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STRATEGIES FOR STATUS IDENTIFICATION OF RUSSIAN YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract

Specificity of the status identification strategies of Russian youth in a transforming society is considered. They are defined as a set of stable reflective ideas about the desired position in society, in accordance with which life goals are defined and actions aimed at their achievement are lined up. Empirical basis of the article is results obtained during sociological research "Interests of modern youth", which is carried out by the method of a questionnaire survey of young people in Volgograd region in 2016, conducted on a multistage quota sample. Based on the data obtained, it is substantiated that a limited range of identification objects is characteristic of modern youth, who, as a rule, include status groups belonging to the market, governmental and administrative, recreational and entertainment and intellectual and creative clusters. Status identification strategies are reflected by the majority of young people, mainly in the context of a purely pragmatic view of life success, associated with material well-being and family happiness. These attitudes become the dominant value orientations in youth environment, predetermining the mythologization of objects of status identification. To a certain extent, the expectations of young people associated with attaining the desired social status represent a negative reaction to the identification standards offered to young people on behalf of the society. A significant part of respondents' claims to modern society is clearly expressed value-semantic nature (spread of lies and deception, a tendency to imitations, etc.), testifying to the feeling of value-normative crisis inherent in young people.

Keywords: Youth, status identification, values, socialization norm, reflection.

1. Introduction

The number of consequences of the modern society globalization should include the increase in its subcultural diversity, expressed, particularly, in the differentiation of social codes and behavior styles of different status groups. The formed samples become reference for young people characterized by polyphony of status identification strategies. They represent a set of stable reflective ideas about the desired position in society, in accordance with which life goals are defined and actions aimed at their achievement are built.

A factor, significantly expanding the choice, is a wide availability of information about the features of life groups' organization with various social statuses. At the same time, mass media often purposefully construct positive status images, which in some cases do not correspond to reality (Rambaree & Knez, 2017). Nevertheless, they become models for the status identification of young people, which is the process of identifying them with certain groups, characterized by the peculiarities of their position in society and the possibilities for realizing specific interests (Jennifer, 2005; Schneider, 2012).

As a result of selective, often aggressive image-making of status identification strategies of young people in some cases are lined up without adequate reflection of sociocultural realities. Consequently, they lose the prospects for successful implementation, stimulating social apathy and protest moods in their subjects, which ultimately leads to an increase in social disjunction (Karmadonov & Kovrigina, 2017; Russell, 2013).

All this gives an additional impetus to the research of identification processes in the youth environment. And, despite the fact that some researchers adhere to the conviction about the exhaustion of identification problems, or its closeness to the exhaustion (Mitroshenkov, 2016), the dynamism of youth subculture constantly provides new data requiring the correction of established concepts (Weller, 2010).

2. Problem Statement

The problem of the study is determined by the contradiction between the substantial expansion of opportunities for status identification of Russian youth in the context of globalization and the inability of a significant part of young people to build and implement successful identification strategies due to their inherent limited reflexive practices. The unsolved nature of this contradiction leads to the social exclusion of youth, destructively affecting the communication system both between young people and their counterparties, and among young people themselves (Trotman, Madeline, & Tucker 2012). In turn, the resolution of this contradiction is possible under the condition of social diagnostics of the processes of youth status identification, revealing and explaining their specificity. This is more relevant because the emphasis is not usually on status in scientific literature, but on ethnocultural identity (Tishkov, Barash, & Stepanov, 2017; Anisimov, 2012; Osipova & Maklashova, 2015).

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is the features of status identification strategies of various groups of Russian youth.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the prevailing types of status identification strategies of Russian youth in a globalizing sociocultural environment.

5. Research Methods

The article is based on the results of the sociological research "Interests of modern youth", which was conducted by the method of questionnaire survey of young people in Volgograd region in 2016. The sample of the study (multistage, quota) was 501 respondents. The quota marks were the place of residence, gender, age, education. In addition, a secondary analysis of data from the All-Russian Youth Survey was carried out the study, conducted by the Center for Social Forecasting and Marketing in April-May 2009 in 21 regions of the Russian Federation (Gorshkov & Sheregi, 2010).

6. Findings

The concept of the study was based on the understanding of identity as a "reflexive project" formed by E. Giddens and his followers (Giddens, 1991; Jennifer, 2005). In this context, status identification is understood as a process, reflected on the level of worldview value, by which a person relates himself to a group occupying a specific position in the system of social relations, which gives its representatives the opportunity to realize their interests.

With this in mind, we have identified eight major clusters, in which groups are combined that serve as identification objects for youth. Each of them is given a conditional definition:

market – includes groups that embody main trends of market economy (bankers, businessmen, farmers);

industrial - groups of industrial workers, which are usually associated with the industrial economic structure in the mass consciousness and are considered (despite the fallacy of this point of view) as outsiders to a large extent;

recreational and entertainment - groups that realize themselves in the spheres of mass culture and sports;

budgetary - groups of so-called "budget workers", to which social workers belong;

governmental and administrative - groups that can be classified as the category of managers (politicians, state and municipal employees, workers of power structures);

intellectual and creative - science and art workers (scientists, "people of art"); despite the differences between these groups, they are mostly united by the creative nature of their professional activities;

criminal - groups that include people associated with the shadow economy, members of criminal communities;

serving – groups uniting employees of security companies, service workers, domestic servants.

Definitely, the listed clusters do not exhaust the entire diversity of the social structure of Russian society, but allow systematically presenting its main elements.

The study shows that young people often identify themselves with groups belonging to the market (19.36%), recreational and entertainment (19.37%), governmental and administrative (20.75%) and

intellectual and creative (18.76%) cluster. Identification with groups of budget (5.19%), industrial (5.99%), serving (4.19%) and criminal (1.20%) clusters is much less pronounced. To tell the truth, the latter cluster may actually be higher, since not every young man is ready to openly declare the attractiveness of the criminal lifestyle.

Thus, four most typical identification status strategies of Russian youth can be identified: a) governmental and administrative; b) market; c) intellectual and creative and d) recreational and entertainment. All the rest are poorly expressed.

The study has not revealed significant gender differences in the identification preferences of respondents. The exception is a more pronounced orientation of men to a group of athletes (difference in relation to women is about 5%). Age differences are more noticeable. In particular, with the increase of age, young people identify themselves with a group of scientists (at the age of 14–18 - 5.53%; 19–24 - 12.89%; 25–29 - 10.75%. The same trend is observed in relation to entrepreneurs (4.23%; 4.44%; 18.35%, respectively). On the contrary, identification with show business representatives (22.54%; 12.89%; 8.23%, respectively) and with politicians (8.45%; 10.57%; 6.33%) decreases, although the tendency is rather weak in the latter case.

However, the most significant differences in the objects of identification are traced by the indicator "place of residence". First of all, they are manifested in the fact that more than 15% of rural residents found it difficult to define them. There was not a single person among the villagers who was willing to identify himself with professional athletes and industrial workers. On the contrary, 12.87% and 5.26% (respectively) of respondents identified with them in the city of Volgograd. At the same time in rural areas, 16.13% of young people identified themselves with politicians; 19.35% - with bankers. In Volgograd these indicators were 7.02% and 8.77%, respectively.

Thus, a clear overestimation of identification ideas is characteristic of rural residents and their focus on groups that, according to the prevailing ideas in public opinion, have the most extensive control over resources. This pragmatic approach is quite typical for modern youth, in the so-called "era of pragmatization of life intentions" (Zlotnikova, Letina, & Gaponova, 2015).

One of the hypotheses of the study is that the status identification of young people as a reflected process is determined by the ideas about the content of life success that are inherent in young people. As a rule, they are as pragmatic as possible, and the objects of identification are comprehended and life strategies acceptable for its achievement are constructed within their framework.

The study demonstrates that the concept of success correlates with two key values for young people - family happiness (23.35%) and wealth (21.96%). Both values have a distinct individual character. A very small proportion of young people identify success in life with values of social importance. So, only 0.60% of respondents consider serving the public as an indicator of life success. Note that the individualization of youth consciousness is a trend that is characteristic not only for Russia (Kitaitseva & Kuchenkova, 2014). In particular, in Russia it manifests itself in the loss of "a complicity sense of what is happening, an identification sense with the country, its culture and history, which creates an unwillingness to take responsibility for what is happening" (Zarubina, 2013, p. 104).

In our opinion, despite the fact that the value of the family formally takes the first place in the hierarchy, the value of wealth has the most significant influence on identification process. As a rule,

orientation towards it determines respondents to be perceived as a reference status group, belonging to which can, according to young people, ensure their material well-being.

In particular, wealth as a priority value is determined by 41.94% of rural residents, for whom orientation toward a cluster of governmental and administrative and market groups is most characteristic. At the same time, the value of wealth takes the most significant position for only 23.39% of respondents in Volgograd. The proportion of those who regard knowledge and education as conditions for achieving life success is quite low among rural youth (12.90%). In Volgograd, this cohort is 47.37%. It is also indicative that the share of those who identify themselves with bankers (5.63%) and entrepreneurs (4.23%) is the least in the youngest age cohort, where the value of wealth is least significant. These figures are 7.59% and 18.35% respectively in the older age cohort.

Thus, the process reflection of status identification in the youth environment is basically determined by the predominance of individualistic values, in the structure of which the value of wealth, which provides material well-being, is most significant. It is understandable for Russian society, because a significant part of population lives below the poverty line or on its border (Kuznetsov, 2016).

Along with individualistic values, the specifics of youth normative consciousness and its high lability have a significant influence on the process of reflection of status identification. For many young people, legal and moral relativism is typical, complemented by heightened criticism regarding the authority of older generation representatives.

In particular, our study shows that only 54.49% of respondents consider it necessary to comply with moral norms in any case. Regarding legal regulations, the indicator is slightly higher (64.47%). But in this case, more than a third of respondents are characterized by situational sense of justice.

It can be argued that moral norms are becoming less and less a social regulator of the behavior of Russian youth. At the same time, only 50.70% recognize their unconditional nature in the youngest age group. Russian researchers Gorshkov and Sheregi (2010) reasonably conclude: "So, 46% of youth representatives are convinced that today we live in a completely different world, different from what it was before, and many traditional moral norms are outdated" (p. 69).

Similarly, legal nihilism inherent in many young people affects the status identification process. In the youth environment, typical Russian features of negative sanctions for violating the law contribute to its spread, which, as the researchers note, are semi-feudal. The real principle of "legality" dominating in society says: the higher the social status of a violator, the softer the punishment for him (Guliaikhin, 2013). Building an identification strategy with a predominant focus on groups related to the market, governmental and administrative, recreational and entertainment, and intellectual and creative clusters, is also an attempt to compensate for the costs of law enforcement practice.

Only 35.93% of young people agree with the statement that, in any case, the requirement of elders should be fulfilled. At the same time, 23.15% of respondents associate their refusal with the contradiction of requirements to their own principles, 18.78% - with the situation peculiarity, 14.77% - with the contradiction of personal interests.

Such a position is generally understandable and explicable, given that not all the requirements of elders are formulated within the legal and moral space. In addition, they are often not adequate to the realities of modern society. It is significant in this regard that only 54.29% of respondents note the

importance of parents experience when choosing life strategies, finding a way out of difficult life situations. This is quite natural and explainable in the framework of the concept of the prefigurative form of culture reproduction (M. Mid), according to which modern youth becomes an active agent of socialization, acting as an assembler of values and social codes of behavior for "adults".

Finally, considering the reasons for the lability of the normative consciousness of young people, it is impossible not to take into account that the socialization norms are formulated on behalf of the society for them, which does not seem to be complementary and attractive to its representatives. In particular, in the course of the survey, only 17.56% of respondents stated that they are satisfied with modern Russian society. Young people named the main reasons for dissatisfaction: the spread of corruption (28.94%); constant lies and deception (28.34%); lack of confidence in the future (23.95%); a sharp separation between rich and poor (22.55%); replacing real cases with imitations (19.76%); danger of terrorism (19.56%); lack of justice (18.96%); lack of freedom (18.56%).

63.87% of respondents expressed a desire to change Russian society. At the same time, among the group of unsatisfied, this indicator was 85.29%. It is quite obvious that with the prevalence of a general negative perception of society, young people will refuse to adopt the standards of behavior offered by external counterparties. This fully applies to the collection of status identification objects and to the identification strategy models.

7. Conclusion

The conducted study leads to a number of conclusions.

1. Despite formally significant expansion of the status identification objects in modern Russian society, caused, on the one hand, by the high level of social differentiation; on the other hand, globalization, their choice by the youth is characterized by obvious limitations. Most young people tend to identify themselves with groups that, in their opinion, have the most extensive possibilities of control over social resources.

2. Status identification strategies chosen by young people are predominantly reflected in the context of a purely pragmatic view of life success, which is mainly associated with material well-being (wealth) and family happiness.

3. Such an orientation is associated with the individualization of values and a decrease in the regulatory impact on the behavior of an individual of socialization norms, which, in turn, predetermines the one-dimensionality of reflection of social practices.

4. Individualized reflection stimulates the formation and consolidation of mythologems in the youth consciousness regarding real possibilities of status groups, which are objects of identification expectations in the process of myth-making, and young people tend to idealize the object of identification.

5. Expectations associated with obtaining the desired social status, in some cases represent a negative reaction to the identification standards offered to young people on behalf of society. A significant part of respondents' claims to modern society is clearly expressed value-semantic nature (the spread of lies and deception, a tendency to imitations, lack of justice), which testifies to the feeling of value-normative crisis inherent in young people. Acting as a form of social anomie, this crisis leads to a weakening of the significance of values as sociocultural regulators, making it possible to adequately reflect social processes.

Acknowledgments

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