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“Place Identity” as a Criterion for Supporting Network Communications: Theoretical Analysis and Empirical Estimation*



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Abstract. The purpose for the research is to analyze the key features of local identities based on the theoretical approach of multiple identity and analysis of large volumes of empirical information. The article is based on the hypothesis that the spread of global communications as widespread practices gradually brings citizens outside the local circle, providing socio-economic and socio-cultural integration. Methods of analysis: calculation of indices of strata proximity, regression models, analysis of variance. The research novelty lies in the substantiation of the necessity of introducing the contextual meaning of the term “place identity” which is associated with the socio-economic criteria of support for network communications by content features and is due to the mechanisms for distinguishing levels of strata

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proximity. The authors empirically verify the concept on sociological databases; identify new effects and performance of identities in Russia. The main results include: theoretical study and empirical estimation of the regional identity based on comparative analysis of performance of seven regions and Russia as a whole by a common methodology during 2002–2016; the author’s model of structuring “place identity” as a symbolic resource and a criteria of support for network communications; the differences of strata proximity levels and main factors for their reproduction. The forecast of M. Castells which states that the “information space” in the modern world dominates over the “place space” is not confirmed in Russian regions. The “professional” identity is close to the hierarchy of identities “family”-“friends”-“generation”-“region”. The radii of “understanding circles” in Russia have increased, which is associated with the extension of available means of communication. The latter reinforce the importance of professional and social contacts, which is a positive signal and is consistent with global trends. At the same time the authors reveal the effects of blocking traditional means of social mobility. Identities of religious, national, and global level are “extensive”, i.e. they are characterized by predominance of lack of identity over its presence. The research results may be used for scientific, educational, managerial, information-analytical purposes as the authors have identified signs of transformation of the Russian society corresponding to the trends in transition to the network society and contradicting them. The prospects for further research are due to analyzing important identity factors such as trust, types and performance of the value system, identification of stratification groups or clusters according to a specified set of criteria in order to determine the possibilities of enhancing and upgrading regional and other types of potential in the Russian society.

Key words: socio-cultural, identity, network communications, region, globalization, communications.

Introduction. Modern social processes denoted by concepts such as globalization, glocalization, mediatization, and development of network communication change the meaning of life and the symbolic forms of a human as part of these processes. Symbolic resources and socio-cultural means of constructing reality, concepts of identities at different levels are becoming of key importance in the functioning of societies, communities and territories. Thus, M. Castells has drawn attention to the fact that in the modern information society, territorial, regional, local, religious, ethnic (diaspora), and other types of identities are becoming determinants of important social change [10; 27; 28]. The concept of “place identity” acquires scientific and practical value, integrating the necessary value, emotional,

rational, business, symbolic and other load-bearing mental structures as benchmarks of human life necessary for a comfortable existence. The purpose for the paper is to identify key characteristics of concepts of identity and “place identity” associated with mechanisms of network cooperation, and to distinguish between levels of strata affinity, presentation of theoretical constructs and empirical evaluations of these phenomena.

The research was conducted within the scientific tradition of constructivist sociology. *The theoretical significance* is defined by the specification and justification of a number of concepts related to the definition of “place identity”. *The practical significance* lies, on the one hand, in the need to activate the regional potential and strengthen the regional

identity associated with it, on the other hand, in recurrent crises of “negative identity”. The latter create an opportunity to manipulate collective identity based on the rhetoric of “*us and others*” aimed at dehumanizing different population groups. In general, “*place identity*” is referred to as an individual’s identification with their “small motherland”, the place of their residence which is generally defined during the struggle with non-differential global symbols [28, p 112].

The research tested **basic hypotheses**: “place identity” in the information society must maintain value, emotional, rational, symbolic, business, and other symbolic pillars necessary for a relatively comfortable human existence; the level of social preparedness for inclusion in the global communications network is directly linked to the relations of regional identity (“place identity”) in respective contexts “communication” – “identification” – including on the scale of “Friend”–“Foe”; the explosive spread of global information media as widespread phenomena gradually takes citizens beyond the local circle, spreading various forms of globalization to a high level of all Russians’ “general mentality”. The more developed in the local society is the assessment of “Friend” at the global/national level the deeper penetrate the relations of the global network society into these communication networks.

Research novelty: the authors justify the necessity of introducing the concept of “place identity” into contextual circulation; by meaningful signs, the concept is associated with the socio-economic criteria of network communication support and is determined by the mechanisms for distinguishing the levels of strata affinity. It is proved that the circles of

mutual understanding in Russia have rapidly grown, which is primarily associated with the spread of free means of communication. The latter primarily reinforce the importance of professional and social contacts, which is consistent with the global trends. In terms of analysis of the conflict between “local” and “global”, the findings do not confirm the forecast of M. Castells. We agree with O.I. Shkaratan that “small motherland” is the basis of reproduction of identities, and that the means of social mobility traditional for the Russian society are currently blocked.

Literature review. Among many theoretical and empirical studies related to issues raised above, there are several groups important to the authors of this article. Conceptually and empirically, we relied on the findings of the research program “The Socio-Cultural Evolution of Russia and its Regions” initiated by the Center for Socio-Cultural Changes at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the findings are reviewed in the works of research teams from 25 regions of the country, among which are the works by N.I. Lapin and L.I. Belyaev [12–15], the leading representatives of the economic-sociological scientific school of the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of the Russian Academy of Sciences: V.A. Ilyin [9], A.A. Shabunova [24, 25], M.A. Lastochkina [16; 17] and other scholars, multi-authored monographs and reviews [2]. The theory of identities is based on the study of classes, social strata, the transformation of the social structure by Russian scholars (T.I. Zaslavskaya [8], V.V. Radaev [18], O.I. Shkaratan [26]). The image of the global scientific context is created

by scientific research of the modern society (Z. Bauman [3], A. Giddens [5; 6], M. Castells [10; 27; 28], J. Habermas [23]). The features of the methodology and research results are associated with the ideas of the theory of communication networks by P. Monge and N. Contractor [32]; theories of communication, network supervision in the context of the new economy by G. Mulgan [33]; new scientific approaches to the social structure from the point of view of the exchange theory and network analysis by K. Cook and J. Whitmeyer [29]; analysis of the problems of the world of social media by D. Miller and his school [31]; with a new view on space and place from the point of view of human (humanitarian) geography of Yi-Fu Tuan [34, 35], which can be described as an alternative approach.

Theoretical approaches. The concept of defining identity was developed in the 1950–s and was understood through self-determination and self-realization in the value socio-cultural space of symbolic signs, through identification of distances of the far and the near, “Friend” and “Foe”, within which there are motivations related to the search and awareness of the actual and the desired position [4; 6; 30]. In modern society structured in dense information flows and new communication technology, the very nature of identification processes is changed. Its new role in the assignment of the necessary connections, meanings, values and social relations is modified, communication and social relations are shifted towards the dynamic present and local, in particular, the semantic vector is shifted towards the new concept of “*place identity*” [28]. Economists (Nobel Prize winner G. Akerlof and R. Kranton) considered

the economic system in conjunction with the development of identification processes. The concept of identity in a number of categories such as tastes – preferences – rules – social rules internalized by the subject – action motivation, helped G. Akerlof and R. Kranton form the theoretical framework of a new economic theory where people’s tastes and decision-making processes depend on the social context [1, p. 7]. We agree that particularly important are standards prevailing in a particular group formed at the place of residence and place of work [1, p. 157]. The concept “place identity” in transformed into the concept “identity of place of work” and afterwards into the concept “identity with the firm”. Place identity transformed through the prism of economic relations organizes and transforms the social space one way or another. A. Giddens formulated two important concepts: “place of action” and “presence” which determine the “properties of the environment” and affect the relations between the social and system integration used to form the semantic content of the interaction on a regular basis. The key components of the real interaction with global characteristics of institutionalization of the social life link the contexts of identification and places of action also reflected in the concept of strengthening group identity [6, pp. 184–185]. A. Giddens proved that “place identity” needs to be defined as a sense of an individual’s informed and accepted sense of their position in a certain social space [5]. From the standpoint of *frame analysis*, E. Hoffman developed a different approach to “space identity” as “perfect circumstances of co-presence” [7, p. 474]. Considering the concept of interactions,

E. Hoffmann highlighted promising analytical opportunities for the identity of an individual and place in line with the rituals of interaction and status signals which help investigate virtual identities as well. This approach has helped reconsider the content and meanings of the characteristics of “place identity”, network interactions, social networking, and levels of strata affinity in the information society, which is particularly important for understanding new social media and social networking in the context of the theory of *scalable sociality* [31]. *Yi-Fu Tuan* presented the definition of “place identity” in the form of *a transformable abstract space into specific place* (the concept of “space and place”) which is has certain *valuable content* of a *specific symbolic form* [34, p. 445]. The concept of “space and place” was described in the fundamental work of the same name [35]. It is important to note that the main objective of Yi-Fu Tuan’s book “Space and Place” was to explain the spatial human behavior and understand how humans perceive space and form their life world and their place. It is important how a human produces life-world and place from the environment. A human can give the meaning to space and place and build their models. The key idea of *Yi-Fu Tuan* is to show and explain how a human creates a specific place from an abstract space [35]. What matters is how a human gives the meaning to the space, how they create abstract images of a space, how they seek to conceptualize a space. When a human creates space for themselves in the forms of life-world and their own place they associate them through their values: therefore this process, according to *Yi-Fu Tuan*, is purely of a value nature. The definition of *place* is determined primarily through personal

experience and through the socio-cultural context, and is operationalized in components such as completeness, subjectivity, discretion, closeness – as conditions in which a human feels comfortable and safe. The definition of *space* is characterized by freedom, openness, isotropy (i.e., when different points of space are homogeneous in any direction), threat. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, when humans create a place, they create behavior matrices (patterns). The place serves as a source of human identity; thus the concept of “rootedness/embeddedness in place” gains particular importance [35]. These characteristics help verify the definition of “place identity” where identity is generally referred to as an individual’s embeddedness or rootedness in subjectively interpreted social categories [20].

T.I. Zaslavskaya verified the empirical model of the social structure: layer groups of the population in its vertical projection, which is divided into five main strata [8, pp. 285–306]. O.I. Shkaratan drew attention to the fact that “*small motherland*”, a territorial community, is the primary environment for a “socializing individual” as “human production” [26, p. 38]. V.V. Radaev suggested several criteria for identifying social groups, which can be re-interpreted by features of power and authority distribution; systems of social action; typological characteristics of individual action; market position in the sense that every social stratum (class) is combined by typical *life-chances* on the markets of goods, services and labor as a product of specific career opportunities. The important points are status position determined by socio-cultural orientations, standards of behavior, educational and occupational

prestige, lifestyle [18, pp. 121–135]. Further development of the identity was revealed and filled with content in the approach of *pair wise identity* based mainly on long-term relations, constantly renewed contacts and periodic coordination of conditions of an action: in this case, the *relational contract* is important, where the special role belongs to the identity of counterparties [18, pp. 49–50, pp. 79–80].

Data, methodology, and methods of analysis.

Empirical data were obtained in the national research project “The Socio-Cultural Images of Russian Regions” [2, p. 295]. The hypotheses were tested with the use of regression and dispersion analysis in the SPSS statistical package. We use the results of long-term socio-cultural monitoring (2006, 2009, 2011, 2016) in the Tyumen Oblast, Khanty-Mansi (KhMAO-Yugra) and Yamalo-Nenets (YaNAO) autonomous okrugs [21, pp. 21–48], independent research projects in the Chelyabinsk, Vologda, Kursk, and Omsk oblasts, in Russia as a whole (sampling structures – see Appendix, *Tab. 3*) [9; 11–17; 22; 24; 25]¹. The choice of regions covers Russia’s geographical range: “the European Center” + “the North” + “the Eurasian Center”; these regions are united by similar levels of development, features and levels of modernization [2]. The analysis is based on the published results [13, p. 45; 15; 19] and data arrays of the all-Russian monitoring for 2002–2015. To check the degree of generality the models were tested in 14 independent samples (see Appendix, *Tab. 3*). In order to

record the statistics of preservation of these dependencies during the transition between different independent samples we use the term “sustainable” link. The statistics of preservation of the specified dependencies between different sub-samples are fixed by the term “statistically significant” link². The analytical framework is based on the approach of “layer affinities”, on the research of group solidarities in the interpretation of N.I. Lapin through the concept of “*Us and Others*”. This approach was verified with the classification of five groups of affinity degree (high, above average, average, low, extensive affinity) and ten layers of affinity (personal affinity (friends); professional (people of the same profession, occupation); age (people of the same age); business (colleagues, schoolmates); property (people of the same income); ethnicity (people of the same nationality); settlement (inhabitants of the same village, city); religious (people of the same confession, religion); “Union” (people who were citizens of the Soviet Union); universal (all the people on the Earth). To measure “layer affinity” N.I. Lapin introduced the affinity intensity factor (AIF) calculated as *the ratio of the number of respondents who indicated the presence of affinity and those who noted its absence*. This distinguished five levels of “layer affinity” intensity: from high (AIF = 15.7) to extensive (AIF = 0.8), i.e. with predominance of absence of affinity over its presence. It was concluded that in Russia the most intense affinity is of a personal nature: friends (AIF = 15.7) and, of course, family (although there was no direct question about the family in this case). The first two types are followed by affinity

¹ The list of abstracts to the research project is presented in, for example, <http://iphras.ru/page48873902.htm>. Samples are multi-stage, quota, random within quotas maintaining control of sample representativeness according to indicators of territory-type of settlement-sex-age-education. The sample error does not exceed 3.5% by one indicator.

² As established in statistics, if the error is below the range of 0.1, 0.01, 0.001 we use the terms weak, strong (significant) and maximum degree of significance respectively.

layers such as: professional, i.e. people of the same profession, occupation (AIF = 9.6), age (AIF = 9.17) and business colleagues (AIF = 99.11). Less intensive is affinity among people of the same income (AIF = 8.2) and of the same nationality (AIF = 7.3). Affinity among people living in the same rural settlement or town is not very intensive (AIF = 3.6), even less is it among people of the same confession, religion (AIF = 2.9). Affinity among former citizens of the USSR (AIF = 1.4) is close to universal, which is extensive in nature (AIF = 0.8) [13, pp. 9–12]. Structural variables are presented numerically as a certain number of people active in various micro-situations. In this case, social reality embodied in place identity is micro-experience; and the macro-sociological level of analysis is formed by quantitative temporal and spatial conglomerates [6, p. 213]. From the theoretical point of view A. Giddens recorded the link between network cooperation and affinity, arguing that “due to electronic means of communication, especially the telephone, indirect contacts became possible, allowing close connection and affinity characteristic of the conditions of co-presence” [6, p. 121]. It is obvious that the principles of building communication links are of paramount importance in establishing local identity.

Evaluation of intensity of layer affinity among the residents of different territorial communities is carried out in the following questions: “*To what extent do you feel affinity or remoteness (“Friend” – “Foe”) with the residents of the settlement you live in (village, rural settlement, city) (settlement level); with the inhabitants of the whole region (regional level); with the inhabitants of the whole country (national level); with the inhabitants of the*

former Soviet republics (“Union” level); with the inhabitants of the whole planet (universal level). N.I. Lapin pointed out that one of the manifestations of asymmetry of social well-being is a notable, almost twofold decrease in intensity of the layer affinity of the population in all its types observed in 2002–2006 [15, p. 46]. We do not entirely agree with this conclusion, which is justified below. Until 2010, the answers to the questions were somewhat different; the same were settlement, Union, national and universal levels of identity. The comparison of data obtained up to 2010 and later is somewhat arbitrary; therefore affinity intensity factor (AIF) is analyzed dynamically. According to data up until 2010, the presence of layer affinity implied the sum of shares (in %) of answers “*Friend*”+“*close*”, the absence – “*far*”+“*Foe*”. According to data obtained in the monitoring since 2010, the question was assumed to be answered by options “*affinity is present*”, “*no affinity*”, “*difficult to say*”. We did not consider variants such as “*indifference*”, “*undecided*”, and “*difficult to say*”.

Analysis of the structure and levels of layer affinity. According to the method, the answer is “there is affinity” is interpreted as the self-assessment of availability of network identity of the specified level, and “no affinity” – lack of it. *Table 1* shows data for 2002 and 2006 for the cited article [15, p. 46]. To ensure comparability we used affinity intensity factor (AIF) proposed in the cited paper.

The ranking of levels of identity (columns 3–6 of *Table 1*) extremely steadily and in descending order of the significance level corresponds to the distribution of physical space: settlement/ region/ Russia as a whole/ Earth. The settlement level remains the

Table 1. Performance of layer affinity intensity factor (“Friend”–“Foe”)*

Territory of survey	Year	Settlement	National	“Union”	Universal
Russia as a whole	2002	3.6		1.4	0.8
Russia as a whole	2006	2.6	2.6	1.6	1.4
Tyumen Oblast	2006	8.9	0.3	0.3	0.2
KhMAO-Yugra	2006	7.3	0.3	0.5	0.2
YaNAO	2006	8.9	0.4	0.6	0.3
Tyumen Oblast	2009	6	0.2	0.3	0.2
KhMAO-Yugra	2009	8.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
YaNAO	2009	7	0.5	0.6	0.4
Russia as a whole	2010	4.7	0.9	0.4	0.4
Omsk Oblast	2010	8.7	0.7		0.6
Vologda Oblast	2010	7.6	0.6		0.5
Tyumen Oblast	2011	3.5	0.5	0.3	0.3
KhMAO-Yugra	2011	3.9	0.7	0.7	0.5
YaNAO	2011	3.7	0.8	0.6	0.6
Kursk Oblast	2012	3.6	0.4	0.3	0.2
Chelyabinsk Oblast	2012	3.9	1.1	0.5	0.5
Russia as a whole	2015	3.7	0.9	0.4	0.4
Kursk Oblast	2016	4.1	0.8	0.4	0.3
Tyumen Oblast	2016	3.0	0.7	0.4	0.3
KhMAO-Yugra	2016	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.4
YaNAO	2016	2.6	0.8	0.6	0.4

* Calculated as the quotient of the share of those who noted the presence of affinity divided by the share of those whose stated there was no of affinity.

most important for people due to territorial community; it is a territory where daily communication and interaction with other people takes place, and, as a rule, these people are “just like me”. Half to one third of respondents note affinity among the inhabitants of their own generation. The highest rate of declining intensity is observed during the transition from the settlement to the regional level; starting from the national level layer affinity is extensive. It can be argued that in Russia “space of places” continues to prevail over “space of information”. This conclusion at first glance contradicts the forecast of M. Castells. Further, we analyze this contradiction in detail. Layer affinity intensity factors decline

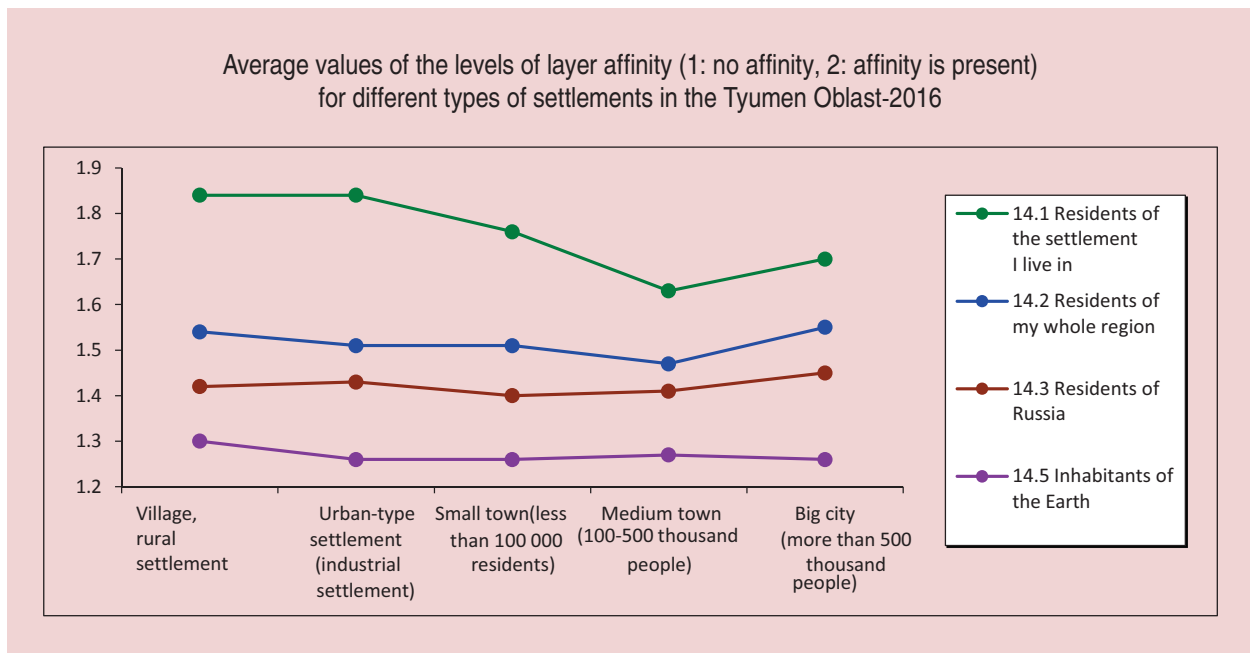
in dynamics or remain unchanged just like in the case of human identity. This happens because the number of those rejecting the existence of affinity is growing at the expense of those who previously evaded identity. The weakening of territorial social ties recognized by sociologists all over the world and the transition to supranational network interactions should be reflected in the fact that young respondents having more network (the Internet) contacts have to demonstrate slower rate of declining identity from settlement to universal.

The dynamics is such that the perception of spaces (Tab. 1 – territory, distances) using the concept of “Friend”-“Foe” becomes closer reducing the absolute value of AIF – the

share of those who consider such people as their “Friends” to the share of those who they consider “Foes”. After reaching a certain level (2–4 times) settlement affinity is not so much varied depending on the degree of area periphery (geographical, institutional, economic, social). The convergence of the perception of space is especially noticeable in geographically distant territories such as KhMAO and YaNAO where AIF has constantly decreased in the range from 7.3 and 8.9 in 2006 to 2.4 and 2.6, respectively, in 2016.

To test the hypotheses we constructed multivariate regression models. The calculations were performed based on data from Tyumen regions (the Tyumen Oblast, KhMAO, YaNAO) for 2011, 2016, from the Kursk Oblast (for 2012, 2015), from Russia as a whole (for 2010, 2015). The calculation methods are: LRM, backward selection, ANOVA, confidence factor is not less than 95%. Multivariate regression models were computed sequentially for cases of dependent variable of the self-assessment of layer affinity among the inhabitants of the Earth, the whole Russia, the whole region, with inhabitants of a settlement you live in (village, rural settlement, city). Levels of measurement: 1: no affinity; 2: here is affinity. Independent variables were selected as socio-economic (C. 27, C. 28, C. 30.1, C. 57) and sociocultural variables (C. 1, C. 42, C. 60, C. 61, C. 54) (see Appendix, *Tab. 4*). The choice of independent variables is determined by the wish to describe the social structure of the sample excluding autocorrelation. The main **conclusion** for all models is the following: none of the independent variables demonstrates the grades of identity by both affinity layers on a scale of “Friend”–“Foe” and the levels of mutual understanding.

The tools of the Tyumen Oblast for 2016 were supplemented by further questions: C.37.1–3. (see Appendix). For reasons of limited space, when summarizing the main results we present the regression table only for the variable C.14.1 called “Settlement layer affinity” (Table 4 of the Appendix). Settlement layer affinity (“place identity”) – remains the most important level of identity but declines with the transition from village to city with increasing intensity of game practices (computer, phone), with increasing levels of the social strata by self-assessment, with reducing level of settled lifestyle. National and regional layer affinity are linked to each other; they increase with self-assessment of the financial status, with increased intensity of communication in social networks during the transition from village to city and directly correlate with the age of the respondents. Universal affinity increases with the level of self-assessment across social strata, with increasing intensity of game practices (computer, phone), self-assessment, financial status, sex. Universal affinity correlates, yet weakly, with the age of the respondents. Women turned up to be more prone to expand the “layers of affinity” at all levels. The contradiction is that the considered target variables have almost no influence in terms of the number of employees (socio-professional status) and the educational status. The hypothesis about the influence of the intergenerational transition on the investigated effects is not confirmed, the results are statistically unstable. The *Figure* demonstrates four graphs of multivariate analysis of variance to demonstrate some specific effects on the example of the Tyumen Oblast, 2016.



Analysis of the structure of “circles of understanding”. The question “Among what kind of people do you usually have more understanding?” remains in the tools almost unchanged and provides for the possibility to mention all the options important to the respondents: *in the family, among friends, among neighbors, at work, around people of the same nationality, among co-religionists* (was not asked in all projects), *no understanding among other people*. This phenomenon is quite often called “circles of understanding” in the sociological literature; we will use this term below (*Tab. 2*).

We can distinguish regions with more or less traditionalist population but all Russian regions are clearly characterized by two trends which are opposite at first glance. First, the family remains an important communication resource for the vast majority of respondents. The importance of communication in the family increases in all regions. Next are the circles of communication with friends, with

colleagues, with neighbors, with people of the same nationality and confession. Second, people become less constrained at the family level; understanding is growing at work, in informal communication (neighbors). Russian regions maintain almost the same national and religious level of understanding, its importance does not exceed 4% among the population of all regions; data variation does not exceed the sample error (3%).

Discussion of results, conclusions. Theoretically, the features of identity of an individual’s or a group produce a multi-dimensional image of the social model of self-reflection of the action subject in its civil (state) and territorial status, indicate the essential points of social stratification, the attitude of the socio-professional hierarchy (belonging to a particular level of government, business, profession), demographic characteristics (age, gender). The general context of the term “identity” introduces the

Table 2. Performance of answers to the question “Among what kind of people do you usually have more understanding?”, % of the total number of responses

Territory of survey	Year	In the family	Among friends	Among neighbors	At work	Among people of the same nationality	Among co-religionists	There is no understanding	Among other people	Total*
Tyumen Oblast	2006	74	29	3	8	4	1	1	1	120
	2009	70	22	3	7	3	2	2	3	112
	2011	73	26	5	9	3	2	1	4	123
	2013	69	28	3	7	3	2	1	3	116
	2016	88	55	15	25	6	4	1	1	195
KhMAO-Yugra	2006	72	27	3	6	5	1	3	3	120
	2009	62	26	4	11	5	3	3	4	118
	2011	72	22	4	10	5	2	1	3	119
	2013	74	25	2	10	5	2	1	2	121
	2016	90	51	13	30	9	5	1	1	201
YaNAO	2006	78	22	1	7	7	1	1	3	120
	2009	67	26	4	10	5	2	3	2	119
	2011	63	23	3	12	6	1	4	4	116
	2013	64	30	2	10	6	2	1	2	117
	2016	90	55	12	28	8	2	1	1	197
Omsk Oblast	2009	67	26	3	9		1	2	1	109
Vologda Oblast	2010	62	31	5	10		1	5	1	115
Chelyabinsk Oblast	2012	79	55	14	32	5	2	1	3	191
Kursk Oblast	2012	73	21	5	5		2	1	2	109
	2015	90	50	13	20	5	6	2	1	186
Russia as a whole	2010	68	27	3	9	6	1	1	1	116
	2015	78	48	20	22	7	3	3	0	182

* Respondents were offered to mark all variants important to them.

semantic characteristics of the “environment properties” associated with two fundamental concepts: “place of action” and “presence” (according to A. Giddens) as the basis of the structuration theory. “Environment properties” affect the relations between social and system integration used to form the semantic content of interaction on a regular basis. Therefore, “place identity” can be defined as a conscious

and accepted by the individual sense of their position in the specified social space. Verification of the concept of “space identity” involves the concept of “settlement layer affinity”, or simply “layer affinity”.

The structure of layer affinity is extremely stable yet in recent years there has been a decrease of the geographical affinity factor which we empirically tested for regions

with different standard of living to and for the national average. The category “place identity” on a “Friend”–“Foe” scale remains the most stable frame among the set including: “settlement”, “national”, “Union”, “universal”; it is intergenerational and is reproduced among territories and over time. In all samples it is above half of the inhabitants. The increase of the level of settlement layer affinity over other levels of identity is significant but for each specific regional community it is steadily decreasing in dynamics. There are no sufficient grounds to assert that domination is conditioned by the material surroundings. There is no strong link between identities, circles of mutual understanding and the level of respondents’ education and status positions. The dominance of place identity is reduced with the transition from rural settlement to city, with the increase in the frequency of networking and socializing, the latter being age-related.

The level of affinity (measured as the largest circle of understanding, communication) with a family remains the most significant being above 60% in all the analyzed samples. The dominance of the family circle of communication (in contrast to “place identity”) is steadily increased in the dynamics. However, the importance of professional communication is rising at a much greater pace; the pattern is statistically steady and has maximum significance.

We cannot yet agree with M. Castells that “space of places” considered as an individual’s informed and accepted sense of their position in a certain geographically conditioned social space, integrating conditions necessary for a

comfortable existence, has lost its importance in favor of “information space” as a space of circulating flows of information, sub-territorial and supranational in nature. However, in Russia, as elsewhere in the world, “space of places” is expanding rapidly, absorbing closest and broader levels due to activities (work, social networking, friends); and this is where the main scientific contribution of domestic research and its novelty arises. We believe that such processes have a positive nature, providing the society with opportunities to increase its capacity. However, the alarming fact is weak connection of these processes with the citizens’ level of education and social status, which points to blocked traditional social mobility, confirming the findings of O.I. Shkaratan and V.V. Radaev.

The possible areas of application of the results are determined by new results and conclusions and include scientific, educational, managements, and information-analytical spheres since, contrary to frequent criticism, there are signs of transformation of the Russian society in line with the trends towards the transition to a networked society. The prospects for further research are derive form analysis of important identity factors such as trust, types and performance of value orientations, identification of opportunities for revitalization and modernization of regional and other types of potential in the Russian society. The future course development will demonstrate if the discovered trends and findings are a manifestation of the general historical trend or reflect only temporary local peculiarities of the situation in Russia.

Table 3. Size of samples used in the article by relevant databases

	2006	2009	2011	2013	2016
Tyumen Oblast	1715	1560	1271	2335	1422
KhMAO	1285	1800	1301	2264	1607
YaMAO	1000	640	482	968	541
	2006	2010	2012	2015	2016
Russia as a whole	1200	1163		1031	
Kursk Oblast			1000		500
Chelyabinsk Oblast		1000	500		
Omsk Oblast		1212			
Vologda Oblast		1500			

Parameters of regression models:

Target variables:

C.14.1 Residents of a settlement I live in (village, rural settlement, city). C.14.2. Residents of my region (oblast, okrug). C.14.4. Residents of Russia. C.14.6. Inhabitants of the Earth.

Options: 1: no affinity. 2: there is affinity.

Independent variables:

C.1. How long have you lived in this city/ town/ rural settlement/village? 1. Less than 5 years. 2. 5–15 years. 3. 16–25. 4. More than 25 years

C.27. Do you subordinates at your main job? 1. No. 2. At least 5 people. 3. 5–10 people. 4. 11–50 people. 5. 51–100 people. 6. More than 100 people.

C.28. Which of the following statements best describes the current financial situation of you and your family? 1. Not enough money for living expenses. 2. The entire salary is spent on living expenses. 3. Money is enough for living expenses, yet buying clothes is problematic. 4. Money is enough, yet we need to borrow money to buy expensive items. 5. Money is enough for practically everything, yet purchasing an apartment or a country house is problematic. 6. We can afford practically everything.

C.30.1 What social class category do you consider you belong to in your city (rural settlement)? 1. Highest social class. 2. Above average. 3. Middle class. 4. Below average. 5. Lower social class.

C.42. What can you say about your religious beliefs? 1. I am religious. 2. I am religious rather than not. 3. I am a non-believer rather an a believer. 4. I am not religious. 5. I am an atheist.

C. 54. Age groups (full years). 1:18–24, 2:25–34, 3:35–44, 4:45–54, 5:55–64, 6: over 64.

C.57. Your education. From 1 to 5, ordinal scale.

C.60. Respondent’s sex. 1.Male. 2. Female.

C.61. Type of settlement. 1: Village, rural settlement. 2: Urban-type settlement (industrial settlement). 3: Small town. 4: Middle town. 5: Big city.

Questions asked only in the Tyumen region (including KhMAO, YaNAO).

C.37.1 How much time do you spend in front of a computer working?

C.37.2 How much time do you spend communicating via social networks?

C.37.3. How much time do you play computer and/or phone games?

0. Never. 1. Occasionally. 2. Less than 3 hours a day. 3. From 3 to 8 hours a day. 4. More than 8 hours a day.

Table 4. Regression coefficients (target variable C.14.1, F=21.6).
Tyumen region (including KhMAO, YaNAO), 2016. N=3570)

	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Value	95.0% confidence interval for C	
	C	Standard error	Beta	t		нижн. гр.	верхн. гр.
Constant	2.06	0.061		33.681	0	1.94	2.18
C.61.	-0.048	0.008	-0.137	-6.226	0	-0.063	-0.033
C.37.3.	-0.042	0.01	-0.093	-4.245	0	-0.061	-0.023
C.30.1	-0.051	0.012	-0.09	-4.116	0	-0.075	-0.027
C.1.	0.032	0.009	0.074	3.378	0.001	0.013	0.05

a Dependent variable: C. 14.1 Inhabitants of a settlement I live in (village, rural settlement, city)
The rest of the variables have been excluded for their insignificance; confidence interval – 95 %.

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