

## The Formation of Civic Identity among Schoolchildren

Igor V. Kozhanov

Marina B. Kozhanova

Tatyana N. Petrova

Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Y. Yakovlev, 428032, Cheboksary, Russia  
Email: i.v.k.21@mail.ru

Raisa I. Platonova

Teacher Training Institute of North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk, 677000, Yakutsk, Russia

Mikhail G. Kharitonov

Elena G. Khrisanova

Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Y. Yakovlev, 428032, Cheboksary, Russia

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n2s3p57

### Abstract

The relevance of the research problem is due to the happening socio-cultural changes in the world, when in the conditions of polyethnicity and multiculturalism of the countries there are difficulties with the consolidation of citizens and establishing the dialogue on the principles of equality and mutual respect. The purpose of this article is to clarify the content of civic personal identity, and based on the analysis of the existing world experience of civic education of students, to present own program of forming civic identity among schoolchildren. This paper presents the content of each of the components of the civic identity of a person (cognitive, value-oriented, emotionally-evaluative, behavioral) in three aspects: ethnic (regional), civil (national) and general cultural (universal human), the author's program of the students' civic identity formation is presented. The contents of the article can be useful for school teachers and instructors of teacher education universities in preparing the relevant classes for the students.

**Keywords:** identity; civic identity; high school students; civic education; schoolchildren.

### 1. Introduction

Global socio-cultural, political and economic changes, the increasing number of multiethnic and multicultural by their composition countries, frequent cases of interethnic, intercultural and inter-religious contradictions put before all states of the world the task of consolidating their citizens, establishing the dialogue based on the principles of mutual respect and tolerance.

So, in the founding documents of the Russian Federation in the sphere of national policy – a Strategy of the state national policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 (2012) and the national security Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2020 (2009) – the objectives of strengthening the unity of the multinational people of the Russian Federation (the Russian nation) are set, that will solve the problems of promoting the formation and development of all-Russian civil patriotism and solidarity; will contribute to the preservation of ethno-cultural diversity of the peoples of Russia, as well as will ensure the harmonization of inter-ethnic and ethno-confessional relations.

In such circumstances, the task of constructing an appropriate system of education becomes urgent. In the Russian Federation in the Federal state educational standard of secondary (complete) general education (2012) its focus on ensuring the formation of the Russian civic identity of the students is stated, their upbringing and socialization, self-identification through personally and socially valuable activities, social and civic development.

Similar objectives are also set before foreign systems of education aimed at the formation of such a member of the society, who would be independent, responsible for the consequences of his/her actions, fulfilling the moral and legal

obligations of a member of the society. Among the most important qualities of such a person there is respect for human dignity noted, as well as for the opinion of others, civil behavior, serving the interests of the fellow citizens and respect for the principle of majority with the recognition of the right of minorities in dissidence, critical thinking, independent judgment, civic engagement, initiative (Fakhrutdinova, 2010; Kozhanov, 2014).

## 2. Methodological Framework

The leading approaches to the formation of civic identity among schoolchildren are: axiological, humanistic and ethno-cultural.

### 2.1 The axiological and humanistic approach

In the basis of the axiological and humanistic approaches there is the idea about a man as a value and purpose of public and educational process. At the organization of educational work and at the adherence to national specifics the following hierarchy of values can be suggested: universal human values; universal national values; local values; traditional values of a certain educational institution; individual values, representing the area of the greatest freedom, diversity and flexibility.

### 2.2 The ethno-cultural approach

The ethno-cultural approach in the context of our research involves the interdependence of the culturological, multicultural and ethno-pedagogical approaches. The culturological approach is based on the fundamental concepts of "culturally congruent environment" and "the dialogue of cultures"; the multicultural approach – is based on the theory of multicultural education; the ethno-pedagogical approach – is based on progressive pedagogical ideas of different peoples. Creation of culturally congruent environment is becoming the main tool of educating (a set of external conditions), which is the most favorable for a person's self-realization as a member of a particular national culture and involving extensive interaction with other cultures and their representatives on the basis of mutual respect, tolerance, and dialogue. Forms, methods and means of educating should respond to national traditions, rely on the accomplishments of ethno-pedagogy, and at the same time ensure access to universal human values that to some extent is reflected in the theory of multicultural education.

## 3. Literature Review

This section is devoted to consideration of the various definitions given to the terms "identity", "civic identity" and to the definition of the components of an individual's civic identity.

As O.A. Borisova notes, identity – is a broad concept that includes all the qualities of personality combinations, due to a large array of biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors (Borisova, 2006).

Turning to the category of "identity", it is necessary to be aware of the ambivalent nature of this phenomenon, designated earlier by E. Erickson. He saw identity as something ambiguous. On the one hand, this phenomenon is static, i.e. it "reaches the climax in its development and gets some integrity and completeness in the pubertal period", on the other – permanently dynamically, "we can see identity as constantly changing until the very end of life, never remaining unchanged" (Erickson, 1996).

In philosophy the term "identity" (from lat. identificare – to identify, late lat. identifico – I am identifying) is defined as "... correlation of something (having self-presence) with oneself in the connectivity and continuity of the inherent variability and conceivable in this capacity" (World encyclopedia: Philosophy of the XX century, 2002).

D.V. Telegin, and G.V. Telegina (2009) indicate that under the identity the identification of certain individuals or social groups is usually understood, with a particular role in the process of social interaction, the association of themselves and others with a particular place in different "worlds" of social communication. Accordingly, we can talk about individual or collaborative, social and/or cultural identity, although in practice an identity is likely to be a complex hybrid form, as a result of complex social interactions.

E. Goffman wrote earlier about different kinds of identity, he distinguished a social identity when it comes to personality typing based on the attributes of the social group to which it belongs, a personal identity, composing a set of unique qualities and properties of an individual together with his unique life story, and the I- identity, that represents the individual's subjective feeling of his/her own life situation. The scientist pointed to the fact that one of the types of the

social identity is the civic identity (Antonova, 1996).

In the modern politological dictionary the following definition is given: "Civic identity is a part of the social identity of an individual and reflects the views of the individual on the belonging to a public education, civil society structures, as well as the ideas of the entities and structures themselves, their assessment by the individual and his right to remain in their composition or to leave them" (Danilenko, 2000).

A.G. Asmolov says about the civic identity as of "the awareness of the individual of his/her belonging to a community of citizens of a particular state on a general cultural basis" (How to design universal educational actions in elementary school, 2011). Herewith the researcher notes that the civic identity has a personal meaning, defining a holistic attitude to the social and natural world.

Vilkova I.V. notes, that the concept of "civic identity" brings together philosophical, social and political-oriented categories and is expressed in the personality's awareness of belonging to the community of citizens of a particular state, willingness and ability to perform the associated with the presence of citizenship duties, to enjoy the rights, to take an active part in the life of the state (Vilkova, 2012).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Components of a person's civic identity

In the civic identity we can identify the following structural components: cognitive, emotionally-evaluative (connotative), value-oriented (axiological), activity (behavioral).

Despite the unity of views to the definition of structural components, there is a different understanding of the content of civic identity. So, A.G. Asmolov (How the civic identity in the world of education comes into being, 2011) examines civic identity as a set of such components as ethnic (or regional) identity, general cultural (or universal human) identity and, as such, civic identity.

Also, just like A.G. Asmolov (2011), A.A. Leontiev (2001) distinguishes three levels of civic identity (regional (ethnic), national, global), which are formed simultaneously. As a basic condition the scholar highlights the unity in the formation of the three fundamentals of a citizen's consciousness in the new Russia:

- the sense of belonging to their ethnic group, love and respect for national traditions and history of their people, language and culture;
- the sense of belonging to the multinational Russian society, Russian patriotism, coupled with the rejection of ethnic exclusivity and acceptance of responsibility for the fate of their people and their multi-ethnic country;
- the sense of belonging to a world community and taking responsibility for the fates of the whole world (Leontiev, 2001).

In accordance with the above aspects of civic identity and the specified structural components we define their content.

The cognitive component:

- the ethnic constituent – knowledge, ideas and concepts about the homeland people, their history and culture, as well as the history and culture of other nationalities; understanding of their ethnicity; knowledge of their mother-tongue;
- the all-Russian constituent – is knowledge about the state system of the society and the institutions of the government, the legal basis for the organization of the society, the state symbols, the fundamental documents, the history and culture of the Russian Federation, the knowledge of its peoples and the existing denominations.
- the general cultural constituent – is knowledge about the states of the world, their history and culture, major religions of the world; knowledge of laws, rules and regulations imposed in any country of the world; knowledge of conflict-free interaction in the conditions of multicultural environment; knowledge of the basic principles and rules of attitude towards nature, fundamentals of environmental protection and natural resource management; knowledge of healthy lifestyles and health care technologies basic principles.

The emotionally-evaluative (connotative) component:

- the ethnic constituent – is the attitude to their ethnicity; attitude towards the ethnic values of their own people; value judgments regarding attitudes to their people and other nationalities, their representatives; attitude towards the mother-tongue;
- the all-Russian constituent – is the attitude to their belonging to the Russian society, to the ongoing socio-

political events, to other citizens of Russia; attitude to the laws in force in the Russian Federation, to the system of civil values;

- the general cultural constituent – is the attitude to their belonging to the world community, awareness of oneself as "a man of peace"; and the attitude to the general cultural (universal human) values.

The value-oriented (axiological) component:

- the ethnic constituent – is the presence or absence of the formed system of ethnic values;
- the all-Russian constituent – is the presence or absence of awareness of the value of the state as a guarantor of a citizen's rights; the presence or absence of the formed system of civic values;
- the general cultural constituent – is the presence or absence of the formed system of general cultural (universal human) values.

Behavioral (activity) component:

- the ethnic constituent – is the use of the mother-tongue in communication; the manifestation of the inherent to the homeland people behaviours, the nature of actions towards the representatives of the native land people and other nationalities;
- the all-Russian constituent – is the participation in public and political life of the society; the nature of the actions towards the citizens of the Russian Federation;
- the general cultural constituent – is the participation in productive work for the prosperity of the global community and for personal self-realization; respect for the natural environment; the ability to conduct a dialogue based on equal relations and mutual respect and acceptance; the ability to constructively resolve conflicts; maintaining of a healthy lifestyle (Kozhanov, 2013).

#### 4.2 The program of forming the civic identity among schoolchildren

The program of forming the civic identity in schoolchildren is developed on a modular basis. Each module has its own range of the students involved, its methods and forms of organizing the process of forming the civic identity of an individual. However, the modules complement each other and are aimed at all-round formation of each of the aspects of an individual's civic identity.

**Module 1 "Academic disciplines"** is aimed at forming the younger students' basics of civic identity and the primary and secondary (complete) school students' – civic identity in the framework of the studied disciplines.

**Module 2 "Classroom hours"** implies thematic classes and interviewing the students held by the supervising teachers, aimed at the formation of the civic identity. The duration of the class: elementary grades – 40 minutes, 5-11 grades – 1 hour.

Each class includes a problem statement (mini-discussion), a mini-lecture or performance of students and training of the interpersonal (intercultural) communication.

Sample topics of the classroom hours:

- (1-4 grades) "the Story of my name", "there it is, my Homeland is big", "the Tale is a lie, but it hints ...", "Heroes of the homeland people", "the Miracles around us", "Kaleidoscope of professions: the past is in the present", "My people and I" and others;
- (5-9 grades) "We are united and unconquerable", "National covenants", "Homeland culture every day", "We have something to be proud of", "Law and order", "My civic duty", "Behavioral philosophy for every day", "Expanding the boundaries", "My contribution" and others;
- (10-11 grades) "Crime has no nationality", "I – am a person, we – are a group", "Everything is in our hands", "A senior high school student – is a person of culture!", "Career and self-development", "an Act", "Personal dignity and honor", "Internationalism and nationalism in the modern world", "the Threats of the future", et cetera.

**Module 3 "Interest groups and clubs"** is aimed at creating favorable conditions for forming the civic identity of an individual through the high school students' involvement in activities of the groups and clubs of ethno-cultural style, functioning at the school in the following areas: artistic-aesthetic; applied; eco-tourism; sports.

**Module 4 "School associations and social design"** provides the students with the opportunity to reveal their social potential, gain experience of socially-useful activities, practice of decision making and their implementation both as part of the school self-management, and in the process of preparation and realization of social civic-oriented projects.

Examples of possible social projects:

- "The binding link of times" (the younger generation's study and acquisition of values and cultural traditions of the established families, the promotion of the family leisure cultural education);

- “Cheboksary – is a clean city” (organization and carrying out environmental activities on cleaning and beautification, Cheboksary);
- “Reviving our forest” (taking part in planting trees);
- “Reviving the traditions of the peoples of Russia” (the study of the advocacy and reproduction of the cultural traditions of the peoples of Russia);
- “We remember! Proud of it! Inheriting it!” (organizing meetings with veterans of the Great Patriotic war, providing them with possible assistance, compilation of a video archive of memories);
- The “tales at your fingertips” (creation of tactile aids and books with fairy tales of the peoples of the world for children with visual impairment of preschool age).

**Module 5 “Socially-cultural”** is presented by the annually held activities at an educational institution, contributing to the formation of civic identity among high school students, such as the feast of “the Road to health: we – are going the same way”, the festivals “Tales of the world nations” (grades 1-4) and “Friendship of peoples” (grades 5-11), the Week of the state symbols and citizenship, the Days of the Chuvash language and others.

**Module 6 “Competition-based”** involves participation of the students in competitions (“One day in the life of the homeland people”, “My civil initiative”, “We have much to be proud of,” “I have only heard about the war” and others) and the activities (interactive game “a Starlet”, intellectually-sports game “at stations”: “My favorite city” and others), contributing to the formation of the civic identity of an individual.

## 5. Discussions

In the formation of civic identity in Russia and abroad the problem-based learning is actively used. As noted by G.W. Chilcoat (Chilcoat, 2000), the benefits of the curriculum based on the problem-based approach (an issue-centered curriculum), are that, first, both the contemporary and historical issues are examined, secondly, there is intrinsic motivation and learner interest, thirdly, the process of reflective thinking is going on, requiring the use of facts, availability of the appropriate skills, the generated values.

One of the aspects of such training is the active use of discussions in the classroom (classroom deliberation) that F.M. Hess (Hess, 2004) defines as a range of educational processes designed to engage students in a thoughtful, structured discussion, analyzing different points of view, the potential consequences are discussed and decisions are taken.

This kind of a form of work with students demonstrates its efficiency in the development of thinking skills and energizing the students with different ideas and views. J.G. Gimpel and J.E. Schuknecht emphasize the importance of this: “Students often see something negative in disagreements and conflicts, and what should be avoided, but nothing good will come of it. They do not understand the importance of ideological differences, their role in the political history” (Gimpel, 2004).

In the USA the development of critical thinking and the civic position among the students promotes the activities of the centre “Development of the character and citizenship” at the University of Missouri (in St. Louis). One of the main programs provided by the center is the LACE Program, designed to prepare education leaders to work on character building and citizenship of not only the students themselves and the teachers but also the parents and the community (Golikova, 2013).

In schools of developing the character and citizenship the daily morning 20-minute session is practiced, when through the school loudspeaker the students are offered a variety of topics to discuss, which are somehow related to the problems of moral character.

Considerable attention within the framework of forming the civic identity of a person is given to multicultural education. In this case the curriculum focuses not only on heroes, holidays, or individual elements of culture (Banks, 1994; Nieto, 1995; Suzuki, 1984), but it should help to ensure that students understand the existing problems from different angles and from different points of view.

In a general way, the main content of the multicultural education in overseas educational institutions can be represented in a form of six of its objectives, proposed by Bennett: 1) development of a multiplicity of historical perspectives; 2) strengthening of the cultural awareness; 3) strengthening of the intercultural competence; 4) opposition to racism, sexism and all the forms of prejudices and discriminations; 5) improving the understanding of the processes occurring in the state and around the world; 6) the development of social activity skills (Bennett, 1990).

Despite a number of studies confirming the importance of strengthening the curriculum of the “civilian component”, one can meet also works, proving, that the inclusion of such disciplines as “Civics” is not effective, because there is no

formation of deep civic knowledge or significant improvements in the students' attitudes to civic engagement (Molnar-Main, 2007). The traditional approach, according to M.D. Miller (Miller, 2009) is in teaching social studies with the goal of giving the students a positive attitude towards civic engagement. However, according to the researcher, to increase civic engagement and improve basic skills in political discourse it is necessary to include service learning, to focus more attention on the discussion of topics related to citizenship, and more attention should be paid directly to the civic engagement of students, in particular, to volunteering.

M.Yates and J.Youniss (Yates, 1999) note a strong interconnection between practice and the emerging civic identity. Therefore, the development of social activity skills among students is one of the leading activities of educational institutions.

As an example of such a social activity the social design aimed at the formation of the civic identity among schoolchildren can be considered. So, A.A. Loginova proposes to use the Internet design, the educational potential of which is that the virtual or the real socially significant products which have found the virtual reflection (web-site and so on) created by the students are designed and implemented by them as a means of expressing their civic identity and as a means of forming that kind in any user of the website (Loginova, 2010).

Alongside with that, despite the presence of the diverse investigations in the field of the students' civic identity formation, there is no comprehensiveness, covering all the aspects of the educational process, and thereby contributing to the achievement of the maximum result in the formation of the civic identity among schoolchildren. Our development of the related program has resulted from this.

## 6. Conclusion

Civic identity of a personality must be considered in three aspects: the ethnic (regional), the civil (national) and general cultural (universal human), therefore, we have clarified the content of each of its structural components.

Based on the analysis of the existing world experience on the students' civic education the author's program of the students' civic identity formation is presented, which includes the interrelated modules: "Academic disciplines", "Classroom hours", "Interest groups and clubs", "School associations and social design", "Socially-cultural" and "Competition-based".

## 7. Recommendations

This article is of value to all researchers working on the issues of the civic identity of an individual and its formation. The practical implications are that the authors propose their program of forming the civic identity in the schoolchildren, which can be used by teachers and lecturers in preparing the curricula and classes for the learners.

## References

- Banks, J.A. (1994). *Multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Massachusetts: A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.
- Bennett, C.I. (1990). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Chilcoat, G. W., & Ligon, J. A. (2000). Issues-centered instruction in the social studies classroom. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 28, 2.
- Gimpel, J. G. & J. E. Schuknecht (2004). *Patchwork nation: sectionalism and political change in American politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hess, F. M. (2004). *Common sense school reform*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miller, M. D. (2009). *Civic identity development: a study of how students conceptualize and operationalize civic engagement at an independent school*. Ann Arbor.
- Molnar-Main, S. (2007). *Leadership for civic learning: How history and research can serve as a guide for educators interested in reclaiming the civic mission of schools*. University of Pennsylvania Dissertations.
- Nieto, S. (1995). *From brown heroes and holidays to assimilationist agendas: Reconsidering the critiques of multicultural education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Suzuki, B. H. (1984). Curriculum transformation for multicultural education. *Education and Urban Society*, 16.
- Yates, M., & Youniss, J. (1999). *Roots of civic identity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Antonova, N.V. (1996). The problem of personal identity in Western psychology. *Issues in psychology*, 1.
- Asmolov, A.G., & Karabanova, O.A., & Marcinowskaya, T.D. (2011). *How the civic identity arises in the world of education: from phenomenology to technology*. Moscow, FIRO.
- Borisova, O.A. (2006). The elusive identity or the analysis of the "identity" category in the framework of the structurally-constructivist approach. *The Bulletin of Udmurt University*, 3.

- Vilkova, I.V. (2012). On the issue of defining the essence of the civic identity concept. *Humanities scientific researches*, No. 6. [http://human.snauka.ru/2012/06/1386/The World encyclopedia: Philosophy of the XX century](http://human.snauka.ru/2012/06/1386/The%20World%20encyclopedia%20Philosophy%20of%20the%20XX%20century). (2002). Moscow, AST.
- Golikova, T.V. (2013). Pedagogical conditions of the USA schools transformation into the schools of character and citizenship development // *Education and self-development*, 2.
- Danilenko, V.I. (2000). *A modern political science dictionary*. Moscow: Publishing house of Nota Bene.
- How to design universal learning activities in primary school. From action to thought: a manual for teachers. (2011). Moscow, Prosveshchenie.
- Kozhanov, I.V. (2013). Indicators of the civic identity formation of a person. *Modern problems of science and education*, 4.
- Kozhanov, I.V. (2014). Foreign experience on forming the civic identity of a person. *Pedagogical education in Russia*, 9.
- Leontiev, A.A. (2001). *Active mind: (activity, sign, personality)*. Moscow, Smysl.
- Loginova, A.A. (2010). *The formation of civic identity of schoolchildren by means of Internet projects*. PhD Thesis, Samara.
- The strategy of the state national policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. <http://text.document.kremlin.ru/SESSION/PDA/linkProxy?subjectId=70284810&linkType=65537>
- Telegin, D.V., & Telegina, G.V. (2009). National identity as a kind of socio-cultural identity and a model of the linguistic community in a European perspective. *the World of psychology*, 3.
- Fakhrutdinova, A.V. (2010). The formation of an active civic position of the student in terms of a unified educational space: the international experience. *Kazan pedagogical journal*, 1.
- Erikson, E. (1996). *Identity: youth and crisis*. Moscow, Progress.