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POLITICAL CULTURE OF REGIONAL YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

Abstract of the dissertation submitted for the degree of
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Academic Specialty 5.4.4. Social Structure, Social Institutions and Processes

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Relevance of the research topic. Youth is the successive bearer of cultural national codes and the social group that determines the future quality of the nation's human capital. The contribution of youth to the future of the state directly depends on its support within the framework of state policy, civic and political identity with the national system. The political turbulence of the Russian space and the unpredictability of political reactions of youth under conditions of geopolitical instability form a demand addressed to state youth policy, connected primarily with its function in shaping the political culture, consciousness and thinking of Russia's youth. The questions that well-known scholars in youth studies and sociology seek to answer are also related to youth reflection, perception of political events, and forecasting of youth behavior. All of this places researchers in the field of studying the political culture of youth, which subsequently transforms into their conscious or intuitive political choice and political self-identification.

The study of the political culture of youth represents a critically important direction in political science, since this social group is an indicator of deep transformations of the political system and an agent of future political and social changes. One cannot ignore the fact that contemporary youth exists in two dimensions simultaneously: it is embedded in the national context, but at the same time is subject to the influence of global trends. This dualism calls into question traditional models of political socialization.

The political culture of youth represents simultaneously a synthesis of the resultant impacts of socialization institutions and a reflection on the geopolitical situation and the systemic political culture of Russian society. Youth, being in the process of socialization, demonstrates not only the assimilation of existing norms and values, but also their reinterpretation, and in some cases – a radical break with traditional patterns of political behavior. Indicators of the political culture of youth become markers reflecting attention to it and its upbringing on the part of social institutions and policies. In this regard, the importance of studying the political culture of youth in the dynamics and chronotope of political events is actualized in order to find answers to the question of the transformation of its political thinking, as well as to create a foundation for forecasting youth behavior under conditions of social risks of the political situation.

At the same time, youth can become a «laboratory» of political innovations, since the political culture of youth often serves as a testing ground for the approbation of new forms of political participation, including digital electoral and political platforms, protest movements and alternative methods of political mobilization. Unlike older generations, whose political orientations are crystallized, youth is more receptive to global trends, which makes it a key actor in the processes of support or, conversely, destabilization of political regimes.

Thus, ***the relevance of the dissertation research*** is determined by:

- the demographic and resource significance of youth as an agent of reproduction of the political system;

- the recorded risks and institutional dysfunctions of the political culture of youth;

- the need to revise models of political socialization under conditions of a hybrid geopolitical environment and external threats.

Thus, on the basis of the understanding of the relevance of the topic and the degree of its scientific elaboration, it is possible to formulate ***the problem of the dissertation research***. It is determined by the contradiction between the importance and necessity of forming the political culture of Russian youth as a response to geopolitical risks and crises, and the absence of systemic data on its state in the regions of the country.

The object of the research is the political culture of youth.

The subject of the research can be defined as the specific features of the political culture of regional youth in the context of societal transformation.

The purpose of the dissertation research is to determine the risks and potentials of the transformation of the political culture of youth in the context of social transformations and crises.

To achieve the stated purpose, it is necessary to solve the following ***scientific tasks***:

1. To clarify and substantiate the conceptual apparatus for the study of political culture.

2. To propose a concept for the study of political culture from the perspective of its structure and dynamics of reproduction.

3. To verify the conceptual model through the study of the political culture of regional youth and to determine its risks and potentials from the perspective of social transformation.

4. To conduct social portraiture of the political types of youth in the region, to determine the specifics of their social dispositions and life planning.

The hypothesis of the dissertation research. The political culture of youth, being a complex systemic formation, possesses both properties of stability and flexibility, which determines its fundamental, little-changing part connected with political consciousness and thinking, and a reactive, adaptive component reflecting changes in the social situation, and accumulating in political dispositions, motives and models of behavior of youth.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is constituted by the constructionist approach of G. Almond, S. Verba, S. Lipset, S. White, R. Lane, A. Wildavsky, R. Inglehart, et al., the basis of which is the value vision of political culture, and which determines the continuity between political values and motives of political behavior.

The structural model of political culture is built on the basis of the theory of V.L. Bozadzhiev, where in the form of a structural meta-model the cognitive, value, emotional-evaluative, motivational and behavioral components are defined.

As the methodological basis for studying the specifics of the political culture of youth, the concept of self-regulation of the life activity of youth by Yu.A. Zubok and V.I. Chuprov is used.

The concept of the research and the research model of the dissertation are based on the systemic and activity-based approaches. The systemic approach was used as the basis for determining the place of a person's political culture in the general system of human culture, explaining the interrelation and continuity of elements of political culture, and substantiating the mechanism of its reproduction. The activity-based approach allowed determining the mechanism of presentation of the political culture of youth through political action, activity, choice and identification.

In the dissertation research, in addition to general scientific methods, empirical methods of comparative and systemic analysis of documentary sources, questionnaire and expert surveys, and focus group studies were applied.

The empirical base of the research includes:

1. Official statistical data and results of VCIOM surveys;
2. Results of all-Russian and regional studies on the topic of the dissertation;
3. Quantitative and qualitative studies conducted by the author and with his participation.

Provisions submitted for defense and possessing scientific novelty.

1. The definition of a person's political culture and the process of its reproduction has been clarified according to the stated subject of the research, in which the emphasis is placed on its institutional channels of transmission, mechanisms of socialization and adaptation, the formation of value-motivational foundations and specific behavioral practices. Thus, a person's political culture is a structural element of the general culture of a person and the result of his political socialization, formed on the basis of cognitive and emotional processes, the result of which are political consciousness and thinking, political values, meanings, motives and political behavioral models of the individual are produced, realized in his political identification, political choice and political action. The reproduction of political culture is a cyclic process of its formation and renewal, connected with the political socialization and adaptation of the individual, ensuring the receipt and internalization of political information obtained as a result of political communication, one's own political actions and decisions ("18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth" 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

2. A concept for the study of a person's political culture is proposed, including blocks of operationalization of basic concepts, a structural model of political culture and substantiation of the mechanism of its reproduction. The structural basis of the political culture of youth is constituted by five interconnected components: cognitive, value, emotional, motivational and behavioral. Each

component, in interaction with others, determines the formation of structural results: political consciousness, political values, political evaluations, political motives and political models of behavior.

The mechanism of reproduction of the political culture of youth includes the stage of filling, formation and approbation. The stage of filling is determined by the processes of socialization, the success of which depends on the functioning of the systems of political education and upbringing, the organization of processes of political communication and self-regulation. At the stage of formation, the structural components of political culture are filled and their results are formed. The stage of approbation is connected with the processes of political identification of the individual, his political choice, political decisions and actions, leads to the formation of political experience and the replenishment of political capital («18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth» Passport of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

3. The specific features of the political culture of regional youth are determined. The political socialization of youth is carried out mainly through self-regulation and informal political communication, which is connected with the need to ensure a security contour of contacts and the internalization of political information through solidarity with the immediate circle of communication. The political consciousness of youth cannot be called formed; significant deficits have been identified in the self-assessment of political knowledge, understanding and interest in politics, and in the skill of political discussion. The value component of political culture accumulates on the basis of human-centered (Life, Quality of Life, Care for People), democratic (Peace, Justice, Human Rights and Freedoms, Legality, Freedom) and systemic-state (Order and Stability) values. The political thinking of youth has elevated values of indicators of breadth, depth, strategicness and flexibility, but its main accentuation is criticality – distrust of the transmitted opinion, the search for evidence, and verification of data. Along with the main characteristics, the political thinking of youth is also characterized by deviation aspects, connected primarily with political egocentrism and political pessimism, which predetermines the perception of politics and political events from the position of subjective interests and negative connotation. The political life plans of youth, as an indicator of the behavioral component of political culture, testify, on the one hand, to their insignificance for young people, on the other — speak of rather weighty political ambitions. Such a situation becomes the result of an unformed political culture, the cause of which is the absence of purposeful political socialization on the part of political institutions. («18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth» Passport of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

4. The risks and potentials of the transformation of the political culture of youth under conditions of changing reality are identified, the profile of political thinking of the regional youth community is verified, which form problematic contradictions determining the consequences of the absence of proper attention to the issue of forming the political culture of youth and its political socialization:

- The potential for growth of political interest of youth versus the risk of its dysfunctional political socialization;
- The potential for critical information subjectivity of youth versus the risk of communication self-isolation;
- The potential for growth of political communication of youth versus the risk of an increase in its informal component, which affects the formation of systemic political knowledge and skills of political dialogue;
- The potential for the formation of a stable core of political thinking of youth (criticality, depth, flexibility, strategicness) as the basis of political adaptation versus the mobility of political deviations (destructiveness and aggressiveness of political thinking) as a zone of risk reactions of youth to the political situation;
- The potential for growth of positive assessments by youth of various spheres of life as a resource of social stability versus the growth of anxiety and maladaptation of youth as a risk, anomie and marginalization;
- The potential for growth of positive assessments by youth of Russian politicians as the creation of opportunities for political recruitment and dialogue versus the risk of forming a deficit of institutional trust, in which parties and party leaders are not perceived as expressers of the interests of youth;
- The potential for growth of interest in the youth environment in the activities of youth parties and the increase of political ambitions of youth as a reserve for the development of political culture versus the risk of a gap between the demand for participation and the real political activity of youth;
- The potential for the development of political consciousness and communication of young political leaders and activists as a possible political personnel reserve versus the risk of deformation of political thinking among included leaders and the threat of negative personnel selection in the political sphere.
- The potential for the existence of a broad spectrum of normative-legal framework as a basis for the formation of systemic political socialization versus the risk of fragmentation of meanings and content of normative documents and the ambiguity of the formative impact on the political consciousness and thinking of program users. («18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth» Passport of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

5. A typology of political activity of youth is proposed, social portraits of youth typological groups of political activity are constructed, and the risks of deformation of political thinking of young political leaders are established.

According to their political activity, youth can be divided into types: included (5.8%), active (14.8%), passive (66.4%), excluded (13.0%). Youth of active political groups has more pronounced political communication and social activity, which leads to higher values of indicators of the cognitive component of political culture. But despite purposeful political socialization, the group of young political leaders demonstrates a deformation of political thinking, connected with its eclecticism and chaotic nature, and an emphasis on egocentrism. A separate risk is the representation in this group of selfish motives for inclusion in political activity and a reduced prosocial interest in it. Youth of the politically active type demonstrates a more balanced and favorable profile of political thinking, social motives in political activity, and, moreover, shows a planned harmonious development of most spheres of life in the future.

A separate group of risks is formed by the politically excluded type of youth, since conscious exclusion from the political sphere is often caused not simply by an infantile position, but rather by non-acceptance of the political system. Internal and external conflict with political reality, reduced solidarity with society, increases the risk of anomie and marginalization of such youth groups («18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth» Passport of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

Theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation research.

The theoretical significance of the dissertation research lies in the fact that the obtained scientific results, provisions and conclusions develop and supplement a number of essential aspects of sociological theory regarding the course of social processes in the youth environment. The theoretical results of the research can become a conceptual basis for further study of political culture, political thinking and political consciousness of youth.

For applied sociology, the empirically confirmed characteristics and indicators of political culture and the verified profile of political thinking of youth are of high significance. An important applied result is the social portraits of youth types distributed by levels of political activity.

The practical significance of the dissertation research lies in the increment of practical foundations for the study of the political culture of youth in the spectrum of its further empirical study. The research model, instrumental complex and results of the research can serve as a basis for subsequent studies and comparative interregional analysis. The obtained data on indicators of the political culture of youth, the established patterns of its formation and the developed recommendations for improving the process of political socialization of youth can be used in the work of regional bodies of state power and local self-government.

The theoretical and practical material of the author's research can be used in teaching in higher education of such academic disciplines as «Sociology of Youth», «Political Sociology», «State and Municipal Administration», «Sociology of Social

Changes», «Sociology of Management», «Methodology and Techniques of Sociological Research».

Compliance of the dissertation topic with the requirements of the VAK specialty passport. The research corresponds to scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes, reflecting item 18. «Youth as a social group. Features of the social situation, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth».

The degree of reliability of the provisions and results of the conducted research is confirmed by their logic, the architectonics of the dissertation text, substantive unity, consistency of the author's conclusions and formulated provisions, the correlation of the conceptual foundations of the research with generally accepted theoretical approaches in sociological science, and the absence of incorrect borrowings.

_____ I. N. Savelicheva