

Research Article

The Identity of Migrants in a Modern Megacity: Applied Aspects

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Abstract: The information revolution, transparency and availability of information, globalization of economies and technological changes have largely determined the structure and style of urban life. The issue of identity transformation in cities is particularly relevant. Birth rates are traditionally lower in cities than in rural areas, however cities have always attracted immigrants who contribute to population growth and the growth of the cities themselves. Big cities attract internal and external migrants by the breadth of opportunities they offer because they concentrate resources and life opportunities proliferate. In a city, the behaviour of individuals is regulated much more than it might seem to an outside observer or even to its inhabitants. Therefore, having arrived in a city, migrants inevitably undergo a transformation of their identity associated with the process of adapting to a new socio-cultural environment. The way migrants adapt and the transformation of their identity in Moscow metropolitan area is an issue of this study. An effective urban planning system should be based on four main priorities: improve the quality of life of the indigenous population, cultural identity of the region, the ecological balance of natural and manmade elements and the stability of the region's economy. However, migrant behaviour focused on being faithful to the core of the former socio-cultural community does not allow the city residents to form a single socio-cultural identity. This destabilizes various spheres of urban life and reduces the quality of life of the indigenous population.

Keywords: City, communication, cultural adaptation, integration, socio-cultural community, urban sociology

INTRODUCTION

The identity of an individual affects society through acts committed by individuals, who form groups, networks, organizations and institutions. And, likewise, a society systematically affects the individual's identity through labels, values and language, shared to varying degrees and allowing the individual to take on the role of someone else, interact with others and, on this basis, carry out self-reflection. Since "I" reflects society and arises within society, the sociological approach to understanding identity (i.e., oneself and one's component parts) dictates that we must also understand the society in which "selfless" is the art of living in a society where an individual always acts in the social space in which there are other individuals with their own identities.

Changes that happened around the world at the turn of the century, the information revolution, transparency and availability of information, globalization of economies and technological changes (Castells, 1992, 2002b; Sassen, 1999), all of which have made our lives significantly easier and provided access to information and communication without the need to be physically present, have led to a weakening in human relations and a lack of direct contact between people, replaced by a

virtual world, which has had a significant impact on modern identity.

After the industrial revolution, society began to industrialize with the advent of corporations, the rapid growth of production, the introduction of universal education, the ever-increasing development of mass communication and the emergence of global economic integration. Naturally, these processes have largely determined the structure and style of urban life. Humankind began to feel that it was truly the master of everything, including nature, all resources were under its power and it could take whatever it wanted and travel to any destination (Korkiya and Mamedov, 2015).

The issue of identity transformation in cities is particularly relevant. The new economy, a "network" economy as defined by many Western researchers, sets new guidelines for structuring social space and creates serious changes in social structure (Stock, 2011). Birth rates are traditionally lower in cities than in rural areas, however cities have always attracted immigrants who contribute to population growth and the growth of the cities themselves. Big cities attract internal and external migrants by the breadth of opportunities they offer because they concentrate resources and life opportunities proliferate. The way migrants adapt and

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the transformation of their identity is an issue that interests researchers in different regions of the world (Sassen, 1999; Bloemraad and Wright, 2014).

Cities, particularly metropolises, are epicentres of social problems. This is due to the specifics of city life. Traditional and new forms of urban life are still structured around the key quantitative characteristics, identified by the renowned Wirth (1938) of the Chicago School of Sociology: size, density and social heterogeneity. However, the existence of heterogeneity does not mean the absence of typical forms of collective behaviour and specific mechanisms of social control that are subordinate to them. In a city, the behaviour of individuals is regulated much more than it might seem to an outside observer or even to its inhabitants. Therefore, having arrived in a city, migrants inevitably undergo a transformation of their identity associated with the process of adapting to a new socio-cultural environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, we research the problem of the identity of migrants in the modern metropolis. In order to describe it, a specialized scientific language needs to be developed. The subject under investigation is the transformation migrant workers' identity in the modern metropolis, as well as the specifics of city life. Especially important is the question of how individual identity is created, the cultural forms through which society symbolizes this identity and, especially, the rate at which this happens. The methodological basis of the research is formed by the theory and applied analysis of the "network" society, as represented in the works of Giddens (1991), Castells (2009, 2010), Bauman (2000), Luckmann (2006) and Sennett (2008), as well as the views and conclusions put forward in the studies by Stock (2011), Elliott (2010), Karanov (2013) and Vershinina and Polyakova (2014).

Erikson (1959), considered to be the founder of the theory of identity, believed that identity develops throughout one's whole life and inherently involves three components: biological, personal and social. Most researchers agree that identity is a multilevel and changeable system, a set of parts of the "I" of the individual, which comprises different meanings (characters) that individuals attribute to the many roles they perform in significantly differentiated modern societies (Stryker and Burke, 2000).

Giddens (1991) emphasizes that in the post-traditional order of late modernity reflexivity becomes a dominant feature of identity development. In an environment of "fluctuation", society becomes more fragmented and dispersed, the individual faces an incredible variety of choice, where it is not obvious what individuals should do and who they should be. They are compelled to consider multiple options and

make choices. Moreover, the search for identity is an open and constantly changing task for the individual.

Bauman (2000) identifies as the key characteristic of modernity its fluidity and links it to the reflectivity of identity. In an unstable and ephemeral reality, the individual has to constantly rebuild their "I" in order to adapt to it; moreover, this necessary measure and constant transformation of identity requires a significant investment of effort, time and money. Beck (2002) develops the ideas of links between reflexive individualization and the process of globalization, reflexivity and individualization. He stresses the clear trend towards individualization in modern society, which is determined as the result of the impact of globalization and risks. Noteworthy is the attempt to interpret identity using the approach proposed by Elliott and Lemert (2006) called "new individualism". According to the basic notion of "new individualism", in the new century the pace of the high-tech culture of globalization and the consequent short-termism have opened up a new paradigm of decision-making. The new individualism presupposes and relies on an ongoing emotional struggle aimed at bringing together internal and external experience, more over the processes and structures of self-determination have been constantly studied, reviewed and redefined.

The distinguishing characteristic of the "new individualism" is its difference from "individualism", a term associated with A. de Tocqueville, who, in his study "Democracy in America", describes it as a mature and calm feeling. "New individualism", on the other hand, is rather a sense of panic caused by the rate of increase in possible choices. It is this emphasis on instantaneous transference and transformation, in particular, of fear and anxiety, that distinguishes the theory of a new individualism from other concepts of reflexive individualization (Elliott and Lemert, 2006). This concept comprises four main component aspects:

- Constant rethinking of oneself
- Infinite desire for immediate change
- Increased dynamism and accelerated process of individualization
- Concern about the transient, fragmentary and episodic nature of events

The new individualism emphasizes the social significance of the individualization formation processes which develop inside the individual. The processes of individualization and identity construction are linked to emotional experiences within fantasies, in an imagined space that has a fundamental impact on the relationship between "I" and society. Elliott and Lemert (2006) noted that the essence of their approach can be summarized as follows: the new individualism, which forms and is formed in the surrounding social reality, includes an ongoing emotional struggle to establish a

link between internal and external experience, in which the processes and structures of self-determination are constantly researched, reviewed and redefined. This approach stresses that the social processes of individualism flow from the inside to the outside, not only inside the individual.

Emphasis is made on the individual level, but this does not exclude the influence of institutional forces against a background of multinational capitalism, restructuring of the political arena and the effects of globalization. It is becoming increasingly important how individual identities are created, i.e., the cultural forms through which people symbolize these identities and especially the speed with which this occurs (Elliott, 2010). In the current social context in which life is modified by technologies brought about by globalization and the transformation of capitalism, it is not just a question of personality of the individual. The multifaceted culture of megacities, the creation of corporate networks, freelancing and short-term projects, the reduction of staff numbers in organizations, electronic self-help manuals, compulsive consumerism as a product of a new era (Elliott, 2010). The growing cult of rethinking everything-social practices managed and directed towards flexibility, plasticity, ongoing change-creates opportunities and threats at the level of personal identity, as well as for the organizational and institutional dynamics of society as a whole.

Particular attention is paid to the processes of globalization because it operates not only on the horizontal axis, the worldwide universalization of multinational capital and new digital technologies, but also on the vertical axis, penetrating into the very "I" of the modern individual and reorganizing his/her environment. This is an instance of deep sociological interaction in constructing and reconstructing oneself under intense global processes. Temptation and desire of individualism reign unchecked. Everywhere people desperately seek self-fulfilment and try to minimize as much as possible interpersonal obstacles on the way to fulfilling their personal interests. In our "self-made" society all people are now "entrepreneurs" in their own lives. There is no doubt the growth of individualism, in which the constant, driving concern with the rules of flexibility leads to the fact that individuals must constantly strive to be more efficient, faster, more compact, resourceful and self-actualizing. This is not happening occasionally, but every day (Elliott and Lemert, 2006).

Social networks and other patterns of communication form a new culture of publicity (Baltovskij *et al.*, 2015). Global transformations in the nature of interactions are deeply inscribed in the sense of one's own individualism, requiring from an individual a significant level of mental load and the reorganization of their life (Elliott and Lemert, 2006). The urban community, despite its heterogeneity, quite

clearly draws the line between "ours" and "theirs", forcing migrants to seek ways of intensively adapting to avoid exclusion and to be included in "us". However, the search for "ours" can be made in different directions. Karanov (2013) identifies 3 main types of migrant behaviour in a new urban environment:

- Migrant follows the rules of behaviour and cultural norms specific to their new place of residence, identifying with the relevant community.
- Migrant identifies with a particular residential area, but not with his/her community, keeping faithful to the social and cultural nucleus of the "mother" community.
- Feeling alienated and unwilling to adapt to a new social and cultural environment, the migrant moves away.

Of most interest are the first two models of behaviour, since the third one does not involve the long-term presence of a migrant in the city. The first model leads to a gradual assimilation of migrants, thus it is the most productive for the functioning of the urban community. Most problems for the urban community are connected to the second case of adaptation, which should be considered in greatest detail since it most often leads to conflicts. Such a strategy of migrant adaptation, when there is identification with a particular residential area, but not with a community, leads to the formation of closed social groups which do not want to integrate into the host city community. A migrant can adjust, i.e., adapt to life in the host society, find work and accommodation, but not be integrated into Russian society, live according to different social norms and rules, not undergo secondary socialization in the host society and not speak the "social" language of norms and rules of behaviour in that society. Today, the Russian people are for the first time facing such a crisis of culture that has no perspective whatsoever, or a way out, or a progress (Baltovskij *et al.*, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An effective urban planning system should be based on four main priorities: improve the quality of life of the indigenous population, cultural identity of the region, the ecological balance of natural and manmade elements and the stability of the region's economy. However, migrant behaviour focused on being faithful to the core of the former socio-cultural community does not allow the city residents to form a single socio-cultural identity. This destabilizes various spheres of urban life and reduces the quality of life of the indigenous population.

Responsibility for choosing this non-productive model of newcomer behaviour may partly lie with a

city's indigenous population, who are inclined to blame migrants for exacerbating already existing social problems. Muscovites are often not very friendly towards migrants. By the same token, dislike between Muscovites and residents of other regions of Russia is mutual. When they arrive in the capital for the first time, visitors experience a complex range of emotions, upon which is based their hostility to Moscow and its residents. Non-acceptance is caused, first of all, by the extremely fast pace of life dictated by the distances that must be travelled during the day, as well as anonymity and indifference which are common to all metropolises and the result of high population density. Consequently, migrants are strangers to most of the city's population, which inevitably provokes conflict situations. Unfortunately, such situations are becoming typical for the Moscow metropolitan area.

It should be noted that the level of conflict differs dramatically in different areas of the city. This fact is possibly related both to the number of migrants and to the attitude of locals towards them. In the city centre migrants do not cause such a negative attitude towards themselves compared to the outskirts, which perhaps can be due to other social problems being less acute there and differences in population density.

According to the 2010 census, the most densely populated areas of Moscow are closer to the Moscow Ring Road than to the city centre. The necessity to decongest the central areas of the Moscow agglomeration by partially transferring jobs to new areas has led to the creation of new jobs in the Moscow region where several local labour markets have been already formed thanks to the intensive development of the service sector and the construction of business centres (Verшинina and Polyakova, 2014). As a result, migration has become a complex social problem not only for Moscow, but also for the Moscow region.

Creating the conditions for the social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants is one of the priorities of the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation. However, different cities and regions have their own specifics. The main feature of Moscow is the heterogeneity of migration flows. Therefore, Moscow has a particularly acute need to develop its own strategies of adaptation for its many migrants that will give the man identity which will help maintain the normal functioning of the city.

CONCLUSION

Modern forms of global interdependence do not, on their own, predetermine for individuals a global set of shared cultural experiences, social values or ideology. Yet globalization, with its very different types of transnational interactions, flows of information and networks, primarily affects individuals.

We should talk about the "new individualism" because individualism has changed in 3 important

respects because of the new world order of globalization, new information technologies and multinational capitalism. Firstly, there has been a breakdown of traditions, which has significantly broadened options and the possibilities of personal choice for many people. As modern societies have become de-traditionalized and pre-existing methods of determining identity have become less reliable and, indeed, have ceased to exist at all, it is not only the "dissolution", but also the disappearance of old rules and boundaries governing personal and social life. Secondly, such purely personal worlds encourage individuals to close off access to the world of their emotional life to all others, which leads to the denial of a broad relational connection with others. However, the growing importance of individualism in the new social context of growing individualization does not mean the actual end of collective ideals or, in a broader sense, of the public sphere. The new individualism, rather, is becoming the basis for future new forms of the organization of individuals, groups and social institutions. Thirdly, global consciousness does not lead to global thinking. Transformations in individualism and globalization do not lead to the production of "globalized" identities.

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