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The philosophical content of the definition of the national mentality

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Abstract: The notion of national mentality is widely used in sociophilosophical and related discussions concerned with the conjunction of the categories of cultural and mental, but its definitions and operationalization often remain implicit. The **research goal of the** presented article is to reconstruct the proximal philosophical content of the term national mentality. The following research questions are raised: the extensiveness and exhaustiveness of current definitions presented in publications; the influence of contexts of use of the term on its definition; the coherence of aspects of definitions of mentality by different definitions. The **methodology of the** work is represented by theoretical modeling. It involves critical and comparative analysis of secondary and primary sources. The article conceptualizes the categories that highlight the issues of national mentality. The **results** emphasize the limitations of current definitions and the insufficient differential capacity of a one-dimensional definition, given the complexity of the phenomenon's structure. The article highlights the dynamics of the concept's development and contextual conditionality, which is considered as a prerequisite for the crisis of our time. The role of individual agency and ways of transforming national codes are emphasized. The author characterizes the etymology and genesis of the concept as a consequence of imperialist influences on European philosophical schools. A combination of empirical-based discrete and holistic continuous dimensional approaches is proposed, using the primitives of the level structure of mentality. The provided detail is offered as an alternative to the traditional understanding of national mentality as a single mental reality. **Implications.** These results serve as the basis for the restoration of the cognitive process of the national mentality in the Ukrainian philosophical tradition, in accordance with the standards of empirical-based research. The proposed way of

understanding the relationship between culture and psyche allows the term to be used in studies of related fields that do not have a descriptive category to denote the ways of being of an ethno-cultural community. By providing a more nuanced and precise understanding of the subject, these categories can help counteract culturally based simplifications that threaten to segregate and exclude. The principles of national mentality conceptualization outlined above are necessary for the correct implementation of the results obtained in practice. In fact, interventions aimed at the thinking aspect of society, such as pedagogical, political, or managerial, should be based on a substantial philosophical foundation.

Keywords: mentality, ethnicity, ethnocultural, social philosophy, terminology.

Introduction

The issue of multiculturalism and glocalization as leading trends in the socio-cultural space is currently being actively discussed. These global phenomena form a new dimension of mentality, accompanied by a change, agglomeration, or segregation of significant cognitive and value constructs. At the same time, there is a growing public demand for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects that can provide the necessary comprehensive coverage of phenomena. And the revival of nationalist sentiment and the acceleration of ethno-cultural identification of society are characteristic of the Ukrainian context. These processes actualize the need for a sufficient tool to describe changes in social and psychological reality. In fact, the category of mentality can become a necessary method, provided that it is meaningfully operationalized, and a clear framework is defined that will limit and guide further research activities. Particularly, the problem of definition is crucial, since the concept of “national mentality” has lost its nominal property. It is evident in the differences in research works by specialists in different subject areas. Moreover, the question of reflecting complexity in the structure of the national mentality remains exposed.

Research Problem

The problematic nature of the concept of *national mentality* primarily lies in its essentialist orientation and the potential for homogenization of ethno-cultural categories. In publications, the term is used in order to describe a specific set of qualities of community that are defining for an ethnic group, namely, a nation. More often, an attempt is made to systematize, reconcile differences, and build a “character profile” of the community that appeals to the accentuated qualities. However, the holistic perception of culture makes it impossible to model it in a meaningful way, both explicitly and implicitly. The narrow meaning of mentality in philosophical discourse, which forms an understanding of the relationship between national culture and individual identity, causes a loss of cognitive complexity and primitivizing of ethno-cultural descriptions. The reflection of the community's mentality becomes stereotypical, leveling the phenomenological basis of such research. Definitions are more often determined by the field of knowledge and the research goal, limiting the researcher's ability to reflect realities. It is important to provide a sufficient level of information about the actual manifestations of the mental reality of representatives of a cultural community and at the same time preserve the boundaries of concepts, avoiding reductionism, which characterizes the imbalances of the current transdisciplinary research process. Therefore, it is advisable to search for a conceptual framework for understanding mentality in unity with the socio-psychological and cultural paradigm, but without losing the ontological context.

Research Focus

The use of the term “national mentality” implies a certain degree of determinism in the relationship between the individual and culture. Often, causal relationships are justified by the

postulates of the immutability of culture, which shapes the way a community lives. However, the organic revision of the postulates themselves that has taken place in recent years demonstrates the dynamic nature of the described connections. At the same time, the question of the extent and agency of these changes remains open. First of all, the nomenclature of social reality itself is transformative, since the tools of verbalization of sensory experience determine the quality of its retransmission. In fact, the current stage is characterized by an incorrect orientation of research in related fields, which is due to the loss of the content of the phenomenon under study. The impoverishment in the understanding of mentality is associated with the above holistic explanation. But at the same time, the socio-cultural context of the term is an important predictor. Therefore, the problem of research is not the concept of mentality itself or the competencies of the performer, but rather the contexts of the discourse that laid down the relevant definitions. Thus, it is necessary to specify the boundaries of the phenomenon nominated as “national mentality”, to clarify the context of the evolution of the concept and to distinguish its subsidiary categories.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to model a new understanding of the phenomenon, taking into account the constructs that ensure the identification of significant components of the national mentality. The task of the study is to search for and construct a philosophical definition that will make it possible to characterize the national psychological reality at a sufficient level of reflection of ethno-cultural uniqueness and, at the same time, universality.

RQ₁ : What is the definition of national mentality postulated in the scientific process and what is the proximal philosophical content of the concept?

RQ₂ : What is the socio-cultural context of the formation of the concept of national mentality and the current conditions for its realization in the scientific discussion?

RQ₃ : What are the limitations of a one-dimensional definition and what constructs should be considered to correctly reflect aspects of the national mentality?

Research Methodology

The main method of work is an analytical and synthetic process and theoretical modeling aimed at revising existing definitions and forming a conceptual framework for the national mentality. Data collection was realized through a systematic search and selection of relevant scientific articles and other primary and secondary sources that reveal the philosophical essence of the concept. The actual research involved such operations as identifying recurring themes, models, conceptualizing discourses, highlighting key differences, harmonizing and comparing existing strategies for studying or understanding the phenomenon. Using this approach, it is possible to exhaustively study aspects of the national mentality. The study is designed from an epistemological perspective, which provides answers to the research questions. The presented work has methodological limitations inherent in this problem field: the dependence on the presentation of the issue in current publications, an impoverished critical approach to working with primary sources - relying on the work of other specialists, a certain amount of information about the phenomenon is lost due to the limitations of available information. Mentality and personality are categories that are selectively covered in the works, so the presented conceptual framework may have gaps, and the authors probably do not have sufficient resources at this stage to comprehensively cover the phenomenon. Despite the predominance of secondary sources of information, this method nevertheless offers a toolkit for identifying the primitives of understanding the philosophical content of the national mentality: synthesis and critical discussion. This can serve as

a basis for future empirical research and the development of additional methodologies to address the identified limitations.

Research Results

The ontology of national mentality is revealed in the etymology and historical context of the concept's development. In fact, tracing the changes in the use of the category, the socio-cultural conditionality of definitions becomes evident, as well as their philosophical content, which determines the way they are operationalized in the tradition of positive science. In fact, the term *mentality originates* in the linguistic model of Sanskrit (*manas*) and Latin (*mens*), reflecting the sphere of the mental (in particular, *spiritual*). The primary content is characterized by the categories of *mental health*, *mental illness*, which have a *psychological* meaning, but do not *correspond to mentality* (i.e., the way a certain community lives the mental), but are preserved as established forms with the corresponding adjective *mental*, as a derivative of Latin (de Vaan, 2008). Classical studies of the Antiquity period form the tradition of identifying *psyche* and *mentalis* in modern times, but the process of their creation shows a significant difference in meaning. Namely, this difference provides a better understanding of the concept of national mentality as a mental phenomenon, but not a mental one.

The word forms *mens*, *ménos*, *mentalis* have a *mental* meaning for the philosophical process, as they are formed during the period of acquiring agency, mastering the ability to experience intellectual, internal action and active construction of well-being (Cicero, 1913). This is the reason for the tendency to define mental health or illness in terms of mental as mental, i.e., as corresponding to the norms of intellectual adaptation to reality. At the same time, the term *ψυχή* (*psychē*) is also developing in Greek, also embodying the sphere of the mental, but not the *intellectual*, but the *ideal* (Plato & Platt, 2008). Naturally, the tradition originates in an earlier context, where the discourse of the material and spiritual has a distinctly lower subjectivity, and psychic reality is often uncontrollable and larger than the subject itself (Gaisser, 2008). Referring to the work of Fisogni (2021), it can be postulated a gradualist divergence in the understanding of the category of the psychic: the energy cycle gradually develops into the dualism of mind and matter, and over time, the psyche acquires a distinction between the rational and the irrational. In fact, at the stage of distinguishing the rational, i.e., healthy thought process, a subcategory important for understanding the national mentality is formed: the norm of the process. The boundaries of this norm of thinking will subsequently determine the cultural peculiarity of the group and the dichotomy of "friend or foe" ("us-they"). And although *mentalis* focuses on the thinking, avoiding spiritual connotations, over time, a tradition of replacing it with the concept of *cognition* is formed, which separates *mentalis* from the classical scientific process. Thus, the meaning of the concept has come to mean something that concerns the mind, but does not describe the mental processes that are now designated as cognitive.

Obviously, these primary transformations of word formation do not illuminate its modern terminological meaning, but they provide us with an understanding of its characteristic quality, which is reflected within the definition of national mentality – "that which concerns the norms of thinking". Subsequently, the suffixes *-ity*, *-ité* (primarily *-itas*, *-tās*) become essential, detailing the concept and giving it a specific nominative character: it is no longer *mentalis* ("that which concerns the norms of thinking"), but *mentality* ("a way of thinking"). It should be noted that in the Ukrainian philosophical tradition, the concepts of *mentality* and *mentalitet* are characterized by distinguishing them as separate categories (Korytska, 2021). These meaning-forming suffixes are the main criterion for distinguishing them, since the words not only have a common root but are formed in different speech centers, retaining common meaning and significance. *Mentality* and *mentalitet* are semantically identical - they define the cognitive structure of a community or an individual in a community. Accordingly, this differentiation reflects the author's desire to detail the phenomenon under study, to highlight its important structural

and functional components, rather than the tradition of forming categories as independent ones. It should be noted that such an intention to differentiate is justified, since the holistic interpretation of the national mentality lays down an essentialist narrative, limiting the authentic experience of the community and the individual in the community.

Returning to the stage of the suffix creation of the term, we note that its formation occurs through the emergence of the ideas of the “spirit of the people” during the decline of Eurocentrism (Hegel, 2012). It is the departure from cultural centrism that shapes the current definition of *mentality*. In particular, Emerson proposes a way to use the term to predict the mental qualities of an entire nation, which becomes the basis for the definition: mentality as a way of thinking of a community (Emerson, 2010). In the Ukrainian philosophical process, this issue became especially important during the transition away from Russian imperialism. The study of the uniqueness of the sphere of the ideal of a particular socio-cultural group is impossible, first of all, in the conditions of its non-recognition as a separate subject, which reveals the characteristic feature of mentality - the identification function. Thus, mentality implies self-awareness (Cash, 2020). A new component is actualised: the agency of descriptiveness - mentality is necessary to determine the characteristics of a particular group to assess this group as a unity, but also for each of its members to form this group as a unity. It is worth noting that the differences in the way communities think become the subject of the first studies precisely during the period of formation of a new standard of ethnic group - the nation. Thus, the identity of ethnic and national mentality is natural for the first stages of research (ethnikos, natio - people). At present, we distinguish the nation as a new entity, a higher form of ethnic group that has a greater degree of homeostasis and agency, as it is realized through the institution of the state. Accordingly, we draw the boundary of mentality in a cross-sectional way: ethno-cultural mentality characterizes Ukrainians as a historically formed community, while national mentality reflects the qualities of Ukrainians as a self-identified community that correlates with the statehood of Ukraine. It should be noted that in most publications, the distinction is not sufficiently realized, due to the high rate of natural overlap between Ukrainians as an ethnic group and Ukrainians as a nation (Levyk et al., 2020).

Thus, the form of the term *mentality*, the *way of thinking*, is currently preserved. It should be noted that this transcription is due not only to the meaning of the morphemes (mentalis - “relating to thinking”, -ity - “quality of being”), but also to the direction of scientific thought that has laid the modern deficit. In fact, it is noteworthy that numerous publications in this area mention the work of Spengler (2017), who uses the term *habitus* to describe the peculiarities of the phylogeny of large social groups. Probably, by referring to the naturalistic concept, the author relays the idea of determinism, the determination of a certain state of a mental community (but not a mental state) by the context. Thus, mentality is not only a way of thinking, but also the result of interaction with the environment (Charkina, 2019). Moreover, it is a way of interacting with it, given the reflective orientation. Thus, the context of mentality - a way of thinking in a context, in particular, historical, socio-cultural, and national - is actualized. Thus, a new understanding of mentality as a historical reality has been initiated (Hanusyn, 2022). Currently, the history of mentality is a separate area of research that is often considered fundamental to the metamodern tradition (Malabou, 2017). The category of historical mentality has intersections with the national mentality, as research is often carried out according to an indigenous design, detailing the phylogeny of the national mentality. Actually, the historical mentality is a mentality that is delimited longitudinally (longitudinally) - it is a way of thinking in a historical context, that is, a set of contents and methods of mental process in a certain period (Dinzelbacher, 1993). It is worth noting that the history of mentality and everyday life is characterized by an activity and action orientation, which is of great value for the future philosophical tradition of Ukraine, given the fundamental nature of Roments's approach (Danyliuk & Yahiyayev, 2019).

A historiographical review is insufficient, since the value of the thoughts of the demiurgeous of the past will be determined by their implementation in the realities of the present. The presented definitions and metaphorical clarifications of the content of the mentality are provided to illustrate the changes that determine the use of the term in different contexts. A detailed description of the socio-philosophical vision of mentality is also provided by Hordiichuk (2018a). The purpose of the present publication is not to describe the development of this phenomenon, but rather to reconstruct it in the light of current trends. In fact, those aspects of the phenomenon that developed in the process of the concept's word formation in different socio-cultural contexts are crucial for determining its proximal philosophical content at the moment. It should be noted that the context in which a particular definition is given plays a key role. Moreover, the impoverishment of the concept is also related to the socio-cultural limits of its use. In fact, the term under study has long served as an instrument of manipulative imperialist policy. *Mentality* as an indivisible unity declares a certain commonality through the characteristics of a nation, ethnicity, or synthetic social group: the proletariat, Soviet society, fraternal peoples, which are emphasized by the current ideology. The mentality of homo sovietisms is not a reflective category of the way of being of the community of the Soviet space, but a protocol of conformity for the population. The totalitarian postulates of the USSR were aimed at reducing the internal diversity of the psychic society, which transformed the acceptable values (but not the meanings) of the term mentality. It should also be noted that during this period the term *mentality* rather than *mentality* is more common, which is related to the French-speaking tradition of intellectual thought in the RSFSR. The depth of the concept is lost, as it serves not for cognition but for declaration. During this period, the philosophical tradition of the colonial states (Ukrainian, Polish, Serbian, etc.) lost the identifying function of mentality, which is reflected in the inconsistent definition of the concept in current works (Hordiichuk, 2019a). Particularly, the mentality acquires the meaning of characteristic features of the Soviet people or the worldview of the Soviet people. That is, a way of thinking is postulated that was necessary for the ideologues of the Soviet period.

Currently, there is a trend toward more active use of the concept among the scientific community of the countries that were part of the USSR. First of all, this is a consequence of the formation of a tradition of cognition in post-communist communities, but also of differences in the methodology of the countries of the Eastern and Western regions of Europe. The "Western definition of man as isomorphic" is contrasted with post-colonial Eastern European diversification (Karkov & Valiavicharska, 2018, p. 24). That is why the study of mentality for Ukrainian, Polish, and other post-communist traditions is an urgent problem aimed at expanding the ethnocentric perspective. Separating from the homo sovietisms mentality requires research into the primary ethnic mentality that has long been in latent form (Hordiichuk, 2019a). It should be noted that at the methodological level, the differences in approaches to cognition are opposite, which is also reflected in the definition of national mentality and the use of this concept. In fact, Western European epistemology leans toward empiricism as opposed to Eastern European holism. The absence of clear operands of mentality is the reason for the lesser involvement of Western experts in this issue, while for Eastern European countries this category is perceived as natural, given its integrity. It is necessary to make a comment on the actual state of representation of the topic. Although cognitive strategies limit the possibilities of nominalizing the achievements of these regions, they do not reduce the value of constructed knowledge. We can talk about the dichotomy of the discrete approach of positivism and the continuous dimensional approach of holism. However, it is worth noting that both traditions continue to actively study the problem and highlight the specifics of the way of thinking in the context, using different terminological and methodological systems. It is advisable to take these differences into account when reconstructing the definition, since globalisation trends contribute to the interpenetration of constructs of different approaches. In fact, by illustrating the Eastern European tradition, it is possible to work out not only the topic of cultural conditioning of the

methodology, but also the proximal epistemological meanings of the phenomenon under study, which complement its ontological description presented above.

At the present stage of cognition of the national mind set, the desire to postulate interconnectedness and contextual perspectives often leads to a regression of concepts and a loss of meaning. Obviously, the primary reason for this for Eastern European countries is the long-term influence of the ideologisation of the concept. On the other hand, the insufficiency of rational positivism in cognition contributes to the strengthening of the essentialist narrative of mentality. For example, studies that focus on identifying specific aspects of a community's mental existence, while using the outdated "broad" concept of mentality, are illustrative. Studies in different areas often present mutually exclusive findings that fall under the category of national or ethnic mentality. This is mainly typical when a researcher seeks to highlight a quality inherent in a particular community within his or her own research field, which is often extensionally inadequate, as there is no sufficient conceptualization of the studied quality within the framework of specific definitions. That is, there is no explanation of how this or that characteristic reflects the way a community thinks and whether it can describe the realities of the authentic experience of this group. Naturally, attempts continue to be made to theorize the results as part of the mentality of an ethnic group or nation, which leads to the expansion of the concept. Since the narrow definition of mentality "offered" by the Soviet approach is rejected, the holistic Eastern European approach is an alternative. Thus, related phenomena are labeled with a marker of *mentality* without sufficient empirical or theoretical justification (Hordiichuk, 2018b). First of all, this expansiveness is due to the transdisciplinary nature of the concept, which makes it impossible to clearly distinguish between its social, philosophical, psychological and other components in the context of the current interrelationships of research fields.

In fact, attempts at an interdisciplinary description of mentality and mentality are noteworthy, reflecting the differences between the terminological apparatus of the sciences interested in studying this problem (Korytska, 2021). The discrepancy between the transdisciplinary nature and the interdisciplinary approach to its description leads to repeated incorrect interpretations. As an example, the statement "Mentality... is a system of internal mental and mental socio-cultural attitudes of society, which is formed and changed both under external influence and through internally determined self-development, and functions at the level of the unconscious. Based on this, the psyche is an internal system of personality attitudes. Psyche can distinguish attitudes of perception, evaluation, and behaviour (Tulenkov et al., 2021, p. 396). The above quote corresponds to a substantive view of mentality and includes the main components: *socio-psychological* nature ("*socio-cultural attitudes of society*"), historical context ("*formed and changed... under external influence*"), agency and identification aspect ("*...through internally determined self-development*"). At the same time, the transcription "psyche is an internal system of attitudes of a personality" as a deduction from the definition of mentality illustrates the gap between social philosophy and psychology. Raising the problem of the relationship between these fields, it is common to completely identify mentality and the mental in a general way (Qian & Yahara, 2020). Etymology shows an important difference that is not taken into account in this case: mentality does not denote the psyche but denotes the way the psyche is in context. Accordingly, cross-cultural and indigenous studies of the parameters of a mental phenomenon are not sufficient; it is necessary to address its genesis. On the other hand, using Okama's razor, experts relay everyday definitions: "*nation's consciousness*" or "*nation's gene,*" which have no meaningful content, since they do not reflect any of the epistemological categories. In particular, the definition of "*a kind of 'genetic code' of a national-cultural community*" (Kobko-Odarii, 2021, p. 1) discredits ethno psychological and psychogenetic studies that postulate the low potential of genetic determination of the mentality of ethnic groups. Such reductions are largely due not to the lack of competence of the scientist, but to the absence of a clear paradigm of mentality that would set the vector of cognition. It is natural that

psychologists will lose the phenomenological context by focusing on the static representation, while the philosophical tradition will remain concerned with the issue of the difference between the mental and the psychic. Therefore, it is necessary to actively involve approaches from different fields and combine them to avoid meaningful conflicts. Since the subject lies within several disciplines, it is advisable not to study it in parallel using different methods, but to take an integrated approach, since specialized studies separate the phenomenon of mentality, which limits their interpretive capabilities. Again, the question arises whether these interpretations remain extensively adequate. It should also be noted that when highlighting certain manifestations of mentality (for example, legal mentality), the authors tend not to define the scope of the concept at all, providing a cross-cultural comparative or indigenous characterization of the process (Husa, 2019). The differences are identified and described, but there is no composition of the elements considered by the authors in accordance with the category they operate with. The characteristic loss of subject matter leads to the accumulation of inductive data that cannot be interpreted and implemented in the realities of human experience. Moreover, the verbalization of the data - the names of the measured qualities - is often contradictory or mutually exclusive. In addition, defined phenomena may have contradictory relationships (Kryvyzyuk et al., 2021). Obviously, the everyday meaning of the concept of mentality in interdisciplinary research plays a significant role. However, the value of the category should not be minimized due to its erroneous use in research. In fact, the terminology does not transform the nominated phenomenon, although it can significantly distort the reflection of the phenomenon in a non-core representation.

Most often, implicit definitions of mentality are based on primary sources that offer a comprehensive characterization acceptable to positivism in an authentic semantic field. As an example, referring to the definition proposed in Vlasevych's work, we can get a full-fledged detail of the synthesis of the philosophical contents of mentality: *"mentality determines the peculiarities of the soul, heart and mind, it is the core of what is called the character of the people and what mostly makes people belong to a particular national and cultural community"* (2011, p. 57). Again, we can see the inclusion of all aspects of mentality: the designation of a way of being (*"peculiarities of the soul"*), affective (*"heart"*) and cognitive (*"mind"*), dispositional (*"core of character"*), identification (*"makes one belong"*) and, finally, formative (*"national-cultural community"*). The essence of the above indicates that it is possible to resolve differences in the meanings inherent in the concept. Considering the individual components that characterize the community as a single entity in terms of a separate characteristic, the external validity of the descriptive method is lost. Accordingly, a certain common basis is needed in order to integrate the identified qualities. In fact, given the identified components and trends in the study of the phenomenon in various scientific fields, a level transcription is appropriate: each of the qualities can be considered separately but should be interpreted as an element, not the mentality itself. Moreover, it is worth emphasizing which level is being interpreted - this is of ultimate importance for the approaches described above.

Referring to the work of Comte (2009, p. 21), the line of intersection between the continuous and discrete approach to mentality is more clearly defined: "When it is said that the intellect should be subordinate to the heart, what is meant is that the intellect should devote itself exclusively to the problems that the heart suggests, and the ultimate goal is to find the proper satisfaction of our various needs." The key obstacle to the term's survival in the scientific community is the principle of positivism, which requires that a definition be cognitively meaningful. This requirement marginalizes the Ukrainian tradition of studying mentality. And it is noteworthy that this separation is natural, since the latter tends to store definitions at an intuitive level, operating with the concepts of archetypology (Ponomarenko, 2020). At the same time, as noted above, a significant amount of knowledge in this area has been accumulated and created. Accordingly, an appropriate solution is to systematize and harmonize the

components of the national mentality in order to preserve the category as an independent, cognitive one.

Referring to Hordiichuk's work, an abstraction is appropriate: the mental as a component of the mental community, embodied in an individual personality as a carrier (Hordiichuk, 2019b). The author's definition makes it possible to move from the national to the personal (or even personological) level and outlines the components that form the way of thinking in a context: cognitive, affective, and perceptual. The subject of most research is currently cognition, as the embodiment of the ethnopsychological and ethno-ideological (Sherali, 2021). Since the mentality initially reflects the thinking aspect, it is natural that it is widely covered. The nature of thinking activity determines the qualities of interaction with the environment that distinguish a person as a representative of a particular group. However, it is worth noting that the focus is on an individual carrier of mentality. On the other hand, referring to the context of the formation of this community, geoclimatic conditions are considered an important factor (Kostyuk 2008), which can be traced at the level of neuropsychological predispositions to a certain pattern of interaction with the environment (Baltadzhy & Matvieieva, 2019), that is, a set of mental abilities that guarantees adaptive existence in the context. Knowing the genesis of these qualities gives us the opportunity to move to a higher level - the national level. Accordingly, a differential tradition is being laid down - the search for differences in the style of adaptation of the thought process of an entire nation. Obviously, the ontology of ethno-cultural differences is well-founded, as evidenced by numerous studies (Anik et al., 2021, Kim et al., 2020). However, more often than not, such a description is needed to a greater extent to objectify the category, since its implementation is not limited to ethnopsychological orientation. Therefore, studies of a societal nature that consider the community as a community that is a carrier of mentality are advisable.

In Ukrainian philosophical thought, the concept under study goes beyond the simple sum of defining qualities (ways, values, attitudes, etc.); mentality reflects the overall dynamics of the mental. In particular, it is a system of phylogenetically constructed models that guide being in context (Krymsky & Zablotsky, 2002). It is noteworthy that this definition includes not only patterns of perception but also transformational potential. That is, again, an important aspect is action and deed as forms of mental expression, and the nation is an agent of the mental norm. Thus, given the suprapersonal nature of mentality, which manifests itself in the carrier as a single case, its regulatory function is revealed (Hordiichuk, 2020). The optimality and relevance of an action and deed to a particular context is determined by the way of thinking in this context, which is formed in the process of socialization and cultural inclusion. That is, the etymological component of *mentalis* ("relating to the norms of thinking") is preserved. The ethno-cultural norm of the nation is not descriptive but guiding, which can be seen in the tension of intercultural interaction (Daryanto & Song, 2021, Wang et al., 2019). Moreover, the context-specific quality of mentality is postulated along with the regulatory one, since the evolutionary significance of the phenomenon guarantees the adequacy of the situation of its manifestation. It should be noted that in this case we are not talking about a moral norm, but about a norm of worldview, polysemantic and historically determined. That is, mentality reaches a deeper level and reflects the mobility of mental existence and its pluralism.

Since the main context of mental existence is social reality, the mentality embodies a significant array of interpersonal patterns (Gilbert, 2021). The effectiveness of activity and behavior in the social environment determines its evolutionary nature. In particular, a discrete manifestation of mentality is a social role as a standard for optimizing the adaptation process (Bilewicz & Liu, 2020). It should be noted that the mechanism of social regulation is precisely the normalizing content of mentality - the basis for the formation of a community is not the restriction of extreme forms of morality, but the development of optima (Pirrodi, 2020). In addition, an important category within social regulation is

shibboleth - a speech manifestation of mental being (Danyliuk, Kurapov & Yagiyayev, 2019). Referring to this concept as a distinguishing marker, we get the necessary differential tool. At the same time, the linguistic environment preserves the way of the norm of being that determines the activity and action direction of the community's adaptation. In fact, the problem of language as a formative component is the cornerstone of post-communist epistemology. In turn, the national mentality and social identity are characterized by a strong internal connection, as both the individual speaker and the community embody their way of thinking through affinity and internal identification with the cultural values of the consolidated community. Naturally, this commonality is manifested not only in the value dimension, but also in the economic, political, and other dimensions. Thus, in his work, Moscovici, laying down the tradition of studying the conspiratorial mentality, notes: "...it seemed to me that we are dealing with a mentality and that social perceptions... are grouped" into a "conspiratorial mentality" (2020, p. 5). In fact, the multidimensional nature of mentality explains the intensification of research, particularly, on the consensus of value transmission (Korolyov & Domylivska, 2020).

Continuing with the idea of conceptualization, the multidimensional nature of mentality implies a certain degree of generalization. "It is obvious that the history of mentality tends to be comprehensive, to be *histoire totale*. That is why it is impossible to characterize a mentality with only a few features...", Dinzenbacher notes in his work, justifying the expediency of the holistic approach (Dinzelbacher, 1993, p. 18). In the study of national mentality, a complex phenomenon that encompasses various dimensions, such as historical, social, cultural, linguistic, political, etc., which are highlighted above, conceptualisation, plays a key role in creating a structured and consistent basis for analyzing the totality of aspects of the community's existence (Bocheliuk et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to substantiate the phenomenon within a reliable theoretical framework, its preliminary preparation is necessary. Thus, a meaningful descriptive analysis is carried out in the coordinates of the historical, national and societal axes: the phenomenon is revealed through its genesis, identification function and interaction of groups or institutions. It should be noted that in this case, we use a single method of delimitation, which is determined by the social orientation of the study. However, such a level structure can serve as a basis for other cognitive strategies. In addition, there are alternatives that add specificity to the phenomenon. In particular, Poplavskaya's classification is useful, which includes the following elements: understanding, intuition, mental consciousness, and mental structures (1995).

In conclusion, it can be noted that a significant number of dichotomies and models contribute to the illusory elaboration of the topic of mentality. Referring to the level concept, it is advisable to distinguish and define a specific component of the phenomenon revealed in the research work. The enrichment of this research area with the inductive approach is a natural stage in the development of the cognitive process. However, it is important to define the context and objectify the plane of mental being in a timely manner. Since it is necessary to guarantee the stability of the qualities that characterize the experience of community, it is important to define the boundaries of interpretation.

Discussion

The presented reconstruction of the concept of national mentality is an attempt to intensify the search for a solution to the debate on the content of the concept. The definition of the national mentality postulated in the scientific process is complex and multifaceted, covering a wide range of dimensions, but the problem of unity of correct interpretation remains relevant. In particular, the presented conceptualization intersects with the results of Baltadzy and Matvieieva (2019), who address the problem of the dynamics and depth of the phenomenon. The correspondence with this work also lies in the postulation of historical determinism as a cornerstone predictor of mentality. At the same time, the correlation between the concepts of *consciousness* and *mentality* is not preserved in the article, given the terminological differences between the concepts. The highlighted etymological aspects that lay the

foundation for the ontology of mentality indicate an important difference between the terms *mental*, *conscious*, *unconscious* and *mental*, as they operate at different levels: mentality is considered as a contextual mode of the mental, but not the mental itself.

The consistency of the process approach to the development of the concept of social mentality by Yang (2019) with the presented level concept is noticeable. The author's distinction between the mental state of the community and the ways of processing corresponds to the position postulated in the article on the distinction between the genesis of being and its specificity in a particular context. Also, an important aspect that is characteristic of both works is the distinction between the individual and the community as carriers of mentality, which are independent representatives of mental reality. It is worth noting that the category of *shared reality*, which is not sufficiently represented in the Ukrainian philosophical process, should be distinguished as a prospect for further research. Yang highlights the process of restructuring subjective reality in the context of a shared experience of a certain context. This approach is presented in studies focused on the semantic field of the community (Tymosh, 2016, Lozova, 2006). However, the question of integration into the system of group mentality remains open.

It should also be noted that the article does not present the phenomenological component of the national mentality, limiting itself to the end of identity and patterns of mental interaction with the environment. This is primarily due to the substantive elaboration of the category in Dewalque's work, which raises the issue of intentionality and manifestation of the mental phenomenon (2020). On the other hand, studies of the process of identity development and self-awareness of the bearer of the national mentality are widely represented (Ozturk, 2021).

Therefore, the presented synthesis, which aims to highlight the proximal philosophical content of the concept, is based on the idea of linguistic reflection of the ontology of the phenomenon and epistemological categories. Mentality as a characteristic way of mental processing of contexts is defined as being shaped by the experience of community and the reflective experience of experience. This is a complex combination of elements that define and differentiate different cultural and social groups, thereby contributing to the formation of the collective identity of the nation. In fact, the socio-cultural context of the concept determines its definitions in modern studies, as it lays down the vector of exploitative activity. Thus, a conscious revision of the constructs and meaningful conceptualization is necessary as a basis for cognition of the realities nominated by mental ones. The current conditions for the introduction of this term into the scientific discussion involve a focus on a transdisciplinary approach, not only a combination, but also the coordination of definitions from different fields. At the same time, one-dimensional definitions of the national mentality are inherently limited in their ability to cover the complexity of the phenomenon and inevitably lead to losses in knowledge.

In order to correctly reflect the community's mental existence, it is necessary to use a holistic approach, highlighting the significant aspects that correspond to the goals of the research. It is the awareness of the connections and hierarchy of the constructs being studied that will make it possible to determine clear limitations and the value of the obtained results.

Conclusions and Implications

The ontological unity of the concept of mentality and its difference from the mental is substantiated. Using the etymology of the term, the definition of the term as *a way of thinking in the context of a certain community is given*. The intersection of the mental and the psychic, which differ in their relations with the context, is actualized. The psyche is realized in certain conditions and is transformed under their influence, contains the results of the socio-cultural adaptation of the community, but does not reflect them. It is the reflection in the psyche and beyond (in culture,

philosophy, etc.) that is nominated as mentality. The concept of psyche describes the totality of the mental personality of the carrier of mentality. The latter, in turn, lies within the psyche, but has a suprapersonal genesis and concerns the whole community, reflecting those qualities of the psyche that characterize adaptation to the historical or socio-cultural context.

The author also considers the issue of agency in the formation of mentality, since the carrier is at the same time an agent of mentality, both at the level of the individual and the social group. The expediency of identifying the concepts of mentality and mentality as equivalent is postulated. At the same time, the tradition of distinction is justified by the desire to detail the phenomenon and to identify significant components, which is characterized in the work as justified by cognitive purposes. The researcher, as an agent of mentality, seeks to reflect the complexity of its structure in the work, using the available nomenclature. The development of the described category accompanies the cognitive intentions of the period of national self-identification, which corresponds to its focus.

The author characterizes the socio-cultural context of the category's development and transformations, which determines the ways of describing it. Particular, the contexts also reveals the reasons for the impoverishment of the content: the imperialist tendencies of postulating mentality as the unity of individual authentic social groups causes the loss of the reflective function of the concept in relation to the actual specifics of the mental existence of an ethno-cultural community. The lack of a single descriptive paradigm, in particular, the discourse of positivism and holism in the approaches of Western and Eastern Europe, respectively, is also a limitation of the category's development at this stage, along with the desire to deconstruct the concept in the post. The opposition between inductive and axiomatic methodology limits the coordination of research findings.

The paper postulates the prospects of combining paradigms, which is highlighted in the level transcription of the phenomenon. The highlighted qualities of the nation's mentality serve as a valuable body of information about the reality under study, provided that they are correctly integrated into theoretical models. The complex nature of the national mentality, which encompasses a wide range of experiences and states - both of an individual and a community - but is not reducible to them, cannot be described through a single criterion. Accordingly, the initial stage of cognition is considered to be conceptualisation, given the risk of extensively inadequate generalisations. The author proposes a level approach of mentality as a way to optimize the process of transdisciplinary study of the phenomenon.

1.The cornerstone problem of this subject area is the incorrect definition of mentality. It leads to the consolidation of exclusive stereotypes and results in the loss of the concept's meaning.

2.The context of the term's use determines its meanings and contents; the manipulative tradition of the Soviet space causes its impoverishment.

3.An interdisciplinary approach to the development of the concept is insufficient given its transdisciplinary nature.

4.The conflict between positivism and holism in the scientific traditions of Europe makes it impossible for the category to develop transdisciplinary in terms of the methodology of mentality descriptions.

5.The empirical approach tends to isolate specific aspects that can be operationalized, losing the overall context; the intuitive approach seeks to capture the aggregate meaning of the concept, levelling or overemphasizing its specific manifestations.

6. The proximal meaning is revealed through the ontology of the concept, which is expressed in its etymology: national mentality is a way of thinking of a community of an ethno-cultural group identified at the level of statehood.

7. The primitives of the level structure combine discreteness and holism in approaches to defining mentality; the national mentality is the only reality that should be specified in the processes of cognition.

The levelness of mentality is expressed through the unity of social and mental aspects that manifest themselves at each level: historical and social contexts, community as an agent of mentality, community and individual as its carriers.

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