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THE CONCEPT OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES.

Ethnic identity is defined as an emotional, strong affiliation with a permanent group. It distinguishes an individual and is the basis of their behavior. According to V. Michaels, essentialism does not describe identity, but attempts to act on its basis. [5].

Developing the idea of the influence of the social context on ethnic identity, we highlight the most significant factors influencing the formation of ethnic identity, specifically the peculiarities of ethnic socialization in family, school and immediate social environment, heterogeneity / homogeneity of the ethnocultural environment, status relations between ethnic groups.

There is some terminological uncertainty in this issue. For example, we talk about "ethnicity", "ethnic identification", "ethno-national mentality". The key concepts of this notion are "ethnocultural group", "identity", "acculturation", "cultural distance".

Summarizing the key concepts of the scholars in the definition of this concept, we found that an ethnocultural group is a stable set of people formed on a certain territory, a dynamic social structure, a group of united individuals which is an integral part of a larger society and awareness of their linguistic, mental, cultural identity.

A characteristic phenomenon of border culture is a special concern for the ancestry of a person inscribed in the history of this society. Let us keep in mind that the condition for the existence of an ethnocultural group is to take care of values that create a connection and serve as a guarantee of group separateness and intergroup similarity. Among the many interpretations of the concept of "ethnocultural group", one of its most significant

features is that the essence of ethnocultural groups is ethnic identity and ethnic self-awareness.

The definition of ethnicity is influenced by awareness of the status of an ethnocultural group in the social structure of society. So, in the USA, for those who have physical differences (complexion, sexual orientation) or whose culture differs from culture of a dominant group, the question is often based on the usage of ethnic names. For example, the descendants of the immigrants from Mexico can call themselves Mexican Americans, Latinos, Hispanic Americans, Chicanos and thus show their desired face in the eyes of majority, since the listed "labels" have different shades and carry a large emotional tension.

In scientific publications of recent decades, one can see the following tendency: the most acceptable option for choosing is a unitary assimilated identity which is influenced by dominant culture. Describing the dynamics of the category of ethnic identity in the American context, Ukrainian scholar N. O. Vysotska mentions two other variants- "Americans-through-a-hyphen" (African-Americans, Asian-Americans etc.) with an emphasis on the first component (which also results in a predominantly unitary identity, but with a shift of the center of gravity to ethnic components), and synthesis, the formula of which outwardly remains unchanged, but both elements receive the same emphasis (pluralistic multiple identity). [1, p. 329].

Modern scientific thought postulates that the latter model of ethnic identity which is achieved in the process of integration can be the most realistic and successful for ethnocultural groups. Accordingly, the least success is achieved as a result of marginalization, and assimilation and separatism occupy an intermediate position. At the individual level, a number of factors contribute to the success of integration strategy: non-discrimination, inclusion in two cultural communities, and personal flexibility.

The American adolescents of Mexican origin either retain the language and traditions of their ancestors, realizing themselves as "Spanish-speaking Americans", or perceive themselves as "white English-speaking Americans". Studying the process of forming an individual's ethnic identity in adolescence, psychologist Gene Finn concluded: "among "white" youth, the category of ethnic identity is not primary, in the age period under

consideration, "individuals" prefer the cultural values of the dominant group. At the same time, those young people who recognize their physical and / or cultural differences see these values as a source of shame". [2, p. 68]. Further in the mentioned psychological study, it is said that the search for one's own identity is usually initiated by such epiphanic moments, when, as a result, anxiety gives way to a sense of agreement.

Consequently, people have different opinions about how they want to live as a result of cross-cultural contact. They adopt different acculturation strategies, not everyone is ready to be included in such contact, and among those who participate in it, not everyone agrees to change their culture and behavior in a way that is more consistent with the norms of another (often dominant) group. In contemporary works on ethnic identity, it is noted that scholars write too little about dissimilation processes in society. In particular, attention is focused on Hansen's law on "return to the third generation": "what the father owns, the son wants to forget about it, and the grandson wants to remember". [3]

Sociologist Herbert Hans was first to use the term in the work "Symbolic Ethnicity: the Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America" (1979). The scientist interpreted in symbolic as ethnicity a nostalgic loyalty to the culture of the country which remained in the past of immigrants, while love for the ancestral homeland and appreciation of its cultural traditions, in his opinion, can be expressed without their incorporation into the daily life and cultural practices of individuals. [4, p. 9].

Ethnic identity development has been conceptualized and researched primarily within the US. Due to the fact the individuals studied are typically from America, it may not be appropriate to extend findings to individuals in other countries.

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