representatives of the instrumental (constructive) theory take up the position that identity is not a primordial, natural phenomenon, but a social construct, a product of human actions and choice [7]. The constructive approach breaks the structuralist formula of the ethnicity analysis “we vs. others”,

which assumes cultural opposition for carrying out the act of ethnic self-perception and group consolidation focusing on the concept of human action and interpretation of permanently changing and shifting meanings and motives [3, p. 64].

The most disputable provision in the primordialist and instrumental (constructive) theories is the significance of culture in the formation of ethnic identity. The authors share the viewpoint of primordialists, according to which culture is the cornerstone attribute of the formation of ethnic identity.

Methodology

Ethnic identification of the Tartar population of the south of the Tyumen region is studied by the results of sociological research, carried out by the authors in 2013. To reveal positive or negative trends, we carry out a comparative analysis of the authors' data and the data of studies, which were carried out among the Tartar population of the south of the Tyumen region, received under assignment of the Congress of Tartars of the Tyumen region.

Body of the work

The majority of the respondents (90.3%) expressed satisfaction with their ethnicity, and just 3.2% gave the opposite opinion («not»). Less than 3% of the population (2.4%) were in doubt [8]. The number of respondents who did not care of their ethnicity equaled to 6.0%. The 2010 research made it possible to track the dynamics of the answers to this question and reveal positive trends that have taken place in the ethnic self-perception of the Tartar population for the last three years (Table 1).

Table 1. Dynamics of the answers regarding the degree of satisfaction with the ethnicity, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Degree of satisfaction	Year	
	2010	2013
Satisfied	90.3	90.4
Dissatisfied	3.2	1.0
I do not care about the ethnicity	6.0	2.9
Cannot say	2.4	5.8

The data of Table 1 show that, in 2013, nine of ten interrogated persons (90.3%) expressed satisfaction with their ethnicity. The number of ethnic Tartars who did not care about their ethnicity reduced by half. Where in 2010 their number equaled to 6.0% [9], it was just 2.9% in 2013. The next table contains answers of respondents to the question of the degree of satisfaction with the ethnicity depending on the ethnicity of their spouses.

Table 2. Answers of the respondents regarding the degree of satisfaction with the ethnicity depending on the ethnicity of the spouse, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Degree of satisfaction	Ethnicity	
	coincides	does not coincide
Satisfied	94.7	81.1
Dissatisfied	0.0	2.7
I do not care about the ethnicity	4.0	5.4
Cannot say	1.3	10.8

Let us return to the aspects of identification of the Tartar population, which we touched on previously. According to the data of our research, the share of the persons who preferred ethnocultural and psychological criteria of identification exceeded the share of those who preferred the ethnic ones. In 2013, 40.1% of the respondents answered that ethnicity was to be determined “according to the will of the person himself”, 18.0% - by the “native language”, two third of the interrogated persons (37.2%) said that origin was the decisive factor, i.e. ethnicity of parents (father's ethnicity – 27.3%, mother's ethnicity – 9.9%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Dynamics of the answers of respondents regarding the criteria of ethnicity determination, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Criterion	Year		
	2001	2010	2013
The person's own will	36.8	31.8	40.1
Native language	22.5	39.7	18.0
Ethnicity of the father	23.6	17.9	27.3
Ethnicity of the mother	6.2	3.5	9.9
Nationality	5.4	5.4	4.1
Ethnic identity of the father and the mother	4.7	-	-
Cannot say	-	2.4	0.6

The data (Table 3) show that for the past 10 years the number of ethnic Tartars who determined the main criterion of determining the ethnicity as “the own will of the person” has increased. We can note that such criteria as “ethnicity of the father and the mother” remain in the current context as important as they have been. Only 4.1% of the respondents interrogated in 2013 associated determination of ethnicity with nationality. The answers of respondents regarding the criteria of ethnicity determination depending on the ethnicity of the spouse are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Dynamics of the answers of respondents regarding the criteria of ethnicity determination depending on the ethnicity of the spouse, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Criterion	Ethnicity	
	coincides	does not coincide
The person's own will	36.0	40.5
Native language	20.0	10.8
Ethnicity of the father	26.7	24.3
Ethnicity of the mother	13.3	16.2
Nationality	4.0	5.4
Cannot say	0.0	2.7

In order to find out how responders understood their ethnicity, they were suggested to select from seven statements that would most comprehensively describe the concept of ethnicity (it was permitted to select several of the statements). Analysis of the answers to this question depending on what kind of marriage they were in (mixed or single-ethnicity one) showed that for those persons who married a person of the same ethnicity [10] the important criteria of determining ethnicity was "Ethnicity is given to a human by birth or by God and he cannot change it", and for those who were in a mixed marriage, it was "a person has the right to select his ethnicity" (Table 5).

Table 5. The answers of respondents regarding the criteria that are to be used for determination of the ethnicity of a person depending on the ethnicity of the spouse, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Opinion	Ethnicity	
	coincides	does not coincide
A person is given ethnicity by birth or by the God and he is not allowed to change it.	61.3	37.8
Due to the ethnic identity, people can remember their ancestors	36.0	32.4
Every normal person must be proud of his ethnicity	58.7	45.9
Ethnicity is what unites people and encourages them to achieve common goals	12.0	8.1
The concept of ethnicity not only will become outdated by some moment in future, but it has become outdated by now.	6.7	13.5
A person is entitled to choose his ethnic identity	5.3	13.5
Ethnicity does no way depend on the solidarity of people	6.7	5.4
Ethnicity is what divides people, opposes them to each other.	1.3	0.0

As we can see, language and culture are indirect indicators of ethnic self-identification and integral elements of ethnic self-identification of a person (Table 6).

Table 6. Dynamics of the answers of respondents about the factors, which make people of the same ethnicity closer and differentiate them, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Factor	Make closer		Differentiate	
	2010	2013	2010	2013
The state we live in	20.7	18.6	11.5	4.1
The language we speak	80.6	62.2	75.5	55.8
The historical past	40.5	37.2	31.5	32.0
The folk traditions and customs	82.1	66.9	62.3	62.8
The peculiarities of behavior	8.1	14.0	16.0	28.5
The peculiarities of the ethnic temper	16.5	22.7	18.5	25.6
Religion	61.5	45.9	59.8	52.3
Appearance	10.4	9.9	23.8	23.8
Confessional unity	5.1	4.7	3.3	5.2
Commonality of calendar church-offices	17.4	11.6	11.6	18.0

Ethnicity differentiating attributes of self-identification are a kind of reverse side of one's own self-identification. The perception of strangers and self-identification of a nation is determined by the differences of its criterion.

Table 7. The answers of respondents about the factors, which make people of the same ethnicity closer and differentiate them depending on the ethnicity of the spouse, in percentage to the total number of respondents

Factor	Make closer		Differentiate	
	coincides	does not coincide	coincides	does not coincide
The state we live in	12.0	32.4	0.0	8.1
The language we speak	70.7	40.5	68.0	54.1
The historical past	30.7	32.4	32.0	18.9
The folk traditions and customs	82.7	48.6	61.3	64.9
The peculiarities of behavior	17.3	21.6	30.7	27.0
The peculiarities of the ethnic temper	18.7	32.4	30.7	18.9
Religion	64.0	32.4	54.7	37.8
Appearance	9.3	8.1	26.7	10.8
Confessional unity	2.7	10.8	9.3	2.7
Commonality of calendar church-offices	10.7	5.4	18.7	27.0

Summary

The majority of the interrogated ethnic Tartars expressed satisfaction with their ethnic origin.

According to the data of the research, there were more people who preferred ethnocultural and psychological criteria of identification rather than ethnic ones.

Native language and culture of an ethnic group are indirect indicators of ethnic self-identification and integral elements of national self-identification of a person.

Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of changes taking place in the culture of an ethnic group as a result of mixed marriages showed that ethnic self-identification is rather stable and positively oriented.

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