

Social and Linguistic Aspects of the Tajik National Identity Formation: the Findings of the Survey of Students in Tajikistan

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: The article investigates the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic problems of the Tajik national identity and relationship to separating the boundaries between “us” and “them” based on a survey conducted in the university environment in Tajikistan. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** The basis of the research was a survey conducted by the method of free association experiment at universities in the northern and southern regions of Tajikistan. The experiment involved 300 students aged between 18 and 21 years old, 76% among them are the Tajik, 24% being representatives of the Turkic ethnic groups of the country. The main purpose of the survey was to monitor the level of tolerance and ethnic stereotypes among young people, questionnaires included only 21-word stimuli. To achieve the research goal in this article, we have analyzed responses to “Tajik” (503), “us” (179) and “them” (167) stimuli. **Findings:** The association experiment analysis allowed determining characteristics of the formation of the youth national identity. Breaking social stereotypes, disunity among regions, radical Islamism, false “democratization”, intolerance – all these among other political and social factors led to the fact that in 1992-1997 Tajikistan survived the civil war. To monitor existing problems in inter-ethnic relations and the level of tolerance among the young in Tajikistan, for the first time in the country a group of the University scientists carried out the association experiment at universities all over the country (a total of 470 respondents). The relevance of these studies is determined by the need for predicting the real problems of inter-ethnic cooperation among youth, building the policy of tolerance in the society, the possibility of preventing conflicts on regional and religious basis and tension in the state. A well-conducted study revealed the main components of the Tajik youth’s auto-stereotype and identity. The analysis of the data gives an indication of the high level of the Tajik youth’s national consciousness and patriotism (only 2 negative responses out of 503), respect for family values, moderate religiosity, sufficient openness and tolerance. **Applications/Improvements:** The significance of the research lies in the fact that its data and the results can be the basis for the creation of ethno-psychological portrait of a young Tajik, and further interdisciplinary research of this phenomenon.

Keywords: National Identity, Survey, Tolerance, Tajik Students

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the modern world a person carries multiple, mosaic identity, which often has a situational nature and becomes a matter of personal choice. This may explain why the

issue of identity has become a global concern nowadays, turning into the main discourse in science. Sociologists, linguists, and experts in cross-cultural communication face a challenge of investigating how a person can adapt to the rapidly changing world order, as well as the problem of a person’s finding and obtaining national identity in the

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conditions of increasing multiculturalism of the modern society.

The problem of personal identity has a complex hierarchical nature. Sociology defines the following types of identity, associated with large, fully developed and historically formed types of communities: human, civilizational, national, ethnic, gender, professional, age-specific, class, political and others. Typically, primary identities associated with biological traits and/or formed during the primary socialization such as gender and religious are referred to as dominant ones, while national-ethnic and professional identities are particularly important among the secondary identities acquired during the secondary socialization.¹

The actualization of this or that form of identity is influenced by social, political, economic and other factors. The national identity takes a special place among its various forms, since it not only defines the nature of international cooperation, but also the specific features of international relations, and contributes to the nation's consolidation, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

To identify factors that form Tajik national identity, it is necessary to differentiate between ethnic and national identity, which is a fundamental theoretical premise of this research. This difference arises from different sources of identification. In ethnic identity, cultural and confessional settings are dominant, which allows defining it as an ethnocultural identity. Ethnocultural identity is a person's perception of himself within a particular culture. It is characterized by subjective sense of individual self-identity, i.e. identifying oneself with this or that typological form of culture, especially with a specific cultural tradition. This form of identity focuses on their reproduction, i.e. on the past.

In case of national identity, the ethnic and cultural parameters are considered from the socio-political perspective. According this position, one creates symbols aiming at the present and the future. That is why national identity, including the ethnic component, is a political identity, which allows us to characterize it as a civic identity, too.

Language is one of the fundamental grounds for national identity. According to A.V. Filatov, language is "an instrument and material for thought, the main means of expression, identification and personal development... The whole intellectual and spiritual repertoire of a person is generated, formed and presented in his native language"².

Growing up in the social and cultural environment with a certain language, the person becomes a native speaker, and, as a rule, builds his national identity on the basis of this language. According to O.V. Ozaeva, "language is a prerequisite of ethnic community formation, a symbol and guarantee of the group unity, as well as preservation of ethnic and cultural identity"³.

The language becomes the crucial component in the model of national identity, which unites various ethnic groups that make up a single nation, since different ethnic groups may have their own traditions, religion, whereas common political history and the language of interethnic communication turn them into a single nation.

The national identity is the structural core of the state; thus, the study of its characteristics and the problems of its formation are relevant research objectives.

1.2 Relevance of the Problem

The relevance of studying the problems of national identity is determined not only by its role in the national security, but also the need to predict the real problems to successful functioning and sustainable development of the Tajik society.

In time of social instability caused by a large-scale transformation of the society one may predict a developing crisis of the national identity parallel to the growth and strengthening of the ethnic identity. The inevitable consequence of this is the aggravation of inter-ethnic conflicts. This thesis was clearly confirmed during the collapse of the USSR. The collapse of a state with such a vast territory and a complex ethnic structure resulted in not only aggravating old ethnic problems and conflicts that have been over for a long time, but also led to new outbreaks.

Such outbreaks of problems and conflicts were typical for the first years of Tajikistan's independence, i.e. in the 90s of the 20th century. Along with this, misunderstanding and aversion occurred not only between people of different ethnic groups, but also between representatives of different regions of the same nation in one country, which led to civil confrontation. Breaking social stereotypes, losing connections between the regions, radical Islamism, fake "democratization", intolerance were among other political and social factors that made Tajikistan go through the confrontation of the 1992-1997.

Due to the abovementioned reasons, Tajikistan needs research on national identity, tolerance and the worldview

(including language, associative and axiological ones) that will enable, in addition to other things, to generate the ethno-psychological portrait of a Tajik and identify the problems of the national identity. It should be emphasized that the need for such research is determined by, among other things, the necessity to predict the real problems of inter-ethnic cooperation among the youth, promoting the policy of tolerance in the society, the ability to prevent inter-ethnic conflicts and tension in the country, taking into account the importance of the language factor in the course of the nation's finding its identity.

The significance of the study stems from an opportunity to use its results as to understand the fact that the knowledge and consideration of socio-linguistic and socio-cultural factors of national identity is one of the prerequisites for improving language policy in multinational companies, as well as enhancing tolerant relations in the society. Ideas and conclusions presented in this article may serve as a basis for further social and philosophical, ethnological, sociological and political studies of the phenomenon.

1.3 Various Aspects of Studying the National Identity

If we consider the national identity as a process of becoming aware of one's being part of the nation, we should examine the features of this process at the cognitive, emotional and evaluative and regulatory levels.

Cognition occurs inside a real communication, within the daily activities of a person. The existence of "ego" cannot be considered outside the social factor, without communication, without understanding of the "us-them" or "friend-or-foe" dichotomy. When assessing their place in the society, people compare themselves to others. This is the basis for forming ethno-social images that are of emotional and value nature. Ethno-social images contain not only rational (conscious) elements, but also irrational (unconscious). The unconscious is fixed in the system of institutional norms and modal stereotypes, actively participating in the forming identity and creating the world view.

The ethno-social images are reflected in the language. The language along with traditions and customs represents the nation's peculiarities of the world perception, especially its psychology.

The issues of national identity, as well as links between this phenomenon and the language have been carefully

investigated in many scientific papers. The concepts of nation and ethnos were considered by E. Balibar, I. Wallerstein, S. Yu. Semenov, P. Sorokin, V. Yu. Sukhachev, the idea of identity, including national and ethnic identity, was studied by F. Barth, P. Berger, Yu. V. Bromley, V. I. Kozlov, T. Luckmann, V. Malakhov and V. A. Tishkov, V. P. Torukalo, Yu. V. Khotinets.⁴

According to the proposed structure of the national identity, this study will consider the socio-linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of the Tajik national identity by means of an association experiment.

1.4 Stating Hypotheses and their Correspondence to the Research Design

As part of the **research work**, we were to study the issues relating to the analysis of the origins of ethnic intolerance: ethnic stereotypes, differences in the axiological picture of the world demonstrated by different nations, the associative field, the formation of the tolerance field of the linguistic identity, which allowed us to determine the main features of the ethno-psychological background of the existing inter-ethnic relations in the educational environment of Tajikistan.⁵ This helped us develop recommendations for a series of actions aimed at the formation and development of tolerance among the youth.

Studies like this one have not been previously conducted in Tajikistan, thus we were the first to do a large-scale work on studying tolerance in this country, an Associative Experiment (AE) being part of the research whose purpose was building the Associative Field (AF) of tolerance among the youth and predicting the problem areas in intercultural communication.

The main purpose of the conducted study was monitoring of the existing ethnic stereotypes and the associative field of tolerance awareness by analyzing the results of the association experiment, which allowed us to reveal the sources of intolerance in the society; these findings will contribute to the formation and development of ethnic tolerance in the society.

The carried out research provided a lot of data not only for investigating the stereotypes and the level of tolerance in society, but it has also presented numerous opportunities for studying many other social, cultural, linguistic and legal aspects. In addition, the conducted monitoring facilitated this research of the Tajik national identity.

In this study we analyze the associations to the stimulus words "us or them" and the ethnonym "Tajik"

obtained as the results of the association experiment in the universities of the two largest regions – the northern Sogd and the southern Khatlon.

Sociocultural and sociolinguistic study of Tajik national identity is carried out by means of different methods (associative field, axiological dominant, language picture of the world, national consciousness, and sociolinguistic background).

2. Methods

2.1 The Analysis of Existing Research Methods of Tolerance

A choosing a method of research is an important issue when studying tolerance as a scientific phenomenon. The analysis of the works on this topic, revealed two main approaches, depending on which a suitable method – theoretical or applied – is selected.

The main methods used when investigating the problem are the following: descriptive and analytical, comparative, experimental, quantitative method, questionnaire survey, quiz and interviewing, association experiment. Among the methods mentioned, the theoretical ones are descriptive and analytical and comparative methods. The others are classified as applied methods.

The applied approach is used to represent the state of various aspects of national identity in the Tajik society, often by means of quantification or factual findings.

The combination of these two approaches results in the third type – analytical. The analytical method enables to draw conclusions on various aspects of the national identity.

2.2 Research Methodology Selected

A free (non-directional) association experiment was selected by us as a research method. We chose this method to identify the components of the concept structure since this type of experiment allows imitating the real thinking. According to R.M. Frumkina,⁶ “studying associations in the association experiment, we appeal to the unconscious, the deepest layer of our psyche”; that is why the experiment makes it possible to establish the unconscious verbal and nonverbal links of the stimulus word with other words as well as to indirectly identify cognitive features of the realia represented by the stimulus words and relevant to the individual.

Let us describe the experiment procedure. The

subject from a relatively homogeneous in terms of age (18-21 year-olds) and educational status (students) group was given a questionnaire, the first part of which was an associative experiment (it included a written set of stimulus words such as “us”, “them”, “friend”, “foe”, “motherland”, “foreign land”, “Tajik”, “Russian”, “Uzbek”, etc.). According to the instructions, the subjects were asked to write the first words that came to their mind as a response to these stimulus words.

The second part of the questionnaire – a question “What is it like?” stimulated the respondents to give qualitative associations to the stimulus words. The list included both ethnonyms and adjectives such as “Tajik”, “Russian”, “Uzbek”, etc.

In this article we analyze the associations only to some of the stimulus words like “us and them” and “Tajik”, which are crucial for this study. We present the processed data for Sogd (north) and Khatlon (southern) regions, which allowed us to conduct the analysis comparing these regions.

The associative field of the word directly or indirectly accumulates the linguistic parameters of the word, as well as reflects diverse connotations dealing with semantics, topic and situation, assessment and pragmatic aspects, which play a significant role in the text creation.⁷

The associative field is formed by responses and reactions of native speakers to a stimulus word. Hence, the associative field represents the knowledge on the word stimulus in a particular national culture.

Associative fields reflect the system of values and stereotypes of linguocultural communities. The associative experiment makes it possible to study the collective linguistic consciousness, as if “from the inside”, and therefore enables to analyze the basic oppositions of the ethnic consciousness, important when considering the tolerance. Thus, the association experiment will allow us to define a number of problems found in the linguistic consciousness of young people in Tajikistan.

The main purpose of the survey was to identify the ethnic stereotypes shared by many students, as well as to determine the level of tolerance, based on the understanding of the national identity and attitudes toward members of other ethnic groups.

Sociolinguistic line of the research allows us to trace the language policy of the state and the linguistic situation in modern Tajikistan. The language policy of the state becomes particularly important in the context of collapsing system of international relations formed and functioning quite successfully during the Soviet

period; this is especially important for the stabilization of the political situation in the country, the prevention of conflicts and ethnic riots.

The concept of the objective existence of the nation is the theoretical and methodological basis for the analysis of the experiment results. When studying the issues of identity we used such approaches as the primordialism theory and the theory of constructivism. According to them, the nation is seen as the social reality, and the formation of the national identity is understood as part of an objective process associated with the self-organization of social systems, which involves the use of synergetic method. Synergetics is an interdisciplinary field and opens up new conceptual perspectives in studying processes of evolutionary dynamics. Fundamentals of synergetics were formulated in the works by I. Prigozhin and I. Stengers. Philosophical and methodological basis of synergetics is considered in the works by E.N. Knyazeva and S.P. Kurdyumov. Besides, A.V. Korotaev, S.Yu. Malkov, N.V. Starostenkov, G.F. Shelova, N.V. Ilyin apply synergetics to the study of social phenomena and processes. M.S. Elchaninov uses this method to study social dynamics, V.A. Vagurin – to explore contradictions and factors of the evolutionary self-organization of the modern society. The evolution of individual and social consciousness, social progress, civilization crises in the context of synergetic ideas and principles are also studied by A.P. Nazaretyan, S.G. Gomayunov, G.G. Malinetskiy, V.P. Shalaev. Synergetics is also applied by V.P. Branskiy, O.V. Ladygina to explore the nature and regularities in the development of nation, national identity, and interethnic cooperation.

Synergetics allows exploring the cases when the system becomes unstable – in the zone of bifurcation, which in this study corresponds with the identity crisis. Self-organization lets using the system's inner potential – the attractor that meets the criteria of stability and survival of the system and can mobilize most of its resources. Awareness of the trends and mechanisms of the national identity self-development will contribute to their understanding, which allows reaching a qualitatively new level of development.

2.3 Characteristics of the Subjects of the Experiment

Location: Khujand, the administrative center of Sogd region, Khujand State University.

Number of respondents: 150.

Nationality: 115 – Tajiks, 33 – Uzbeks, 2 – Tatars.

Gender: M – 62, F – 88.

Age: from 18 to 21.

Location: **Khatlon:** Kulob State University and Kurgan-Tyube State University.

Number of respondents: 150.

Nationality: 109 – Tajiks; 36 – Uzbeks; 1 – Turkman; 4 – not specified.

Gender: M – 96; F – 50; 4 – not specified.

Age: 19-21

The survey was conducted in the Tajik and Russian languages.

2.4. Rationale for Choosing Stimulus Words

It should be noted that the formation of the tolerant field of a linguistic identity, the main objective of our research, requires identification of five basic opposite concepts; thus, the vast majority of studies that consider tolerance (intolerance) from various aspects, focus on searching the elements corresponding with the following oppositions: “love – hate”, “happiness – unhappiness”, “friend – foe”, “us – them”, “homeland - foreign land”⁸.

However, we thought it necessary to expand the list of stimulus words with several additional concepts, such as “fate”, “space” and some others. The respondents also received ethnonym stimulus words (Russian, Tajik, Uzbek) for detecting ethnic stereotypes, common for the youth of Tajikistan. In addition, to enhance associations, the oppositions were supplemented with a question “*What are they like?*” and adjectives *Tajik*, *Russian* and *Uzbek*.

In this paper, we propose the analysis of the opposition “**us or them**” and the **Tajik** ethnonym.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Survey Findings

The stimulus words were presented in two forms: an ethnonym and a corresponding adjective for obtaining further reactions. The answers are presented first on the Sogd region, then on the Khatlon region. The reactions to stimuli are listed in descending order.

Sogd:

Tajik (person)

hardworking 12, hospitable 10, good-looking 10, kind 9, Dushanbe 6, mountains 6, sensible 4, we 4, patriot 3

black eyes 3, tanned skin 3 (pilaff 3, shakarob 2, manti 2 sambusa 2)¹, homeland 2, black hair 2, fit Figure 2, good 2, lazy person 2, word 2, language 2, bright sun 2, Muslim 2, Tajikistan 1, Temurmaliq 1, history 1, nationality 1, nation 1, culture 1, Aryan 1, human 1, state language 1, black eyebrows 1, beard 1, middle height 1, beautiful eyes and eyebrows 1, small 1, tubeteika 1, clothing 1, dress atlas 1, nice (good) people 1, generous 1, loyal 1, honest 1, mighty 1, modest 1, black 1, white 1, from the mountains 1, wise people 1, friendly 1, well-bred 1, talkative 1, polite 1, not very clever 1, Uzbek 1, labourer 1, ofarin 1, hinhoi milli 1, movies 1, songs 1, many flowers 1, blooming city 1, works with confidence 1, never bored 1;

Tajik (adj)

osh (pilaf) 10, Tajik language 8, mountains 4, water 4, traditions 4, friendliness 3, people 3, national dress (which makes them different from other nations) 3, nature 2 (beautiful), university 2, eating 2 (delicious), fruit 2, kurutob² 2, family 2, hospitality 2, guys 2, tubeteika 2, sambusa, shakarob, cuisine, picturesque places, lake, river, homeland, Dushanbe, Khuyand, Pamir, chapan³, scarf, long hair, black eyes and eyebrows, history, people, flag, culture, song, poet, film, movie, holiday, Nowruz, laborer, mosque, gymnasium, Russian, sweet, gold, ruby, gisarets; Khatlon:

Tajik (person)

Hospitable 35, hard-working 28, Muslim 22, culture 7, Emomalii Rahmon⁴ 5, rich history and a man (inson) 4, my nation 4, nation 4, patriot 4, crowned head⁵ 4, good 4, a nation with rich culture 3, merciful 3, sociable 3, clean, humane 2, the border 2, Tajik 2, believes in God only 2, the sun², black eyes, brown eyes, Nigina Amonqulova⁶ 2, S. Aini 2; one for each of the following: Somoni⁷, A. Rudaki⁸, free Tajikistan, Dushanbe, a friendly nation, a dignified nation, mountains, homeland, beloved homeland, a guy (people, ancient people), noble, history, university, tradition, proud, brave, intelligent, kind, native language, our place, a city dweller, love them, the fate of the free nation, a beautiful country, Tajik clothes, mineral resources, a Tajik respects his uncle, not his father;

Tajik (adj)

Language 9, clothing 8, food (shakarob 4, pilaf 3, food 3, kurutob 2)⁹, clothing (chakan 4, a robe (choma), dresses), hospitality 3, movies 3, films 3, a girl 2, people 2,

nation 2, a good nation, national idea, beautiful 2, brave 2, cotton 2, customs 2, zur, culture, asilzod, gulduhtar, gold, dance, freedom, Nowruz, dish, traditions, history, proud, culture, very good, Falak¹⁰, Parda Kosim¹¹, Aryan, humane, beauty, man, respected nation, anthem, a movie "Dar orzui padar"¹², Farsi, Russian.

The majority of the respondents in the Sogd region associated the ethnonym "Tajik" with native place 30 (at the same time mentioning toponyms (11), mountains, nature, places, etc.); with various dishes of the Tajik cuisine 29, external data – 17, items of national dress – 10, different traits of character such as hard-working 12, hospitable 10, beautiful 10, kind 9, sensible 4, nice, kind people, generous, loyal, honest, mighty, modest, black, white, mountain, wise people, benevolent, well-bred, talkative, polite. Apart from positive characteristics, the respondents also mentioned such features as "lazy" and "not very clever".

Somewhat different results were obtained in the Khatlon region. The majority of the respondents in this region associated the word "Tajik" with hospitality 38, diligence 28, faith: Muslim 22. A specific trait of young people of the Khatlon region is their patriotism and immense love for their country – 30, love for their national dress – 15, food – 13; they are proud of their well-known people – 12, language – 9.

The opposition "us or them" allows us to trace how the subjects understand the boundaries of the personal space of "Ego" and the attitude to "us and them":

Sogd¹³

us

Home 10, a person 7, mom 6, family 4, significant other 4, property 3, my 3, life 2, my father (dad) 2, sister 2, relative 2, objective 2, all which is mine 2, what belongs to me 2, brief case 2, pen 2, me 1, parents 1, brother 1, husband 1, friend 1, acquaintance 1, loved one 1, all personal objects, my own, yours, our 1, property 1, things 1, jewelry 1, car 1, hearth 1, number 1, phone 1, education 1, character 1, opinion 1, place 1, route 1, city 1, people 1, school 1, wish 1, a stranger 1, something that belongs to you 1, make a responsible decision 1, the beautiful things 1;

them

unknown 12, stranger person 6, people 6, enemy 3, not your own 3, item 3, separate 3, alien 2, region 2, foreign place 2, yours 2, culture 2, distant 2, Uzbeks 2, not can give love to others 2, city 1, world 1, happiness 1, love 1, self-knowing 1, water 1, close 1, tsar 1, Germans 1, KSU 1¹⁴, I-Phone 1, no 1, a stranger 1, unknown 1, the one

whom I do not know, there is no attraction 1, a person not important to you 1, not relatives 1.

The analysis of the responses to the stimulus “us” among the students in the Sogd region showed that the boundaries of their space for most of the respondents are the following: property (21), “own” people – relatives, the family and its members (19), close friends (13); home, hearth (11), synonymous pronouns (my, your, our, etc. – 6) and associations of specific type (1) dealing with nature, opinion, education, place, path, wish, etc.

Some responses were descriptive like *something that belongs to you, make a responsible decision, all beautiful things*.

Among “them” the respondents mainly named people (36): unknown (21) or strangers (10), enemies (3), other nationalities (3); the place or region (8), culture (4). In addition, they mentioned other people’s happiness, love, tsar, telephone, etc.

Among the reactions to the word “them” we found such words as *enemy*, *Uzbeks* which were also offered as stimulus words in the questionnaire.

Khatlon:

us

relatives¹³, native 8, close 9, me 4, alien 6, property 3, parents 2, familiar 5, my 2+ all my things 1, private 2, person 4 (+ a person I feel close to 2, my relative, person, people I trust, my people), one for each of the following: guest, guest among us, one’s own, you and I, family, brother, sister, child, home, someone else’s home, one’s parents’ home, nook, Tajikistan, homeland, people, fate, trust, talent, thing, car, blood, the world, our world, not alien, an Indian film, that one; hudi¹⁵4;

them

Unknown or a stranger 47+, a good stranger, not one’s native 5, Begona – sagi devona ²¹⁶, without homeland 2, an outlander 2; one’s own 3, not mine 2; a person 3, nobody, a foreigner, acquaintance, friend, enemy, longing, nation, homeland, foreign country, there is nothing alien, not alien to me, do not become a stranger, in the family, do not take it, it’s hard to find a person close to you, among your people, doesn’t help you for nothing, which you know nothing of; not a close person; there are no strangers 2, not mine, someone else’s; have to meet, Pirakov, group 201; hama bandai Hudovand¹⁷, gairi¹⁸.

The students of the Khatlon region had a somewhat different reaction to the word “us”. They attributed mostly relatives, close friends, and members of their family (52) to the “us” category. Among the “us” people they also mentioned their loved ones and guests, which demonstrates the attitude to guests – 2. Nine respondents defined their borders as “my”, “personal”, “private”. Four reactions referred to the native places (home, homeland, Tajikistan). Seven responses to the stimulus were “a stranger”. There were also single reactions like fate, trust, talent, an Indian film, etc.

People were also mentioned as aliens by this group of respondents (a total of 64 responses): mostly strangers (48), outlanders (3), others, not “ours” (3), enemy (1). They also named other people’s guests (2), a particular person (Pirakov), and even the whole group of students (201). Foreign land, homeland were mentioned only twice. Besides, a well-known Tajik proverb was mentioned: “A stranger is worse than a rabid dog” (“Begona – sagi devona”). However, the positive attitude of this group of respondents was manifested by the fact that there were reactions, showing young people’s openness towards strangers: there are no strangers, you are not a stranger to me, do not become a stranger, no strangers, all the people are God’s creation, and even: I should learn more about them, I should get familiar with a stranger and he would be a stranger anymore. We would also like to note there were such reactions as words “friend”, “acquaintance”. And positive responses like these were quite numerous (9).

3.2 A Comparative Analysis of the Data by Regions

Comparative analysis of the data is given in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the responses to the stimulus “Tajik”

Sogd (the north)	Khatlon (the south)
1. positive qualities – 46	1. positive character traits – 96.
2. home – 30	2. patriotism and national pride – 30
3. national dishes – 29	3. faith – 24
4. external data – 27	4. culture, arts – 19
5. clothing – 10	5. national dress – 15
6. culture, art – 5	6. national dishes – 13
	7. well-known personalities – 12
	8. language – 9
Negative associations – 2	Negative associations – 0

Table 2. Comparative analysis of the responses to the stimulus “us”

Sogd (the north)	Khatlon (the south)
1. property – 21	relatives, family – 28
2. relatives, family – 19	friends, acquaintances – 15
3. nearest and dearest – 13	I, mine – 8
4. house, hearth – 11	property – 5
5. my, your, our etc. – 6	guest – 2

Table 3. Comparative analysis of the responses to the stimulus “them”

Sogd (the north)	Khatlon (the south)
strangers – 21	strangers – 48
other people – 10	outlanders – 3
place or region – 8	others, not your people – 3
culture – 4	guests – 2
enemies – 3	other place, homeland – 2
people of other nationalities – 3	enemy – 1
	9 tolerance markers (“a stranger may become your friend”)

According to the presented data, we can conclude that the youth of Soghd is quite positive when describing people, pays more attention to the person’s appearance, noting the details of their appearance, loves and appreciates good food, is well acquainted with the culture and art, treasures their own home, sees a personality as an important part of a person and fancies dressing well.

When identifying the boundaries of “us”, the students of the northern region paid the most attention to the property; relatives and friends were also important for them.

Others, people of other nationalities, other people’s land and culture as well as enemies were named as strangers.

Even more positive was the opinion given by the students of the Khatlon region when describing the people of different nationalities: for them arts and culture were at the second place. They also showed great knowledge of famous people, more than once highlighted the importance of the language and peoples. They weren’t so fond of eating compared to the respondents from the north. However, national pride and patriotism were clearly expressed in many responses. Besides, we find it quite important that many of them stated their religion – Islam.

When defining the “us” category, young people of Khatlon most often mentioned relatives and close friends,

they didn’t place so much emphasis on the property, compared to the responses of students in the northern region.

The reactions to “them” stimulus in the Khatlon region in general was similar to the results of the survey in the Sogd region, but the southern youth did not emphasize the foreign culture and, unlike the northern region, the young people of Khatlon again showed greater openness and tolerance (see tolerance markers presented in Table 3).

Thus, the analysis of the survey added many interesting touches to the ethno psychological portrait of a young man of the northern and southern Tajikistan. Further analysis of the data obtained in the association experiment will provide a lot of other data on this description.

The comparative analysis of the material indicates a greater openness of the Khatlon youth who replied to virtually all stimulus words. As for the students from the Sogd region, many people refused to answer questions, their responses were rather guarded, despite the anonymity of the survey.

This survey showed that university students are quite patriotic and tolerant; only few people had negative opinions.

3.3 Sociolinguistic Background of the Research

In the Republic of Tajikistan, Tajik language is used as the national language, a language of regional communication among ethnic minorities, as a means of communication between Tajiks and Uzbeks, who make up 20 percent of the population. Russian language is used as a language of international communication. Thanks to the abovementioned roles of Tajik and Russian languages, the residents of the republic can learn about scientific advances, technology, the culture of Iranian and Slavic people as well as the world civilization. Knowledge of two or more languages is bound to have a positive influence on the spiritual development of various social groups, which, by means of the second and third languages can expand their horizons, increase the knowledge about the country’s life and have a greater potential regarding the development of their abilities, intelligence, as well as further education. Bilingualism opens new horizons to Tajiks, beyond their nation. It becomes an effective means for the manifestation of the creativity; knowing several languages helps to adapt to a different social environment and enhances self-knowing.

Self-knowledge is learning about yourself through another person, which requires the ability to match one's attitudes and objectives with other people's views on life. As M.M. Bakhtin said, without the "Other" a person cannot have any knowledge about himself or about the world as the knowledge is born when communicating with the other".⁹ "... "We," A.G. Zdravomyslov¹⁰ said, "manifest ourselves due to the fact that there are some "others", different from "us", whose differences manifest themselves in language, culture, customs and other characteristics." Understanding the identity is impossible without separating from the "other", the subject of self-identification interacts with.

The opposition "us – them" lays the basis for the ethno-social outlooks that implies the knowledge of your own nation and other nations. It is believed that understanding your national environment generates the positive assessment of "us", and negative – of "them". However, our survey data demonstrate that such conclusions are not always right. The attitude to "them" category in the Khatlon region demonstrated that one can get acquainted with a stranger and make him a friend, which clearly proves their belief in human values and openness to the world.

Bilingualism helps relieve the tension between the oppositions, find the mid-point of the continuum, which B.F. Porshnev¹¹ defined with the concept of "peaceful diversity", and it promotes the formation of tolerance, the perception of others' differences without any negative emotions.

In Tajikistan, there are three socio-linguistic zones: the northern zone (where Tajik, Uzbek and Russian languages are very common), the southern zone (Tajik and Russian languages are most frequently used). This zone can be divided into two sub-zones: Jirgatal area (people speak mainly Kyrgyz, Tajik and Russian languages), as well as Shaartuz and Tursunzade areas (with high popularity of Uzbek, Tajik and Russian languages). The third sociolinguistic area is the East and Badakhshan (characterized by the wide use of local languages, as well as Tajik and Russian languages). Considering this area, we should also highlight its sub-zone – the Murghab region (where people mainly use Kyrgyz, Tajik, Russian and Shughni languages).

When people work or interact in the multilingual environment, they need a language of interethnic communication. Contrary to large nations, due to

their mass migration outside the country (particularly in the post-Soviet period), Tajiks need to master a foreign language, since they find themselves in a foreign environment with much more people speaking a foreign language than the representatives of Tajik ethnic group in this particular multilingual environment.

To increase their chances of obtaining a particular qualification or studying abroad, Tajiks learn Russian language. The natural need Tajiks have for mastering Russian language results in the emergence, development, and spreading of various forms and types of Tajik-Russian bilingualism. Wide-scale and individual bilingualism is also a result of all sorts of political, economic, scientific and other connections between the nations speaking different languages.

Language development of the society is connected with many important theoretical and practical problems, solving which helps to optimally regulate the linguistic life of the multinational state. The issue of regulating the official language in the Republic of Tajikistan arose after the October Revolution, when socio-political, socio-economic, cultural and linguistic aspects of life dramatically changed. In the 1920-30s culture and language were being actively renovated, parallel to the development of Tajik literary language, the alphabet reform, expanding the functions of the national languages. However, in the second half of the XX century "scientific approach to solving the problems of the national language was substituted with rigid administrative methods based on a false allegation of trouble-free national relations and the fact that the issue of inter-ethnic relations had been completely solved. The elimination of the national languages from communication ... has reduced the prestige of these languages in the minds of their speakers and influenced the structural development of the terminology and stylistic systems of these languages".¹²

The number of active languages, as a rule, corresponds with the share of ethnic groups and prestige of the languages. In Tajikistan, Tajik language is used as a mother tongue and an official language, as well as a means of international communication among some ethnic groups of Badakhshan, Russian language – as a native language (Russian, Koreans, Jews, Tatars and others) and a common language of inter-ethnic communication; Uzbek language is used as a native language of the largest national diaspora (20% of the total population), after the titular nation of the republic. Of special note are Pamir nationalities –

small ethnic groups living in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, their total exceeding 270 thousand people, but who occupy 45% of the country's territory and speak 14 languages and dialects which are usually united by a single name – Pamir languages. In addition to these large national communities, the republic is home for such ethnic groups as Ukrainians, Belarusians, Koreans (which can be attributed to the category of Russian-speaking population), Tatars, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz (mainly living in the Murghab and Jirgital areas). All of these languages, except Tajik, are classified as the languages of national and ethnic minorities. The number of people who speak these languages varies greatly – from several hundred to several hundred thousand people.

The status of Tajik language as an official language is an important mechanism for the formation of the national identity. Its development will contribute to strengthening the emotional connections of Tajikistan citizens, while the preservation of linguistic diversity will create a favorable environment.

3.4 Socio-Cultural Aspect of Research

In Tajikistan, in today's social and cultural conditions, the identity is a contradictory combination of different aspects. Numerous socio-economic and political problems lead to the development of the traditional forms of group solidarity. Family and close people become more important than the "secondary" large groups.

The stable nature of the primary forms of identity may be explained by the fact that most people think in terms of primordialism, which was confirmed by the results of the association experiment. Categories, significant for them, include clothing, food, social and psychological characteristics.

The stability of the primordial components of the Tajik identity also stems from the fact that archaic, community ideas still play an important role in the nation's consciousness. The traditional base of the Tajik society – *avlod* – consanguine patrilineal community, within which the social regulation is done through customary law (*adat*). *Avlod* is highly adaptable. Therefore, despite the decline of large patriarchal families, *avlod* continues to be an important social institution, firmly securing authoritarian traditions in the social life. This leads to a formation of a socially infantile personality, who is unable to take responsibility for himself. Social infantilism brings about confrontation with everything that is

beyond the boundaries of the community, preventing the development of the civic awareness.

Patriarchal lifestyle gives a chance for the manifestation of independence not only to its members, but also to small families, whose functions are limited to procreation. Community's interests suppress the ones of an individual¹³. This feature of social relations was also highlighted by A.A. Shamolov¹⁴: "An individual, a member of the Tajik nation and society represents ... a tangle of multiple human relationships. He is always a part of solidarity groups (family, village and religious community, *avlod*, region, etc.) ... the Tajik society still has community spirit," A.A. Shamolov says, "individualism is not welcomed".¹⁴ The spirit of community is still dominant, which prevents the society from understanding national and state interests.

Till today, Mahalla, the area of *avlod*, has not lost its importance in the social life of the country as a tool of social control. Mahalla monitors the implementation of the standards of conduct prescribed by the Sharia as well as *adat* and local obligatory rules of conduct; it not only controls, but also imposes sanctions.

Conservation of traditional models of group solidarity is also promoted by a growing role of Islam, which is perceived as a traditional religion. Many researchers, for example, M.D. Komilova¹⁵, B. Nasurova¹⁶, point out the increase in the religious identity among young people. "The religious renaissance led to the situation," B. Nasurova says, "when more than half of the population of Tajikistan consider themselves religious, while the religious identity receives considerable support among the youth". Thus, religion continues to play a decisive role in the process of self-identification, contributing to the strengthening of the primordial components of identity.

The family identity is also important for Tajiks (49.8%). Sh. Shoismatulloev¹⁷ explains the family's dominance as a value, which people are proud of more than their country, by the crisis situation in the country, "when the survival as a way of life overshadows the pride for the country". This becomes an obstacle to the formation of the national identity. That is why at present day, Tajikistan pays so much attention to instilling patriotism, the fundamental element of the national identity.

Despite the fact that Tajikistan has been an independent state for over 20 years, the identification of the community "the citizens of Tajikistan" is meaningful only for 51.4% of the population of the republic. Among

the regions of the country where people are more likely to identify themselves as citizens of Tajikistan are: the Khatlon region (50.3%) and Sogd (50%)¹⁷. The associative experiment conducted by us in these regions confirms the results of the sociological research.

The residents of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, Regions of Republican Subordination and Dushanbe do not see the national identity as a significant value category yet. This conclusion is confirmed by a sociological survey, which was conducted among the students of the Tajik National University by M.D. Komilova¹⁸. The students were asked to give at least 4 answers to the question “Who am I?”. Answering the question, the respondents most frequently indicated the group they belong to (referring to education, job), for example, “I am a student”. The second place was taken by family identification (“I am a sister/a brother”), gender identity (“I am a man/a woman”), and religious identity (“Alhamdulillah – I am Muslim”). The next one mentioned was the definition characterizing the subcultural identity dealing with their interests. Answers relating to the civic identity (“I am Tajik”, “I am a citizen of my country”, “I am a patriot”) were quite rare and were given by few students.¹⁵ The weak civic position is obviously determined by the system of values of the young people.

For example, in the hierarchy of value system of high school students, only 34% of the respondents mentioned “serving the motherland” among the most important values. The highest in the hierarchy were the values relating to personal interests (“health” – 92%, “family” – 81%).¹⁴ Lack of wish to reconcile their private interests with the public leads to social passivity, undermining the national unity.

Regionalism also hinders the national unity. The results of the association experiment indicate that the region is now a significant aspect of the sociocultural reality. For example, the ethnonym “Tajik” the majority of the respondents in the Sogd region associated not with the state, but with their native places, especially specific features of the climate and landscape.

Emphasis on the regional features, the lack of understandable unity, political rivalry between the regions narrow the national identity to the borders of the region, promoting the local forms of the group solidarity, such as ethno-cultural, regional, and clan ones. The national identity is split into fragments, the outcome of which being its moving from the center to the periphery in the identities structure.

Ethnic and cultural identity is one of the most stable forms of the Tajik identity. 52% of Tajiks identify themselves with their ethnic community.¹⁷ This trend is greatly due to the landscape and geographic location of different parts of the Tajik ethnic group, specific features of the lifestyle and mentality.

The Sogd region, separated from the other territory by a mountain range, is the most urbanized. From ancient times cities there were administrative centers which controlled trade routes. This is the reason why in this region the researchers note higher, compared to other areas of Tajikistan, marketability of small-scale farms, which led, in turn, to the development of private initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, pragmatism, focus on solving practical tasks. At the same time, one should not exaggerate individualism of the Northern Tajikistan residents. Despite the destruction of the traditional patriarchal lifestyle, the dependence on avlod has lived up to present day. Freedom of enterprise is not associated with the ideas of liberalism or democracy, but fits into the system of patron-client relationships. So, the idea of free enterprise quite harmoniously combines with the idea of the authoritarian government.

While the Sogd region is the most economically developed, in Kulyab (the central and eastern parts of the Khatlon region) commodity-money relations, which determine the level of the economic well-being of the territory, are poorly developed. This, in particular, is confirmed by a small number of cities and the urban population. That is why these areas are characterized by the most stable patriarchal relations.

As long as traditions are not subjects to criticism, they turn the society into a more archaic one. The secondary traditionalization takes place, when traditional norms and ideas become viable enough not only to be maintained, but also extend to the new areas of life.

This secondary traditionalization of the Tajik society occurred as a result of the modernization of the Soviet policy. The Soviet modernization was carried out to balance the economic and social development of the union republics. The common political space, as well as economic, was being formed. Focus on the All Union market became an obstacle to the inter-republican integration. Industrialization did not link Tajikistan regions. The local population was poorly involved into the industrialization. Therefore, the individual, personal consciousness has not been formed.

The development of industrial production was not

accompanied by the urbanization of the Tajik society. The bulk of the urban population was made up by newcomers, while the local people continued to live in the rural areas, maintaining the traditional way of life. Due to the fact that industrial development was not properly thought through, the society developed a steady desire to preserve the traditional lifestyle.

Thus, formally, the conditions for the national identity formation have been created – stop to local wars in Tajikistan, the acceleration of economic and cultural development, Tajik literary language was formed from the numerous dialects. However, traditional social institutions have adapted to the changing social system, preserving the traditional way of life and strengthening the importance of local identities.

4. Conclusion

Having analyzed the data, we arrived at a conclusion that the respondents demonstrated fairly calm, balanced, non-aggressive reactions in the studied oppositions, which clearly proves their peacefulness, tolerance and openness to the world.

A great number of words – reactions to the stimuli, deal with family, especially with parents, which is quite natural in the traditional Tajik society, where young people honor their elders and have a strong relationship with close relatives throughout their whole life.

The attitude to the homeland, native land, the places where they were born and live, to their home and hearth is also very warm and respectful, indicating patriotism and love for their land.

At the same time, the respondents have a rather cautious attitude to the stranger and foreign land. From the most ancient times the foreign land has been perceived by Tajiks as a mostly negative place, so people are willing to travel, but they always want to return home. All this testifies the great attachment to their home, the difficulties of adapting to the unfamiliar conditions and the rejection of (or inability to understand) the foreign culture. At the same time, the students of the southern region have clearly demonstrated that they are willing to get acquainted with strangers and their culture to make them part of their own world, their own life.

On the one hand, the identity is closely linked with the worldview of a person, his behavior in the society and, therefore, the problems of personal development

and the relationships. On the other hand, there is a strong connection between the identity and social stereotypes, which are a kind of bridge between an individual and the society, between individual and social aspects.

Parallel to the weakening national and civil grounds of social solidarity, its primary forms are strengthening. The increasing significance of the ethnic identity and its local differences occur due to the desire to preserve one's uniqueness. Furthermore, traditional norms and practices have strong socio-cultural grounds in the Tajik society.

The reasons for the weak national identity in Tajikistan are the following: low living standards, the dominance of patron-client relations in the society, traditional mental patterns of thinking and behavior. Internally disintegrated society is an amorphous object, which prevents the formation of the national identity in Tajikistan, the latter implying a pro-active attitude of citizens who are able to defend their interests and results when establishing democratic freedoms.

However, a positive attitude to national identifiers shows that there are attractors which in the long run are capable of mobilizing the necessary resources for strengthening the Tajik national identity.

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Notes

- i. Dishes of Tajik national cuisine
- ii. Kurutob – a national dish
- iii. Chapan – national men's outerwear (coat)
- iv. The President of Tajikistan
- v. Crown-headed – a literal translation: Tajik is sometimes etymologized as "crowned"
- vi. Nigina Amonqulova – a popular Tajik singer
- vii. Ismail Samani - the founder of the Samanid dynasty
- viii. Rudaki – the founder of the Tajik classical literature (10th century)
- ix. National dishes
- x. Falak – a national style of singing
- xi. Parda Kosim – a famous singer
- xii. The film's title – "The Dream about my Father"
- xiii. Study results of the opposition "friend or foe" in the Sogd region were published in the article "Monitoring of Tolerance Associative Field and Forecasting of Inter-ethnic Interrelations Problems: Questionnaire Survey in the University Environment of Tajikistan" (see References)
- xiv. KSU – Khujand State University where the survey was conducted
- xv. Mine (Tajik)
- xvi. Begona – sagi devona (proverb) – literary: a stranger is a rabid dog
- xvii. We are all God creation
- xix. Other, different