

# "Identity of place" in the context of urbanization

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**Abstract.** The article shows that there is a contradictory process involving the growing influence of globalization and localization in Russia nowadays. The empirical base is the data of mass opinion surveys in the regions of Russia for years 2006-2017. The methods of analysis is the calculation of the location layer index, dispersion, and regression analysis. It is revealed that the spread of global practices may contradict the growing importance of local environment, manifested as "identity of place". In the dynamics of Russian reality, the "identity of place" in its local, geographical terms is reduced. At the same time, the importance of family and professional circles of communication is increasing while the importance of communication on the basis of "place of living" is decreasing. This process is not contrary to the logic of urbanization. The growth of cities, the processes of agglomeration are getting people outside their local circles, and increasing the level of trust of individuals to strangers, but in Russia, these processes have decelerated and in some aspects changed their orientation. The weakness of such significant for socialization factors like education and type of employment seems worrisome.

## 1 Introduction

Currently, in Russia there is a contradictory process involving the increasing influence of globalization and localization. Globalization is understood as the certainty of universalization and transnationalization of some fragments and areas of human activity, economics and sociocultural spheres. Localization is the increase in local factors relevance and strengthening of various "identities of place", traditionalization life practices. M. Castells drew attention to the fact that in the modern information society territorial, regional, local, religious, ethnic and other types of identities become determinants of important social changes [1; 2]. "Identities of place" integrate the necessary for a comfortable existence value, emotional, rational, business-like, symbolic and other mental concepts as the baseline of human life. An individual's self-identification with his "small homeland", with a place of residence included into the concept of "identity of place" can sustain the necessary emotional, rational, business, and other symbolic support, and can be approved in the open informational space during the confrontation with unallocated global symbols. The objective of the work is to identify key characteristics of the concept "identity of place" associated with the mechanisms of network interactions formation and levels of the layered proximity distinction in the context of urbanization, understood as the increase in the share of urban population, the increased importance of employment in secondary and tertiary economy sector as a predominantly urban types of employment. The work checks out the following hypotheses: in the informational society, the "identity of place" ought to maintain the necessary for relatively

comfortable human existence axiological, emotional, rational, symbolic and other business support; improving of life quality is directly linked to the "identity of place", and the spread of global practices doesn't contradict to the increasing importance of local environment, manifested as "identity of place".

## 2 Literature review

The concept of independent realization of identity of a person was developed in 1950-ies, and is understood through self-determination and self-realization in value sociocultural space of symbolic signs through the identification of distances far and near, of yours and alien, in which there appears the motivation to search and learn the real and desired place. In modern society, communication and social relations are shifted to the field of dynamically running present and local, facilitating the issues of "identity of place". The category "identity of place" is deeply represented in the theories of A. Giddens, E. Hoffmann, Y. Tuan [7-9]. Their logic of the analysis is based on the idea that for individuals positioning into a spatio-temporal trajectories of their everyday life also means the location within the life cycle within a relatively long length of institutional formations, which involves the categorization of social identity. A. Giddens based the theory of structuration on two fundamental concepts: "place of action" and "existence-presence", which largely determine the environment's properties, concern the relationship between social and system integration and are used to form the semantic content of the interaction on a regular basis [7]. From the standpoint of frame analysis E.

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**Table 1.** Intensity coefficient of layered proximity.

Survey region	Survey year	Settlement	General	General human	Family	Friends	Colleagues	People of the same nationality
The whole Russia	2006	2.6	2.6	1.4	3.65	0.24	0.02	0.11
Tyumen region	2006	8.9	0.3	0.2	2.81	0.40	0.03	0.08
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District	2006	7.3	0.3	0.2	2.60	0.37	0.03	0.07
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District	2006	8.9	0.4	0.3	3.49	0.28	0.01	0.07
Tyumen region	2009	6	0.2	0.2	2.33	0.28	0.03	0.08
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District	2009	8.4	0.4	0.3	1.63	0.35	0.04	0.12
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District	2009	7	0.5	0.4	2.03	0.35	0.04	0.11
The whole Russia	2010	4.7	0.9	0.4	2.13	0.37	0.03	0.10
Omsk region	2010	8.7	0.7	0.6	2.06	0.36	0.03	0.10
Vologda region	2010	7.6	0.6	0.5	1.65	0.44	0.05	0.11
Tyumen region	2011	3.5	0.5	0.3	2.70	0.35	0.05	0.10
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District	2011	3.9	0.7	0.5	2.57	0.28	0.04	0.11
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District	2011	3.7	0.8	0.6	1.70	0.30	0.03	0.14
Kursk region	2012	3.6	0.4	0.2	2.69	0.26	0.05	0.06
Chelyabinsk region	2012	3.9	1.1	0.5	3.81	1.20	0.16	0.47
The whole Russia	2015	3.7	0.9	0.4	3.57	0.91	0.25	0.28
Kursk region	2016	4.1	0.8	0.3	9.20	1.01	0.15	0.25
Tyumen region	2016	3.0	0.7	0.3	7.41	1.24	0.18	0.34
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District	2016	2.4	0.7	0.4	9.10	1.05	0.15	0.44
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District	2016	2.6	0.8	0.4	8.76	1.25	0.14	0.39
<sup>a</sup> is determined by dividing the share of those who noted the presence of proximity in relation to the share of those who noted the absence of it								

Hoffman developed a different approach to the “identity of place”, defined as “perfect circumstances of co-presence” [8, p. 474]. E. Hoffman observed the concept of regionalization of interactions and presented perspective analytical possibilities to identify an individual and place – in line with the rituals of interaction and status signals, which allow to investigate virtual identities as well. There have been created the background to reconsider the content and meanings of “identity of place” signs, network interactions, social networking, and levels of layered proximity in today's information society. The concept allows to deepen the understanding of new social media and social networking in the context of the theory of scalable sociality developed by D. Miller [10]. Y-Fu Tuan defined the “identity of place” as such convertible space, which is endowed with certain valuable content and which therefore acquires a special symbolic form [9, p. 445]. These grounds give the possibility to verify the definition of “identity of place”, keeping also in mind that the identity in general sense is understood as the embeddedness of an individual in subjectively interpreted social category. Economists G. Akerlof (a Nobel laureate) and R. Krenton suggested to consider an economic system in conjunction with the development of identification processes. For example, norms prevailing

in a particular group, established at the place of either residence or work are significant [11, p. 157], meanwhile the notion of “identity of place” is transformed into the concept of “identity of working place” and, furthermore, is modified into the term “identification with a company”. Thus, the “identity of place”, which is transformed through the prism of economic relations anyway organizes and transform social space. The features of the methodology are associated with the ideas of communication networks theory that is successfully developed by P. Monge and N. Contractor [12], and with communication theory, and networks control in the context of new economics represented in the work of G. Mulgan [13].

### 3 Methods

The study is based on the Russian research project “Social and cultural portraits of Russian regions” [3]. Hypothesis testing was conducted using regression and dispersion analyses in the statistical package SPSS. There are used the results of socio-cultural monitoring (2006, 2009, 2011, 2017) in the Tyumen region (without Autonomous Districts), Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous districts [4, p.21-48], Vologda,

**Table 2.** The indices of layered proximity of different settlement types , Russia on average, 2015.

	Settleme nt level	Regional level <sup>b</sup>	General level <sup>c</sup>	General human level	Famil y	Friend s	Neighb ours	Colleag ues
Village	5.36	2.37	0.77	0.47	5.49	0.75	0.42	0.19
Small town (< 100 th.)	3.28	1.4	0.97	0.38	3.55	0.96	0.32	0.42
Town (100-500 th.)	3.96	1.77	0.99	0.44	4.05	1.07	0.10	0.20
City (> 500 th.)	3.82	1.50	0.74	0.39	2.62	1.13	0.14	0.33
<sup>b</sup> General level: The inhabitants of the whole Russia.								
<sup>c</sup> General human level: The inhabitants of the whole Earth.								

Kursk, Omsk and Chelyabinsk regions (see the appendix), [5]. There are attracted the published results and data sets of the all-Russian monitoring for the period of 2006-2015, the data of the Center for the study of social and cultural changes at the Institute of Philosophy of RAS (Russian Academy of Sciences) [14]. The exchange of data between regional and national research groups is voluntary and mutual.

The evaluation of the layered proximity intensity of the residents of different territorial communities is held on the question: “To what extent do you feel vicinity or remoteness (on a scale of “yours” – “alien”) with the residents of the settlement where you live (village, town, city) (Settlement level); with the inhabitants of your region (Regional level); with the inhabitants of the whole Russia (General level); with the inhabitants of the whole Earth (General human level), with my family, friends, neighbors, with people of the same nationality, with people of the same religion. The index of the layered proximity is determined by dividing the share of those who noted the presence of proximity in relation to the share of those who noted the absence of it. There were noted 1: absence of proximity 2: proximity. Intense layered proximity is when the level is more than 1, and the extensive one is with the index less than 1. This means that the proportion of those who said the specified authentication level as “alien” is higher than of those who consider such people “yours”.

## 4 Results

Table 1 demonstrates the data of Russia and its regions received within a decade 2006-2016. [4-6], see the Appendix. There were calculated the indices of intensity of the layered proximity on various levels of self-identity for different samples and during different years. The ranking of territorial identity in dynamics for ten years is extremely stable, and the descending order of significance level still corresponds to the geographical distribution: settlement / region / the whole Russia / the whole Earth. If the first two are intensive, the latter two are extensive, see tables 1 and 2.

This ranking is maintained for all dimensions of social structure and geographical division. The level of settlement remains the most important territorial community for people, this is the territory where daily communication and interaction with other people

happens, and usually they are “like me”. The presence of proximity with the inhabitants of the village / town / city is noted by a half to three quarters of all respondents. Regional identity level is believe to be “theirs” by up to a third of the sample. The highest reduction rate of proximity estimation is observed in the transition from the settlement to the regional level of layered proximity, the next levels take no more than a half of the settlement level.

The structure of layered proximity at the community circles is pretty standard, that is family, friends, colleagues, people of the same nationality. We also studied the significance of confessional relations, but nowadays the Russian people do not note this type of communication (less than 5% of the sample). The dynamics is that in all Russian regions and in Russia on average, there is the increase of the value of family, friendship circle, and professional relationships. At the same time, on average, there is the decrease of importance of the settlement-level of layered proximity. However, grades of layered proximity remain unchanged, with the exception of mutual change of such grades as friends / colleagues. The increasing importance of friendship and professional relationship reflects the global trend – people are expending their immediate environment, they base on work relations, and choose more free and varied choice of social circle. However, this trend is contrary to the increasing importance of the family circle. From the point of view of specific social data and indicators, there is a convergence of the importance of different segments and growing diversity. This process can be designated as the growth of uncertainty (or entropy) in the selection and/or identification on the scale of “yours”/ “alien”. The indices of layered proximity in dynamics converge.

In fact, the growth of cities contributes to capsulization of “your” circle at the family level, and to withdrawal from direct communication at the “place of living”. However, our results have demonstrated that the outlined trend towards the transition to a professional, general human, and impersonal (“the inhabitants of the whole Earth”) authentication levels of “yours” are still very weak and unstable. Table 2 reflects the structure of the layered proximity of the residents of settlements of different types.

In towns and cities, compared to villages, there is dramatic decrease of the level of settlement and regional

**Table 3.** The indices of the layered proximity for various in some cities (sample size in each city is in parentheses).

Towns and cities <sup>f</sup>	Settlement level	Regional level	General level <sup>d</sup>	General human level <sup>e</sup>
Moscow (85)	1.55	1.02	1.25	0.58
Kursk (190)	2.09	0.92	0.97	0.33
Tyumen (739)	2.30	1.20	0.82	0.40
Khanty-Mansiysk (243)	1.72	0.97	0.58	0.37
New Urengoy (268)	1.82	1.04	1.03	0.43
Nizhnevartovsk (270)	1.89	0.94	0.74	0.35
Surgut (229)	1.61	0.78	0.71	0.42
Tobolsk (93)	1.96	0.85	0.61	0.24

<sup>d</sup> General level: The inhabitants of the whole Russia.  
<sup>e</sup> General human level: The inhabitants of the whole Earth.  
<sup>f</sup> Mass surveys in different regions and in the whole Russia were produced according to the general method, but by various research groups, data were obtained from different samples (see the Appendix), so the sample size for the different towns and cities may differ significantly. Stability of the data is tested, Pearson's Chi-square for all of the subsamples is more than 45 with asymptotical significance lower than 0.001.

self-identity, but there are no changes in the significance of proximity of general and general human layers (table 2). The self-identity of relations on the scale of “yours” – “alien” in the transition to a larger settlement goes in the direction of reducing the importance of territorial characteristics. The significance of family and neighborhood (by place of living) levels of identity in towns, cities are declining, and friend, and professional ones, on the contrary, are increasing in comparison with the residents of villages. However, in Russia, the “space of places” continues to dominate the “space of information”, or in other words, the “local” continues to dominate the “global”, contrary to the predictions of M. Castells.

Let it be noted that Moscow residents are not so significantly different from other Russian cities, as it is commonly believed. The latter fact is confirmed by the data of other research groups, obtained by comparable methods. For comparison, we have taken only those areas where the survey was conducted in 2015 and later, and the sample size in the city exceeded the 85 people (table 3). It can be concluded that the settlement level of self-identity remains dominant among the territorial signs, but on the general human level, the share of those who denied the existence of proximity is more than twice bigger than the share of those who noted the presence of it. In bigger towns and cities, the process of globalization occurs slightly faster than in small ones, but the transformation has affected all types of Russian cities.

We hypothesized that the level of layered proximity can be associated with self-assessment of financial situation, age, education, type of settlement, type of employment, type of place of work's ownership, type of work motivation, level of religiosity, and political preferences of a respondent. To test the hypotheses there were built regression models, there was performed the dispersion analysis. The calculations were performed on the bases of the Tyumen region, Khanty-Mansi, and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Districts in 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016, Kursk region (2012, 2015), Russia (2010, 2015). The method of calculation is step-by-step exception, a confidence probability is not less than 95%.

Regression models were calculated sequentially for the cases of dependent variable self-assessment of layered proximity with the inhabitants of the whole Earth, the whole Russia, the whole region, and with inhabitants of the settlement where you live (village, town, city). Levels of measurement: 1: absence of proximity; 2: proximity. At the initial stage the models included 25 predictors, and in different models the number of significant ones primarily consisted of: self-assessment of financial situation, interpersonal trust, age, institutional trust, the type of settlement. Let it be noted that the level of education, self-assessment of social groups, number of employees, level of religiosity, political preferences, type of employment, type of place of work's ownership, type of work motivation are not included in the list of significant bases of the models.

At various levels of identification a variety of mechanisms “work”. Settlement layered proximity (the “identity of place”) decreases with the transition from village to city, with the growing of institutional trust and significantly increases for older age groups. General and regional layered proximity are increasing with the self-assessment of financial position and the growth of interpersonal trust. General human proximity is increasing with the self-assessment of financial situation and decreases with the growth of institutional trust. The analysis was conducted only for the models obtained at the maximum level of significance (confidence level above 99.5%).

## 5 Conclusion

Having analyzed the self-identity of the citizens of different regions, different cities, we can conclude that in this context the processes of globalization and urbanization take a specific form. First, on large amounts of empirical data, we showed that the family remains the basic level of self-identity for people of all types of settlements. Of course, type of a family and reasons of its significance in the understanding of the Russians has changed, this problem was not studied deeply, but we trust the results of our colleagues in this field. Second, in

urban areas there is the increase of the importance of friendships and professional contacts. The latter corresponds with global trends, and, along with the decline in significance of the settlement and neighborhood circles reflects the exit of the Russians beyond the local circle. Third, despite the rapid spread of mass communications networks, “the space of places” still dominates over the “space of information”. Cities are slightly ahead of “the whole Russia” in terms of distribution of global and national self-identity, but there isn’t the change of structure in the observed period of time. The identities of national and global nature conflict with local identities. The latter is confirmed by the fact that the growth of family importance in time is much higher and widely reproduced for different levels of the social structure. In this context, it is important to note that settlements remain more important than other territorial levels. There is the reason to assume that the problems connected with the conflict of these identities have a global character. The further course of historical development will show, whether this trend is an expression of the general historical trend or just reflects a temporary, local peculiarities of the Russian situation. At the same time, let it be noted the regrettable fact of weak influence on the identity of such important forms of socialization as education and employment. In this article, we were unable to analyze this problem deeply, but we plan to do it in future.

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