

**SCTCMG 2021**  
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of**  
**Modern Globalism»**

**TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIOCULTURAL VALUES IN MULTI-ETHNIC YOUTH COMMUNITIES OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS**

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**Abstract**

The article deals with the specifics of the North Caucasus and its impact on the processes of transformation of the sociocultural values of youth in the region. The authors briefly analyzed the results of a number of previous studies of assessments and perceptions of young people in the North Caucasus in the field of interethnic relations, identity and ethno-territorial processes in the region. On this basis, the article formulates the questions and purpose of scientific research “Risks of conflict in the process of transformation of the socio-cultural values of youth in the North Caucasus”. Based on the analysis of previous studies, the main problems and risks arising in the process of transformation of sociocultural values in the multi-ethnic youth communities of the North Caucasus have been identified. It is concluded that the modern space of sociocultural values of youth in the North Caucasus is formed on the transfer of three main vectors of socio-cultural dynamics such as archaization, traditionalization, modernization. For the youth of the North Caucasus, socio-cultural values are of great importance. Ethnopolitical and ethno-confessional issues are of less concern to young people. The all-Russian identity formed among the youth of the region has a contradictory and unstable character. The blogosphere, social networks and the immediate social environment have the greatest influence on the worldview and sociocultural values of young people.

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*Keywords:* Identity, multiethnicity, North Caucasus, sociocultural values, youth



## 1. Introduction

The North Caucasus is a region of great importance to Russia. The geopolitical, demographic, socio-economic and ethno-confessional specifics of the region should be taken into account when implementing the tasks of youth, national and cultural policy, determining and leveling the risks of conflict in multi-ethnic youth communities. The North Caucasus is a border region of the Russian Federation, a territory of interaction between the Christian and Islamic worlds, a "geopolitical bridge" between the states of the Transcaucasus, the Middle East and the Caspian region. A special feature of the North Caucasus is its polyconfessional and multi-ethnic character, age-old traditions of coexistence and socio-cultural interaction of the Russian and Caucasian peoples. The birth rate and the share of young people in the structure of the population are higher than the national average, and the population density in the region is one of the highest in Russia.

In the North Caucasus, the risks of radicalization and politicization of religious and ethnic identity remain, and there is a destructive influence of international Islamic extremist non-governmental religious and political organizations. Traditional ethnocultural and religious values are of great importance for the peoples of the North Caucasus. Ethno-cultural development of all peoples of the region, while leveling the risks of politicizing ethnic and religious issues and maintaining a common vector for integrating the region into the all-Russian socio-cultural space, are the priorities of Russia's national policy. The tasks of the formation and development of an all-Russian civic identity and its harmonization with ethnic and regional identities in the minds of young people, the formation of values and socio-cultural foundations uniting all the peoples of the region in young people are quite a topical issue for the multi-ethnic North Caucasus.

## 2. Problem Statement

The specificity of the North Caucasus is reflected in the socio-cultural and value characteristics. In the value aspect, conservatism and traditionalism are more clearly manifested here, while the modernist vector is also significant. Traditional and modern sociocultural values are present to varying degrees among young people, which represents of various ethnic and confessional groups and regions of the North Caucasus.

Multi-ethnic youth communities are a space where traditional socio-cultural values are intertwined with modern ones, they are more open than mono-ethnic ones to new values, but the risks of conflict in such communities are also higher. Different cultures meet here, and the reproduction and transmission of socio-cultural values and norms, behavior models will differ even if one ethnic culture dominates in the community. Traditional and modern values are spread to varying degrees among young people — representatives of various ethnic and confessional groups, as well as representatives of different regions of the North Caucasus.

The data of a number of surveys, conducted with the participation of the authors of the article, indicate that among the youth of the North Caucasus negative ethnic stereotypes, which form the negative dynamics of interethnic relations and ethnocultural interaction, are not widely spread. Young people, in general, are open for dialogue with representatives of other cultures and ethnic groups, are not inclined to

politicize and exacerbate issues of ethnic identity and ethnocultural interaction (Vorobiev & Avdeev, 2020). However, one should not regard the current situation in the sphere of ethno-cultural interaction and interethnic relations in the region as a whole and in its subjects as having no problems and destructive factors. For example, a sociological survey conducted in the Republic of Dagestan indicates the presence of latent intolerant attitudes along ethnic lines. These attitudes are manifested in various spheres of social interaction - in the sphere of labor, politics, economics, etc. Researchers conclude about the potential for their transformation into open conflict practices of interethnic interaction (Vereshchagina & Shakhbanova, 2016).

Risks of conflict inevitably arise in multi-ethnic youth communities. These can be both value-worldview conflicts - a conflict of traditional and modern values, and conflicts in the process of social interaction, social adaptation and integration of young people into the all-Russian sociocultural space. Thus, according to a number of surveys carried out with the participation of the authors, the youth of the North Caucasus has formed an all-Russian civic identity, while the risks of conflict in civic, national and religious identity remain. Among the youth, the role of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values is decreasing and the importance of modern (Erokhin et al., 2019). In the context of the economic and contemporary spiritual crisis, these risks are increasing. In this connection the scientific research "Risks of conflict in the process of transformation of the socio-cultural values of youth in the North Caucasus" (grant of the President of the Russian Federation MK-431.2021.2) conducted by the authors of the article in 2021 is actual.

### **3. Research Questions**

This scientific research is aimed at determining the transformation of the values of youth in the North Caucasus, identifying the influence of global, all-Russian and regional factors on the change in the socio-cultural values of the region, establishing the significance for young people and modern sociocultural values. Traditional and modern values include all-Russian culture and all-Russian identity, greater openness, readiness for dialogue, intercultural interaction, personal development and creativity. The study will also determine the ratio of all-Russian, ethnic, confessional and regional identity in the portfolio of identities of young people in the North Caucasus, the attitude of young people to patriotism, social and socially significant activities. Another significant research center for assessing and representing in the field of interethnic relations, as well as determining the risks of involvement in extremist and terrorist activities.

Analysis of previous studies allows us to conclude that young people in the North Caucasus, regardless of nationality, have formed a common regional socio-cultural identity, which is manifested in regional patriotism, greater traditionalism and conservatism. For young people, the values of survival, material well-being and security are still relevant, which is associated with a high level of unemployment among young people, low incomes, lack of life prospects, as well as a high level of corruption, ethnic clans and threats of terrorism. The values of development, creativity and self-realization are priority only for the socially active part of the youth.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The scientific research "Risks of conflict in the process of transformation of the socio-cultural values of youth in the North Caucasus" will allow to determine the risks of conflict in the process of transforming the socio-cultural values of young people in the North Caucasus, the common and differences in the values and perceptions of youth of the Russian and Caucasian peoples. The modern space of sociocultural values of youth in the North Caucasus is formed on the transfer of three main vectors of socio-cultural dynamics. These vectors are archaization, traditionalization and modernization.

It is assumed that if the transformation of the values of the region occurs in the direction away from archaic practices and perceptions (including negative ethnic stereotypes, attitudes towards closeness, survival and confrontation), then conflict risks are increasing. If the transformation is directed towards modern and generally recognized traditional sociocultural values (including the values of all-Russian culture and all-Russian identity, as well as greater openness, readiness for dialogue, intercultural interaction, personal development and creativity aimed at achieving socially significant goals), then the conflict risks are decreasing.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Theoretical framework of the scientific research is the works of leading Russian ethnologists and ethnosociologists in the field of the problem of Russian identity and ethnocultural interaction. The concept of "Russian identity" are got the most complete justification in the works of Tishkov. He understands Russian identity and Russian self-awareness as supra-ethnic phenomena of public life, integrating all ethnic groups of Russia (Tishkov, 2009). Drobizheva interprets the all-Russian civic identity as "identifying oneself with a community, ideas about it, emotional experience of these ideas (pride, patriotism) and readiness for action". According to Drobizheva (2020);

This complex of ideas and images is formed in the process of socialization by the institutions of civil society, the state, family, education, the media, Internet resources. The formation of an integrating connection between citizens is not only the task of the state, but also the need of a society interested in self-understanding, and at some moments - in meaningful solidarity (p. 484).

According to Pain and Fedyunin (2017);

For the integration of the peoples of Russia into a single political nation, it is necessary to overcome the competition of identities and find common grounds for self-identification of people with the whole country. You can hardly find a better foundation than civic identity in connection with civic practices (p. 151).

The importance and significance of collective ideas, beliefs, goals and values of "faith in ethnic community" that form identity, is substantiated by Weber (2017). Understanding the process of identification presupposes an appeal to the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann (1995). The

concept of fluid modernity described by Bauman as an era of transition to a new social reality of postmodernity is significant for understanding the phenomenon of identity (Bauman, 2008). A change in the meanings and values of the surrounding social world leads a person to a phenomenon called by Erickson identity crisis (Erikson, 2008).

The methodological basis for the scientific research of the transformation of the values of youth in the North Caucasus is the methodology developed by Inglehart and Welzel in the framework of an international research project "World Values Survey". The map of sociocultural values, compiled on the basis of the results of the research project of the World Values Survey, makes it possible to determine the ratio in a particular society of traditional and modern values.

The implementation of the goals and objectives of the scientific research involves the authors of the article in the spring of 2021 conducting a sociological study of assessments and perceptions of young people in the field of interethnic relations, the perception of traditional and modern values, the ratio in the portfolio of the identities of young people of Russian, confessional, ethnic and regional identities. The method of sociological survey will be used to determine the nature and direction of the transformation of the sociocultural values of young people in the North Caucasus, to determine the general and special in the ideas about the values of the youth of the Russian and North Caucasian peoples, as well as the potential riskiness in the course of the transformation of the values of youth. The focus group method will allow to identify deep ideas about socio-cultural values among the youth of the region, to determine the nature of the transformation of value ideas. The method of comparative analysis will allow to identify and establish the general and specific in the assessments and perceptions of the youth of the Russian and North Caucasian peoples. The secondary analysis method will help to study a wide range of research conducted on this and related topics, to establish the current state of the problem. Comparison of the results of the previous and the present research will reveal the specifics of the transformation of the values of youth in the North Caucasus. The object of the sociological survey will be senior undergraduate and graduate students aged 20-24 from leading universities in the North Caucasus. In total, it is planned to interview 1,400 students in the humanities, as well as technical and natural science specialties of the leading universities of the North Caucasus. The survey will be conducted in an online form, questions and tests will be generated using cloud-based tools (Google Form). The focus groups will be focused on senior undergraduate and graduate students from leading universities in the North Caucasus.

## **6. Findings**

An analysis of the results of previous studies carried out, including with the participation of the authors, makes it possible to identify the following negative factors and risks of conflict that arise in the process of transformation of sociocultural values in multi-ethnic youth communities of the North Caucasus:

- The outflow of the Russian population from the republics of the North Caucasus continues and the trend towards mono-ethnicity in some republics is increasing (Chechnya and Ingushetia), some areas of Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria. In this regard, the role of the Russian language as the state language and the language of interethnic communication decreases, the influence of Russian culture in the secondary education system and in cultural

institutions decreases. In the republics of the North Caucasus Federal District of the Russian Federation, a tendency is formed towards the predominance of ethnic cultures, the cultural influence of Turkey and the countries of the Middle East remains, which may lead to their gradual withdrawal from the socio-cultural space of the Russian Federation.

- Please replace this text with context of your paper.
- In interethnic relations, the historical and cultural significance of ethno-territorial issues in the republics of the North Caucasus is increasing. During the 2019 research "Ethnopolitical processes in the Caucasus in the assessments and perceptions of modern youth" respondents answering the question "Why do you think the territorial integrity of your area (republic) is an important issue?" emphasized what was important to them unity and indivisibility of the territory of their republics. They said: "territorial integrity unites the people", "my republic is my home, no one wants his house to be dismantled in parts", "any piece of our land that for one reason or another passed to others is a great cultural loss for us", "these territories are part of the way of life of the people", "every piece of native land is important for me", "our ancestors fought for these lands", "the land is the legacy of our fathers" (Erokhin et al., 2019, pp. 29-39).
- All-Russian civic, national and religious identities in the minds of young people are in an unstable equilibrium state. This carries risks of identity conflict. An important component of identity is the perception of the connection with their country, Small homeland, family, people of their nationality and religion. Civil, national and religious identity are priorities for the majority of respondents. Civic identity is important and rather important for 81%, national - 77%, religious - 65% of respondents in the North Caucasus (Erokhin et al., 2019). The active component of the all-Russian civic identity is the socio-political activity of the youth of the North Caucasus. The majority of young people believe that their active participation in the political life of the region and the country is necessary and their public activity can influence the change in the socio-political situation in the country and the region for the better.
- Insufficient formation of the all-Russian civil identity leads to the predominance of regional identity. It is based on the perception by the regional community of a certain system of values, ethnocultural specifics and historical memory of the regional community. In the imagination of the youth of the North Caucasus, the most significant are such traditional components of patriotism as the preservation of their national culture and history, pride in their people and their protection.
- The state, represented by the authorities, TV, and the education system, exerts less influence on the formation of political views of young people. The prevailing influence is exerted by the environment in which young people communicate and spend a lot of time, as well as the blogosphere and social networks. The worldview of young people, including the idea of the state and citizenship, is formed to a greater extent under the influence of the immediate environment, which is informal, while both online and offline communication are relevant.

## 7. Conclusion

Multi-ethnic youth communities demonstrate mixed dynamics today. Along with the development of a rational everyday culture, modernization, overcoming ethnic stereotypes, there are also attempts to return to traditional ethnic and confessional values, the archaization of some social practices and relationships. There are a development of a rational everyday culture, modernization, overcoming hostility and stereotypes, a re-actualization of traditional ethnic and confessional values, as well as an archaization of some social practices and relations. In general, in the minds of young people in the North Caucasus, sociocultural issues are becoming more and more relevant and replace ethno-political and ethno-confessional issues. Socio-cultural and value aspects of interethnic relations, such as the history and culture of their people, love and pride in their small homeland and their people, are becoming more significant. The all-Russian identity formed among the youth of the region is contradictory and unstable. The blogosphere, social networks and the immediate environment have the greatest influence on the formation of sociocultural values of young people. The influence of government departments and the education system on the formation of the worldview of young people is decreasing. The risks of radicalization of youth, politicization of ethnic and confessional identities remain.

## Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the grant of the President of the Russian Federation No. MK-431.2021.2.

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