



Reasoned Opinion

About national character and "a model person" to be taken into account in management

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Abstract

In scientists' opinion, national character study within one or another society must be expressed in investigation of some personal characteristics incidence, while "a model person" is such a type, to which the majority of given society members must belong. It is believed that totally different types are represented in each nation, but one of them are of frequent occurrence and others are seldom or very rare. Despite the fact that in some cases empirical data confirm hypothesis of modal persons' existence, it became obvious that there should be much more intracultural differences (between different population classes and strata) than intercultural ones. On other side, it turned out that "modal person: is a complex of distinctive signs peculiar to one part of nation, in opposition to its other part and respectively, question of national character as a unity of behavioral, emotional and other characteristics peculiar to each member of nation, either had to be taken off or raised in completely different manner. This fact led Inkeles and Levinson to pessimistic conclusion: "With the current limited state of knowledge and research methods, it cannot be asserted that any nation has a national character". The situation was aggravated by the fact that when speaking about national character, some people imply temperament first of all, while others pinpoint attention upon personality traits and still others emphasize value orientations etc. Consequently, despite the existence of different approaches to this problem and more than six decades of research, there are currently totally different views not only on what the national character is, but also on its existence at all, whether it is a more important trait than those elements of personality which unite all the people worldwide, or those which distinguish even the individuals, which are the most similar to each other. As a result, despite the existence of different approaches to this problem and more than sixty years of research, there are currently completely different viewpoints not only on what national character is, but also on whether it exists at all, whether it is a more important trait than those elements of personality that unite all people in the world, or those that distinguish even the individuals most similar to each other.

Keywords: National character, study, problem, a model person.



Introduction

The study of national character, which dates back to the German romantics, was initially associated with the study of customs, morals, beliefs, features of family life, methods of upbringing, economics, etc., the interpretation of which was carried out within the framework of the cultural paradigm. As well as the study of other areas of human activity, the study of national character was also particularly influenced by the theory of psychoanalysis, within the framework of which the first systematic attempt to interpret the mentioned concept was made. The famous physician-psychoanalyst A. Kardiner became interested in ethnological problems and tried to combine the psychoanalytic concept with the field research of ethnologists, on the basis of which he formulated the generalizing basic concept of the “basic personality structure”. In his theory, he offered society a model of the relationship between the practice of raising children in a given culture, the type of personality, and the social institutions common to that culture (“institution” was defined by A. Kardiner as a means through which an individual is influenced in the process of his growth and development). According to A. Kardiner, it is the psychological makeup of a person, which is characteristic of a given society and determines all the behavioral characteristics of its members, that is the connecting axis of a society or culture.

Main part

I

1.1. A. Kardiner's ideas were based on the

assumption that in a given society, in a given culture, the existence of a “basic personality structure”, which is to a greater or lesser extent characteristic of all members of a given society, is explained by the fact that its formation is influenced by a single cultural practice. Models of family organization, infant care, and child rearing, which are “primarily social institutions,” differ across cultures but are relatively uniform within a culture, which contributes to the development of somewhat similar traits (i.e., similar psychological traits) in all members of a given society. By adapting to these “primary social institutions,” the author argues, the human psyche undergoes a specific correction, resulting in a particularly deformed mental structure, the structure of its ego. The result of this deformation is the formation of the “primary personal structure” of a given society. Mythology, art, folklore, political institutions, and the economic system (“secondary social institutions”) are formed only as attempts by the individual to compensate for the traumas he or she has experienced in early childhood. If these traumas are approximately similar in representatives of a given society, their compensation models are also similar to each other [8, p. 1945].

The proposed concept of a national character, based on an attempt to combine psychoanalytic theory with ethnographic material, was not very successful, since it was not possible to prove the existence of a direct connection between the upbringing of a child and the structure of the personality, and this connection itself was eventually called into question.



Attempts to overcome the contradictions of the indicated concept were initiated by K. Du Bois, who introduced the concept of “modal personality”, which denotes the most widespread type of personality, which is simply statistically determined, i.e. the type to which the largest number of members of a given society belong. Within the framework of this approach, psychological, primarily projective, methods were mainly used: the Rorschach test (interpretation of strange inkblots), the test of incomplete sentences, and the thematic apperception test. Despite the initial popularity of this concept, field studies have shown that no single personality type is significantly dominant in any society.

1.2. Research in this area was given a new impetus by the social order associated with the US involvement in World War II. The idea arose in US military circles that understanding the psychology of their enemies would be useful for planning actions during and after the war. “It would also be useful to know the psychological characteristics of our allies, especially if they ever turned into our enemies. In a similar way, the study of the American national character can contribute to raising the moral level and fighting spirit [3, p. 108].

To realize the above idea, famous American anthropologists (R. Benedict, M. Mead, K. Klachkon and others) went to Washington to participate in the study of the national character. According to M. Mead’s memoirs, since 1943, in Washington, in various government departments, there were a lot of psychologists and anthropologists who were studying the problems of the national character, cultures and technologies for studying the distances between them.

Nevertheless, the “military order” caused considerable difficulties among anthropologists. Previously, the subject of research was primitive peoples who existed in rather isolated conditions. The scientific basis of the previous period, developed for such studies, turned out to be absolutely unsuitable for the study of “civilized” nations. In this regard, M. Moore, together with his colleagues, developed a method of distance analysis (A. distance) to reveal the national character of representatives of civilized cultures, which was a study of documents intended for modernity as if they were dealing with the study of the culture of past centuries [9, p. 1953].

1.3. In the early forties, theoretical and methodological approaches related to the study of national character are usually grouped into two main directions: cultural-centered and personality-centered. The first direction is associated with three methodological approaches. In the first, the concept of “national character” is relatively weakly connected with the individual personality and is practically combined with the concept of “cultural model of behavior”. So, for example, M. Mead distinguished three main aspects of the study of national character: 1) a comparative description of some cultural configurations of public institutions characteristic of a particular culture; 2) a comparative analysis of the care of infants and the upbringing of children; 3) the study of interpersonal relationships characteristic of a particular culture - such as relationships between parents and children and relationships between peers. R. Benedict’s work “The Chrysanthemum and the Sword”,



which interprets the Japanese character, was written from this perspective. According to the Americans themselves, the most exotic opponent for them in World War II was Japan. The behavior of the Japanese government, Japanese soldiers, their fanaticism, paradoxical behavior in the trenches - all this caused the greatest astonishment of Americans. Scientists saw the specificity of the Japanese character in the peculiarities of raising children in Japanese families, which was characterized by a sharp change in the method of upbringing when the child reached a certain age. It should be noted that within the framework of this methodological approach, national character is presented to us as a special way of distributing and regulating values and behavioral models within a culture.

II

2.1 The second methodological approach combines the views of those scientists who interpret national character as a system of attitudes, values, and beliefs adopted among members of a given society. So, for example, e. Fram puts forward the concept of “social personality”, which was defined as a more or less conscious system of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, and feelings. According to his concept, the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany is explained by the prevalence of the so-called authoritarian type of personality in this country. Such a type of personality is docile and submissive towards superiors, but dominates and treats subordinates with contempt. Some representatives of this direction, in particular J. Gorer, in studying the national character of the Japanese again

turned to the category of “basic personal structure”.

2.2 The third direction of national character studies within the framework of the cultural-centered approach was oriented towards the search for national self-concepts through the analysis of cultural products - literature, art, philosophy. This direction was based on the following idea: in order to understand the people, it is necessary and sufficient to understand the worldview of their elite, since it is connected with the worldview of the whole people, but is expressed in a clearer form. Undoubtedly, the worldview of the elite reflects the dominant values, which are common to the whole nation, but how adequate this reflection will be, remained unclear.

III

3.1 If all three approaches of the culture-centered direction are united by the idea of describing socio-cultural phenomena in their psychological perspective, the personality-centered direction should first of all provide a theoretical basis for the psychological explanation of differences and peculiarities in human behavior, and then in the institutions, values, and norms characteristic of a given people. The question of whether a certain type of personality can dominate in any society remained open. Prominent representatives of this direction, ethnologists A. Inkels and D. Levenson, attempted to describe the national character through the concept of a “modal personality structure.” In their view, “national character corresponds to relatively firmly preserved personal traits and personality models (personality types) that are



typical of adult members of a given society” [5, p. 983].

IV

4.1 Having failed in their attempts to define national character, culturologists and anthropologists increasingly began to use the concept of “mentality” to denote the psychological characteristics of ethnic groups. This term, which comes from the French historians of the “Annals” school, is used to denote a phenomenon that is opposed to “collective representations”, the collective unconscious, etc. In their opinion, “mentality” is a system of images, ...which underlie human representations of the world, of one’s place in it, and, consequently, determine human actions and behavior” [4, p. 52].

V

5.1 We find an extensive discussion of mentality in the work of the famous Russian linguist V.I. Kolesov. Speaking about the history of the study of national mentality, which has a two-century tradition, the author notes that the first researchers - sociologists and historians - noted the mental differences of primitive peoples from modern people, although the authors spoke not about mentality itself, but about “forms of the soul” and “mental functions”. Later, psychologists also began to talk about mentality, when they discovered the similarity of such “functions of the soul” with the worldview of a child entering life. The next stage was the identification by medievalists of the distinctive features of the medieval type of thinking in the late 1920s, which gave impetus to the study of the mentality of a medieval person. A little later, as V. I. Kolesov notes, philosophers also became interested in this, generalizing the results of specific

studies, on the basis of which they concluded that it is necessary to study such forms of worldview that differ from the usual modern forms of public opinion. An important factor in the study of the problem of mentality was the work of linguists who, since the late 1960s, began to study the manifestations of mentality in the categories and forms of folk languages, although it should be noted that the connection between language and thinking had been studied even before that. It is enough to name the works of Wilhelm von Humboldt, which became the theoretical basis for research in this direction, as well as the symbolic forms of the language of A.A. Potebny and the “pictorial” forms of I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay.

The problem of mentality as a scientific basis, according to V.I. Kolesov, was formulated by the French conceptualists, according to whom “mind - idea” underlies any research, and the task of the scientist is to determine the connections that exist between the word-term and the object-thing (words and things).

VI

6.1 The French episteme as a unit of mentality, according to V.I. Kolesov, has a superficial, external character and does not reach the depths of the subconscious. This was achieved by German philosophy, which came to the recognition of the concept as the basic unit of mentality, to which the hermeneutic definition corresponds exactly. The problem arose within the boundaries of French conceptualism, was formalized within the framework of Anglo-American nominalism, but was finally formed within the boundaries of “German-Russian realism” [6, p. 9].



The researcher gives a number of definitions of the indicated term, which are proposed by representatives of various sciences:

“Foreign medieval historian: the picture of the world of people of the past, which a person possesses: it is internally contradictory, depends on many reasons (gender, age, rank), and therefore it is better to talk about mentality separately. This is the mind of specific people in their relationship to others” [6, p. 11].

Social psychologists define mentality as a specific feature of the mental life of people, characteristic of a specific culture, which is politically and economically conditioned at a given historical moment (knowledge + beliefs). This is the national character in the process of development. Professor V. E. Semyonov says that mentality is a historically formed long-term mindset, the unity of conscious and unconscious values, norms, attitudes in their cognitive, emotional and behavioral embodiment, which is characteristic of a particular group (unity) and its representatives [7, p. 12].

Conclusion

From the point of view of ethnologists, mentality is a system of ethnic ideas about priorities, norms and models of behavior in specific circumstances, which is based on unconscious complexes (ethnic constants) formed in the social environment; this is a system of values that creates the cultural environment of existence. Accordingly, we are talking about those ethnic data (talents) that are formed in a certain social environment. Mentality is the generally accepted attitudes and uniform reactions of

of the consciousness of an ethnos to various manifestations of the environment.

Culturologist: Mentality is the spiritual equipment of a person, which includes language, mind, consciousness, thought, “I”. Mentality is not necessarily a positive phenomenon, but without the active work of language or thought, it appears to us as a completely irrational phenomenon.

The culturologist admits that in a narrow sense, mentality is primarily language and words.

The historian, philologist and philosopher of Eastern culture perceives mentality as a naive picture of the world, striving for integrity, and not for completeness (like a scientific picture); it is pragmatic, aesthetically designed and operates in the modality of desire (dream); logic is secondary here, since they think not with concepts, but with prototypes: this is concrete non-discursive thinking through mental images-symbols. Ultimately, mentality is a system of conceptual or semantic fields.

Summarizing the “interdisciplinary approaches” to the specified phenomenon, V. I. Kolesov comes to the conclusion that “mentality, with its signs, is a single naively perceived image of the three-dimensionality with its value orientation, which has existed for a long time, regardless of specific economic and political conditions and is based on ethnic inclinations and historical traditions: it manifests itself in the feelings, mind, will of each member of society on the basis of the unity of language and upbringing and is part of the national spiritual culture, which creates the ethnomental space of the people in the given territory of its existence” [7, p. 11].



ეროვნული ხასიათისა და „სამოდელო პიროვნების“ შესახებ მართვაში გასათვალისწინებლად

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აბსტრაქტი

მეცნიერთა თვალსაზრისის თანახმად, ეროვნული ხასიათის კვლევა, ამა თუ იმ საზოგადოების ფარგლებში, გარკვეული პირადული მახასიათებლების გავრცელებადობის ხარისხის შესწავლას უნდა წარმოადგენდეს, ხოლო „სამოდელო პიროვნება“ ისეთი ტიპია, რომელსაც მოცემული საზოგადოების წევრთა უმეტესობა განეკუთვნება. ითვლებოდა, რომ, თითოეულ ერში, სრულიად სხვადასხვა ტიპის წარმოდგენილი, მაგრამ ერთი განსაკუთრებით ხშირად გვხვდება, ხოლო სხვები - იშვიათად ან ძალიან იშვიათად. მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ, ზოგიერთ შემთხვევაში, ემპირიული მონაცემები ადასტურებდა მოდალური პიროვნებების არსებობის ჰიპოთეზას, ნათელი გახდა, რომ შიდაკულტურული განსხვავებები (მოსახლეობის სხვადასხვა კლასსა და ფენას შორის) შეიძლება გაცილებით დიდი ყოფილიყო, ვიდრე კულტურათაშორისი. მეორე მხრივ, გამოდიოდა, რომ „მოდალური პიროვნება“ ესაა ერის ერთი ნაწილისთვის ჩვეული ნიშან-თვისებების კომპლექსი, მისი სხვა ნაწილის საპირისპიროდ, და, შესაბამისად, საკითხი ეროვნული ხასიათის, როგორც ერის ყველა წევრისთვის ჩვეული ქცევითი, ემოციური და სხვა მახასიათებლების ერთობლიობის შესახებ, ან საერთოდ უნდა მოხსნილიყო, ან სრულიად სხვაგვარად ყოფილიყო დაყენებული. ამან ინკელსი და ლევენსონი პესიმისტურ დასკვნამდე მიიყვანა, რომ შემეცნებისა და კვლევითი მეთოდის შეზღუდულ თანამედროვე მდგომარეობაში არ შეიძლება მტკიცება, რომ რომელიმე ერს სპეციფიკური ეროვნული ხასიათი აქვს. მდგომარეობა იმითაც გართულდა, რომ, ეროვნული ხასიათის შესახებ საუბრისას, ერთი, პირველ რიგში, ტემპერამენტს გულისხმობდნენ, მეორე კი ყურადღებას აქცევდნენ პიროვნულ ნიშნებს, მესამე - ღირებულებით ორიენტაციებს და ა.შ. შედეგად, მოცემული პრობლემისადმი სხვადასხვა მიდგომის არსებობისა და სამოც წელიწადზე მეტი ხნის კვლევების მიუხედავად, ამჟამად, სრულიად განსხვავებული თვალსაზრისები არსებობს არა მხოლოდ იმაზე, თუ რა არის ეროვნული ხასიათი, არამედ იმაზეც, საერთოდ არსებობს ის თუ არა, არის თუ არა ის უფრო მნიშვნელოვანი ნიშანი, ვიდრე პიროვნების ის ელემენტები, რომლებიც მსოფლიოში ყველა ადამიანს აერთიანებს, ან ისინი, რომლებიც ერთმანეთს ყველაზე მეტად მსგავს ინდივიდებსაც კი განასხვავებენ.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: ეროვნული ხასიათი, კვლევა, პრობლემა, სამოდელო პიროვნება.



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