

SELF-REGULATION OF THE SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF RUSSIAN YOUTH IN CRIMEA

AUTO-REGULAÇÃO DA VIDA SÓCIO-PEDAGÓGICA E POLÍTICA DA JUVENTUDE RUSSA NA CRIMEIA

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Abstract: The article analyzes the problems of political regulation of young people in Crimea in the context of the instability of the socio-political situation in the region, which is under the pressure of sanctions and world isolation. The authors emphasize that the objective difficulties are compounded by the peculiarities of the youth's political identity, which was formed in another state. The assessment of self-regulation processes in the political life of Crimean youth was carried out through a sociological survey using three empirical indicators: 1) satisfaction with the state of Affairs in the region (country); 2) articulation of the difficulties experienced by regional youth; 3) readiness to be included in alternative political participation programs.

Keywords: self-regulation; political identity; political resocialization; social problems; adaptation.

Resumo: O artigo analisa os problemas de regulação política dos jovens na Crimeia no contexto de instabilidade da situação sócio-política da região, que está sob pressão de sanções e isolamento mundial. Os autores enfatizam que as dificuldades objetivas são compostas pelas peculiaridades da identidade política da juventude dessa região, formada em outro estado. A avaliação dos processos de auto-regulação na vida política da juventude da Crimeia foi realizada por meio de uma pesquisa sociológica utilizando três indicadores empíricos: 1) satisfação com o estado de coisas da região (país); 2) articulação das dificuldades vivenciadas pelos jovens da região; 3) prontidão para ser incluída em programas alternativos de participação política.

Palavras-chave: auto-regulação; identidade política; socialização política; Problemas sociais; adaptação.

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Introduction

The problem of self-regulation of participation in the socio-pedagogical political life of Crimean youth cannot be considered far-fetched. Due to the integration of the region into the Russian Federation, it is significant for all age groups of the Peninsula, but it is especially relevant for young people due to the fact that this age cohort was the only one in Crimea for which Russia, in essence, is an exogenous political reality.

For the majority of young people, the process of civil and political identity at the stage of transition from childhood to adolescence and youth was inextricably linked with Ukraine, and some of those who took part in the presidential elections in 2018 were even the same age as the collapse of the USSR and, consequently, the emergence of the Ukrainian independent statehood. Therefore, it is not surprising that young people in Crimea are experiencing difficulties in their political re-socialization. At the same time, unlike the generation of her parents and people of an even older generation, in 2014, when the referendum was held, she was roused, without having individually significant channels of historical memory that would broadcast information about the inseparable connection of Crimea as Russia.

The existing system of education in schools in Ukraine is built in such a way to split a single historical process into locally Ukrainian and locally Russian by downplaying the importance of the latter in favor of the former. Given the high degree of sensitivity of children's minds to the first received information, this inevitably affected the development of anti-Russian sentiments among the Crimean youth. In any case, it helped to increase the political distance between the youth of the two neighboring countries.

Of course, the Russian government takes into account all these difficulties. Some of them became obvious almost immediately after the return of the Peninsula to Russia. So, a loud signal on May 25, 2014, sounded the performance of the anthem of Ukraine by graduates of one of the Yalta high schools (Crimea, 2014). And even though it turned out after a while that they were students of the only educational institution in Crimea where teaching was carried out in Ukrainian, the authorities did not completely ignore such incidents.

At present, Crimean youth are given special attention: efforts are being made to improve the socio-economic infrastructure of the region, various educational opportunities are being provided, including admission to "mainland" Russian universities, and a lot of attention is being paid to Patriotic education. However, it is practically an unsolvable task to organize young people in all their interactions and to put the formation of their political consciousness under strict control. Therefore, when we talk about the organization of political life of the Peninsula's youth, we should pay attention to the processes of self-regulation, which can take a variety of forms: both in terms of content and the nature of the actions performed.

Thus, we state that the purpose of our research interest is to show the features of self-regulation in the political life of the Crimean youth in the context of integration of the region into the Russian Federation.

Research Methods

Self-regulation as a concept in sociology is usually understood as *the ability of complex social systems, macro and micro-groups, as well as individual social actors to compensate for the lack of external organizing force (purposeful regulation) to preserve the stability of social interaction*. In this sense, the main function of self-regulation is compensatory. It is particularly important in the context of social imbalance, which manifests itself in the presence of a variety of inconsistent goals, values, and interests that are inherent in different groups of social actors. At the same time, such inconsistency occurs both in exogenous social groups, causing discord in the functioning of local communities, and in endogenous ones, disrupting the normal life of the host region.

In principle, ideally, every society should have the ability to self-regulate, and the facts confirm that to some extent this ability actually exists. But this measure, first of all, depends on the perceived readiness of social actors to coordinate their divergent interests in order to participate in joint activities. In the late modern society, this becomes noticeably more difficult

to implement than in the traditional one. Needs are becoming more and more multi-vector, and social traditions and stereotypes are fading and being destroyed, thereby ceasing to play the role of social bonds that can be a reliable platform for self-regulation of social behavior (Zubok & Chuprov, 2011; Chikaeva et al., 2018). As a result, the socio-cultural matrix at the lower levels (Gafiatulina & Makadei, 2019), where the layers are responsible for regulating the sphere of the subconscious are located, is gradually destroyed, and in the upper layers, where the process of developing conscious and reproducible interests and values takes place, its enlargement takes place. On the one hand, this increases the importance of individual decisions made by social actors, their personal responsibility for the consequences that may result from their activities; and on the other, the role of opinion leaders of various informal groups that absorb the socially inert mass of young people who are not able to identify and solve individual problems is felt to be more significant in society.

The methodology of the self-regulation process is determined by the phenomenological sociology of A. Schutz. As a basic concept, it offers such a natural setting (Schutz, 2004). It is interpreted by the scientist as a tool through which the actor can determine what is individualized and what is typical in relation to social communication. This division forms communities formed in the process of self-regulation, differentiated through the articulation of their needs, which act as a natural impulse for social interaction. The presence of detectable typicalities creates a conditional potential for the ability of young people to engage in self-regulation processes. In this case, the intermediate goal of search activity based on a natural setting is aimed at suppressing reflexivity (the intention to reproduce individualized meanings). Such a state is characterized by a sociologist as "rational action", which is "always an action within an unproblematic and indefinite set of typifications of motives, means and goals, modes of action and persons who perform it, taken for granted. They are, however, taken for granted not only by the actor himself but also by his partner" (Schutz, 2004, p.11). A. Schutz defines this as the suppression of hotbeds of tension in the space of life meanings, the reduction of problematic interactions that can support social instability and uncertainty.

The considered social model can be applied as an explanatory model for the social processes of self-regulation of the political life of young people using the category of reflexivity, through which we can show how the transition of needs to the level of understanding of interests is carried out. As for the concept of "interest", in our assessment of the interest of young people in political participation, we will adhere to the definition given by Dmitry Alexandrov. According to its interpretation, "interest is a rational and valuable position of a social subject regarding the provision of conditions and ways of their life and behavior in society" (Aleksandrov, 2014, p. 9). From this point of view, the interest is an external expression of a reflexed adaptation strategy that links together the political needs and social capabilities of the subject (Panfilova, et al., 2019). Young people may have certain political needs. However, the appearance of "interest" in political life that can satisfy this need depends on the emergence of a specific social actor (a representative of a cohort of young people) in the space of the life world of the corresponding opportunities. Applying this definition to the subject of our article, we note that political self-regulation becomes possible only if the social actor is able to independently develop the necessary adaptation strategies, which at the external level of development of his political consciousness will form the corresponding interests in the field of political participation. Awareness of not only needs but also the possibilities of their satisfaction occurs "at the secondary stage of socialization, which is characterized primarily by the development of the ability to actively learn, comprehend and rethink, i.e. reflection" (Zubok, 2012, p. 13). Young people develop a personal practice of participating in political activities, which confirms or refutes a stable interest in certain groups of needs. Reflection brings needs to the level of consciousness, where they become the object of cognitive activity. As a result, stable interests are formed that determine the forms, intensity, and nature of youth participation in political processes.

The stability of interests depends not only on the characteristics of the reflexive experience of an individual social actor. In the end, in sociology, this experience does not become an object of independent study, regardless of the depth and quality of the reflexive abilities of

the cognizing subject. It is absorbed in the search for those conditions and grounds that ensure the formation of a wider, social space. The solution to this problem in the subject space of sociology is based on the application of such a concept as a social setting. To reveal this concept, we will understand using the wording proposed by S. S. Gordeeva – “the readiness of the subject to perform specific actions in certain situations that contribute to the satisfaction of actualized needs on the basis of an emotionally colored evaluative attitude to a social object.” (Gordeeva, 2016, p. 21). Through the social setting is not so much structuring and cementing individual interests, but the education reference groups political participation of young people, which supports and implements the collective interests of a political ally. Thus, the social attitude ensures the transformation of individual experiences of personal experience in meeting needs and realizing interests into collective experiences, which leads to the formation of stable youth groups in the field of political relations, which are formed as a result of self-organization processes.

When social attitudes begin to play the role of a socio-cultural regulator, their stability in this capacity, and equally their effectiveness, depends on how much they have been reflected by the cognizing subject. Therefore, we are talking about social values. The concept of social value, as a term used in this article, will be based on the classic definition proposed by American sociologists W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki in their joint work “the Polish peasant in Europe and America”. In the specified work we read the following: “By social value we mean any object that has an empirical content accessible to members of a social group, as well as the meaning that makes it or may be the object of action.” (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918-1920, 32). If we follow the definition presented, the category of “value” in political relations acquires the properties of an object (it is defined). This allows us to build a clear and uniform vector relationship with respect to value, which unites a certain reference group around the “value-as-an-object”, which has a sign of stability due to the common attitude of all group members to the object of evaluation. This value produces the emergence of social solidarity since the creation of a single scale for assessing the significance of social objects supports group cohesion and the presence of systemic connections, which are based on role models of behavior, created in such a way that the group is both differentiated and unified at the same time.

Thus, the transformation of needs into interests and the reproduction of social attitudes and values on their basis ultimately leads to the formation of a space of group political consciousness, where social actors have typified motives for political actions in relation to each other. One of the most important characteristics of a conciliatory attitude towards young people is that the social conditions that create the conditions for their socialization are characterized by a higher level of uncertainty and instability (Tarasenko et al., 2016). It should be understood that the described mechanism only regulates the processes of creating typicalities but does not lead to absolute uniformity in social reality. As a result, in the minds of different groups of actors, there is a focus on the reproduction of stable social forms that launch activities in group communities, where there are alternative behavioral programs to the prevailing types of culture. Young people, due to the characteristics inherent in this age group, have stable motives for more active activity than other age cohorts. This is especially true of their political activities. The spontaneity of the conditions in which the political consciousness of young people is formed creates uncertainty and unstructured. This, in turn, leads to a loss of manageability, and hence causes a particularly acute need for self-regulation of their activities.

All of the above is characteristic of the youth of the Crimea to a greater extent than the analogical age groups of other regions of Russia. If on the “mainland”, as is often expressed in the Crimea, young people are “on duty” socialization, including in the existing matrix of political values, norms and roles, then on the Peninsula, the existing “spontaneity of conditions” for various reasons, which we will write below, has much greater variability than in the rest of Russia.

The analysis of the features of self-regulation of the political life of young people in Crimea in the context of integration of the region into the Russian Federation was carried out in the course of a sociological study (a survey of students of the Crimean Federal University), conducted in two stages on February 12-20 and March 12-13, 2018. The research was conduc-

ted to analyze the main characteristics of the electoral field of the KFU (students) by the parameters of assessing the political, economic, and socio-psychological situation in the Crimea, as well as by the main parameters of electoral behavior – electoral activity, certainty, stability and motivation for choice. In total, 1400 students of KFU structural divisions and branches took part in the survey. In addition, the method of analyzing documents was used, among which the sources of empirical information - electronic media, social networks, and Internet blogs-predominated.

Results

The assessment of self-regulation processes taking place in the political life of Crimean youth was carried out using three empirical indicators:

- 1) satisfaction with the state of Affairs in the region (country);
- 2) articulation of difficulties;

3) readiness to be included in alternative political participation programs. All three indicators are closely related to each other because they reflect the psychological background for other forms of political participation, the social grounds for dissatisfaction with the results of official policy, and the understanding of ways of political participation that are not foreseen in the framework of desired or approved procedures.

Let us turn to the question of satisfaction with the state of Affairs in the region (country).

Table 1. Student satisfaction with the state of Affairs in the Republic of Crimea (country)

Answer choice	The result obtained, in %	
	In The Republic Of Crimea	In The Russian Federation
Satisfied	10.40	4.80
Rather satisfied	34.88	38.08
Rather not satisfied	28,80	28.16
Completely dissatisfied	12.96	13.60
I can't answer	12.96	15.36

There are no deep differences between regional and federal assessments. This is confirmed by another question from the questionnaire, which suggests a direct comparison of the quality of life in the Republic of Crimea in comparison with other regions of Russia. The options “better” and “in our region, people live on average the same as in most other regions of the country, in some ways worse, in some ways better” were chosen by a total of 63.36% of respondents. 28.32% of all respondents agreed with the alternative position: “in our region, people generally live worse than in most other regions of the country”. The presence of coincidences in the answers only makes it easier for us to reach a holistic understanding that self-regulation of young people in the political sphere depends not on the awareness of backwardness from other regions of Russia, but on the rejection of specific problems of the socio-economic nature of the region itself. The only question is whether these problems have always existed, including during the Ukrainian period of the Peninsula’s life, or whether they were the result of Crimea’s joining Russia. In fact, this is important since this aspect is directly related to the scheme that we have constructed in the theoretical and methodological part of the article. Along the line of social discontent, we can build a combination of concepts through which we have described the mechanism of self-regulation. In the end, behind the presented figures, which in this capacity only indicate the depth of the psychological background on which the impulses of political discontent grow, it is possible to assess the real motives that can act as factors of political self-organization. Even a simple linear measurement reveals that there

are about 40% of potentially dissatisfied students in Crimea. This means that at least as many people are able to choose alternative forms of political self-regulation.

The presence of a large number of young people who are dissatisfied with the situation in the region actualizes the need to understand what problems are the basis for this.

Table 2. Problems that are acute for you personally

Answer options	The result obtained, in %
Increase in prices for goods and services	36.00
Growth of tariffs for housing and communal services, rent	32.00
Bad roads, bad transport operation	30,00
Low level of medical services, poor performance of health authorities	28.80
Low wages	28.40
Corruption, poor performance and the arbitrariness of officials	24,40
Low quality of housing and communal services	24.40
Low pensions	21.20
Poor state of the environment, environmental problems	19,20
Difficulties with traveling abroad	17.20
Problems of the moral state of society, low level of morality, indifference of people around	16,80
The threat of unemployment rate of	16.00
Prevalence of drunkenness, alcoholism, and drug addiction	14.40
Arrival in the region of a large number of new residents, migrants	13,60
Housing shortage, poor quality, dilapidated housing	12.80
Threat of terrorist acts	12.00
International problems	9.20
Low level of the educational system in the region (schools, colleges, universities)	8.40
The high crime rate of	4.00
Other (WRITE)	2.00

It is easy to see that on the upper floors of the pyramid of personally actualized problems there are difficulties of a socio-economic nature. The undisputed leader was “growth in prices for goods and services” (36.0%). To a large extent, this is a direct consequence of the Peninsula becoming part of Russia. The increase in prices in the future could be offset by an increase in development indicators, but there is one aspect of this problem that cannot be corrected by simply equalizing the quality of life of the population of the Peninsula to all-Russian standards. This is a loss of extremely convenient practice for the Ukrainian period, when the presence of different price ranges in the Crimea and Russia allowed Russian tourists to consume a much larger amount of goods on the Peninsula for the same amount of money than in their homeland. Now prices have been leveled, and there is even talk of a so-called “price revolution”, and this has led to a decrease in the purchasing power of Russian citizens in Crimea. Meanwhile, they are now in many ways the only consumers of tourist products: because of the sanctions, foreigners cannot come to Crimea, and Ukrainians for known reasons do not want to.

The significance of the price revolution in the perception of the Crimean youth itself can be evidenced by the fact that when answering other questions related to the region’s development strategy, respondents chose answers that indicate the prospects for the development of Crimea as an international tourist center. So, the answer “the region should develop as a

tourist area, the manufacturer of organic agricultural products as environmental reserve” was chosen by 49.28% of respondents, and close to its implementation strategy formulation “the region should develop as a “free port”, “window” shopping “gates” of Russia to the outside world, and from the outside world to Russia” – 21.44%.

It is also clear that young people are seriously concerned about defects in the socio-economic infrastructure (transport, housing and utilities, roads, etc.), which can partly be considered a legacy from the Ukrainian period (transport and roads), but also has consequences due to the features of the new Russian policy (the increase in payments for housing and utilities) (Kasyanov et al., 2020). Other issues, such as problems of spiritual and moral nature, protection of security, low level of education (Kovaleva et al., 2019), increase in crime, and ethnic contradictions were not so significant when assessing their personal relevance.

There is no doubt that the majority of young people have a positive view of Crimea’s joining Russia and see the new opportunities that this Association offers them. But there is also a certain group, which we will have to define quantitatively, which is potentially able to search for alternative forms of self-regulation in the political sphere in real politics.

As a justification, we can refer to a number of data obtained in the course of the poll, indicating the search for other vectors of political development for the Crimea and, as a result, personal movement in these areas.

Table 3. What sources do you usually learn about events from

Answer options	The result obtained, in %
Social networks	66.56
Conversations with relatives, friends, acquaintances	63.52
All-Russian TV channels (by importance): <i>Russia 24, channel One, Russia, NTV, Ren TV</i>	41.60
Internet (foreign language sites) <i>YouTube, Google, The New York Times. (16% of site names did not specify)</i>	34.08
Random conversations in public places, rumors	24,16
Crimean TV channels (by importance): <i>Krym 24, 1 Krym, millet, ITV, IKS</i>	15.52
Public organization that you are a member	8.8
The website of the University	8.8
Newspapers (by importance): <i>Krymskaya Pravda, a Reporter, a Look</i>	6.72

Social networks, conversations with relatives, and TV channels as sources of information were expected to be among the leaders. But at the same time, a large share in the designated quality is occupied by foreign-language sites, which, obviously, was more typical for Crimean youth than for Russian ones since the Ukrainian period. After reunification with Russia, the habit of receiving information from foreign sites remained. Given that Crimea is considered annexed abroad, the Western media is dominated by the rhetoric corresponding to this attitude when assessing the current situation on the Peninsula. The aggravation of some of the problems mentioned by respondents in foreign media is directly linked to the change in the international status of the region. This idea is supported by information portals, Newspapers, social networks, etc., whose domains are located abroad. Propaganda is facilitated by the fact that in neighboring Ukraine, the Russian language becomes a means of anti-Russian policy, facilitating the information war for the involvement of Crimean youth in alternative official forms of political participation.

Various structures that define the goal of their activities as human rights play an important role in this. Modern Russian authorities are making significant efforts to create officially supported NGOs on the Peninsula, similar to the existing ANO “Public control” in the Rostov region (its Crimean counterpart is the CRO “human Rights Committee “Delo chest”), but new

groups are still being created and even operating as exclusively network communities, since they are registered under foreign domains, but at the same time proclaim that they operate on the territory of Crimea. One of these organizations is the Crimean human rights group. Its functions are broader than those of the network community since this organization actually acts as an information Agency, whose self-proclaimed goal is “to promote the observance and protection of human rights in Crimea by drawing broad attention to the problems of human rights and international humanitarian law on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula, as well as to search for and develop mechanisms for the protection of human rights in Crimea”. In fact, this is an anti-Russian organization whose functioning is supported by Western financial sources. In a more traditional format, as a network community in “FB”, the “Human Rights movement of Crimea” operates. It is located geographically in Ukraine, where it has the status of an NGO, but its thematic focus is related to Crimea, which is provided by the placement of information about violations (from the point of view of the group’s administrators) of human rights on the Peninsula. Viewing online records showed that the “Human Rights movement of Crimea” posts exclusively of an ethnic nature, recording the actions of Russian law enforcement agencies against the Crimean Tatar population.

There are many such network platforms in the information space available to Crimean youth. Their influence on the processes of self-regulation is undeniable, since they arouse interest in an alternative interpretation of the difficulties of the process of integration of Crimea into Russia, generating anti-Russian values in the political consciousness. As a result, the political participation of a certain part of the youth begins to be subordinated to the values of protest. A reliable indicator for checking the scale of the protest potential among young people can serve as the corresponding decisions that were predicted by respondents regarding participation in the presidential elections of 2018.

Table 4. Russian Presidential elections will be held on March 18.
Do you intend to vote?

Answer options	The result obtained, in %
I will definitely vote	25.46
Most likely, I will vote	26.07
Most likely, I will not vote	12.83
I’m not going to run in the election	28.31
I can’t answer	7.33

Table 4 shows that the group of young people who have absenteeism values is 41.14%. This is almost half of the number of respondents. In this regard, we were interested in the reasons for the reluctance to go to the polling stations, which were called by respondents from this group. Most often political motives prevailed among them: “distrust of all Presidential candidates without exception” – 14.88%, “uncertainty in a fair vote count” - 16.96%, “political (religious) beliefs” – 8.93%. The rest of the answers did not contain political accents and, accordingly, they cannot be taken into account as impulses for self-regulation of the political life of the Crimean youth. Adding up the results, we get an amount approximately equal to forty percent. This is about half of the total figure of 41.14%, which quantitatively characterizes the group of presidential election refuseniks. Accordingly, for the entire sample, we select a total of 20-25% of respondents whose political values most likely do not coincide with the official ones. This group shows the scale of the protest potential among the youth of Crimea.

Conclusions

Self-regulation is based on the manifestation of a compensatory function associated with the replacement of a lack of external organizing force necessary for maintaining the stability of social interaction. It is particularly significant in the context of social imbalance, which manifests itself in the presence of inconsistent goals, values, and interests inherent in different

groups of social actors. Features of political self-regulation are expressed in the fact that its mechanism is formed from political interests and values. The structure of political self-regulation is described by us through the operationalization of such concepts as political needs, interests, attitudes and values, which together form a certain type of political consciousness. Self-regulation of the political life of the Crimean youth at the present stage takes place in difficult conditions. The uncertainty and instability that create the need for self-organization are more common for young people in Crimea than for their peers from other regions of Russia. This is due to the processes of re-socialization, replacing one type of political consciousness with another. An additional impulse to self-organization is the presence of old programs of political participation, alternative to those supported by the official Russian government. Self-regulation processes in the political life of Crimean youth were evaluated by obtaining data from a sociological survey with the control of three empirical indicators: 1) satisfaction with the situation in the region (country); 2) articulation of difficulties experienced by regional youth; 3) willingness to participate in alternative political participation programs as opposed to participating in official ones. We have made the scale of self-regulation processes that are dependent on identifying the protest potential among the Crimean youth. It is established that the majority of young people positively assess the entry of Crimea into Russia and welcome the new opportunities that this Association provides them. But there is also a certain group of young people who are potentially able to search for alternative forms of self-regulation in real politics. In the analyzed sample, a total of 20-25% of respondents whose political values most likely do not coincide with the official ones are identified. It is this group that shows the magnitude of the protest potential of the Crimean youth.

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