Social Character: Issues of Methodology and Research Methods

Социальный Характер: Вопросы Методологии и Методов Исследования

Written by:
Guzelia Raufovna Asadullina[221]
ORCID: 0000-0002-0137-7219
Natalya Vladimirovna Korovkina[222]
Evellina Vinerovna Sadretdinova[223]
ORCID: 0000-0003-1665-5370
Rafael Badretdinovich Shaykhislamov[224]
Nursafa Gafurovna Hajrullina[225]

Abstract

This article analyzes the methodological issues of the study of the phenomenon of social character. Social character is considered not as a typical (modal) individual character in society. As a systemic formation of social interactions, social character has non-additive (emergent) properties. Both individuals and various social communities are subjects of social character. At the individual level, social character is manifested as typical behavior traits in the process of communicating with different social groups. At the level of interpersonal, intergroup and mass communication, social character is a typical form of social interaction. Social character is the result of the mutual influence of subjects on individual behavior in the form of persuasion, suggestion, imitation and infection.

The article analyzes the methods of measuring social character. It presents a test developed by one of the authors (R. B Shaikhislamov) to measure the degree of inner-, tradition- and other-directedness (according to D. Riesman' stypology). The results of the measurement of social character in the course of interviewing residents of the Republic of Bashkortostan in 2015-2016 are presented.

The authors come to the conclusion about the need for a comprehensive study of social character. The following problems are of great scientific interest. What are the emergent properties of social character in stable and unstable social situations? What are the trends of

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируются методологические вопросы изучения феномена социального характера. Социальный характер рассматривается не как типичный (модальный) индивидуальный характер в обществе. Как системная формация социальных взаимодействий, социальный характер обладает неаддитивными (эмерджентными) свойствами. Как индивиды, так и различные социальные сообщества являются субъектами социального характера. На индивидуальном уровне социальный характер проявляется как типичные черты поведения в процессе общения с различными социальными группами. На уровне межличностного, межгруппового и массового общения социальный характер является типичной формой социального взаимодействия. Социальный характер является результатом взаимного влияния субъектов на индивидуальное поведение в форме убеждения, внушения, подражания и заражения.

В статье анализируются методы измерения социального характера. В нем представлен тест, разработанный одним из авторов (Р. Б. Шайхисламов) для измерения степени внутренней, традиционной и другой направленности (по мнению Д. Рисмана). Представлены результаты измерения социального характера в ходе опроса жителей Республики Башкортостан в 2015-2016 гг.

[221] Bashkir State University, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia
[222] Bashkir State University, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia
[223] Bashkir State University, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia
[224] Bashkir State University, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia
[225] Tyumen Industrial University, Tyumen, Russia

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546

changes in the social character of Russians in the post-Soviet era? How significant are the differences in the social character of different generations, ethnic groups, residents of megacities, other cities and villages?

We note that it is necessary to develop a system of indicators to measure social character. In addition to such indicators as inner-, tradition- and other-directedness, it is necessary to measure social character by such variables as "dominance – subordination", "productivity – non-productivity", "responsibility – irresponsibility", "cooperation – isolation", "trust – distrust", "Conformity – Innovation – Ritualism – Retreatism – Rebellion".

Key Words: social character, social behavior, directedness, orientation, methodology, measurement methods.

Авторы приходят к выводу о необходимости комплексного изучения социального характера. Следующие проблемы представляют большой научный интерес. Каковы возникающие свойства социального характера в стабильных и нестабильных социальных ситуациях? Каковы тенденции изменения социального характера россиян в постсоветский период? Насколько значительны различия в социальном характере разных поколений, этнических групп, жителей мегаполисов, других городов и деревень?

Отметим, что необходимо разработать систему показателей для измерения социального характера. Помимо таких показателей, как внутренняя, традиционная и иная направленность, необходимо измерять социальный характер с помощью таких переменных, как «доминирование – подчинение», «производительность – непроизводительность», «ответственность – безответственность», «сотрудничество – изоляция», «доверие – недоверие», «соответствие – инновация – ритуализм – ретритизм – восстание».

Ключевые слова: социальный характер, социальное поведение, направленность, ориентация, методология, методы измерения.

Introduction

In our previous publications, we considered "social character" as one of the key sociological concepts (. Socio-cultural system and personality (Shaikhislamov, 2005; Shaikhislamov, 1998). Unlike psychological sciences (primarily social psychology), a sociological study of a social character involves the analysis of typical forms of social behavior of various social groups and communities of people in various social situations. Social character is an integral topic of psychological and sociological sciences; therefore, it is difficult to clearly demarcate between different research approaches. We should note that not only the concept of "social character", but also the category of "social behavior" has not yet taken root in sociological science. Within the framework of a sociological study of a social character, questions of socio-labor, consumer, monetary behavior, socio-political, educational, moral, aesthetic behavior of various social strata and groups of society are of undoubted interest.

The study of social character is an urgent scientific problem for the following reasons. Firstly, the social transformation of Russian society which embraced the life of most citizens, one way or another, influenced changes in the social behavior of individuals. What is the social character of modern adolescents, youth, middle-aged and old generations? Is the character of Russians becoming social, and if so, to what extent productive or non-productive (including receptive, hoarding, exploitative, marketing)? What direction dominates in the youth environment - inner, towards culture or social rules? Secondly, (following the logic "sow an act - reap a habit, reap a habit - reap a character, sow a character - reap a destiny") it is necessary to foresee the fate of the future Russian society, the core of which will be the so-called "generation Z" in the next two or three decades, whose character is formed in the environment of electronic social networks and digital technologies.

The concept of social character in sociological science, in our opinion, has some specifics. From the point of view of social psychology, social character is determined by the social and cultural conditions of the person's life, and this refers to the character of the modal (most often

encountered in a particular society) personality. Sociology emphasizes the typical forms of social behavior of various social groups and strata. In addition, from our point of view, when we talk about social character, we consider these typical forms of behavior as immanently inherent in various social groups and strata. These types of behavior are formed historically, rooted in subcultures, passed down from generation to generation in the form of traditions.

Some sociologists and psychologists (M. Weber, W. Sombart, E. Fromm, D. Riesman and others) studied the evolution of social character using the example of Western European and North American personality types. At the same time, explicitly or implicitly, this evolution was presented as a successive change of various types of social actions (behavior). According to the logic of M. Weber's analysis, this evolution is alternating ideal types of social action, most fully embodied at various stages of historical development. According to E. Fromm, the current stage of development of Western countries is marked by the dominance of such a fruitless character as the market one. According to D. Riesman, inner-directedness, which replaced tradition-directedness, in the 20th century it itself begins to be replaced by other-directedness. In modern societies, these types of orientations co-exist, but their proportion depends on demographic, social, economic, political and other factors.

Such views of the social character evolution cannot be automatically traced to the analysis of other civilizations, including Russian. Earlier in our works, we suggested that the social character of Russians is a kind of integrity, internally inexplicitly differentiated; it exists in the form of a certain synthesis of inner-directedness and tradition-directedness, which do not exclude but rather suppose each other. Moreover, other-directedness (in the sense given by D. Riesman) in the Russian social character does not play a leading role (Shaikhislamov, 2005; Shaikhislamov, 1998). Differences in social character are found not only between different historical and civilizational types of society, but also between different strata and groups within society. Marginal strata of society (having acquired a new social status, but not developed their own subculture and only experiencing the process of secondary socialization) are most directed towards themselves and others, while the "old" strata are committed to the cultural tradition more than the "new" strata.

Literature review

At the present stage, social issues are among the theoretically and empirically undeveloped areas of sociological and socio-psychological research. An analysis of the publications posted on the portal of the Russian Science Citation Index revealed only a few articles on this topic (in contrast, for example, to problems of national character). In foreign sociological and socio-psychological literature, it is also difficult to find new studies on social character.

"Character" is one of the basic psychological concepts used to describe the behavior of an individual. The essence and manifestations of social character have been studied insufficiently today. Turning to psychological literature allows us to state that the definition of character as one of the basic concepts of psychological science today still has a rather vague, streamlined look. Moreover, the nature of character in various psychological concepts is determined in different ways. The main discrepancy between these concepts comes down to the fact that some consider character to be a description of the behavior of a person, others - a trait of the personality itself. Behavioral interpretation of character directly reduces to typical behaviors, since it is believed that the inner world of a person is a "black box", only behavioral acts are subject to cognition. In neo-Freudian and humanistic psychological schools, character is understood as the intrinsic properties of a person, manifested in their behavior.

Of the many definitions, two main generic features of the concept of an individual character can be distinguished. These are a) typical (habitual) forms of human behavior and b) intrinsic, stable mental qualities of a person manifested in their behavior. At the same time, the number of these qualities noted by various authors is constantly increasing.

Since the subject of our discussion is social, rather than an individual, character, we will not analyze in detail all the definitions of a person's character. As for social character, the study of this phenomenon is connected with the psychoanalytic tradition. Typologies of social character were given by representatives of psychoanalytic orientation E. Fromm and D. Riesman. E. Fromm identified two types of social character - productive and non-productive orientations. He defined fertility as the realization by a person of his inherent capabilities, the use of his abilities. A productive orientation of social character is characterized by

a creative orientation of personality behavior. E. Fromm singled out such types of non-productive orientation as receptive (behavior directed towards the consumption of external goods - to be loved, but not to love, to accept some ideas, but not to create them, etc.), exploitative (in contrast to receptive orientation, behavior is aimed at consuming goods received not in the form of a gift, but with the help of force or cunning), hoarding (behavior aimed at taking as much as possible and giving as little as possible), marketing orientation that developed as dominant only in modern era (Fromm, 2004; Fromm, 1998). The latter type of social character deserves more detailed consideration in the context of the transformations of Russian society over the past three decades.

What is social character as a whole? E. Fromm understood this concept as "the core of the structure of character, common to most representatives of the same culture, as opposed to an individual character that distinguishes from each other people from the same culture. Social character is not a statistical concept, that is, it is not just a combination of character traits characteristic of most representatives of a given culture. ... Members of society and (or) various classes or groups occupying a certain social position within them must behave in such a way as to be able to function as required by the social system. The purpose of social character is to organize the energy of members of society so that their behavior is determined not by a conscious decision to follow or not follow a socially-defined pattern, but by the desire to act in the way they should, and at the same time, satisfaction from actions that meet the requirements of culture. In other words, a function of social character is to form and direct human energy in a given society in order to ensure its continuous activity" (Inkeles, 2000). American social psychologist D. Riesman considered three types of social character: tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed. Tradition-directed type of behavior is determined mainly by culture. The second type of character, emerging under the conditions of weakening influence of traditions, is distinguished by the fact that a person is directed in his behavior by his own principles, beliefs, motives. The third type of character, emerging from the middle of the last century, is due to the social environment of the person - the totality of its connections, fashion, functions that he has to perform in various social organizations (Inkeles, 2005).

A special direction in social sciences is research of national character, coming from W. Wundt's school of cultural psychology. Concepts of national character of M. Mead, R. Benedict, J. Gorera made a great contribution to the formation of modern anthropological, cultural, ethnographic and psychological theories. The theme of national character is currently being updated by the intensification of intercultural communications, the growth of transnational corporations, and migration processes.

However, as A. Inkeles noted, "the main problem of empirical research of national nature - obvious and relevant so far - is the lack of a clear, well-established analytical scheme, that is, a universally applicable system of concepts and descriptive variables that could make it possible to describe personality structures and compare them. Even the most consistent studies, which are based on a broad theoretical base, are relatively limited at the level of description of variables or categories. This problem leads to idiosyncrasy: each researcher, engaged in direct observation, notices something of his own and all have their own results, disjoint and incomparable. They are interesting as a basis for the development of standardized methods, but they are not of any interest for the scientific study of national character, because it is not clear what this researcher noticed, what he missed, and what he did not want to notice" (Sikorsky, 2002; Ivanova, Abrukova, 2016). This remark is true for many publications of Russian authors devoted to the analysis of national character. For the most part, scientific works on the problems of national character are theorizing without an empirical basis.

B.F. Sikorsky believes that the correlation of concepts of social character and national character is the most controversial issue. The author understands national character as a set of stable mental traits of the nation, which determine the typical manner of behavior and the typical lifestyle of people formed under the influence of the national environment. The content of social character is defined as the socio-typical properties of people of a certain era, regardless of their nationality (Sikorsky, 2002).
As for the study of social character, it should be recognized that this is still a field of social sciences that has not been worked out either theoretically or empirically. There is practically no large-scale research of social character in the Russian sociological and psychological literature both of society as a whole and of individual social groups and strata. As T.N. Ivanova and M.A. Abrukova note, "the main difficulties associated with the consideration of the concept of social character are heterogeneous

interpretations of the social character of a person, a weak continuity of theoretical approaches associated with the concept's belonging to the interdisciplinary field of knowledge. Despite the variety of existing scientific works on this subject, the majority only partially affect the concept of the social character of an individual. In science, there is still no unity in understanding this concept and the possibilities of its application in modern society" (Ivanova, Abrukova, 2016).

Materials and methods

First of all, it is necessary to determine what is meant by social character from the standpoint of modern science. In our opinion, social character cannot be reduced to the prevailing type of individual character in a particular society. Since any society is not a collection of individuals, but a system of their interactions and relationships, social character is something more and different than many individual characters. Social psychologists and sociologists have studied quite well, for example, the behavior of crowds, human behavior in mass communities. But the behavior of an individual changes not only in stochastic processes, but also in a system of stable, ordered social connections. Features of social character can clearly manifest themselves in critical social situations - during wars, various disasters, social upheavals. An "ordinary" person can behave in such situations in a very unusual way.

As noted by Michael Maccoby, co-author of Erich Fromm, the latter left some bewilderment about the difference between individual and social character. "The confusion comes when social character is described solely in terms of individual character. A peasant farmer and the bureaucrat may both be moderately productive obsessive - hoarding characters, but because their social contexts are different, their social characters are also significantly different". M. Maccoby noted that "for most people, the social character is not deeply rooted in their individual character. Rather, it is an internalization of cultural norms that determine social attitudes and give meaning to social behavior. Most people go along with the prevailing consensus, and the more productive people of any type are best able to adapt to a changing social environment" (Maccoby, 2002).

We will try to outline the basic contours of the essence of social character. Subjects of social character are both individuals and various social communities of people, including society as a whole. At the individual level, we are talking about some typical features of an individual's behavior, due to their attitudes, orientations, motives for interacting with various social groups. So, we can talk about typical forms of personality behavior, manifested in relation to men and women, generations, family, organization, settlement community, etc. At the group (family, organizational, settlement or other) level, the social character represents typical behavioral forms of social interaction.

Since the social character is the behavior of the individual and the social micro-, meso- and macro-groups, it is necessary to give a definition of the very concept of "behavior", distinguishing it from other concepts ("social action", "social activity"). In our works, we defined social behavior as a system of actions and inactions of an individual in the space-time continuum. It is determined by the social connections of the individual and is aimed at adaptation in relation to social systems, culture, to its uniqueness. Three aspects should be analytically distinguished in a person's behavior: personality-driven and self-oriented behavior; due to social role and society-oriented behavior; culture-driven behavior oriented towards a system of norms and values (Gadzhigasanova, Khairullina, 2016; Khairullina, Sadykova, 2016). Accordingly, it is possible to distinguish between such behavioral manifestations of personality traits as individual character, social character, mentality.

At the level of a social group, we are dealing with more complex forms of behavior (family behavior, behavior of a small informal group, organizational behavior, etc.). Individual behavior in a social group either is leveled, or becomes dominant in relation to other members of the group (behavior of a leader, chief, leader of an organization). Group behavior is the result of social interaction and has non-additive, emergent properties.

The study of social character involves not only a theoretical understanding, but an empirical measurement. For this, it is necessary to formulate a system of indicators of social character, representing not only and not so much one or another set of indicators, but their typology, classification. Unfortunately, such work has not been undertaken either in psychology or in other scientific disciplines.

Another fundamental issue is the methods of measuring social character. If the social character is typical, ordinary forms of social behavior, then

the most appropriate measurement method will be the method of participant and non-participant observation. But if the social character is represented not only as ordinary forms of social behavior, but also as a manifestation of essential properties that are immanently inherent in a particular society, then the observation method should be supplemented by other methods - tests, surveys, studying documents that contain ideas, thoughts of representatives of a certain society. It must be admitted that writers are better at describing social character than scientists since

writers are "armed" with informal, qualitative methods of artistic learning. Therefore, reference to sources such as works of art (literature, cinema, theater, painting, music) can significantly enrich our ideas about social character.

We propose one of the possible approaches to the analysis of a structure of social character, which makes it possible to determine the methods of measuring the phenomenon under study.
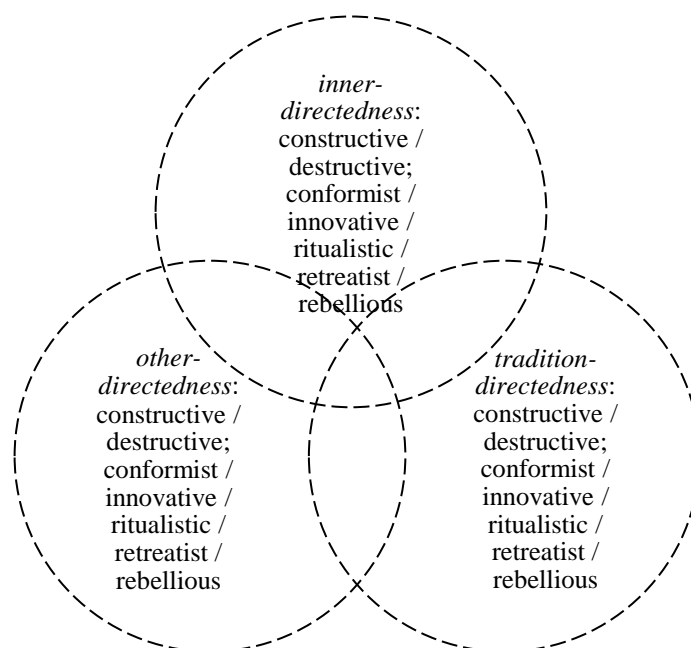

Figure 1. Structure of social character

The basis of this approach is the typology of the social character of D. Riesman. Each type of orientation can be described in the context of "productivity (constructiveness) - non-productivity (destructiveness")" according to E. Fromm and types of social adaptation of R. Merton (conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, rebellion). We believe that social character can be measured by such variables as "dominance - subordination", "productivity - non-productivity", "responsibility - irresponsibility", "cooperation - isolation", "trust - distrust". An empirical study of social behavior according to the typology of R. Merton (conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, rebellion) would be of great interest (Merton, 1992). Moreover, all social variables must be considered not as parallel, but as mutually intersecting. For example, inner-directedness,

tradition-directedness, other-directednessmust be analyzed in two aspects - productivity (constructiveness, creativity) and non-productivity(destructiveness). Thus, the measurement of social character seems to be a multidimensional and multilevel research operation. Other contexts of describing the structure of social character are possible.

In the study on the project "Features of the formation of civic identity of Russians in a multi-ethnic region (for the Republic of Bashkortostan)", conducted in 2015-2016, supported by the Russian Foundation of Basic Research and the Government of the Republic of Bashkortostan in the framework of the competition "Ural: History, Economics, Culture" (No. 15- 13-02021), we made an attempt to measure such an aspect of social character as (in

D. Riesman's terminology) "tradition-directedness", "inner-directedness" and "other-directedness". Moreover, unlike D. Riesman, these types of orientations were not considered in a positive or negative sense. In total, 1000 respondents were interviewed - residents of the Republic of Bashkortostan over 18 years of age in a systematic sample. The sampling error does not exceed 3%. In the interview sheet, we included a test of 21 statements representing 3 blocks of 7 statements correlated with different types of orientations.

Respondents were offered the following scales of attitude to these statements: *"absolutely disagree"; "disagree"; "rather disagree"; "rather agree"; "agree"; "completely agree".*

This sequence of scales is explained by the need to avoid a situation where the respondent is held hostage to his answers. The answer "completely agree" or "agree", provided that the respondent has not fully read the statement, or has not fully considered it, creates obstacles for further clarification of his position.

When preparing the test, we excluded the "agree - disagree" dichotomy, since we thought that the respondents could not be typical in terms of their orientations towards themselves, others, and traditions. As the test results showed, the vast majority of respondents agreed with the answers "agree" and "rather agree", "disagree" and "rather disagree".

Table 1. Personality Orientation Test "How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?"

№	Statement
1	What is right or wrong is up to me to decide, and no one else
2	Our behavior should not differ much from what management expects from us.
3	We'd better not backtrack from rooted traditions
4	I stick to the opinion that I am personally convinced in
5	My behavior must fully correspond to my place in society
6	Whatever you communicate with, you need to behave in the usual, accepted way.
7	What kind of person I am is for others to judge
8	I rely, by and large, only on myself
9	If everything around is dishonest, you can't be honest
10	I believe that there is supreme justice
11	I cannot give up my principles no matter how circumstances change
12	I want people with the same views in my life
13	If I'm a boss, then I should act like a boss, and not like an ordinary person
14	My point of view is always more important to me than the opinions of others.
15	I always try to show my good manners
16	In our life you need to behave like others expect from you
17	In man, I value good manners the best
18	I am more likely to act in accordance with my internal motives than external circumstances and rules.
19	Traditions are our strength and confidence in the future
20	In life, all people are actors: only some are good, others are not
21	The greatest authority for me is myself

Each block of statements was processed separately by assigning a total score, which was defined as the difference between the sum of positive (strongly agree, agree, rather agree) and negative (absolutely disagree, disagree, rather disagree) answers. The maximum score was +3 (completely agree) and -3 (absolutely disagree); the minimum score was assigned to the answers "rather agree" (+1) and "rather disagree" (-1). The degree of intensity of social character was determined in a total score for the block: from +15 to +21 as a strong manifestation; from +8 to +14 as an average manifestation; from +1 to +8 as a weak manifestation; from -1 to -7 as a slight

rejection, from -8 to -14 as an average rejection; from -15 to -21 as a strong rejection.

Research results

In this article, which is devoted to questions of the methodology and research methods of social character, we present the test results of 1000 respondents in general terms, without differentiation by gender, age, nationality, place of residence. A more detailed description of the results will be given in our future publications. Based on the calculation of indices, we obtained the following results.

Discussion

The vast majority of respondents are not unambiguous representatives of a social type. Moreover, most of the respondents are those who have a weakly expressed inner-directedness, tradition-directedness, other-directedness (from 36 to 42%). A proportion of respondents with a moderate social character type is also significant. The diagram shows that two types of social character prevail among respondents - tradition-directedness and inner-directedness. As for other-directedness, this type of social character is not dominant (in 8% it is expressed in the average degree, in 36% - in the low degree).

For us, it was important to measure both the degree of acceptance and rejection of orientation types by respondents (answers "absolutely disagree", "disagree", rather disagree"). First of all, it should be noted that the categorical rejection of one or another type of orientation is characteristic only for individual respondents. The proportion of respondents with an average level of rejection, especially inner-directedness and tradition-directedness, is also extremely small. Only other-directedness stands out especially - 40% of respondents determine for themselves this orientation, although with reservations ("rather disagree"), as unacceptable. Tradition-directedness is less rejected (only every fifth respondent considers this orientation unacceptable to one degree or another). A low degree of rejection primarily refers to other-directedness - 40% of respondents said that they "rather disagree" with the relevant statements correlated with this type of orientation. It should be noted that, in contrast to inner-directedness and tradition-directedness, the proportion of respondents excluding other-directedness exceeds the proportion of respondents who to one degree or another accept this type of orientation. For a significant part of the respondents, 24%, a heterogeneous combination of all types of orientation is characteristic (average and low degrees of their manifestation). 8.6% of respondents are characterized by a lack of a positive attitude towards all types of orientation. Although insignificant in comparison with self-orientation, respondents characterize themselves as tradition-directed. However, there are few "pure traditionalists", most of them are a certain combination with inner-directedness (10% - average degrees of tradition-directedness and inner-directedness; 13% - an average degree of tradition-directedness and a low degree of inner-directedness; 8% - low degrees of tradition-directedness and inner-directedness).

In second place is the proportion of respondents with predominant inner-directedness (10% - average degrees of inner-directedness and tradition-directedness; 7% - an average degree of inner-directedness and a low degree of tradition-directedness).

As for other-directedness, its combination with other types characterizes a small part of the respondents (7.6% are low degrees of all types of orientations, other combinations do not exceed 1.7%).

Conclusions

The results of the measurement of the considered aspect of social character indicate that almost half of the respondents have a synthesis of weakly expressed types of orientations. If we consider the high and medium degrees of manifestation of orientations, then we should single out inner-directedness among others. Therefore, this type of social character is more differentiated than the rest. It can be assumed that this is an imprint of the transformations of Russian society over the past three decades. At the same time, traditionalism in society has not disappeared: this character is inherent in about a third of respondents. As for other-directedness, it is not a leading trend in social changes.

The fact that most of the respondents simultaneously agreed with the statements correlated with different types of orientations, indicates not only a weak differentiation of the social character of an individual. Most likely, we are dealing with a kind of symbiosis of orientations. The majority of respondents do not see orientation types as mutually exclusive, but at least coexisting. Moreover, in this symbiosis, depending on the social situation, one or the other orientation may be actualized.

In general, the social character of the respondents (they represent residents of the Republic of Bashkortostan over 18 years of age of the second decade of our century) can be defined as traits of traditionalism and internality manifested in their social behavior. In contrast to focusing on others, traditionalism, judging by the results of our study, cannot be clearly attributed to the external locus of control. Following traditions does not exclude responsibility for one's and others' actions (just like inner-directedness does not always completely coincide with the internal locus of control). Our results cannot be considered only as a local example of social character. In terms of social structure, the level of socio-economic and socio-cultural development,

Bashkortostan does not fundamentally differ from most Russian regions. Of course, to study the social character of Russians, a comparative interregional sociological and socio-psychological study is required. Social character can be determined by the characteristics of the socio-economic and socio-political development of the country, the mentality of the population.

The problems of the social character of society and various social groups require a deep theoretical and methodological study. Among these theoretical and methodological issues, we would single out the following. Firstly, the identification of the mechanism of emergence of emergent properties of social character in the process of interaction in various social systems. Secondly, determining the degree of dependence of social character on the social situation. Social character has sufficient rigidity, but it can still be subject to changes in a critical situation. Thirdly, the study of evolution of social character, which requires longitudinal, historical and comparative studies.

An equally challenging task is to develop methods for measuring social character. In this article, we have presented only one aspect of such a measurement. It is necessary to develop a system of indicators of social character. The above chart of indicators of social character is incomplete, the system of indicators can be built on other grounds and criteria. But a systematic approach will allow avoiding such a trap as an endless increase in the number of indicators (as is observed in the study of individual character and psychological science).

A difficult question in the study of social character is the clarification of what we study - social behavior or certain qualities of an individual and society manifested in this behavior? If the first, then this involves the use of the observation method, if the second, then we can talk about such methods as testing, surveying, narrative analysis, etc. The use of surveying methods and the observation method, in this case, will encounter such a methodological difficulty as the Lapierre paradox (a discrepancy between real human behavior and its declared attitudes and value orientations). In the psychological literature there is no clear explanation of exactly which essential traits of a person, manifested in his behavior, are called character. Personality traits ("responsibility", "activity", "quick-witted", "kind", "responsive", etc.) should be correlated with basic qualities - motives, value orientations,

attitudes. This will make it possible to study both individual and social character with the help of various socio-psychological and sociological methods.

Summing up what has been written, we can state that we are at the very beginning of a sociological and socio-psychological study of a phenomenon of social character.

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