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**THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING ON THE MECHANISM OF  
SOCIALIZATION OF MODERN STUDENTS**

Abstract to the dissertation  
for the degree of Candidate of Sociological Sciences

Specialization 5.4.4. Social Structure, Social Institutions and Processes

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**The relevance of this research topic** is determined by the Russian Federation's status as a powerful state with a unique cultural heritage, political and economic potential, and experience. To maintain and enhance this position on the international and domestic stage, it is essential to firmly rely on human capital. Students, as a socio-demographic group, are a significant resource that contributes to our country's competitiveness. They make numerous scientific discoveries, propose social, technical, and economic developments and innovations, and constitute the country's primary labor force and a reservoir of intellectual capital. Therefore, it is important to utilize this social resource as effectively as possible.

This will be facilitated by improving the socialization mechanisms of modern students, one of which could be the development of traditional values among them. It is precisely this system of traditional values that will transform youth into a social group that will protect and strengthen Russia's sovereignty, ensure the unity of our multinational and multi-religious country, and contribute to the savings of the Russian people and the development of human potential. Volunteering has become a norm for many young people in modern Russia. Therefore, one of the goals of youth policy should be to create conditions for students that allow them to participate in internships at volunteer centers, charitable foundations, and other institutions alongside their studies. This fosters traditional values such as civic responsibility, solidarity, humanism, and compassion. Thus, participation in volunteering will contribute to improving the socialization of modern students. All of the above highlights the growing interest in volunteering, making it a subject of study in various fields. In this regard, a sociological approach to studying volunteerism as a social institution allows us to identify those functions that will directly influence the socialization of modern students. Among these, it is important to note their involvement in social movements and organizations whose goals include directly assisting the state, expressing their civic positions and reinforcing them with concrete actions, and fostering active citizenship and political participation. All of this highlights the need for a scientific justification of the impact of volunteerism on

the socialization of modern student youth and the search for areas for its improvement.

Thus, the scientific and theoretical relevance of research into the impact of volunteerism on the socialization of modern student youth is determined by the following circumstances:

first, the need for a scientific and theoretical understanding of the impact of volunteerism on the socialization of modern student youth;

second, the feasibility of conducting an applied sociological study of the impact of volunteerism on the socialization of modern student youth to identify the factors that have a positive and negative impact on this process;

third, the need for a scientific justification for improving the socialization of student youth through volunteerism.

**The aim of this dissertation** is to identify, on the basis of a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis, the role and significance of the institution of volunteerism in improving the mechanism of socialization of modern student youth.

**The objectives of this dissertation are:**

– to substantiate the relevance of considering volunteerism as a social institution;

– to conduct a theoretical analysis of research on volunteerism and its potential impact on the socialization mechanisms of modern student youth;

– to identify differentiating criteria necessary for developing key strategies for engaging student youth in volunteerism;

– to identify the value orientations and behavioral attitudes shaped by the socialization of student youth through volunteerism;

– to classify student youth based on their readiness to participate in volunteer activities and their value-motivational attitudes;

– to differentiate key areas for improving youth socialization mechanisms through volunteerism.

**The object of the dissertation research** is the socialization of student youth.

**The subject of the dissertation research** is the role and importance of the institution of volunteerism in improving the mechanism of socialization of modern student youth.

**Scientific hypothesis of the dissertation research.**

The process of socialization of modern student youth through volunteerism is influenced by both positive factors, such as the desire to contribute to society and provide concrete assistance, and negative factors, such as a lack of interest and desire to solve others' problems. The main areas for improving the mechanism of socialization of modern student youth will be finding a balance between these factors to enhance the positive and minimize the negative, which will be facilitated by regular sociological research conducted in a monitoring mode on this issue.

A cluster analysis procedure for these research results, allowing for the classification of students based on their readiness to participate in volunteer activities and their value-motivational attitudes, will facilitate differentiation in improving their socialization mechanism.

**Theoretical and methodological basis of the dissertation research.**

The conceptual principles underlying this dissertation research are sociological theories that examine the stated problematic from various perspectives:

– **Structural functionalism (T. Parsons, R. Merton)**, which views society as a holistic system whose elements are interconnected and perform specific functions to maintain stability and reproduction;

– **Humanistic theory of socialization (E. Fromm)**, which examines how sociocultural factors interact with unique human needs to shape the individual;

– **Social development of youth (Yu. A. Zubok, V. I. Chuprova)**, where the authors examine the contradictions between the cultural and the social, the traditional and the modern, the objective and the subjective as sources of youth development;

– **Value-orientation model (M. K. Gorshkov)**, which aims to identify those problematic areas of social interaction in which the connection between generations

is lost and those where this connection is reproduced with the same social, moral, and spiritual orientation, shaping the value orientations of today's youth.

The methodological approaches used in this dissertation are:

– **comparative-historical**, which focuses on the development of volunteerism in close connection with patterns in the development of religious and social norms, worldviews, and values, allowing for the systematization and classification of various approaches to the study of volunteerism and socialization phenomena;

– **neo-institutional**, which allows for the analysis of formal social institutions of volunteerism and the "informal rules of the game" in this area, which, when combined, generate complex organizational interactions between members of society, leading to the maintenance of stability and order, thus enabling the study of volunteerism as a socializing tool;

– **structural-functional**, which allows for the classification of volunteerism, volunteers, and society (the object of volunteerism) in terms of the functioning and structure of volunteerism;

– **predictive**, which allows for the construction of predictive models of the impact of volunteerism on the socialization of student youth.

#### **Empirical basis of the study.**

1. Official statistical data from regional government bodies and territorial state statistics offices of Russia and the city of Orel.

2. Results of nationwide studies.

3. Results of research conducted in the sociology laboratory of the Department of Sociology and Social Technologies at the Central Russian Institute of Management – a branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

4. Research conducted with the direct participation of the author.

#### **The thesis presented for defense and possessing scientific novelty.**

1. The relevance of examining volunteerism as a social institution whose activities are goal-oriented and occur in the form of group activity, the source of which is the external environment (organizations, movements, etc.), is theoretically

substantiated. This determines the appropriateness of applying an institutional approach to its study, which integrates the provisions of structural functionalism, social positivism, and neoinstitutionalism (28. Processes and Institutions of Socialization, Scientific Specialty Passport 5.4.4. Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Processes).

2. Two approaches to the study of socialization are defined: object-subject (G. Giddens, E. Durkheim), where the individual plays a passive role in the process of socialization, and the social environment dominates, and subject-subject (T. Parsons, P.A. Sorokin), where the individual becomes an active participant in this process, and the social environment fades into the background, and the feasibility of using the latter for studying the socialization of student youth is substantiated (18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social status, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth; 28. Processes and institutions of socialization Passports of the scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

3. Differentiating criteria that contribute to the attraction of student youth to volunteerism were identified:

- Gender: men are pragmatically oriented; women are emotionally engaged and teamwork-oriented;

- Education level: college students are focused on empathy and environmental issues, integrating volunteering into the educational process; university students are focused on intellectual and event-based areas, partnerships with employers, reinforced by career incentives;

- Academic performance: students with low academic achievement perceive volunteering as compensation for academic difficulties; students with high academic achievement are focused on solving more complex problems with a creative and organizational component;

- the degree of involvement in volunteering: novice volunteers are guided by clear instructions and mentoring, experienced volunteers strive to complicate the mission and reflect (18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social status,

consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth; 28. Processes and institutions of socialization Passports of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

4. Volunteering has been proven to foster personal qualities and traditional values such as humanism and empathy, which correlate with such traditional values as human life and dignity; the development of historical continuity, which correlates with civic consciousness and patriotism; collectivism and social solidarity, which contribute to strengthening community spirit; and a work ethic, which correlates with the value of creative work.

The main motivators for volunteering are self-realization (the opportunity to show initiative, visible results of actions, personal contribution to a common cause) and social capital (recognition in the community, career prospects, useful contacts). The main demotivators are organizational difficulties (the organizers' formal approach to volunteers, bureaucratic barriers) and substantive routine (tasks without development, monotony in actions) (18. Youth as a social group. Features of the social status, consciousness and behavior of different groups of youth. Problems of social development of youth; 28. Processes and institutions of socialization. Passports of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

5. Five clusters were identified based on willingness to participate in volunteer activities and their values and motivations:

- "Collectivist-conformists" (20%) – passive, inert; the primary motivator is group conformity and maximum simplification of tasks; the primary demotivator is attracting attention and accepting responsibility;

- "Conscious individualists" (21.7%) – pragmatic, calculating; the primary motivator is a safe, predictable, and developmentally beneficial format; the primary demotivator is a waste of time and invasion of personal space;

- "Activist-pragmatists" (30.9%) – ambitious, rational; the primary motivator is the connection between the benefits they bring and their personal gain; the primary

demotivator is the prospect of being left without visible dividends after investing effort;

- "Altruistic social activists" (10.9%) – selfless, altruistic, and motivated by high ideals, emotional satisfaction, and service; demotivated by unprofessionalism and indifference;

- "Indifferent consumers" (16.5%) – infantile; their consumer values have been shaped over years; any attempt to engage in volunteering will be met with misunderstanding and rejection (18. Youth as a Social Group. Characteristics of the Social Status, Consciousness, and Behavior of Different Youth Groups. Problems of Youth Social Development; 28. Processes and Institutions of Socialization. Scientific Specialty Passports 5.4.4. Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Processes).

6. Differentiated approaches to improving youth socialization mechanisms through volunteerism:

- "collectivist-conformists" (20%) – envision volunteerism as simplified, socially approved group activities; the main incentive is belonging to a group and its approval;

- "conscious individualists" (21.7%) – envision volunteerism as a strategic personal investment, achieved through consciously building social connections and careers; the main incentive is practical benefit;

- "pragmatic activists" (30.9%) – envision volunteerism as a launching pad for professional and personal development, transforming the energy of ambition into concrete achievements; the main incentive is the acquisition of skills and competencies;

- "altruist-social activists" (10.9%) – envision volunteerism as providing tangible assistance, transforming the world for the better; the main incentive is finding like-minded people;

- "indifferent consumers" (16.5%) – volunteering seems a pointless waste of time and resources. They can be attracted through directive influence, but this will not in any way influence their socialization (18. Youth as a social group. Features of

the social status, consciousness, and behavior of different youth groups. Problems of social development of youth; 28. Processes and institutions of socialization. Passports of scientific specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions and processes).

**Compliance of the dissertation topic with the requirements of the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC) specialty passport.**

The dissertation topic corresponds to the specialty's specialty 5.4.4. Social structure, social institutions, and processes; Section 18. Youth as a social group. Characteristics of the social status, consciousness, and behavior of different youth groups; Problems of youth social development; Section 28. Processes and institutions of socialization of the scientific specialty passport.

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

**Theoretical significance of the research results.**

The findings obtained during the dissertation expand the scope of further research on volunteerism as a mechanism for the socialization of student youth. They provide an opportunity to deepen and systematize knowledge about the nature and content of volunteerism and the mechanisms of student socialization for subsequent research and the development of theoretical propositions. They also contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge regarding theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of volunteerism as a social institution and mechanism for the socialization of modern student youth.

**Scientific and practical significance of the research results.** The theoretical and practical findings may be of interest to state, municipal, and regional authorities, as well as volunteer organizations. The dissertation materials can be used to refine theoretical approaches to analyzing student socialization and volunteer activities.

Furthermore, the theoretical and empirical data can be used in developing work programs and educational courses for students in the fields of "Youth Work Organization," "Sociology," and "Social Work."



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