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**INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENTIATION IN THE STRUCTURE OF  
STUDENTS' CIVIL IDENTITY**

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*Abstract*

In this article we present the results of the study of the level of civil identity in relation to the indicators of intellectual development and their variability among students in different socio-cultural environments: in Moscow, which is the capital and the largest city in Russia, and in much smaller Kaluga. We've found that the number and nature of the interrelations between the adoption of civil values and intellectual development has its own peculiarities among students in Moscow and provincial universities. In the capital the intelligence promotes adoption of liberal values and acknowledgement of need for democratic reforms in Russia. In the provincial society we can see a slightly different picture: the level of recognition of the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities increases alongside intelligence levels. Overall, there are some general trends. First of all, higher intelligence levels are associated with stronger civil identity. At the same time, there are certain conflicts and inconsistencies in the structure of the latter: some civic values are persistent (e.g. freedom of information), while others are underrepresented (such as freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly etc.). These results suggest that intelligence and the socio-cultural conditions of its development are critical to the formation of civil identity of modern youth.

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**Keywords:** Civil values, civil identity, intellectual differentiation.



## 1. Introduction

Any identity is acquired in the process of socialization and is the result of an agreement between personal meanings and significant characteristics of society (Erikson, 1968; Ivanova & Mazilova, 2010). In the process of socialization, the individual juxtaposes himself and the society in all of its socio-cultural dimensions, including language, mentality, worldview, cultural, social and political values and norms of behavior (Akimova et al. 2012a, 2012b).

Comparing communal and social types of identities, we can reveal the essential features of civil identity. The former supposes that inclusion in social relations is based on the affective sense of belonging to the collective, on the strength of tradition and cultural heritage. This identity type is characterised by dominating "we-identification". The latter type is manifested in social relations based on rationally motivated values and adherence to them as universal rules of social life (Filippova, 2004). This very feature of civic identity is what allows an individual to overcome the excessive pressure of multiple identities – confessional, ethnic, professional, family, clan, network – with his own standards of social wealth and local solidarity and pursue values that are "independent of communication with members of their group" (Gofman, 2015).

Civil identity can be seen as a consciousness of belonging to the structures of civil society, based on its humanistic values and the importance of group unification on the basis of these values (Akimova, Persiyantseva, 2015).

## 2. Problem Statement

Being a personal phenomenon, civil identity is formed on a certain worldview basis and therefore is a kind of integration of the value system that functions in civil society. Acceptance or denial, representation and interpretation of the values of civil society, their categorization and awareness should be mediated by the level of intellectual development of a person (Kanazawa, 2010).

The present study is based on the principles of the differential-psychological approach. When it comes to adoption of positive values and practices of civil society, this means the analysis of the conditions and factors of their formation, the identification of the structure of civil identity and its correlation with the associated personality traits. Another principle of differential-psychological research is to reveal essential traits, separating them from the nonessential ones. Intellectual differences may be considered those substantial internal causes explaining the variability in the adoption of the civil society values and their manifestations in civil practices.

The rationale for the methodological procedure for the study of civil identity and the specificity of its expression in subjects with different intellectual characteristics is based on three empirically verified provisions. The first one is that individual chose his values in a certain socio-cultural environment, in which various kinds of regulatory prescriptions including civil ones are presented. This environment, created by different institutions, forms a value symbolic field that affects the individuals. The second point is that an individual has a certain experience of socialization - internalized in the course of education by knowledge and modes of action that allow him to navigate in the civil sphere, to

distinguish between the value alternatives and express his attitude towards them. The third position indicates that there is a special cognitive mechanism that ensures the matching of the socio-cultural environment with individual experience in building up a socio-cultural resource that provides for the perception, understanding, assessment of incoming information, enable the individual to analyze and assess environmental factors, including current and future requirements of socio-cultural environment, to establish the causal relationship between the personality and social processes. Such a mechanism is intelligence. In other words, in order to understand the essence of civil identity as a conscious identification with the values and practices of civil society, it is necessary to know the individual's socio-cultural environment, his sociocultural resource, the extent to which he is capable of thinking over the incoming information, – that is, his level of intellectual development.

### **3. Research Questions**

We may pose our research question as following: is there a relation between civil identity and intellectual development? If so, then what is the kind of this relationship? Is it uniformal or different regarding social and cultural environments?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Our purpose in the present study was to explore relations between intelligence and civil identity in Russian youth – both in general (combined student sample) and in terms of socio-cultural environment. The latter varies greatly in metropolitan areas (such as Moscow, St.-Petersburg etc.) and outside of large cities, in province (such as Kaluga and other smaller regional centres).

### **5. Research Methods**

The study involved 326 students aged 18-22 years (172 from the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, and 154 students from the Kaluga State University of K.E. Tsiolkovsky).

For the study of civil identity, a projective-type technique was used (Akimova, Gorbacheva, 2012a). The operational definition of "civil identity" construct was the following: support for others in their difference and recognition of their civil rights; awareness of the importance of eliminating problems related to the inequality of certain social groups; adherence to the goals of democratic institutions; belief in the need for positive changes in their country. Stimulus material of the technique consists of 27 drawings representing situations of social interaction, the attitude to which and their interpretation indicate the acceptance or non-acceptance of the values of civil society. Each answer grants from -2 to 2 points, depending on the proactive position of the participant, its moral and legal or just pragmatic justification, approval or disapproval of the violation of civil rights and freedoms.

The items make up seven subscales, combining situations representing the following values of civil society: the rights of ethnic minorities, the rights of sexual minorities, liberal rights, political rights, the rights of economically disadvantaged, the rights of persons with disabilities, and attitudes towards democratic transformations in Russia. Negative general score and negative scale indexes suggest a negative, anti-civic identity.

To assess intelligence level the Test of adult intelligence (TURV) was employed by Akimova et al. (2012a). The test is based on the concept of socio-psychological normatives (SPN) (Gurevich, 2008), according to which the mental development of individuals occurs under the influence of the society requirements to its members. The test consists of 7 subtests: "Dictionary", "Information", "Inferences", "Classification", "Analogies", "Generalization", "Numerical series."

## 6. Findings

Kaluga and Moscow students showed equal readiness to follow the values of legal justice to persons with disabilities and economically disadvantaged population groups. There is no significant difference between regional subsamples in recognizing Russia's right for democratic choice. Young people, although they recognized the need for democratic reforms in our state, still pointed out as an insurmountable reality that the legal norms and rules of behavior in Russian society differ from the European ("always have been and always will be") and there is no way to change the way of life. Unlike Moscow students, their Kaluga peers showed less solidarity with those who are ready to defend political rights, take into account the peculiarity of the way of life of ethnic and sexual minorities. Moscow participants often noted that migrants should have equal rights with Russians, including at work, and showed confidence that newcomers are better able to fulfil their duties ("they do not drink," "they have established ties with producers", "they are not lazy"). While in the Kaluga subsample, only a few of participants recognized the rights of non-Russians for free living, moving around the country and equal access to work. "Rights of sexual minorities" scale shows, that Moscow students believe more strongly that LGBT people deserve a tolerant attitude and need support in showing their differences and in exercising their civil rights. Such an answers were rare among students of a provincial university.

Conflicts were revealed in relation to liberal values in the juxtaposed subsamples. Regardless of the socio-cultural resources of the environments, students tend to support freedom of information, a civilized arrangement of everyday life, an environmental concern. At the same time, adherence to such liberal rights as the right to express one's opinion, the right to discuss public plans and dialogue with the authorities, the right to free manifestation of public activity was uncharacteristic of the students surveyed. At the same time, when it comes to liberal rights, Moscow students demonstrate a distinct tendency towards higher indicators compared to Kaluga students.

Analysis of the links between the degree of acceptance of civil values, the level of civil identity and the level of intellectual development (Spearman's  $\rho$ ) confirmed the role of intellectual differentiation.

In our combined sample we've found significant link between the recognition of the rights of sexual minorities ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), relation to liberal rights ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) and the rights of persons with HIA ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ), as well as a general indicator of adherence to the values of civil society ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) with general intelligence test score. The greatest contribution to the interrelation between intelligence and civil identity was made by Information, Classification, and Generalization subtests.

In the Moscow student sample, interconnection between civil values and intellectual development was limited to certain types of values and intellectual actions, for example, recognition of rights of

children with HIA was significantly correlated with Information ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), and adherence to democratic transformations in Russia is connected at the tendency level with Inferences ( $r = 0.17$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ). A few links were revealed in the Kaluga sample. Attitude towards the rights of sexual minorities and the rights of people with HIA proved to be reliably associated with the intellectual skills of establishing an analogy ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $p = 0.05$  and  $r = 0.17$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ) and reconstruction of the inference structure ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.04$  and  $r = 0.16$ ,  $p = 0.05$ , respectively). The adoption of the value of the protection of political rights at the trend level correlated with the establishment of analogies ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ) and the ability to generalize ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ). These data indicate that the interrelation of the intelligence level and civil identity has manifested itself differently in groups studying in different sociocultural regional environments.

The dependence of the involvement of civil values on intellectual differentiation in different regional sociocultural environments acquires qualitative specificity. In Moscow, intelligence promotes a positive attitude to values of a liberal nature and strengthens adherence to democratic reforms in Russia. In the provincial society, with the growth of intelligence, reflective solidarity is formed conducive to the recognition of the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities.

The role of intellectual differentiation in the variability of the adoption of civic values and the formed civic identity was manifested in the increase in the measure of coherence in levels of acceptance of civic values.

The revealed facts, showing both differences and some general trends in Moscow and Kaluga subsamples, need to be interpreted.

In modern social phenomenology, it is asserted that "everyday life styles" play an important role in people's lives, expressing the values and interests that govern the behavior of people in their familiar environment (Rosenberg, 2008, 2009). The culture of the daily life of a particular region is a special way of life, consisting of values, customs, traditions, ethical norms, etc. The general experience of socialization in this case plays a decisive role not only in the genesis of certain values, but also in their assimilation, changes in values that correspond to various socio-cultural norms. Moscow as a region is distinct not only by the level but also by the quality of social and economic development caused by active involvement in the processes of globalization, the formation of a modern information environment, interregional and external migration flows and cultural exchange. At the same time, the unpreparedness of its residents to accept and successfully master the new social situation is growing in the megalopolis. According to numerous opinion polls (Poletaev et al., 2014; Vorobyeva, 2015; Mikhailova, 2016; Lekontsev, 2017), a significant part of the young students in Moscow expresses open aversion to migrants, they support strict restrictions on the entry and stay of non-Russians in Russia. These manifestations of intolerance are especially evident in the mass consciousness of the inhabitants of the province, where the opposition "we and they" feeds on both the centuries-old tradition of isolated living and the contemporary realities of regional life, in particular, by increasing competition in conditions of limited economic resources.

The contradictory nature of the relationship between civil identity and the level of intellectual development, the discrepancy between adherence to basic civil values and their willingness to be guided in the assessment and interpretation of social situations, revealed both in the Moscow and Kaluga subsamples, confirm the importance of the supra-individual sources of knowledge imprinted in the culture of

society and its various groups. The attitude to and identification with civil values may correspond way more with these sources than individual's intellectual activity. It should be taken into account that many ideas about society coming to the individual from various social institutions - family, school, mass media - are assimilated in a "ready-made" form without being subjected to any cognitive modification and thought processing. In other words, an individual in a situation of value choice can show a selective attitude to the values on which the agents of socialization are oriented, and his ideas about the public good of civic duty, individual rights and freedom will be based on ready-made judgments prevalent in his environment.

The true choice and rational interpretation of civic values presupposes a purposeful evaluation of various options for social action. Intelligence creates a problem field of civic actions and meanings, the individual begins not only noticing phenomena and objects of the civil sphere, but starts to practice interactions with them.

## **7. Conclusion**

Relationship between intellectual development and acceptance of civic values confirm that differences in the youth attitude to the values of civil society are determined by the level of intellectual development. It ensures both a direct understanding of the content of the value choice in the civil sphere, and its rational motivation, which explains the meaning of the applied practices of social activity. The formation of positive attitude towards the freedom and dignity of the individual, the rights of minorities and readiness to defend them require developed thought processes, the ability to understand social processes, to assess their consequences and to realize individual's active position as a citizen.

Students with a low level of intellectual development differ from their highly intellectual peers in an indifferent or negative attitude toward political rights and minority rights, rejection of legal forms of protection of honor and dignity, refusal to openly manifest a civic position. Moderate acceptance of the values of individual freedom functions in the structure of civil identity of low-intellectual students regardless of recognition of the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities, readiness to defend their political rights and attitudes towards democratic reforms in Russia.

On the contrary, among highly intelligent students positive identifications with different civic values form a single interconnected structure. Their civic identity is manifested through a reflexive and critical attitude to the world, based upon desire to receive and rely on diverse information in their assessments, as well as the consciousness, freedom and responsibility. High level of intellectual development ensures differentiation and harmonization of civic values, which allows them to reach a new level of analysis and generalization, to abstract from secondary rules and traditions of social action associated with the close socio-cultural environment and focus their attention on higher-order values of civil society.

Being manifested in a positive civic identity, intelligence provides an idea of social reality as a "unity in diversity", which opens up opportunities for constructive interaction with people of different social, ethnic, sexual etc. backgrounds.

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