

## СОЦИОЛОГИЯ И ПОЛИТОЛОГИЯ

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*V.A. Achkasov, A.I. Abalian, N.V. Poliakova*

### “REGION-BUILDING”: THE SPECIFICS OF THE RUSSIAN REGIONAL IDENTITY POLICY

This article is devoted to the study of the regional identity policy in post-Soviet Russia based on the concept of “region-building” by the Norwegian political scientist Iver Neumann. Traditional concepts explained the existence of a region mainly in terms of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and other similarities, emphasizing the isolation of the region with the existing distribution of political forces and clearly established leadership. However, along with this understanding of region models, one question has always remained unrevealed, namely, which factors are “external” and which are “internal” in the formation and functioning of regional structures if, according to B. Anderson, a nation appears as an “open” and “closed” (sovereign) community simultaneously, the region in its turn is an “open” community. Thus, according to Neumann’s concept, regions can also be regarded as “imaginary communities”, but their identities come usually as a result of deliberate political actors’ efforts both “from within the region” and “from the outside”, or as a reaction and outcome of the emergence and spread of local nationalisms. The authors of the article analyze the similarities and differences in the regional identity policy in the 1990s and in modern Russia, primarily on the following grounds: which social forces or groups control the attribution of regional identities in modern Russia, on what basis these identities are built, how these ideas are proliferated in the regional society, what potential for conflict or coexistence they contain. At the same time, it is obvious for the authors that the specifics of the regional identity policy are due to the peculiarities of the region status as an integral part of Russia. The activity of regional political elites in the formation and implementation of identity policy is inevitably associated with the need to solve the problem of combining regional identity with national identity. Therefore, a regional identity policy can be aimed at the formation of two types of identity: exclusive and inclusive. Exclusive identity involves the formation of ideas about the regional “we-community”, which is opposed to the national community. Inclusive identity, on the contrary, is aimed at harmonizing ideas about regional and national communities, the region is considered as an organic part of a larger community. As a result, the authors conclude that, in a transforming Russian society, regional identities are extremely mobile and depend on the nature of emerging social relations, political alliances and their goals. However, the formation of a regional identity policy in Russia has been largely influenced by the type of the relationship between the federal center and the regions, as well as the activities of the central authorities (or their absence) in the formation of a nationwide civic identity.

**Keywords:** center and regions; regional identity; identity policy; nation building; political elites.

The modern man is the bearer of a variety of identities. He could be characterized by the so-called divided loyalty, i.e., the multiplicity of forms of self-identification. As a result, in his mind, there is a hierarchy of “peoples”, with whom he classifies himself: “the people” of his village or city, “the people” of the region, finally, the people of his native country. However, the question is what place each of those “peoples” occupies in the hierarchy of the identities of a particular person. In addition, it is well known that different identification, the bearer of which is a separate individual or a group, can reinforce each other or, conversely, to conflict with one another. Thus, Edmund Burke noted that the main principle (the germ) of social behavior is attachment to the small, to the fragment of the territorial society which we belong to. At the same time, “love to the whole is not eliminated by that attachment to the small” [1. P. 60]. The individual’s relationship with the territory appears to be twofold: on the one hand, it manifests itself in the form of assignment (this is my home, my homeland, my country), on the other, in the form of identification (I am “local”).

Indeed, the historical development of our country with its huge space has always been inextricably linked to the formation of not only ethnic, religious, but also territorial communities, significantly variable, with its sociocultural specificities that can be defined as “regional identity”. Moreover, this regional identification was determined for ethnic Russians by its territorial belonging rather than ethnic one, giving in their own eyes and the eyes of others its immanent socially, psychologically and culturally significant signs of the “we-group”.

Thus, according to Pitirim Sorokin, “of all the ties that unite people, location ties are the strongest. The same residence gives people the commonality of aspirations and interests. Similarity in lifestyle, family relationship, peer relations, developed since childhood, give them a common character, creating a live connection . . . And the result is the formation of the group, marked by the peculiarities of the place” [2. P. 21, 213].

At the same time, one should emphasize the distinction between “identity” and an attribution/imposition of identity. Belonging to one group or another is heavily determined by the others: relatives, compatriots, co-religionists, the elites, etc., either considering the person as a member of a certain community, or rejecting him as an outsider. Hence, a constructivist vision of public life evolves to emphasize the phenomenon of social construction of reality. In this approach, the Norwegian political scientist Iver Neumann convincingly showed that the regions, both domestic and transnational, “are imagined” in accordance with the same mechanisms, as in a well-known theory by Benedict Anderson, the nations “are imagined”. This idea became the basis for the concept of “regional construction”. As in the process of national states building, the regional authorities design a certain spatio-temporal identity in accordance with their interests, using certain cultural traits and differences as a construction material. According to the Norwegian researcher, “. . . identity can exist only when it is constructed as ‘difference’, and < . . . > any social objectivity is constructed through the acts of the authorities” [3. P. 271].

On this basis, the establishment of any region (both domestic and transnational) can be considered as a ra-

tional political process associated primarily with the construction of regional identity by the elites, designed to consolidate the regional society. A special role is played by the “historical narratives of unity”, which perform an integrative function, allowing members of the regional community to recognize themselves as belonging to a “collective I” and smooth over the inevitable differences. It is no coincidence that Neumann stresses the importance of such “stories in the subjunctive mood” (which constitute the “collective I”) and their carrying out of the function of representation in the political space. Those who move away from participation in any representation of history on the collective “I”, immediately lose political space [3. P. 277–278]. In its turn, clashes over historical narratives often do not occur to determine historical truths, a comprehensive and unbiased description of past events, but are rather a struggle for political domination through the symbolic interpretation of “the history of the region”. Thus, regional identity as any other form of social identity is not created by nature but is the result of a political construction based on the choice of certain markers and events of historic and cultural past of the territory. Therefore, regional identity appears to be the “key” to region-building as a political, social and institutional space. It works as a basis of the authority legitimation and a necessary condition of a regional institutional order consolidation.

In this case, the condition of membership in the regional community are often not “objectively” existing differences but socially defined ones based on the phenomenon of categorical attribution. By giving importance to the categories on the basis of which the identification is exercised, the system of domination and subordination, and group stratification is fixed and maintained. As noted by Pierre Bourdieu, “. . . the transition from practice groups to formalized group involves the construction of classifier foundations, which are able to produce a set of distinctive traits that are typical of all members of this group; and simultaneously to cancel the set of insignificant features, which otherwise some or all of its members have and which could serve as the basis for alternative structures” [4].

Thus, the basis of the process of legitimation in this case is the struggle for “classifier foundations construction”, which would ensure the loyalty of the regional community. The issues of the hallmarks and characteristics that need to be actualized, or to be removed from the agenda, constitute the essence of identity policy.

In this regard, the main research tasks include the study of following issues: what social forces or groups are in control of the attribution of identities, what basis these identities are constructed on, how these ideas spread in regional society, what potential for the conflict or coexistence they contain. In other words, it is necessary to examine “. . . the ways of exercising of discourse moves in the formation of a pan-European, regional and national identities” [3. P. 267].

At the same time, in contrast to the process of nation-building, “region-building” does not always aim at transforming it into a sovereign state. The author of the concept believes that the main role in region-building is played by the motivated political activity of the elites that

aim to extract old and create new regional symbols and images, and signs of differences. These are to be introduced into mass consciousness (through the media, speeches of politicians and intellectuals) in order to create fundamentally new challenges in the designing of the political space inside the national one.

This understanding of the methods and objectives of region-building is directly related to attempts of theoretical reflection of a new structure of the world community and international relations that emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century. The traditional concepts used to explain the existence of the region mainly in terms of cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and other similarities, emphasizing, thus, the “isolation” of the region. However, this interpretation of traditional models of the regions has always remained an open question: which factors are “external” and which are “internal” in the formation and functioning of the regional structures. If the nation, according to Anderson, appears as both open and closed (sovereign) community, the region is an open community. Thus, regions, according to this concept, can also be seen as an “imagined community”, but their identity usually comes as a result of deliberate political efforts both “inside” and “outside” the region or as a reaction and result of the emergence and spread of local nationalisms.

Thus, there is no doubt that the specificity of regional identity policy related to the region’s status as a part of the national state. The activities of the regional political elites in the formation and implementation of the policy of identity is largely due to the necessity to combine regional identities with national ones. Therefore, the ongoing regional identity policy exercised by the political elites is “a game on two levels”, which are closely related. On the one hand, it is addressed to the actors outside the region (the federal center, economic agents, foreign and international organizations) and aims at attracting resources from outside in various forms (from attracting of new investments to receiving tax benefits or electoral support from powerful politicians of the center). On the other hand, it is addressed inside the region (both towards intra-regional political and economic actors, and to voters) and aims at maximizing the power to legitimize the status quo (for the ruling groups) or undermine its legitimacy (for the counter-elites) [5. P. 35].

However, the regional identity policy can be aimed at forming two types of regional identity: an inclusive and an exclusive one. An exclusive identity involves the formation of ideas about the regional “we-community”, which is opposed to the national community. An inclusive identity, in contrast, aims at harmonization of views in the regional and national communities; here the region is considered as a part of a larger community. A Norwegian researcher Bo Strath notes that the problem of identity arose either when the identity did not exist or in situations of crisis and instability [6. P. 64]. Indeed, the identity, making an impact on the processes of social integration and legitimation of power, is a vital part of a socio-cultural system, in the regulation of which the political elites are extremely interested during the crises when the notion that “culture matters” is particularly relevant, as confirmed by various manifestations of social tension. At

the same time, in transforming societies, the identities are highly mobile and depend on the nature of new social relations and political alliances, including those at the regional level. However, the formation of the regional identity policy in Russia has always been heavily influenced by the nature of the relationship between the center and the regions and the central government activity (or lack thereof) on the designing of all-national identity. As might be expected, “the multinational people of the Russian Federation”, which is “the bearer and the only source of power in the Russian Federation” (article 3), sooner or later, appears to be a potential stumbling block. Thus, inevitable questions are arising: who “the multinational people of the Russian Federation” is, and what the Russian Federation is.

At the same time, “it is the shortage of design activity (of the state–V.A.) on “building” of a new (Russian–V.A.) identity that most clearly reveals the fundamental fact that a society, as if provided by itself, needs power, seeks it” [7. P. 65]. The regional myths and identities formation in the 1990s in Russia, as noted by many researchers, reflected the “narrowing” and the actualization of regional identity of citizens (including ethnic-based) in the acute crisis of national identity. Not by chance, surveys show that, in the 1990s, the majority of respondents had more trust in the regional authorities than in the federal ones.

Among the factors that determined the choice of a particular strategy by the regional elites, the following can be outlined: the status of the region, the share of the so-called “titular nation” in the population of the “national” region, the proximity or remoteness from the center, the presence of external borders, the economic characteristics of the region and the type of political regime, the activity of ethnic entrepreneurs, etc. In the 1990s, an exclusive identity was a characteristic, to a greater extent, of the national republics and geographically remote regions, while the “Russian” regions often showed the formation of an inclusive identity. However, occasionally almost all regions resorted to “Moscowclasm” rhetoric.

As noted by many analysts, in the post-Soviet period, the institutions of the state identity policy were formed largely spontaneously, which was partly determined by the difficult economic and social situation in the country as a whole and in its regions, in particular, and the need to respond promptly to the emerging political challenges. As other reasons, we can highlight an evident lack of a proper understanding of the goals and objectives of these institutions, as well as the pressure from ethnically oriented regional politicians and ethnic organizations that tried to impose their vision of the state national policy institutions. It should be recognized that the regional identity policy has always been strongly influenced by ethnic entrepreneurs, whose interests and intentions did not always coincide with the interests of the society and the state. Ethnic entrepreneurs in general are the preachers of alarmist ideas as they consider the ethnocultural processes on the territory of residence of their peoples not as a natural cross-cultural interaction, whose objectives are to be increasingly standardized forms of behavior and cultural consumption, but often as a cultural Apocalypse, the result of which will become/is becoming an “extinction” of peoples [8]. According to other alarmist scenarios, there

are attempts to present ethnic communities, which are objectively not in danger of assimilation, as “victim peoples” in respect of whom a historical injustice was committed, and, for that, they should receive their economic, political and cultural “compensation” [9].

“The vagueness of the civil national (Russian–V.A.) identity makes one look closely at alternative forms—ethnic, religious, and various local identities, as well as at the history of the country,” state the researchers of the RAS Institute of Sociology [10. P. 92].

It is recognized that “. . . the Russians < . . . > have a rather amorphous identity. Cultural distances between geographical groups of the Russians (for example, living in Pomor region, in the European North, and in the Caucasus) can be greater than the cultural distance between them and the peoples with whom they have had a long period of cultural contact” [11. P. 133]. The Russian territorial space makes obstacles to the formation of a solid Russian identity. In the 1990s, it prevented an ethno-political mobilization of the Russians, yet simultaneously created favorable conditions for the construction of new “national” identities by the regional intellectual and political elites. This could also be explained by a high degree of the institutionalization of ethnicity in our country and by the existence of the link between ethnicity and economic, political, cultural benefits and status preferences, which, in the 1990s, were directed mainly to the Russian national minorities. Besides, the Russian experience demonstrates that a collective identity, constructed and described in one case as an “ethnic” and in another as a “regional” one, can be mobilized to achieve similar goals and supported by almost identical arguments.

As a result, already in the 1990s, plenty of PhD theses devoted to special “Cossack”, “Siberian”, “Pomor”, and other sub-ethnic identities appeared in Russia. There appeared political movements called for the recognition of these regional identities as ethnic or “national” identities; besides, all of them possessed a reactive and rebellious character. So, Terek, Don and Kuban Cossacks in the 1990s required the recognition of the Cossacks as a special “ethnos” and pushed for the creation of the Cossack republics, while various options were discussed (separated Cossack Republics—the Don, the Kuban, Zelenchuk-Urupsky, etc. or the Union of the Cossack Republics of the South of Russia with the rights of the subject of the Russian Federation) [12]. It was supplied by the relevant “historical” foundation. As a result, the term “Cossack”, from an estate title, turned into an ethnic category because, during the last two censuses, tens of thousands of the Cossack movement members indicated a “Cossack” in the column “Nationality” of the questionnaires, taking a former class name as an ethnonym [13].

A similar transformation has occurred with the Siberian regional movement and regional name “the Siberian”. Recently “the Siberians” have largely been presented as a separate ethnic group. The experts state that “the growth of regional consciousness, which in recent years had been observed in the Siberian region, had a significant component of the protest < . . . > and led to a clear differentiation and contrast between Moscow and Siberia, the center and the regions” [14. P. 66]. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the Russian nationalists, who tried

to speculate on the slighted feelings of social justice by protesting under the slogan “Stop feeding the Caucasus!” in Moscow, suddenly heard a response from the Russian regions: “Stop feeding Moscow!” (but not “Stop feeding Siberia, the Far East, the Ural, the Volga region, the Moscow suburbs . . .,” as noted Vladimir Putin in his pre-election article—approx. ed.), as well as the proposals to create the Siberian Republic within the Federation and cease to pay taxes (except the 5% allocated for the maintenance of the army) or totally separate [15. P. 30]. At the same time, the formed regional myths often lurk an “inferiority complex” with regard to the federal center. As noted by Mikhail Ilyin, “the Siberian and Ural regional ‘pride’ may indicates not so much the weakening of the historical, ethnic and cultural ties with its Russian or East Slavic origin, but a perception of themselves as the Russians in the square, twice the Russians, the representatives of a more distant and, therefore, more significant expansion of the primordial Rus’ ” [16]. The same complex seems to be manifested in the widely used regional mythmaking stereotype of the “victim region”. This is evidenced in particular by the example of the Pomor movement.

A damage to the areas of traditional nature management and limitation of the Pomor fishing activities as a result of pressure from the state, industrial and mining companies, and neighboring ethnic communities has not only created a conflict situation and jeopardized the very existence of the group, but also led to the fact that the Pomors became more aware of the difference of their interests from those of neighboring cultural groups and large-sized companies operating in the region. This situation has stimulated the processes of people’s self-organization and enables its leaders to search for symbolic resources that can be mobilized to fight for the interests of local communities. The most effective form of struggle was the Pomor movement that emerged in the early 2000s, and the most important symbolic resource became the cultural distinctiveness of the Pomors, their traditions and the way of life. As a result, the ideologists of the Pomor movement have recently announced that the Pomors were not an ethnographic group, but an independent “ethnos”, and not of Slavic, but of Finno-Ugric origin. As noted by Leonid Ionin, “The ‘Pomor revival’ scheme, if you clear away the talking rubbish, is quite simple: 1. The Pomors are not Russians. 2. The Pomors are a numerically small indigenous people “of the Russian North”. 3. The Pomors have a lot in common with the Norwegians, the same indigenous people of the North. 4. The Pomors should revive and strengthen ties with the Norwegians, which formerly existed in the 18th–19th centuries” [17. P. 191].

Thus, the Russian political practice shows that the ideology of regionalism, the regionalist protest movement can successfully be transformed into an ideology of ethnic nationalism and generate an ethnopolitical movement. In turn, the mobilization of the resource movements from the positions of ethnic nationalism by the local authorities often resulted in the formation of ethno-regional identities, ideologies or their surrogates on this basis. However, today, in the conditions of a highly centralized state, “regions, which gained its “face” do not always know and

understand what to do with it” [18, p. 148], but new hard times may make these identities relevant again. The following conclusions by Yuriy Shabaev seem to be absolutely true: “first of all, a lack of consolidation of the Russian society; secondly, an apparent lack of integration of many Russian regions and their populations in national political and cultural space; and, thirdly, an obvious lack of any consistent, resource-wealthy and conceptualized policy of nation building” [19. P. 71].

The adoption of the Russian National Policy Strategy Until 2025 at the end of 2012 did not bring any fundamental changes in the solution of these problems because the officials responsible for the “national policy” in the regions understand it very narrowly: just as an official support to the permanent demonstration of the cultural distinctiveness of groups (in this context, integration policy just falls out of their field of vision) and the cultural diversity in the region. Obvious partners in this activity are ethnic entrepreneurs that are not only included in the expert councils, but also incorporated in the institutions of ethnic politics, regional authority structures. This situation is related to the sustainable stereotype of perception of the state national policy, as one oriented exclusively towards the needs of minority cultural groups or “titular ethnic groups”, on whose behalf one or another republic is titled.

As a consequence, regional authorities find themselves trapped in a simulation of ethnopolitics. On the one hand, an alliance with ethnic entrepreneurs provides a dependence of ethnic leaders and their organizations from regional authorities and their loyalty, but, on the other hand, the administrative and financial support of the government makes ethnic organizations an organic part of the political designs of the Russian regions, and the very ethnic policy instead of the unambiguous orientation on the interests of the society and the state (and, consequently, the aim to strengthen the all-Russian identity), to a greater extent, focuses on the interests of particular ethnic groups and their leaders (i.e., essentially, it reinforces the reproduction of cultural distinctiveness and the weakening of integration tendencies in the Russian society). The result of the chosen tactics is not so much the political curbing of radical ethno-nationalism, but the regional policy ethnicization and the increasing insensitivity of the political leaders to ethnic nationalism and cultural racism, to the practice of cultural boundaries construction within the Russian society.

As a result, it can be argued that the strengthening of the central government in the 2000s has not led to the overcoming of the pathologies of the Russian state system due to the persistence of the redistributive model of relations between the center and the regions. Despite the apparent reconciliation and submission of the regional elites, the governmental regional policy is characterized by double standards: in some regions, direct representatives of the Kremlin gained key offices; in others, there occurred a complete incorporation of clan ethnocracies formed in the 1990s into the presidential power-management vertical (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya, etc.).

Overall, this policy is to ensure that strong regional groups (regardless of their history and actual views on the political issues important for the federal government) remain inviolable and politically powerful, while the weak and the dependent suffer defeat and are to be replaced by

technical managers acting in the interest of the Kremlin. The costs of this approach to the development of the federative relations are clear: the redistributive model reproduces the situation of bargaining between the center and the federal subjects, in which the necessity of promoting interests of strong regional clans forces to make decisions that often fundamentally contradict the “general line” of the federal government. A classic example of this kind is an agreement with Tatarstan on the division of subjects of governance and authority, despite the policy of refusing bilateral agreements and the adoption of the constitutional bases of federalism that acted for almost two decades.

Thus, the strength of social cohesion provided by Vladimir Putin during his presidency and premiership should not mislead; fundamental problems of the country, including the “center–regions” relations are solved unsatisfactorily. The causes of regional separatism are not resolved; the problem just tired “inside”, and/or the source of conflict was “flooded” with money, but, with a worsening of the socioeconomic situation, the threat of Russia’s disintegration, first of all, on ethnic grounds can become extremely relevant again. The governors have significantly degraded after the cancellation of the elections, “the regional authorities are not capable of finding adequate management solutions to optimize the budget spending and keep the support of the population in the worsening economic conditions. <...> Contrary to expectations, the return of the elections has not changed the situation. The harsh legislative filter requiring signatures of 5% of municipal deputies of the region is almost an insurmountable obstacle to alternative candidates. In the coming years, governor elections are unlikely to be an instrument of change of the elites and a rise of more trained politicians and businessmen to power. The renewal of regional elites

through the elections is possible only with the weakening of the federal center and the reduction of control over the situation in the regions” [20. P. 119–120]. However, one of the consequences of this process can become so familiar by the 1990s, the “renewal of the federative bargain, the effectiveness of which is closely linked to the strength of democracy; in a totally non-democratic environment it can cause serious shocks, the consequences of which are unpredictable” [21. P. 120]. The most serious outcome could be the question of the preservation of Russia’s territorial integrity and even its existence. “It is possible to predict,” says Vladimir Mukomel, “the growth (of significance–ed.) of regional and local identity, a counterposition of national and regional interests, a consolidation of the political actors on ethnic and sectarian basis, growth of fundamentalism, and radicalization of the political forces” [22. P. 210].

In this respect, one needs to pay attention to the answers to the question (not quite correct in its wording): “Who would be called a Russian?” (a poll in September 2013): 35% of respondents allocate an accommodation in Russia and upbringing in the traditions of the Russian culture as an identification criteria; for 16% ethnicity appears to be a key point, for 14% the most significant attribute is Russian as their mother tongue, 11% consider a person “who honestly works for the benefit of Russia” to be Russian, 10% name a person “who considers oneself a Russian”, religion and traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church are the determining factor for 6%, 5% associate the identity with the territory of residence, 2% of respondents found it difficult to answer [23. P. 5]. It is significant, however, that none of the respondents has ranked the Russian citizenship as a criterion.

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## «СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО РЕГИОНОВ»: СПЕЦИФИКА РОССИЙСКОЙ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ

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**Ачкасов В.А.**, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет. E-mail: val-achkasov@yandex.ru

**Абалиян А.И.**, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет. E-mail: anna.abalyan@spbu.ru

**Полякова Н.В.**, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет. E-mail: belnata70@yandex.ru

**Ключевые слова:** центр и регионы; региональная идентичность; политика идентичности; нациестроительство; политические элиты.

Данная статья посвящена исследованию политики региональной идентичности в постсоветской России с опорой на концепт «строительство регионов» норвежского политолога Ивара Нойманна. Традиционные концепции объясняли существование региона главным образом в терминах культурных, лингвистических, социально-экономических и иных подоби, подчеркивая замкнутость региона со сложившейся в нем расстановкой политических сил и четко закрепленным лидерством. Однако при таком понимании моделей регионов всегда оставался открытым вопрос, какие факторы являются «внешними», а какие «внутренними» в формировании и функционировании региональных структур, если нация, по Б. Андерсону, предстает одновременно как «открытое» и «закрытое» (суверенное) сообщество, то регион сообщество «открытое». Таким образом, регионы, согласно концепции И. Нойманна, могут также рассматриваться как «воображаемые общности», однако их идентичности, как правило, это результат преднамеренных политических усилий акторов как «изнутри региона», так и «извне», или как реакция и результат возникновения и распространения локальных национализмов. Авторы анализируют сходства и различия в региональной политике идентичности в 1990-е гг. и в современной России, прежде всего, по следующим основаниям: какие социальные силы или группы контролируют приписывание региональных идентичностей в современной России, на какой основе эти идентичности строятся, как эти идеи распространяются в региональном социуме, какой потенциал для конфликта или сосуществования они содержат? При этом для авторов несомненно, что специфика региональной политики идентичности обусловлена особенностями статуса региона как составной части России. Деятельность региональных политических элит по формированию и реализации политики идентичности неизбежно связана с необходимостью решения проблемы сочетания региональной идентичности с общегосударственной. Поэтому региональная политика идентичности может быть направлена на формирование двух типов идентичности: эксклюзивной и инклюзивной. Эксклюзивная идентичность предполагает формирование представлений о региональном «мы-сообществе», которое противопоставляется национальному сообществу. Инклюзивная идентичность, напротив, направлена на гармонизацию представлений о региональном и национальном сообществах, регион рассматривается как органичная часть более крупного сообщества.

В результате авторы приходят к заключению, что в трансформирующемся российском обществе региональные идентичности крайне подвижны и зависят от характера складывающихся общественных отношений, возникающих политических альянсов и их целей. Однако на формирование региональной политики идентичности в России наибольшее влияние оказывает и оказывает характер взаимоотношений между федеральным Центром и регионами, а также деятельность центральных органов власти (либо ее отсутствие) по формированию общенациональной гражданской идентичности.

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