

# СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

## SOCIAL FIELD OF SELF-CONSTRUCTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

DOI: 10.31618/ESU.2413-9335.2020.3.77.977

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### ANNOTATION

The article is devoted to an actual problem—the construction of identity in the information society. The discourse of the new individualism is revealed. The article describes how the realities of the information society and the new digital reality have radically changed the established concepts of identity. The main trends of identity phenomenology are shown.

**Keywords:** identity, individualism, information society, communication, postmodernism, consumerism, transitivity, digital reality.

A person, as a social-generic being, needs a certain social optics, which can be used to identify, actualize and frame the life world of his "I" on a certain real basis, something *akulturenno*, which gives the ability to social orientation and a sense of order in society. We also need a Foundation for understanding the "I-World" system, nature, the world, ourselves as an element and in some sense the Creator of society, social institutions that define norms, criteria, values, and our identity. It is not without reason that the founder of the theory of identity in the Western scientific tradition is considered to be E. Erickson, an adept of psychoanalysis, who suggested that identity is not a monument, because it is constructed throughout the entire life cycle, and immanently includes three components: biological, personal and social [21]. The systemic transformation of the world, the revolution in the information technology sphere, the openness and accessibility of the economic space, and the introduction of digital innovations have led to the weakening of conventional ties and the erosion of communication practices replaced by the virtual environment. Once unshakable and "solid" norms and values were replaced by a "flickering reality of being", an amorphous axiology and a certain rhizome (J. Deleuze and F. Guattari). Because of this, identity has become the "fashionable" prism of the study of the entire social; the tools of social analysis that have developed recently have been updated and reformulated in order to adequately fit into the discourse of identity. In addition, the theoretical constructs of identity extracted from these discourses should be taken into account when determining global, national, and local government interests in relation to mass media and information and communication technologies [13, p.24-47]. In modern sociological discourse, there is a wide range of understanding of identity – a number of researchers, based on the established socio-cultural tradition, reduce identity to belonging to an individual to a specific ethnic group. Others, remaining in the culture of the 19th century, operate with the concept of identity in the sense of collective identity, which, of course, expands its scope, because this reflection includes various social movements. At the same time, researchers usually

agree that identity is rather a multi – level and changeable system, a set of parts of the individual's "I" consisting of various meanings (symbols) that individuals attach to the numerous roles they perform in significantly differentiated modern societies [39, p.284-297]. In Russian social science, identity is defined as " a person's representation of his / her Self, characterized by a subjective sense of his / her individual identity and integrity; a person's identification of himself / herself [4]. The identity of an individual affects society through social actions, interactions of individuals that create groups, networks, organizations, and institutions. And, of course, society systematically and directly affects the identity of an individual through accepted and shared cultural codes, symbols, signs, values, and language, which allow an individual to accept the role of another, interact with others, and carry out self-reflection on the basis of this. Because "I" like the monad (Leibniz) reflects the situation in society and arises in him, the sociological approach to understanding identity (i.e. this means that we must also understand a society in which the " self " is the art of living in a society where the individual always acts in a social space in which other individuals with their own identities exist [38]. Critical discussions and discourses about identity are aimed at redefining and reformulating the term in such a way as to avoid "weak" points, especially the once fashionable accusations of essentialism, excessive dependence on individual sensory perception. In General, modern foreign researchers [14] suggest considering two essentially opposite interpretations of identity: "strong" and "weak". "Strong" concepts of identity adhere to the usual meaning of the term with an emphasis on maintaining its constancy over time and among individuals. This corresponds to how the concept of identity is used to construct and manage it externally. Due to the fact that these researchers take for granted the categories of everyday experience and practice for the analysis of identity, a number of initial assumptions taken as axioms become ambiguous and problematic:

- Identity – what all individuals have or are searching for.

- Identity – what all groups (at least groups of a certain type – ethnic, racial, or national) have or should have.

- Identity – what individuals can have without realizing it.

- Collective identity is a group boundedness and homogeneity.

A high degree of "group" identity, intra-group homogeneity, which implies a strict demarcation between members and non-members of the group, i.e. between internal and external. "Weak" concepts offer a different view of identity, and they are increasingly aware of the complexity of everyday rigid understanding of identity. In fact, this view reverses the above-mentioned characteristics of the "strong" concept of identity and indicates that identity can not be had, it is not prescribed from the outside and is not associated with a certain group and is not monochrome. The scientific focus of researchers has shifted in this direction, but it should be pointed out that these ideas are also criticized due to the fact that: "weak" identity concepts are a persistent cliché of constructivism (they are still provided together with standard classifications) that serve as indicators that identity is multiple, unstable, fluid, discontinuous, fragmented, constructed, and changeable. In an effort to clear the term of "strong" connotations, identity turns out to be too elastic and unable to be a tool for serious analytical research [14, p. 7-11]. Within the framework of the discourse of late modernity, a very effective and functional sociological interpretation of identity is being promoted, which consistently incorporates the "soft" or "weak" positions described above. The General opinion suggests that identity is more important now, because the individual of the new era has an exponentially growing choice of capabilities and competencies for determining identity: previously, established traditional identities were used, they were ascriptive. However, modern society, having entered the period of "rapid history", offers the individual fluidity, mobility and constant choice in all social fields. The basic characteristics associated with modern identity reflect the dominance of ideas about multiple selection and an independent narrative of identity. By asking the existential question "Who am I", individuals set out and update the reference criteria and distinctive features of their identity, located within the past and present. "How can I live» points to being in the present time, conjuring up practices and procedures that determine the ways of being in the world. And finally, the question "Who do I want to be» it focuses on the future, on the social perspective, defining the desired project of creating the future Self, on the construction of your life world. The relationship between the past, present, and future in the ongoing work on identity construction suggests that who we are, what we do, and what we become change throughout life, and the point of stability and stopping (achieving the desired identity model) remains unrealistic [27]. It is obvious that in the absence of a strong and stable view of the world based on tradition, identity, with the above potential, must be multivariate and highly adaptive [29]. A number of studies have argued that in accordance with the fluid,

constantly mimicking and flexible surrounding reality, it is impossible to hold the view that the unchangeable essence and constancy of identity is fixed. According to this position, there does not have to be a stable core of the Self that remains *modus vivendi* unchanged throughout life. Within the framework of the theory, it is argued that identities are never monochrome, homomorphic, and their fragmentary, discrete, and fragile nature increases in modern times. They do not originate from a single pre-determined source, but are variously constructed from various overlapping and sometimes opposite discourses, practices, and positions [18]. There are many researchers who rightly believe that constructivism simply catalogues the process of constructing identity - everyone becomes a social artifact, an entity that is formed, revised, remade and mobilized in accordance with the prevailing cultural scenarios and centers of power [16, p.387]. However, this position belittles the role and does not sufficiently take into account the role of power in the classification process, mistakenly assuming a multi-vector flow [15; 17; 23]. In an effort to expand the social side of the issue, sociologists study the "real today", i.e. the current situation clearly, paying attention to various areas and aspects of identity. Let's turn to theories that consider the new state of modernity, but not to postmodernism, but to frontier concepts that appear on their border, for example, fluid modernity, late modernity, high modernity, radicalized modernity. So, E. Giddens [5; 22] emphasizes that in the posttraditional order of late modernity, constant reflexivity becomes the dominant feature of identity construction. In conditions of "fluctuation", society becomes more fragmented, the individual is faced with an incredible variety of choices, where it is not obvious what individuals should do and who they should be. They are doomed to consider multiple options themselves, reinvent themselves, and make choices. And the search for identity is an open, constantly changing project of the individual. In turn, Z. Bauman [1] highlights as a defining characteristic of modernity its fluidity, which is directly related to the reflexivity of identity. The instability and ephemerality of reality, the individual is forced to recreate himself, to adjust, to adapt to it, and it is an emergency measure and a permanent transformation of its identity requires a lot of effort, time and money. U. Beck [9; 10; 11] develops ideas of dynamic and functional connection between reflexive individualization and the process of globalization, reflexivity and individualization. The author emphasizes a clear trend of individualization in modern society, which is defined as a result of the influence of globalization and risks. An interesting attempt to interpret identity in a new interpretation of the "new individualism" by E. Elliott and C. Lemert [20]. According to the basic thesis of the "new individualism", in the modern era, the high-tech culture of globalization and the resulting "speed of history" has opened up a new paradigm and cognitive basis for decision-making. The new individualism implies and relies on an ongoing emotional struggle to combine internal and external experiences, while the processes and structures of self-determination are constantly being explored, revised, and transformed. The

peculiarity of" new individualism "is its difference from" individualism", a term of de Tocqueville, who described it as a Mature and calm feeling. "New individualism" is rather a sense of panic caused by the speed of multiplication of choices. It is the emphasis on instantaneous transmission and transformation, in particular, of fears and anxieties, that distinguishes the theory of new individualism from other concepts of reflexive individualization [20, p. 71-73]. This concept includes four main components:

- \* relentless self-reinterpretation;
- \* endless desire for instant change;
- \* increase dynamism and speed up the process of individualization;
- \* concern about the transience and fragmentary, episodic nature of events.

The new individualism emphasizes the social significance of the processes of formalizing individualization that develop from within the individual. The processes of individualization and identity construction are generated and functionally related to the emotional experiences of people who are located in fantasies, in an imaginary area that has a fundamental influence on the relationship between the "I" and society. A. Elliott and CH. Lemert States that the new individualism, which forms and is formed in the surrounding social reality, involves an ongoing emotional struggle to establish a connection between the translation of internal and external experience, in which the processes and structures of self-determination are constantly being investigated, revised and transformed. This approach emphasizes that the social processes of individualism run from the inside out, and not just within the individual. The emphasis is on the individual level, which nevertheless does not exclude the impact of institutional forces against the background of multinational capitalism, and the restructuring of political arenas [20, p. 72]. All this requires a person to define identity and self-actualization in the deployment of social products and cultural symbols. The way individual identities are created, the cultural forms through which people symbolize them, and above all the speed with which this happens, are becoming increasingly important [19, p.33-34]. And in the current social conditions, in which life is modified by technologies induced by globalization and the transformations of capitalism, it is not just a question of the individual's individuality. The multi-faceted and mosaic culture of megacities, the creation of corporate networks, freelancing, and short-term projects, the reduction of the staff number of organizations, regionally distributed and remote places of work, electronic self-help guides, compulsive consumerism as a product and often a marker of a new era [19, P. 32]. The growing cult of reinterpretation of everything and everything-social practices that are managed and directed at flexibility, plasticity, and incessant change-creates opportunities and real dangers at all levels: both for personal identity and for the organizational and institutional dynamics of the entire society. Special attention is paid to the processes of globalization, since it acts as a new field not only on the horizontal axis, the universalization of the activities of

multinational capital and new digital technologies around the world, but also on the vertical axis, penetrating the very "I" of the modern individual, reorganizing his environment. The temptations and drives of individualism rule undivided, because they fit into the General trend of global consumerism. Everywhere, people are desperately looking for self-fulfillment and trying to minimize as many interpersonal obstacles to achieving their personal interests as possible. In the so-called "do-it-yourself" society, all "entrepreneurs" are now in our own lives. There is no doubt about the growth of individualism, in which a constant, driving preoccupation with the rules of flexibility leads to individuals constantly striving to be more efficient, faster, compact, inventive, and self-actualizing. And this is done not sporadically and spontaneously, from case to case, but every day [20, p.3]. Adherents of this concept believe that we should talk about a "new individualism", because individualism has changed in three significant aspects due to the new world order of globalization, new information technologies and multinational capitalism. First, there was a breakdown of centuries-old traditions, which incredibly expanded the options and opportunities for personal choice for many people. As modern societies have become detraditionalized, and pre-existing ways of defining identity have become less reliable and, in fact, cease to exist at all. Second, such highly personal worlds encourage individuals to block access to the world of their emotional life for all others, which leads to the denial of a broad relational connection with others. However, the growing importance of individualism in the new social conditions of growing individualization does not mean the actual end of collective ideals or, more broadly, of the social sphere. Rather, the new individualism becomes the basis for future new forms of organization of individuals, groups, and social institutions. Third, sadly, global consciousness itself does not lead to global thinking. Unfortunately, transformations in individualism and globalization do not lead to the production of "globalized" identities. Modern forms of global interdependence do not in themselves define a global set of shared cultural experiences, social values, or ideologies for individuals. Yet globalization, involving very different patterns of transnational interactions, information flows, and networks, is reflected primarily in individuals. Global transformations in the nature of interaction are deeply embedded in the sense of their own individualism, requiring a significant level of mental stress from the individual and the reorganization of their own life [20, p. 7-11]. It follows that social theories must respond to the ongoing changes in social life and must strive to understand, comprehend and explain the complex, contradictory ways in which individuals form, reproduce and transform feelings of their own identity and individualism in connection with the ongoing processes of globalization [20, p.90]. In the information society, especially with the total introduction of digital technologies, the emergence of virtual hyperreality, and socialization actors, the constant desire to update, "reinvent" yourself becomes a fundamental trend of

modern life, and often leads to a "turning point" in the form of certain phobias, addictions, obsessive-compulsive disorders. Today, this is most clearly manifested in the phenomenon of unrestrained consumerism, which forces you to transform and "improve" every aspect of yourself. More and more decision-making models are being developed and imposed: from helping to treat stress to instant perfectionism through plastic surgery – it all comes down to "buying" an identity. A generation of people who could be called the "instant generation" has grown up. Any goals turned out to be absolutely unrelated and most importantly not in contact with labor and other "rudiments" of the past. Today's slogan and insistence on "I want now" contributes to the infinite plasticity of identity, even to the loss of its own "matrix". The new individualism focuses and supports attention on the independence of reinterpretation, and thus leads to a culture of "until the next time", an incessant thirst for instant change [19, p. 35]. This approach is based on the updated legacy of the Frankfurt school [6], paying attention to the dominance of society over the individual, which is carried out in impersonal forms of power communications and formulas of science. A certain model of behavior is imposed, in particular with the help of the culture industry, the main goal of which is to control individuals, forming uniformity-standard needs and meeting them through standardized products. A total universe is formed on the basis of the principle of domination of power over the subordinate individual. Even Yur. Habermas [24] drew attention to manipulative aspects within the General concept of communication and the public sphere and their impact on identity. The idea that language itself contains norms for criticism of domination and repression, as well as a force that could be the basis for promoting the actual democratization of society. In the ability to understand the speech of another, to present the power of a better argument, and to reach a consensus, Habermas found the rationality characteristic of all that he called communicative action, which could generate norms of criticism of the distortion of communication in the processes of domination and manipulation and cultivate the process of rational discursive volition. Within the framework of the concept of the public sphere, he argues that in the course of its development, it is destroyed by the forces that created it, in particular the state, the capitalist economy, which led to limited access to the public sphere and political control over it in order to maintain the prosperity of capitalist forces. In the works of S. Hall [25] questions of identity and fields of its implementation are studied from the point of view of manipulation. Identity can be seen as the intersection of subjective processes embedded in the life of individuals and discourses that represent, position, and construct individuals as subjects. Identity there are points in a discrete attachment to the subject positions that are constructed out of discursive practices. Identities are never unified and become increasingly fragmented, but are constantly constructed by multiple different discourses, and their representation occurs not from within, but through external sources. Moreover, identities arise in the

process of competition of specific authorities, and, therefore, act as a means of marking the difference and exclusion. Among the latest developments, the concept of a British follower of M. Foucault, N. Rose [29], is interesting. He studies identity when constructing a General theory of society and explaining modern features of interdependencies in the system "power politics-experts – influence groups) - people". The researcher points out that the construction and choice of identity is carried out by the individual not entirely independently, but under the constant influence of experts – groups of influence ("specially trained experts of human souls"), whose tactics are set by external forces that purposefully form the identity. Therefore, in modern conditions, it becomes manageable (manipulated) and calculated (predictable).

The second important element of identity formation is the influence techniques themselves, in particular the widely used techniques of psychological influence. Here, a psychosocial direction is actively developing, where identity can be the product of psychological techniques, imposed models and patterns of behavior. The third aspect that aggressively sets and defines modern identity is capitalist production and consumer society, in which the individual must work and buy without unnecessary questions and reflections, and such a society simply needs completely predictable and at least partially (at the right moment) manipulated individuals. As a result, the "codification of the art of existence" of the individual occurs: life management techniques strive to make a suitable concrete identity [29 p. 217]. So Rose believes that the "I" of the individual is a vital element of the power system that permeates modern societies. But now, when the management of society began to require regulation of the activities of subjects, this was achieved not by increasing the power and potential of the all-knowing centralized state, but by the actions of the institution of agents of influence, often latent. This management system has developed through the spread of various relevant influence techniques. They acted as a "relay", resulting in, if necessary, "included" various ambitions of political, scientific, charitable and professional organizations or social institutions. In particular, N. Rose postulates that psychotherapy technologies provide the formation of individuality for the production and regulation of individuals "free to choose", but at the same time capable of pre-set models of choice by experts acting as agents of influence [29, p.231]. So, as a result of the widespread use of psychotherapy practices, life today has become an "art of representations", a codified product set by experts and social Directors. Even pleasure becomes, in fact, only a form of work, and public, which must be performed "under the sign of professional expertise and under the auspices of scientifically codified knowledge." Life became, almost according to G. Tard, an imitation of the patterns and ways of life set by the agents of influence. These "Deborah" images set the individual decision-making patterns. In accordance with this world of ideal images and values, identity must be changed, rebuilt so that a person can achieve success according to the models set by experts. Some

analysts, usually postmodern discourse, not unreasonably see the spread of psychotherapeutic methods of influence as a continuation of state supervision and regulation of individuals as social subjects. The main feature of agents, institutions and methods is the separation of their influence from the Central powers and regulation at the level of the internal world of institutions and individual individuals [34, p. 261-262]. In General, privatisation is a term used in social knowledge to describe that people have the right to own certain things. In sociology, however, privatisation is interpreted as attention to one's interests, excluding broad social problems and relationships. In the 50s, the American thinker d. Riesman [28] stated that the phenomenon of the crowd actually hides, paradoxically, loneliness, behind which there is a radical change in the character of individuals, when the active orientation from within is replaced by the externally oriented character of individuals of the XX century. A lone crowd is a society of false integration, false personalization, and forced isolation. Kr. Lash [23] considers this phenomenon from the concept of "minimal Self" as a manifestation of the individual's survival strategy, his attempts to survive in the midst of the fears of disasters and dangers surrounding the modern individual, when he closes in on himself and the present day, avoiding the broader context. R. bell [12] connects the personal and public life of the individual, raising the question of individualism, the connection with the values of liberal democracy, while paying special attention to the place of religion. Putnam [26] considers isolated privatisation, taking leisure as a basis, focusing our attention on the political and public consequences of this trend. People play alone and in solitude, which leads to the fact that they do not participate in social communication and civil discussions that took place earlier during joint leisure time. A. Hochschild [26] connects this problem with the aspect of comprehensive commercialization, when the house becomes a job, and work becomes a home, when the public and personal-intimate are mixed. In General, Hochschild describes the various ways in which each individual "I" becomes a shock absorber of conflicting forces at work in society, and describes how individuals, in fact, move away not only from others, but also from themselves. Interesting, in our opinion, is the concept of R. Sennett [31], who in the work "corrosion of character", with the subtitle - "personal consequences of working in the new capitalism" comes to the conclusion that:

- the character of people in modern society is mainly threatened by new forms of employment and labor;
- there is a lack of consistency and continuity in the intergenerational relay of work experience transfer, instead of building a long career only temporary jobs;
- places of work are constantly changing geographically and professionally, and there is no continuity of work;
- the spirit of community is gradually disappearing from society;

- alienation from one's own needs and ideals increases.

The reduction of public policy space is not simply due to the influence of forces of commodification or bureaucratization, but to the dominance of concepts of self-realization, sense gratification, and egocentrism at the expense of social connections. Increasing the importance of human dignity is a much more important ideal than the dominant moral ideal in neoliberal morality, the "super-ego" of self-determination and self-realization. The new information world of non-permanent employment, temporary, contract work reorganizes the emotional, internal life of a person: a systematic change in the length of time and meaning of work-from a clear and fixed certainty in the long term to speed and transience. R. Sennett highlighted the consequences generated by frequent moving, changing jobs, and determined that today, for example, the average American after College can change jobs up to eleven times, as well as change their profession at least three times. Popular researcher Zh. Baudrillard [2] showed how flows of unfiltered communication, information, images, ideas and ideologies permeate all aspects of everyday life. Central to the analysis of the information society is the transition from a modernist understanding of reality to a postmodern concept of artificial, virtual reality, or what Baudrillard calls "hyperreality", which, as he rightly claims, begins with the elimination of all the old familiar foundations. Modeling and designing an environment that seeks to present the world in a different way, thereby "exploding" this world. As a result, round-the-clock life in the world of mass and ubiquitous information displaces a person from the real, alienates from the historically established social fabric, people empathize with what they see, experience stress, the horrors of struggle, violence, and try to cope with the signs of the real. According to D. Meyrovitz [30], the main problem of our time is that the fields of social interaction are constantly being reorganized, which weakens or even breaks the connection between the physical and social place, localizing the individual's "I" in new hybrid spaces of action. They are a mixture of public and personal, attract and attract new ways of presenting and identifying themselves, including forming new collective configurations. With unpredictable social consequences. Information and communication technologies have redistributed the boundaries that distinguish collectives and groups in such a way that at the present social moment, the differences that divide people by age, physical capabilities, professional affiliation, etc. may be less rigid than those that distinguish computer-literate from illiterate. So D. Altheide [7; 8] draws attention to new codes and communication formats, new modes of selection, organization and presentation of information, which he studies and analyzes in his works. These new formats define social activity, can change or eliminate existing practices, stimulate the formation of a new one, and thus create conditions for identifying your "I", present new opportunities and formats for choosing yourself. Alside describes the use of individual phones, ATMs, computers and even the TV remote control; the

keyboards of these devices, which open the way to new interactions, take you to places that are not accessible in the past or future, reduce the distance between children and adults, and act, in fact, as a type of reverse socialization. It should be pointed out that media objects today are a kind of "live" objects. In recent decades, there have been trends of serious changes in the relationship between the human-machine system, this was noted in the research of B. Reeves and K. NASS [32], believing that now the human-machine relationship reflects, "mirrors" purely human relationships. For example, people are polite to computers (although this is not necessary), react to computers with female voices differently than with male ones, the size and frequency of the TV screen image affects physical reactions and perception of personal space, if the image is identical to movement in real life. In a "fast" world where only fleeting and mosaic signs of the real are present, broadcast from screens, are Central blocks of identities that are themselves fragmented and split in conditions where there is no stability, nothing remains stable for long. The new reality turns out to be just one of the flickers of discrete events, disposable items filtered out by information. And this is the world that the next generation is getting access to, and obviously with increasing ease with the latest technologies and in completely new formats. The extent to which this situation is anchored by technological developments is key to understanding the identity dilemma that modern individuals currently face around the world.

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