

## DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL NEUROTICISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANS OF PREVENTION<sup>††</sup>

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### Abstract

*In psychology, the destructive development of social neuroticism, as an independent process, has been little studied. The question of what impact adverse or unregulated social relations have on the destructive development of social neuroticism has not been fully studied. In addition, special concepts that could serve as a basis for preventing the destructive impact of social neuroticism have not yet been introduced into the psychological discipline. This article presents the main forms and features of the destructive consequences of social neuroticism. Social neuroticism is characterized as a set of individual-personal qualities that are influenced by adverse processes and social relationships occurring in the social environment. Therefore, there is a need to develop methodological guidelines aimed at extinguishing the negative potential of social neuroticism for different social groups, in particular, immigrants with social alienation or marginalization, and people of different age groups in crisis stages of life.*

**Keywords:** *destructive development, social neuroticism, social relationships, social alienation, subjective and objective factors.*

### INTRODUCTION

The complex system of social neuroticism and the multifactorial nature of its emergence and aggravation indicate that the destructive development of social neuroticism is conditioned by various factors, both subjective and objective. It is no secret that the destructive development of neurotic traits negatively affects the psyche of a person and his activities. That is why we are faced with the task of identifying the destructive consequences of social neuroticism and ways to prevent them. Taking into account the fact that the phenomenon of social neuroticism is interconnected by the nature of the relationship between a person and society, the development of the destructive consequences of social neuroticism inevitably affects the complex and multi-layered spheres of the individual-society relationship, that is, it is systemic in nature and can exhaust all the resources of the person's psyche, in extreme cases it can proceed with cases of self-harm and suicide.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the phenomenon of social neuroticism underlies the social organization of society, the mechanisms of social integration and coping behavior. The concept of social integration was developed by E. Durkheim in the context of the dependence of the individual on external, social conditions of the environment. The integration of the individual with society was also noted by T. Parsons as a basic construct of the organization of society (Hanifah and Nugraha, 2022).

The phenomenon of social neuroticism can be studied using various theoretical and methodological models. This area of social psychology is at the stage of forming a theory that will become a link between social and psychological sciences related to the problem of neuroticism. However, it is already possible to find certain parallels between modern attempts to define social neuroticism and some theoretical approaches to studying stress and coping. Let us dwell in more detail on the transactional model of R. Lazarus and S. Folkman (1984), put forward in the last quarter of the 20th century. According to this model, coping is a series of assessments and reactions of a person to stress factors. This process involves both an assessment of the requirements of the situation, as well as psychological resources aimed at overcoming the stressful situation. The authors note that coping behavior is formed in one of two directions. In particular, the orientation of coping behavior to a problematic situation, as a rule, is effective if it is possible to change the stressful situation or control it. Otherwise, emotion-focused coping behavior becomes more effective.

Thus, the founders and followers of the theory of social integration assumed that the key component of social organization is the mechanism of interpenetration/interaction of the social system and the personal construct. In turn, representatives of the transactional model supplemented this process of interaction with the mechanism of coping behavior.

One way or another, the definition of social neuroticism is associated with the ability of the individual to social integration, on the one hand, and the preservation of personal space, on the other.

Violation of the social-personal balance in the process of social integration can be characterized by signs of social neuroticism. At present, in psychological literature, some parallels of the transactional model and definitions of social neuroticism are observed. In particular, the tendency to choose ineffective coping mechanisms leads to the manifestation of the phenomenon of social neuroticism. Such a choice can be an orientation to emotions in the case of a controlled problematic situation, or, conversely, an orientation to the problem in the case where the situation is insoluble.

Recent studies have allowed us to identify the stages through which social neuroticism passes

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and turns into destructive consequences. They are as follows:

- Nervous difficulties related to relatively uncomplicated problems of the inner world, and inner life of a person. Nervous difficulties manifest themselves in the form of doubt, uncertainty, hopeless situations, and the absence of ways to solve problems.
- Intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, which are the most complex types of social neuroticism. The severity of their manifestation depends on the mental stability of the person and the peculiarity of the person's perception of a difficult or emergency.
- Crises, which are characterized by specific periods of a person's life. These periods lead to significant psychological changes. These are accompanied by changes in the semantic structure of the person's consciousness, and reorientation to new goals and values (Li et al., 2023; Quan et al., 2024; Widinger & Oltmann, 2017).

The typology of the development of the negative potential of social neuroticism according to the degree of its impact on the psyche of a person is necessary so that we can identify early what experiences the person is experiencing at a given moment and what is the reason for it. Other subjects interacting with the person in the social environment will likely be able to notice these negative shifts earlier and warn about the destructive crisis maturing in a person suffering from social neuroticism earlier. In our opinion, it is precisely such a development that is the reason why a person is unable to get out of such a situation alone, which is followed by destructive consequences after a certain time. For this reason, both the person suffering from the negative consequences of social neuroticism and the psychologist supporting the person should be able to distinguish the crisis stages and features of social neuroticism since their recognition will allow them to detect and prevent the destructive development of the phenomenon on time. In the case of the destructive development of social neuroticism, the person is constantly forced to encounter unpleasant and painful experiences. Neurotic symptoms with destructive development generally have the following consequences:

- Deepening of the personality split, the emergence of crises and neurotic reactions
- Inhibition of productive activity
- Inhibition of personal development
- Exhaustion of energy, formation of inferiority complexes, loss of meaning in life
- Violation of interpersonal relationships, aggressiveness, anxiety
- The emergence of negative psychological states
- In extreme cases, suicide (Wiebe et al., 2018).

In addition to the above, we consider it necessary to note that their destructive development can lead to

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1. Blocking of personal development, degradation of the personality
  2. Psychological and physiological disorganization of the personality
  3. Decrease in activity and efficiency of activity
  4. Doubt, oppression, and depressive state of mind
  5. Exacerbation of aggression, or vice versa, activation of defense
  6. Lack of confidence in one's strengths and feelings of inferiority
  7. Meaningful devaluation
  8. Manifestation of destruction in interpersonal relationships
  9. Weakening of the personality's activity in the group
  10. Presence of high sensitivity
  11. Manifestation of deviant behavior
  12. Manifestation of rude formal behavior.

Naturally, these consequences can be expressed more sharply by several objective and subjective factors caused by complex social relations or difficult life situations. A neurotic state of mind developing destructively is capable of undermining the daily life of a person and his environment. The list of negative consequences of social neuroticism is so large and so wide-ranging that our primary task is not so much finding ways to solve them as prevention.

Social neuroticism is often accompanied by deviant behavior. The formation of deviant behavior is accompanied by an internal struggle of a person, the intractability of which often leads to alcoholism, drug addiction, self-deception, and even suicide. In other words, different ages and social groups exhibiting deviant behavior are also at risk: adolescents, marginalized people in conditions of social isolation and alienation, immigrants, and others. After all, addictive behavior, as a variety of deviant behavior, is a serious problem for social groups that have problems adapting and integrating into the environment.

In addition to the above examples of addictive behavior, another destructive way to get rid of social neuroticism is suicide. What is the reason that a person chooses this particular method, why does he consider the struggle for his own life meaningless? The acute emotional state that arises during crises, when a person is faced with vital problems, can also lead to suicidal behavior. This is due to intrapersonal contradictions: interpersonal conflicts, problems in society, inconsistency of moral and value concepts with reality, etc. It should be noted that crises can occur not only in extreme conditions but also simply during the performance of work duties (Jang et al., 2018).

In our opinion, the following reasons are included in the list of suicides committed in the presence of social neuroticism:

1. Fear

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2. Mentally unstable states: depression, stress, trauma

3. Unreciprocity love

4. Social and cultural alienation

5. Financial debt and problem situations

In our opinion, these factors can be divided into the following groups:

1. Objective factors:

-social injustice

-patronage

-physical and mental overstrain and overload

-strictly regulated daily life

-being cut off from family and relatives

-loss of relatives

-feeling of helplessness and hopelessness

2. Subjective factors

-character accentuation

-low adaptability

-lack of knowledge and skills

-worldview differences

-value system, distorted or negative ideas about moral norms

3. There is another factor that can be included in each of the above groups, which is subculture.

## METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

For the experimental study conducted within the framework of studying the destructive consequences of social neuroticism, observation, interview, assessment, and comparison methods were selected. The semantic differential was chosen as the assessment method. Respondents were presented with a list of objective and subjective factors of social neuroticism mentioned above. The sample of study participants consisted of the following groups at risk of social neuroticism:

- Group 1 - adolescents aged 13-18 (n=90),

- Group 2 - immigrants aged 30-45 (n=85),

- Group 3 - unemployed people aged 30-45 (n=105).

The total number of the sample was 280 people. The immigrants included those forcibly displaced as a result of war operations (Syrian and Artsakh Armenians). The assessment was carried out on a [-3] – [+3] assessment scale. Low scores received a negative, neutral score - 0, and high

scores are positive quantitative indicators. Low and high scores were then rated according to the recorded quantitative indicators.

Interview was conducted at the Psychological Observatory of the International Scientific-Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. The study was started subject to the verbal consent of respondents.

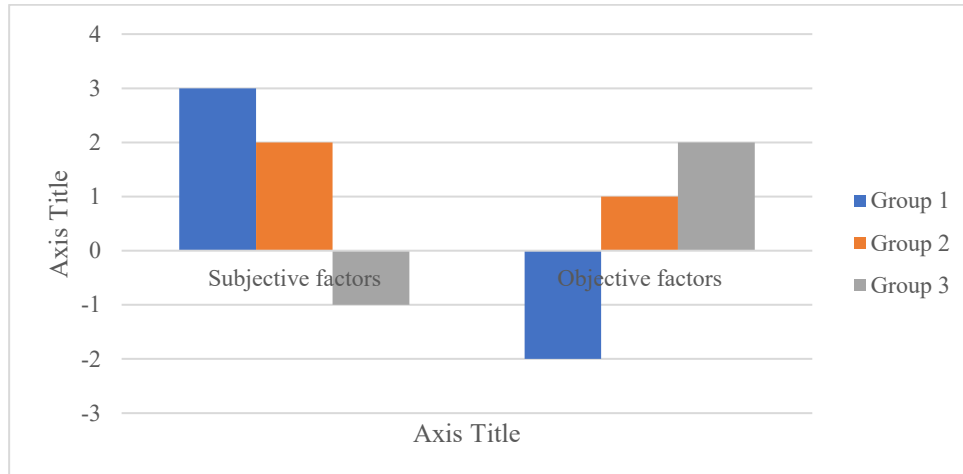
The key guiding questions for interview were the following: “How often do you discuss personal problems with family members / people close to you?”, “In what situations do you feel helpless and hopeless? What do you do to get out of this situation?”, “What situations of social injustice have you encountered?”, “How do you feel about the phenomenon of protection?”, “What ideas about moral standards exist in society?”, “What ideas do you have about moral standards?”, “What concepts in your worldview differ most from the common ideas in society?”, etc. The degree of consistency between interview questions was calculated using Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , which was equal to 0.788.

Taking into account the fact that the empirical study of social neuroticism is a multi-stage research process, we set a methodological task to cover a sample consisting of different age and social groups. The methodological basis for forming the sample was the results of preliminary closed observation in order to identify problem situations in the process of social integration. Observation was carried out according to the main objective and subjective signs of social neuroticism. In the future, we plan to continue the empirical research in each of the presented groups separately for the purpose of a more in-depth analysis of the social and age characteristics of the manifestation of social neuroticism.

The answers obtained as a result of the interviews were subjected to correlation analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to identify interdependent relationships among the variables of the respondents' answers. In the future, the results of the correlation analysis can become a methodological basis for a more in-depth analysis of social neuroticism separately in each of the studied groups of respondents. To determine the correlation method, we conducted a Shapiro-Wilk test to normality assumption check. This test showed  $p < 0.05$  which means that variables are nonnormally distributed. Statistical data was analysed by Spearman correlation method using JASP 0.17.3.0 software.

## RESULTS

The research results recorded the following indicators (FIGURE 1).



**FIGURE 1. Distribution of social neuroticism factors among 3 groups**

As we can see in FIGURE 1, the most extreme responses in the assessments of the objective and subjective factors of social neuroticism discussed above were recorded in Group 1 of adolescents. In this group, we see that adolescents predominantly associate their dissatisfaction, difficulties in communicating in the social environment, and the loss of meaning in life with the subjective factors of biosocial neuroticism, while the objective factors received the lowest ratings. The responses recorded in Group 2 of immigrants were identical: respondents almost equally highly assessed both subjective and objective factors affecting social neuroticism, with a slight predominance of the first group of factors. Group 3, which was represented by a sample of unemployed individuals, gave preference to objective factors, assessing factors that exist independently of them, i.e., external environmental factors, as determinants of the manifestations of social neuroticism and their destructive consequences.

These indicators were also confirmed by the interview method, when adolescents showed more extreme subjective assessments, while the unemployed, on the contrary, sought to see the causes of existing problems outside their inner world, in objectively existing environmental circumstances, thereby trying to “justify” their unemployment. And, finally, during the conversation with the sample group of immigrants, it also turned out that both subjective and objective factors were important in the assessment of social neuroticism; It was noteworthy that according to the period of immigration, within 1-12 months, the majority of immigrants, 74% of respondents, indicated external, environmental factors as the cause of social neuroticism. The picture changed during the conversation with immigrants within 2-4 years, as assessments of internal, subjective factors began to prevail in the assessments.

The main results of correlation analysis is presented below (Table 1).



Table 1. Correlation interrelations of objective and subjective factors of social neuroticism

| Spearman rho                | Objective factors, Group 1 | Subjective factors, Group 1 | Objective factors, Group 2 | Subjective factors, Group 2 | Objective factors, Group 3 | Subjective factors, Group 3 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Objective factors, Group 1  | -                          |                             |                            |                             |                            |                             |
| Subjective factors, Group 1 | -.709***                   | -                           |                            |                             |                            |                             |
| Objective factors, Group 2  | .258                       | .641                        | -                          |                             |                            |                             |
| Subjective factors, Group 2 | .316                       | .981                        | -.201*                     | -                           |                            |                             |
| Objective factors, Group 3  | .554                       | -.636                       | -.333                      | .435                        | -                          |                             |
| Subjective factors, Group 3 | .501                       | -.200                       | -.268                      | .487                        | -.421**                    | -                           |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## DISCUSSION

In our opinion, these factors form a common set that has a psychologically damaging effect on a person and creates fertile ground for the destructive development of social neuroticism. As a result, we have long-term stressful situations, unprovoked aggression in a person's behavior, interpersonal conflicts, self-mutilation, even suicidal attempts, and completed suicide. As a result, instead of finding solutions to the created situation, a person finds himself in a hopeless situation, as a result of which he chooses a destructive way out of a difficult situation, which is very often of a self-destructive nature. Speaking about the destructive consequences of social neuroticism, let us note that it is also extremely important to reveal psychological ways to prevent them since their prevention in a social environment is necessary not only to maintain the mental balance and resources of a person but also to improve the general moral and psychological state of a socially significant group for a person. Prevention of destructive consequences is carried out either independently if A person can manage and direct this process alone, or with the help of a psychologist or psychotherapist if painful experiences and emotions prevent the person from finding



a solution. Different authors offer different methods of solving the problem. As a rule, the essence of the methods known in psychological science depends on what, according to the given author, is the basis of the conflict. Some choose psychotherapeutic intervention, some - self-analysis, some - the choice of defense mechanisms, and another group may prefer simply a means of replacing possible exits or the development of alternatives. It is clear that such alternatives The choice is highly individual, but in any case, it is necessary to guide the person and present an overall picture of overcoming the problem (Khan et al., 2021; Weiss & Deary, 2019; Khodayarifard & Fatemi, 2013; Turiano et al., 2020).

Maffini and Pham (2016) state that after overcoming any conflict, a person should encourage himself, note the fact that he has overcome an obstacle, and is ready for new heights. In our opinion, this methodological tool is a unique motivator for a person in the future and helps him to make the changes required of him more boldly.

As can be seen from Table 1, within each group there are statistically significant inverse relationships between subjective and objective factors. It is noteworthy that the most strongly expressed negative correlations were found in Group 1, which indicates a more disturbing picture of the manifestations of social neuroticism among adolescents. These results will serve as an important basis for further studies.

## CONCLUSIONS

Generalizing the information received from different sources, we can conclude that the destructive development of social neuroticism can be prevented only through long-term psychological work and the help of a psychotherapist. In many cases, the inability to get rid of the negative consequences of social neuroticism causes pathological developments and psychosomatic disorders in a person. It should also be noted that destructive means of solving the consequences of social neuroticism are chosen mainly by mentally immature people. This implies that it is necessary to increase the level of knowledge of the general public about social neuroticism and ways to solve it, which is another step towards preventing the destructive development of this phenomenon.

As solutions, the following methods of self-regulation and prevention of the negative potential of social neuroticism are proposed:

- acceptance of a difficult situation as a vital necessity,
- normalization of one's vital values, flexibility and adaptability,
- weakening of excessive concentration on details,
- management of one's desires,
- adequate self-assessment and self-control,

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- development of volitional qualities,
  - the ability not to artificially create problems, not to give in to panic.

Of course, the participation of a psychologist in the process of solving the negative consequences of social neuroticism is a necessity, since the concepts of preventing the destructive consequences of social neuroticism have not yet been introduced into society. Therefore, we consider it important to develop a concept for overcoming and preventing the destructive impact of social neuroticism and other negative phenomena accompanying it, which will serve as a methodological guide for specialists in the field.

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