PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION OF THE NORTH CAUCASIAN YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIGITALIZATION OF SOCIETY

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The formation of the young generation identity of the North Caucasus is closely connected with social-ization within certain socio-cultural traditions of the region. In the multi-level identification structure of the North Caucasian youth, many identities are simultaneously combined, some of which are basic, others are auxiliary. The former includes ethnic, confessional, ethno-cultural, civic identities, while the auxiliary one includes positioning oneself in the virtual space. The article was written on the basis of the survey "Problems of Identification of Youth" conducted in April-May 2022 in the North Caucasian republics, in which 1240 people were interviewed. The purpose of this sociological study was to identify the key identification markers of the North Caucasian youth. The object of the study was young people from 14 to 35 years old, the subject of the study was a comparative analysis of the identification preferences of modern North Caucasian youth. The hypothesis of the study, which was that with the active penetration of digital technologies into our lives, there was a leveling of basic forms of identity among the youth of the North Caucasus, was not confirmed. In the North Caucasian society, the stability of traditional social institutions, the strength of connection with the past, and resistance to change are still preserved.
Key words: identity, identification, youth, ethnos, nation, religion, digitalization, North Caucasus

[*М.З. Магомедова* **Проблемы идентификации северокавказской молодежи в условиях цифро-визации общества**]
Формирование идентичности молодого поколения Северного Кавказа теснейшим образом свя-зано с социализацией в рамках определенных социокультурных традиций региона. В многоуровневой идентификационной структуре северокавказской молодежи одновременно совмещается множество идентичностей, одни из которых являются базовыми, другие вспомогательными. К первым относятся – этническая, конфессиональная, этнокультурная, гражданская идентичности, к вспомогательной от-носится позиционирование себя в виртуальном пространстве. Статья написана на основе проведен-ного в апреле-мае 2022 г. в северокавказских республиках анкетирования «Проблемы идентификации молодежи», в рамках которого было опрошено 1240 человек. Целью данного социологического ис-следования было определение ключевых идентификационных маркеров северокавказской молодежи. Объектом исследования была молодежь от 14 до 35 лет, предметом исследования – сравнительный анализ идентификационных предпочтений современной северокавказской молодежи. Гипотеза ис-следования, заключавшаяся в том, что с активным проникновением в нашу жизнь цифровых техноло-гий, у молодежи Северного Кавказа произошло нивелирование базовых форм идентичности, не под-твердилась. В северокавказском социуме все еще сохраняется устойчивость традиционных социаль-ных институтов, сила связи с прошлым, сопротивление переменам.
Ключевые слова: идентичность, идентификация, молодежь, этнос, нация, религия, цифровиза-ция, Северный Кавказ.

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Introduction

Modern society is radically transforming the usual forms of personal identification. A person in the era of universal digitalization is not limited to the usual identification characteristics in the real world, they begin to position themselves in a certain way in the virtual space. And not always the "avatar" created on social networks corresponds to a real person. Achievements of scientific and technological progress have radically changed the daily lifestyle of modern youth. The Alpha generation can no longer imagine the world without "technological toys", gadgets, smart technology, the dependence on which is becoming stronger and stronger every day. We live in a reality in which "no one knows where science is taking us... We are on a train that is picking up speed, rushing along a path where there are an unknown number of arrows leading to unknown destinations [6]. It cannot be argued that the impact of technology on human life is the prerogative of modernity; they have always been present in people's lives. It's just that in the traditional, industrial and information societies, the technologies themselves and the degree of their influence on a person have changed. The range of possibilities of muscular strength, horse harness and modern technology is commensurately different. "Today, a human being has created technical extensions for everything that they used to do with their body. The evolution of weaponry starts with teeth and fists and ends with atomic weapons" [9, p. 299]. M. McLuhan considered the role of technology in the transformation of identity in most detail, according to which all mass media are amplifiers of human capabilities [4, p. 27].

Technology has changed a modern person, and in order to understand the role of technology in the formation and transformation of identity, it is necessary to realize our emotional dependence on technical innovations. The development of high technologies has led to a paradoxical situation: instead of freeing us, freeing up space for development, they, on the contrary, enslave, limit and stupefy. Everyone has probably experienced a feeling of helplessness and confusion when they find that they have left their phone at home. Little useful inventions turn from assistants into "masters" before our eyes, without which a person begins to feel his vulnerability and insecurity. Things that were created to satisfy human needs begin to give rise to new needs. A person from a self-sufficient personality, a subject that acts on an object, turns into "a person with disabilities" [10, p. 8].

As long as we use the possibilities of the Internet as a tool and a means of facilitating human life, for searching for information, establishing contacts, choosing entertainment, it is even useful, but to absolutize its possibilities, to make it the only source of communication, to fall into slavish dependence means to obey a surrogate for reality that imitates its authenticity.

Research methods

In this work, the method of questioning was used; 1240 young people were interviewed through the constructor for online surveys Google Forms. As part of the sociological study, schoolchildren in grades 10-11 and university students from Dagestan, Ingushetia, the Chechen Republic, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia were interviewed. Boys (46%) and girls (54%) aged 14 to 35 took part in the survey.

Results and discussion

According to a survey conducted among North Caucasian youth, more than half of the surveyed boys and girls spend more than 4 hours a day on the phone.

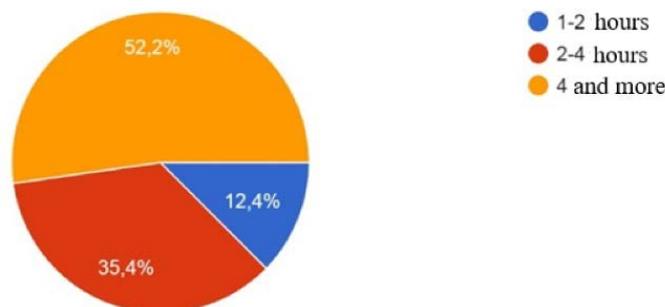How long do you spend on your phone on average per day?

Figure 1. **Average time spent on the phone during the day**

"Modern culture is clearly more informative than any previous one. We exist in a media rich environment, which means that life is essentially symbolized, it takes place in the processes of sharing and receiving – or trying to share and not receive – messages about ourselves and others. Recognition of the explosive growth of meanings makes many authors say that we have entered the information society" [7, p. 318].

In the age of information technology, a clip culture has been formed in which we are dealing with new images and ideas or "clips" of information. Instead of receiving a stream of information that correlates with each other, we are fed with short modular flashes, truncated pieces of facts that do not add up to a coherent picture.
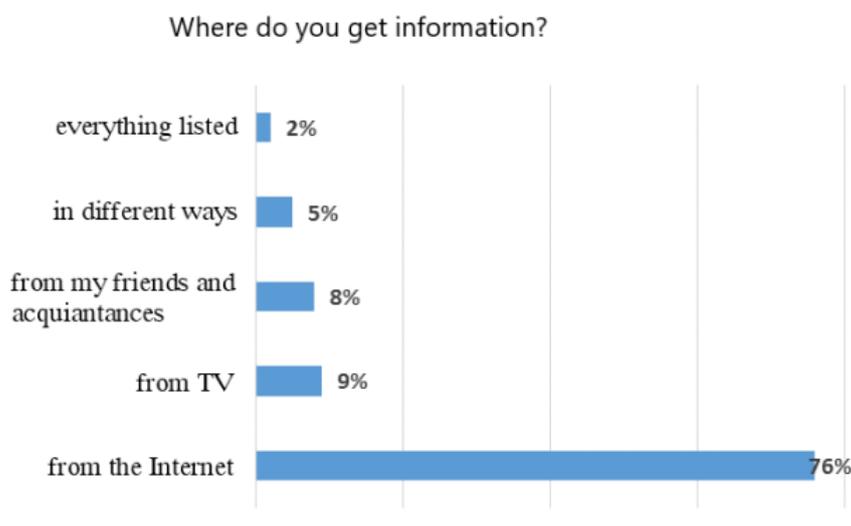
Where do you get information?

Figure 2. **Characteristics of information sources**

More recently, students rewrote the schedule, recorded lectures, and now they are taking pictures of everything. Schoolchildren lose the skills of writing in calligraphic handwriting, the motor skills of the fingers change, but the ability to quickly type on a relatively small touch screen keyboard is acquired. The skill of counting in the mind, literate writing without the help of auto-checking spelling, perception of long texts is lost. Modern technologies are an important factor in the transformation of higher mental functions in the digital age. Moreover, the loss of some abilities is accompanied by the acquisition of others. During the life of one generation, technologies have changed that are fundamentally superior to the previous form.

The identity of a modern person is being transformed along with the changes taking place in the world, the identification criteria are expanding, some of which are irretrievably lost, but at the same time in order to preserve one's self a certain stability is needed that fixes us in a new socio-cultural reality [10, p. 4].

To determine the basic identity of the respondents, the questionnaire suggested "Who do you position yourself in the first place?". It is interesting that the largest percentage of answers fell on the broader types of identification "inhabitant of the planet Earth" (33%), "citizen of his country" (29%), "adherent of my religion religion" (21%) and further in descending order.

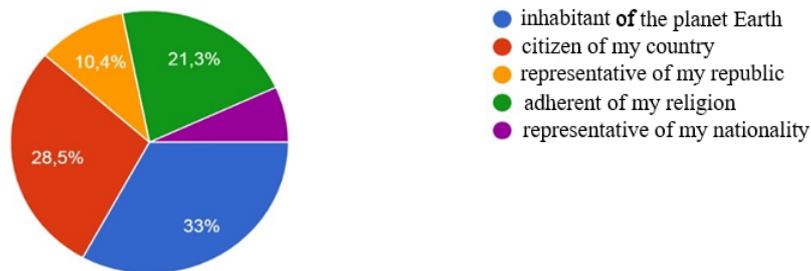Who do you position yourself in the first place?

Figure 3. **Positioning yourself with a social group**

The advent of the "third wave" society qualitatively changes the understanding of identity: "identifications that are chosen become more short-lived, and people accept or reject any components of their identities faster than ever" [5]. "Our time is marked by a break in continuity and solidity, in which life has ceased to be a logical chain of events connected with each other. The episodic nature of the social world makes people question the existence of a permanent human identity. The episodic means the rejection of the idea of stability and constancy" [1]. Although, as the study showed, the opinion of family members is still important for the younger generation - 67%, in second place are people from the inner circle - 18%, and only for 4% of the respondents the most authoritative opinion is the opinion of famous media personalities. It is gratifying that the family for the youth of the North Caucasus remains a source of formation of social norms and value orientations, given that the value system of the Western world with great success undermines the foundations of traditional family values in Russian society as a whole.
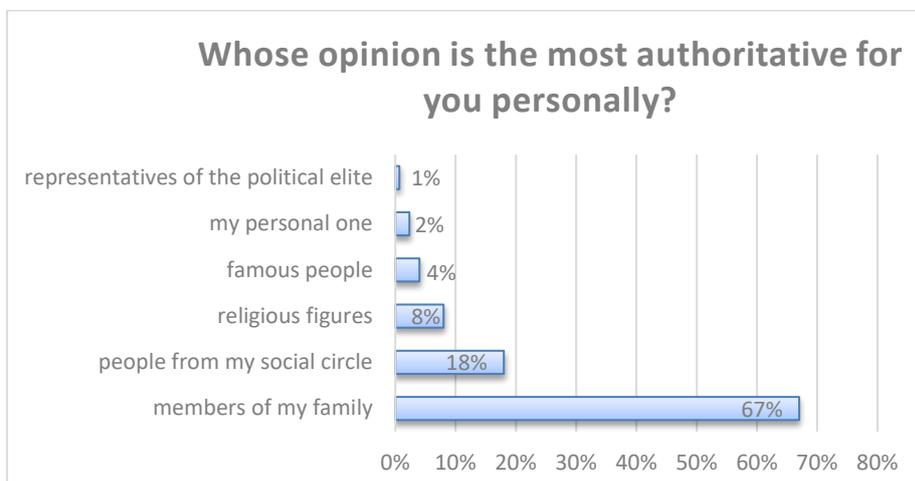

Figure 4. **Representatives of reference groups for youth**

In the Caucasus, extended families are traditionally common, in which parents, children, grandparents and other close relatives live together. Almost 40% of the young people surveyed live in such families.
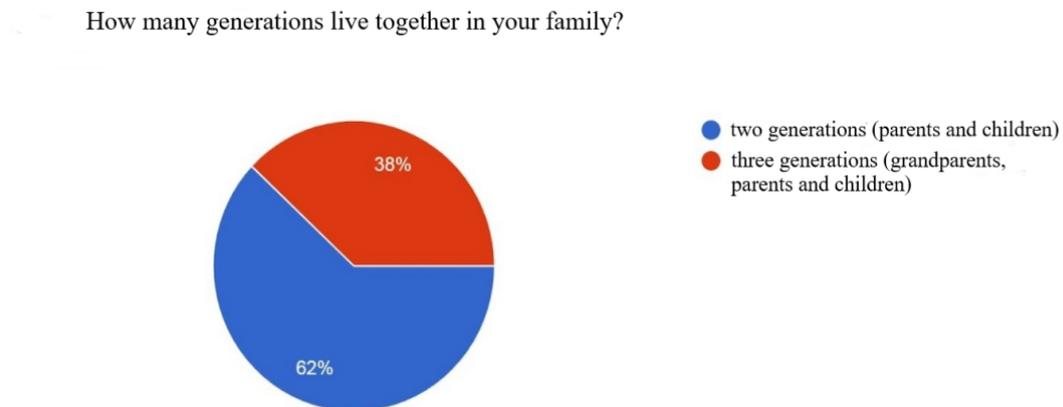

Figure 5. **Characteristics of families by number of generations**

The role of traditions in the transfer of knowledge and experience from parents to children is closely related to the establishment and strengthening of ties between people of different generations. There cannot be a strong family that does not have its own traditions. This is the establishment of contacts primarily between parents and children, their rallying is closely related to such an important role of traditions as the education of family members in a certain ethical and aesthetic direction. It is important that young people are brought up with the right family values. After all, it is in the family that a person acquires the necessary social skills, masters the basic stereotypes of behavior and cultural norms, realizes his emotional preferences, receives psychological support and protection. The meaning of the socializing functions of the family lies in the satisfaction of all these needs.

In the family, there is an introduction to the most important socio- and ethno-cultural values - language, national traditions, customs, rituals. Here you get acquainted with the beginnings of the history of your people, clan, family, with the spiritual layers of the ethnic group - epic, fairy tales, songs, proverbs and sayings, all kinds of taboos, religious cult. The family develops a sense of pride for their home, their loved ones, for their small homeland. A significant majority of the young people surveyed are brought up in single-ethnic families - 78%. As you know, the sphere of family relations, being the bearer of ethnic characteristics, the custodian of the nationally specific, more clearly highlights the national features of psychology, traditions and customs. National specificity in family relations has a great influence on the observance of moral, ethical and aesthetic norms traditional for the people [3, p. 37].
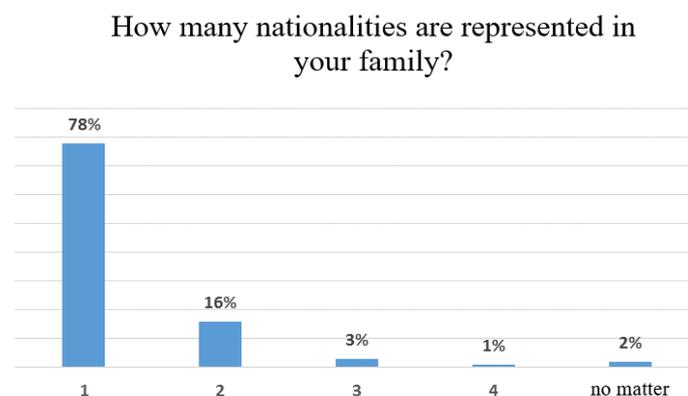

Figure 6. **Characteristics of families by national composition**

According to the results of the survey, 20% of the young people surveyed live in multinational families. Interethnic families bring international relations in a concentrated form into everyday life, which determine the mixed nature of life, traditions, customs, contribute to the spread and strengthening of all-Russian traditions, the language of interethnic communication, and the introduction of various innovations. In such families, the material, spiritual, ritual side of life, leisure and the upbringing of children become international. In nationally mixed families, relations of democracy and mutual understanding are usually established.

Interethnic marriages have a significant impact on the development of bilingualism processes. The way of life of nationally mixed families involves the choice of the language or languages of intra-family communication not only between spouses, but also between children and each of the parents. Therefore, the language in the hierarchy of ethno-determining features occupies one of the key positions. Being part of the culture of the people, it acts as an indicator of ethnic identity at all levels. I am glad that many young people speak their native language and speak it at home. More than half of the young people surveyed are fluent in their native language, a quarter of the respondents do not speak their native language, of which 11% do not speak or understand.

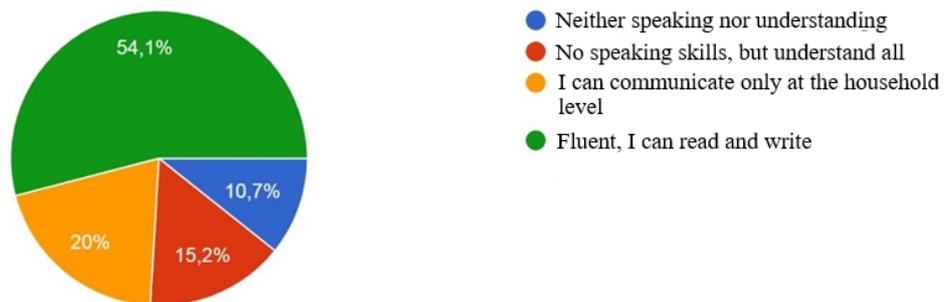At what level do you speak your language?

Legend:
- Neither speaking nor understanding
- No speaking skills, but understand all
- I can communicate only at the household level
- Fluent, I can read and write

(54,1% / 10,7% / 15,2% / 20%)

Figure 7. **Level of native language proficiency**

In general, a positive picture in ethnolinguistic terms is determined by strong traditions of preserving native languages in the family and learning them at school.
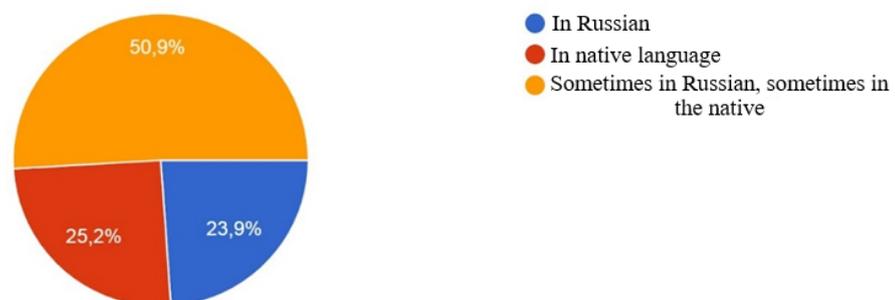
What language do you communicate with your family?

Legend:
- In Russian
- In native language
- Sometimes in Russian, sometimes in the native

(50,9% / 25,2% / 23,9%)

Figure 7. **Language of intra-family communication**

The high level of sacralization of the North Caucasian society is evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of the population considers themselves religious people. The re-

sults of the survey confirmed this - 97% of the surveyed boys and girls identify themselves with religion to one degree or another.

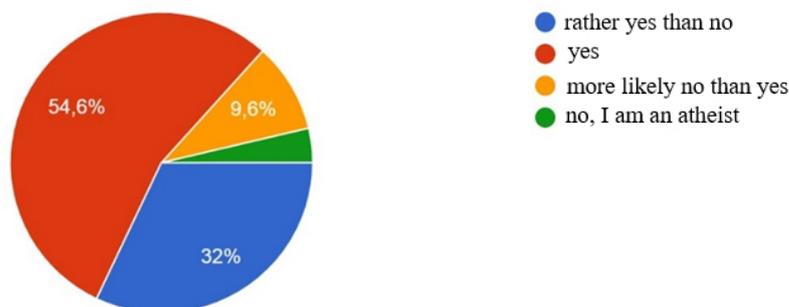## Do you consider yourself a religious person?

Figure 8. **The level of religiosity of the respondents**

The religious consciousness of today's young people is more eclectic, pragmatic and fashionable. One of the results of the post-industrial era is the destruction of traditional religiosity, which was characterized by the integrity of ethno-cultural life and the continuity of generations. The loss of many traditional values has already led to the "spiritual nihilism" of some of today's youth.

In the life frame of today's youth, religion has ceased to play the role of a moral imperative that forms a picture of the world, it has become a form of psychotherapy. As large-scale studies of the religious self-identification of students show, young people have a purely pragmatic attitude towards religion, "for the generation of young individualists and egoists, the therapeutic function of faith has come to the fore" [8, p. 82].

Conclusion

The conducted sociological research revealed that, in contrast to the global trends of globalism, the younger generation, the bearers of the North Caucasian culture, is difficult to modernize and strives to maintain their usual way of life. The values of the traditional culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus against the backdrop of the crisis of Russian society demonstrate the ability to resist transformational processes and adapt to modern realities. In the traditional values of the peoples of the North Caucasus, "historical social experience is selected, transmitted and perceived from person to person, from generation to generation, accumulating in the form of images, norms, principles of the idea of the best, authoritative in culture" [2, p. 131]. The peoples of the North Caucasus have managed to oppose Western socio-cultural templates that depersonalize a person with their original culture inherited from their ancestors, in which traditions and customs are preserved, religious values are honoured, men and women fulfil their social and gender roles. The generally accepted criteria of traditionalism in the North Caucasus are still the stability of traditional social institutions, the strength of ties to the past, and resistance to change.

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