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PROBLEM OF IDENTITY AND NATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

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Abstract

The article presents a philosophical analysis of the dynamics of the modern national public sphere, which is influenced by the conflicting socio-political and socio-cultural realities of the globalizing world. The relevance of the study is justified by the need to understand the changing nature of collective identity, the changes of which are caused by the influence of phenomena of supranational reality, as well as the formation and development of supranational institutions. The purpose of the article is to identify and substantiate the influence of the phenomenon of supranational symbolic reality on the nature of the national public sphere and the process of forming a national collective identity. The research methodology includes a dialectical approach as the basis for the analysis of the development of social contradictions, methods of philosophical reflection. The analysis of the development trends of the modern national public sphere showed the emergence of transcultural and transnational forms in its structure, which leads, on the one hand, to the state of its instability and vagueness, and, on the other hand, to conflict, which is manifested in the contrast between the national and the supranational. The scientific novelty of the proposed view is to substantiate the unstable nature of the modern national public sphere, which is seen in the complication of the structure of the modern symbolic reality, the manifestation of the phenomenon of its multisubjectivity, the “flickering” character of individual identity.

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1. Introduction

The tension of the problem of identity in the modern world is caused by the developing globalization processes that give rise to the transnationalization of all social relations. Identity is becoming a category that reflects many civilizational shifts and faults. At whatever level we consider identity – as a theoretical concept or as a phenomenon, we are faced with a statement about its crisis state. The multiple social transformations that are characteristic of the modern post-industrial stage of the development of society also affect the phenomenon of identity, which in turn leads to conflicting social situations and conflicts.

The concept of identity is a subject of transdisciplinary research, and issues of national identity are included in different social contexts, the most significant of which are the contradictions of the modern world caused by globalization processes. Questions that are related to the interpretation of the essence of collective identity, including its national and civic dimensions, which are not clearly distinguished in the Russian research literature, fall into this problematic field. Civic identity is considered as an element of national identity, as a general concept for such varieties as state-civic identity and national-civic identity (Gorshkov & Tyurina, 2018), as a universal national-state identity (Lubsky, 2018). Meanwhile, national and civic identities, which are components of a collective identity, represent its various and somewhat contradictory hypostases, and, therefore, clarification of the foundations and boundaries of concepts is very important for understanding the nature of their relationship or mutual conflict manifesting in the public sphere. At the same time, this scientific task is actualized by the influence that these phenomena experience in a globalizing world under the influence of developing supranational institutions and symbolic phenomena of supranational reality. In this regard, the purpose of the article is to identify and substantiate the influence of the phenomenon of supranational symbolic reality on the nature of the national public sphere and the process of formation of the national collective identity. The substantiation of the unstable nature of the modern national public sphere, which is seen as a result of the increasing complexity of its structure (new subjectivity and, therefore, increasing multimodality) in the global world.

2. Problem Statement

Identity has always been one of the central issues of theoretical discussions in the field of social sciences and humanities. Despite the sharply debatable nature both at the theoretical and empirical levels of the whole range of issues that cover the topic of identity, we can single out a common understanding of identity as an individual's recognition of belonging to a community, which is formed on the basis of stable socio-cultural characteristics – socio-political, national-cultural, and reflects the ideas prevailing in society. Both civic and national identities as components of a collective identity are contextual phenomena that change under the influence of historical realities. The processes of global development and the transition to a new stage of globalization development in the 21st century led to a rapidly changing social context in which all spheres of life found themselves. With new acuteness, these changes manifested primarily in the relationship between the national and the global, in the broad sense, including such an aspect as the national and the global public sphere. The changing nature of the social context and the stability of sociocultural characteristics form the problematic nature of the contradiction, which is

analyzed in this article: supranational reality as a result of globalization erodes national identity and, thereby, changes the foundations of the existence of structures of the national public sphere, leads to a crisis as a phenomenon of national publicity, and the public sphere as a whole.

3. Research Questions

The subject field of the study is the dynamic relationship of the phenomenon of national identity and the transformation of the national public sphere under the influence of globalization processes. The subject of the study is the phenomenon of supranational symbolic reality that occurs in the global world and creates the context for the development of the national public sphere.

The influence of globalization on the public sphere is defined by leading foreign and domestic philosophers as one of the risk factors. First of all, this influence extends to forms of civic activity. A set of civic attributes is almost everywhere subjected to serious attacks, which led to the conclusion about the corrosion and decay of citizenship (Crouch, 2010). Along with this, the problem of narrowing public space in the global world is being posed (Habermas, 2012), the understanding of the specifics of public communication of the 21st century in connection with the formation of a global multimedia system is being problematized (Castells, 2016). In a number of studies, the globalization of media communications is considered the challenge for identity, the complex of factors determining the identification processes includes the phenomenon of media identity, that is, the result of the assignment of identity through forms of articulation of identity in the media space. It is noted that national identities confront with translocal representations of national identities and challenge fixed national contextualizations of identity (Hepp, 2004). The focus of modern researchers is on such issues as identity erosion, dissipative processes of identification, the formation of different models of multiple identities (Astafieva, 2016); methodological approaches to the analysis of identity (Polyakova, 2016). Among the important criteria for national identification are historical narratives that form those belonging to the “collective self” (Achkasov, 2018). The multidimensional nature of these approaches indicates an unflagging interest in the problem of identity in a globalizing world, including the interdependence of a changing national identity and the national public sphere.

Until the end of the twentieth century, the national public sphere evolved as the interaction of a political society and a national media system, on the one hand, and a passive anonymous audience, on the other. The revolutionary nature of innovative information and communication technologies, primarily the Internet communications, has become the mechanism that launched the process of “reformatting” the public sphere and gave citizens interactive tools to implement their activities in the new conditions of communication. At the same time, the distant nature of virtual communications did not only not resolve the conflict, but also generated new contradictions. The public disintegrated into a huge number of fragmented groups united by random interest. This process led to the erosion of national public spheres, since media communication, following Habermas, cannot be equated with the model of pretentious communication in traditional communicative forms of discourse.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to identify and substantiate the influence of the phenomenon of supranational symbolic reality on the nature of the national public sphere and the process of forming a national collective identity. The research methodology includes a dialectical approach as the basis for the analysis of the development of social contradictions, methods of philosophical reflection.

5. Research Methods

The theoretical framework for the consideration is the following research positions: understanding of the dynamic nature of the formation of identity, coming from the classical approach of Erickson; recognition of the role of symbolic sign systems in the process of social construction of identity (Giddens); a change in the nature of the public sphere under the influence of globalization processes (Bauman, Habermas, Castells). The research methodology includes the dialectical approach as the basis for analyzing the development of social contradictions in understanding the global and the local, a method of philosophical reflection.

6. Findings

In globalizing world, the public sphere is a multifaceted, complex phenomenon. The main property of the traditional public sphere was recognized manifestation, openness, which was presented in the forms of real civic activity, statements of real actors in real reality and real collective actions. At the same time, national problems and contradictions were articulated in the national public sphere, civic activity was aimed at achieving national goals. Under these conditions, national and civic identities developed as components of a collective identity. As social practice shows, the national public sphere can be more ordered than the amorphous supranational space. The source of the conflicts articulated in the national public sphere is to a greater extent national problems and contradictions, which means that in the process of resolving the conflict the parties will more often appeal to national experience and historical facts.

The public sphere of different eras has always represented its ideas in the forms of symbolic reality. These were artistic images of the times of European literary salons, theatrical forms of street demonstrations. Including in television media reality, the spatial and temporal coordinates of traditional symbolic worlds were associated with categories of a specific social space and time. The basic aspects of personality, especially the picture of the world, were formed within the framework of a certain social reality and national culture. The public sphere was initially formed in situations of co-presence, with their own spatial and temporal boundaries, their own rules and restrictions, certain social positions and social roles, that is, those conditions that Giddens calls contextual interaction. This determines its character, which manifests itself in time and space and reflects the institutionalized properties of social systems (Giddens, 2005). If we take into account such institutions as traditions and rituals, without which the existence of the public sphere is impossible, we will see how stable the foundations of the national public sphere are.

Today, along with traditional publicity, a peculiar phenomenon of virtual publicity is emerging, where the property of manifestation is no longer constitutive; virtual publicity is technological and supranational publicity. Virtual reality as a new symbolic environment deprives Kantian forms a priori of their classical ontological forms: now these are non-spatial and timeless constructions. They become the new framework in which virtual publicity is formed. Virtual reality “canceled” not only manifestation as the main prerequisite for the existence of the public sphere, that is, the visibility of what is happening, but also its openness: actors acting in the public sphere cannot be precisely defined, ontologized in traditional “human” images. Virtual publicity is supranational in nature: it is everywhere and nowhere, it is not constrained by the prevailing cultural and political national traditions and at the same time creates an illusory world. There are proposals to understand identity as a complex labyrinth, and the individual as a kind of simulacrum (Nemchina, 2016) At the same time, it is this challenge of “fluid” identity, as defined by Bauman, that manifests itself not only in the necessity of the choice itself, but also in the fact that it acquires a situational character, the need to change the previously chosen identity, if it ceases to be of value to a person will lose her alluring features. At the same time, as Bauman (2005) puts it, the choice of the least risky turn at the nearest intersection. This “identity crisis”, in terms of Erickson, in the information age, when all processes become global, becomes a barrier that requires constant overcoming as a challenge facing not only a separate individual, but also an entire society that is not indifferent to what capacity an individual is included in the public sphere.

Is supranational reality so powerful a construction to change persistent national symbolic codes? It has been noticed that while the world is gaining unity, people hold on tightly to the national soil, and cultural homogenization, as a result of global processes, reactivates the process of identification of the national and the cultural (Kuvadin, 2003). Is the condition for the individual entering the space of virtual publicity the need to change stable mental and behavioral structures, parting with them or even oblivion? The price of this contradiction may be the phenomenon of a “split subject”. Its parallel existence in real and virtual publicity creates a conflict of two worlds: the real conditions of national publicity, national culture and images of supranational symbolic publicity. Losing his or her national identity, he or she “begins to exist only as a function, but not as a person” (Semenov, 2013, p. 241).

The figure of the Other as a necessary subject of public space and civil interaction also acquires a virtual character, which is in no way connected with the real social space and can become a communicative tool for the social construction of supranational reality by virtue of its invisibility. The deontological principles of communication between a virtual subject and a virtual Other can reveal a different understanding of values such as freedom, necessity, justice, other than in real national reality. Elimination or weakening of social communication regulations takes place as a person goes beyond established ontological boundaries, assimilation of other communicative and behavioral patterns (Kuznetsova, 2018).

However, it is not only in the technological undermining of the national public sphere that one can see the reason for its significant changes. One of the effects of globalization was a much higher degree of social and cultural diversity, which contributed to a change in self-awareness and social interaction in public space. The national public sphere increasingly demonstrates forms of supranational public activity, thus acquiring a unified supranational character. This is expressed in the representation of civic solidarity

in supranational visual images in borrowing the principles of public rituals. While culture and language are the main criteria that shape national identity, the national public sphere is replacing the state language with English as the language of interethnic communication to express national political slogans. The boundaries of the national public sphere have become more permeable, cultural norms and values more mobile. The reason for this can be seen in the activity in the global public space of supranational entities – multinational media corporations, global media systems that supply transcultural symbolic communicative media products that represent universal patterns of collective behavior and act as a unification mechanism. All this creates new mechanisms in the functioning of heterogeneous semiotic systems, demonstrates the high dynamism of social processes in the global world, which gives the national public sphere the character of self-renewal. In the world of virtual reality, which “hugs” a person of the information age, in the conditions of dynamism of the development of global processes, the role of the individual’s personal identification as the basis of his presence in the public sphere is being actualized. Here, as Hall (2015) emphasizes, the autonomy of decisions and the role of existential choice are increasing. The phenomenon of new publicity is largely formed for the individual in the structure of social networks that create a psychological dependence of a person on a constant presence in the virtual world. Real publicity is becoming less valuable than a symbolic world created in accordance with cultural patterns, stereotypes, scripts of the global virtual world. This leads to the depreciation of the values and codes of national culture, national identity and the national public sphere.

In a globalizing world, external and internal political processes are often carried out using a set of standardized methods and techniques developed by supranational institutions and proven global players. In the global public sphere, these political technologies are reflected in the metaphor of “color revolution”. The universal nature of these political technologies, based on supranational symbolic reality, ignores the specifics of national public spheres, which, as a result, erodes the unique national identity.

7. Conclusion

In global world, the national public sphere is a synthesis of the real manifestation of its events and their virtual construction, enhanced through the development of global media communications. This creates a field of conflict of value and deontological nature, which is embodied in a symbolic confrontation of the forms of communication that exist in traditional and virtual reality. Supranational reality as a result of the globalization of social processes naturally leads to the transformation of the national public sphere and thereby contributes to the erosion of national identity. Its character becomes situational, “fluid”, or even a flickering identity – that is the reality that today characterizes the national public sphere. At the same time, this conflict should be understood as a natural result of historical development, which reproduces in new forms a dialectical contradiction between the stable mental structures of the personality that form the national identity and the constantly changing social context, with the difference that in the modern globalizing world these changes are faster as they occur in the conditions of a constantly evolving information revolution. The new context of the development and functioning of the national public sphere, the contours of which are marked by the information age, requires its further careful study.

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