

Challenges to Leadership Development in Members of Student Communities as a Problem of Social Well-Being and Development of Patriotism in Youth

Gritskikh N.

Irkutsk state university
Irkutsk, Russia
anris@list.ru

Reshetnikova E.

Irkutsk state university
Irkutsk, Russia
eresh80@mail.ru

Zagorodny N.

Irkutsk state university
Irkutsk, Russia
lic-kric97@mail.ru

Feytkevich N.

Irkutsk state university
Irkutsk, Russia
feytkevich@mail.ru

Bovkun A.

Irkutsk National Research Technical University
Irkutsk, Russia
bovas87@yandex.ru

Abstract—The paper presents the results of the study conducted by the scientists of the Laboratory of Psycho-economical and Cross-Cultural Research, Institute of Social Sciences, Irkutsk State University. The paper provides an overview of the top challenges to the development of leadership qualities in members of student communities and proposes the ways of their minimization. The emphasis is placed on the fact that the studied leadership qualities are important for both the individual and society, and are an indicator of social well-being and patriotism. Social well-being and patriotism are considered through the prism of state regulation, psychological characteristics of young people and socio-cultural research. The authors propose the approach to solving the problems of development of leadership qualities through the category of "social capital". Psycho-physiological barriers and destructive impact of social environment can be reduced through rethinking of the role of social capital, the place and importance of the state and student communities in stimulation of young people. The paper uses research data from scientific foundations in Russian cities of Abakan, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Kyzyl, Tomsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita and Yakutsk, and a total of 2000 respondents were involved in the study.

Keywords—*leadership qualities of young people, student communities, social well-being, patriotism, social capital, psycho-physiological characteristics, social environment, government policy*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of social modernization, the issue of the well-being of all social groups of the country is particularly relevant. On the one hand, Russian society assimilates and translates democratic values; on the other hand, transformation of the

mentality required in these political conditions continues and takes quite a long time, hence, both the society and management structures are in transitional state.

Economic, political, social and ethno-cultural well-being, firstly, largely depends on the quality of government decisions, which, in turn, are conditioned by knowledge and skills of middle and senior managers, and secondly, on approval/rejection of these decisions by society [1-5]. Many of these decisions are based on the needs of social groups, while the lack of ideological foundations and the need for cohesion and social consolidation highlight the problems of patriotism. In our opinion, one of the most effective tools for social approval of patriotic decisions by society is support of the initiatives by student communities and formation of necessary leadership qualities among leaders of these communities. However, this issue is poorly studied as its relevance is underestimated.

II. RESULTS

Well-being is a characteristic of the inner state of the individual that depends on a complex of vital factors, which are an interdependent system of needs and goal accomplishment. That is, well-being is the accomplishment of life goals by the individual, which to a certain extent satisfy his needs. In the context of this study, the authors analyze social well-being and imply that the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the individual, his self-esteem largely depends on conditions and quality of his interaction with other social groups and fields and their impact on the individual. One of the external factors of social well-being is the government policy, and the policy of

patriotism in the context of Russia. It should be noted that the problem of patriotism is often encountered in various government documents, in particular, in the State Program Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation for 2016–2020 [6]. In practice, this strategy is implemented as follows: banned publication of the textbook on Economics for 10–11 grades by Prof. Igor Lipsitz since it does not inculcate patriotism. Therefore, it can be concluded that the patriotic policy is targeted at the younger generation.

In order to identify patriotic value orientations of young people, the Laboratory of Psycho-economical and Cross-Cultural Research, Irkutsk State University, conducted a comprehensive study on Economic Patriotism as an Object of Interdisciplinary Research in Psychology and Resources of its Formation in Urban and Rural Youth (through the example of the population of Eastern Siberia).

TABLE I. PATRIOTIC MANIFESTATION (1 – MINIMUM POINT, 10 – MAXIMUM POINT)

Possible response	17–25 years	26–35 years	36–45 years
I am a patriot of my small motherland (village, town)	7.13	7.65	7.23
I am a patriot of my motherland (region, district)	7.13	7.53	7.34
I am a patriot of the entire Baikal region	6.88	7.05	7.01
I am a patriot of my country	7.56	8.07	7.94
I am a patriot of my mainland (Asian, European)	5.09	5.34	4.78
I am a Patriot of the Earth (cosmopolitan)	5.70	5.60	5.20
I am a patriot of the organization where I work/study	5.79	5.38	5.37
I adhere to the principle “Where it is good, there is my motherland”	4.64	4.09	3.82
I do not accept this word	2.44	2.56	2.24

Note: $p < 0.05^*$; $p < 0.01^{**}$

The data in Table I show that respondents aged from 17 to 25 years put forward the standpoint “I am a patriot of my country” (7.56 out of 10), and at the age from 26 to 35 years, this indicator increases (8.07 out of 10). These indicators cannot be considered to be positive, as the expected results, which are provided in the State Program, and the spent resources of the state budget, which are pledged to implement this program, do not correlate. Young people aged from 17 to 25 years claim that “I am a patriot of my small motherland (village, town)” and “I am a Patriot of my motherland (region, district)” with a score of 7.13 out of 10. This implies that regional identity among young people is developed poorer than identity with the country and the state. The study also revealed a pattern: the level of patriotism decreases as age increases. Thus, we can say that the age group of young people from 26 to 35 years shows the peak of patriotism, and the dynamics of the indicators takes the form of a sinusoid. In general, the results presented in Table 1 indicate that young people do not provide sufficient display of patriotism in all its forms.

Military and civil patriotism is currently high-priority in terms of the government policy. The former implies increased importance of the national Armed Forces in public consciousness, and the latter is aimed at formation of civil

society and development of each individual [6]. In our opinion, the priority task for formation of civil society is the development of each individual, which, in turn, is its basic system-forming component. Therefore, for development of patriotism and enhancement of social well-being of the population, the government should focus on personality development.

To fulfill this task, there are many effective tools, such as:

1. Improvement of the quality and accessibility of educational services at all levels (pre-school education, secondary education, secondary special and higher education);

2. Enhancement of the role of the family institution through a competent social policy pursued by the government (the system of birth rate stimulation and support of young families, concern for material well-being of families, updating of the relevance of the family institution in socialization of the individual through the media);

3. The growing importance of the cultural field in the system of value orientations of young people (preservation of traditions and customs of the ancestors, development of the material cultural base, shift of emphasis from material values to the spiritual ones by means of culture). To achieve this result, a reflexive government policy to provide economic sustainability is required;

4. Activation of youth communities as an important tool in formation of personal competencies of the individual (youth volunteer movements, student teams, trade union organizations of students, art and sports associations, etc.).

The authors emphasize strengthening of the role of student communities in the life of both the individual and the country as a whole. Student communities imply initiative groups whose activities are aimed at implementation and development of personal qualities and abilities. The problem of developing the personal qualities in students is of dual nature: firstly, a low level of motivation to join initiative youth communities, and secondly, the impact of external and internal factors on quality indicators of personal growth.

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, “WHAT IS YOUTH ACTIVITY IN YOUR OPINION,”%

Possible response	Share of responses, %
Development of new social roles due to the status changed	23.4%
High social mobility	19.9%
Activity in social networks	17.0%
Search for a place of residence and work	11.3%
Participation in the activities of non-profit organizations, public associations	9.6%
Expression of citizenship	7.8%
All of the above	6.4%
Political activity	3.9%
Other (Search for one’s place/formation of personality, desire to innovate)	0.7%
Total	100.0%

Note: $p < 0.05^*$; $p < 0.01^{**}$

The analysis of data in Table II allows us to conclude that young people do not consider participation in the activities of non-profit organizations and public associations as one of the forms of youth activity (9.6%). Hence, it can be assumed that positioning of these communities/associations does not attract youth and does not motivate their joining. This may indicate that student communities, as one of the forms of developing personality traits of a young person, are not in demand.

In our opinion, this is due to inefficiency of functioning and management of such student communities. Consequently, the issue of leadership is of particular relevance since it has been currently poorly developed in scientific discourse, and effective mechanisms for realizing leadership potential have not been developed.

There are more than 300 definitions of the concept of leadership, both philosophical, and socio-psychological and pedagogical. We consider the most meaningful definition of the concept proposed by G.M. Andreeva, Doctor of Philosophy. The leader is a member of a social group, consciously/unconsciously recommended by the group participants to organize the community oriented towards a specific task in a particular situation, who takes on key functions and demonstrates the highest level of activity, participation, influence on the behavior of others; while the rest of the members are building an appropriate relationship with the leader, which is characterized by domination and subordination in the group [7, p. 213]. Thus, leadership is of a complex multi-level nature, and formation of leadership qualities directly depends on a number of multidirectional factors divided into two main groups: psycho-physiological characteristics and social environment. Each factor poses a number of challenges to leadership development.

In psychology, psycho-physical characteristics of the individual typically take the following categories: personality type, personality accentuation, intellectual abilities, features of the nervous system, and resistance to stress. Based on the psycho-physiological characteristics, it is possible to identify the top challenges to the development of leadership qualities in individuals, namely:

1. Certain personality types have a greater predisposition for leadership; hence, since the personality type can hardly be changed, some individuals have worse starting opportunities;

2. Leadership implies mental mobility, creativity and high intellectual abilities; however, since individuals have different innate intellectual abilities, poorly developed thinking without proper self-improvement can become a barrier in leadership development and promotion to leadership positions;

3. Low ability to handle stress and poorly developed nervous system leads to emotional burnout and to problems of interaction in the social field with other individuals due to conflicts against the background of emotional instability.

The theory of social stratification suggests that all people are in unequal starting positions. In the context of psycho-physiological characteristics of the personality, the starting inequality can play a big role; however, the main component is the social environment that forms leadership qualities in individuals. In the history, there are examples of people who

have reached leadership positions through internal self-development despite low starting psycho-physiological characteristics and unfavorable social environment, but these examples are just an exception to the general trend. The above arguments suggest the predominant role of the social environment and the quality of interaction of the individual in the social field. Therefore, to solve the problems of leadership development among members of student communities, it is necessary to focus on these viewpoints.

Social environment or social factors are an important general superstructure of psycho-physiological characteristics. This means that it is the social factors that contribute to the disclosure/stagnation of the initial leadership potential of the individual. The main social factors include the following categories: influence of the family and the environment, the quality of interaction of the individual in the social field, the number of social relationships, satisfaction of the highest needs of the individual, refreshment of professional and soft skills through education and social interaction, and socialization of the individual within particular society. Each of these categories affects the individual to different extent, and their combination under certain social conditions impact the individual. Therefore, the existing problems and the ways to solve them must be considered comprehensively. The authors classify all of the above as "social capital", and since consideration requires an integrated approach, the integration of social factors into a single concept of "social capital" can be considered appropriate.

At present, the major problems of modern Russian youth related to social facts are as follows:

1. The lack of attention to the young man paid by the family and the environment. First of all, this problem is associated with the individual's alienation from society (family, friends, acquaintances, educational and work colleagues), which comes from the individual himself. Secondly, the individual's alienation from the social environment caused by society that does not accept an individual in terms of personal qualities and socio-cultural values of the group;

2. The lack of interpersonal communication in the communicative space due to emerging network interaction (social networks, telephone communications). This trend negatively affects the quality of interaction between individuals in the social field and hinders the exchange of cultural values and experiences. Also, this trend helps individuals quickly increase the number of social connections, but their quality remains at the same low level due to the lack of interpersonal communication;

3. Actualization of professional and soft skills causes difficulties related to stereotypical thinking of the environment and social attitudes, and to the inconsistency between the educational system and current trends in public life;

4. The absence of socialization agents to help the individual join a certain community and to ensure effective socialization.

The solution of problems related to the individual's social environment and/or his social capital to a greater extent depends on constructive functioning of social institutions, and significance of these social institutions for the individual.

TABLE III. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: "WHAT ARE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT PRIMARILY PROMOTE THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN YOURTH?"; %

Possible response	Share of responses, %
Education	18.3%
Family	18.3%
State	11.5%
Social networks	10.2%
Economy	9.9%
Culture	8.1%
Public opinion	7.9%
Media	5.2%
Science	4.7%
Politics	3.4%
All mentioned above	1.1%
Religion	0.9%
Difficult to reply	0.5%
Total	100.0%

Note: $p < 0.05^*$; $p < 0.01^{**}$

The analysis of data in Table III shows that the most significant social institutions for today's youth are: education (18.3%), family (18.3%), the state (11.5%), and social networks (10.2%). This suggests that the main problems of the social capital of the individual are associated with individual's interaction with these social institutions. The increasing importance of social networks for today's youth is confirmed, however, traditional institutions, such as education, family and the state, still occupy leading positions in the system of value priorities of young people.

To overcome the above difficulties in the formation of leadership qualities, the focus should be on fulfillment of the following tasks:

1. A comprehensive study of the external and internal potential of the individual for differentiation of real life ideals;
2. Study of the motivation for choosing the main goals and achievement tools;
3. The ratio of the expected individual's results and the value orientations of other people;
4. Development of the competency of understanding the risks of choice and their reassessment in the process of achievement;
5. Formation of tasks depending on the goal and development of a system for assessing personal achievements in different periods of time;
6. Development of life strategies with regard to the tactical goals achieved [8].

These tasks are particularly relevant for the leaders of student communities, since they are responsible for management and decision-making that are not typical of young individuals. In addition, the leaders of student communities deal with a complex category of recipients, namely the youth. The bipolarity of this issue is due to the fact that the leaders of student communities implement the above tasks and hence develop their leadership competencies. They also help each member of the community form similar leadership competencies in a broad sense of the concept.

When considering the involvement of student organizations in the formation of leadership competencies among young people, it should be noted that student communities are one of the starting points to realize the potential of leadership qualities and to solve the above tasks. Being involved in the activities of these communities, the individual shows his worth in various spheres, realizes his creativity, expands the boundaries of research activities, and develops his citizenship. The activity of young people in student communities serves as a necessary imperative for the individual's socialization and development of his leadership competencies, and as a starting point for personal growth [9, p. 196]. Thus, one of the key factors in the formation of leadership competencies is the community and personal traits of its members.

The state is one of the leading social institutions addressing the issues of socio-cultural, psychological and physical development, and, in particular, the development of leadership competencies [10, 11]. If the state performs its functions in youth development properly, the attitude of young people towards the state will be positive, that is, the issue of youth well-being and patriotism will not be so urgent in the Russian Federation.

The problem should be considered from different positions, namely: the state (Federal Agency for Youth Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Youth Policy in the subjects of the Russian Federation), educational (the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Education in the subjects of the Russian Federation) and corporate (in student communities).

TABLE IV. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: "WHICH OF THE ISSUES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE"; %

Responses	Share of responses, %
State support for the start-up of young specialists	21.2%
Public-private support for talented youth	16.7%
Acquisition of soft skills	15.9%
Open meetings with government authorities, representatives of the business community and the public	14.7%
Self-presentation in the framework of core sites	11.4%
Signs of social recognition in the new system of stimulation of young people	10.2%
All mentioned above	6.9%
Difficult to reply	2.9%
Total	100.0%

Note: $p < 0.05^*$; $p < 0.01^{**}$

Table IV presents the solutions to the problems posed. For successful implementation of the strategy of social and personal development of members of student communities and young people in general, it is necessary to develop the mechanisms to provide the opportunities to young people using an integrated approach.

Major ways to address the issue of development of the leadership potential in members of student communities and young people in general are as follows:

1. The state support for the start-up of young specialists (21.2%). This will help young people overcome the problems

of refreshment of professional and soft skills in a working environment, adapt to working conditions, and facilitate job hunting. Thus, the stagnation of the individual's intrapersonal potential associated with social problems in adaptation to a new social role will be minimized. This initiative should come from both the state (Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation) and the subjects of the educational field (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and universities);

2. Public-private support for talented youth (16.7%). It is necessary to develop an adequate system for selecting talented individuals according to the following criteria: intellectual capital, the quantity and quality of professional and soft skills, adaptability, etc. The concept of "talented young people" should be differentiated within several vertical levels, that is, each new level provides strengthened support. However, the fact that initially all young people are at a basic level which requires support should not be ignored. This system will allow motivation of young people to advance to a higher level, which leads to the need for increased capitals and comprehensive development. In our opinion, the creation of a single digital platform for young people will enable selection of talented youth by representatives of the public, private and non-profit sectors. Thus, the whole range of specific areas of implementation and emerging opportunities for support will be available for young people;

3. Acquisition of soft skills (15.9%). The development of soft skills (responsibility, discipline, self-management, teamwork, emotional intelligence, time management, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking, etc.) is one of the priority tasks of both state bodies and student organizations. The establishment of horizontal relations between the two above-mentioned subjects is relevant, since student communities, especially narrow and small-scale organizations, need financial support. Hence, the proper state support of student organizations will enhance the training system for members of student communities by attracting competent specialists, and will increase the transferability of members to various forums and seminars. An increase in the number of publicly available state sites aimed at development of soft skills on a free basis will allow young people to realize their potential and to develop leadership competencies;

4. Open meetings with government authorities, representatives of the business community and the public (14.7%). The meetings will help reveal the actual problems of young people and activate the individual's internal potential. In addition, these meetings can become a social elevator for talented young people;

5. Signs of social recognition in the framework of the new system of stimulation of young people (10.2%). In our opinion, it is necessary to create a unified system for assessment of the achievements. By the term "unified" we mean not similar criteria for assessment of different activities, but systematic assessment of achievements by the executive authorities and creation of a unified data base that will be centralized in the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs. In addition, signs of social recognition (letters of commendation, letters of appreciation, insignia, etc.) should have a high rating in the state and bear real

legal weight, that is, be stated in legal acts, for example, in the federal law on youth being developed.

III. CONCLUSION

The study of foreign and Russian experience and data from the longitudinal sociological study by the Laboratory of Psychological, Economic and Cross-Cultural Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, Irkutsk State University, show:

1. This social group will be sufficiently motivated to comprehensively implement their professional and soft skills in case of the effective reflexive state policy aimed to maintain and develop the intrapersonal potential of young people;

2. A systematic approach implemented by the state authorities and representatives of business structures and non-profit public organizations, which may include student communities, will contribute to minimization of the psychophysiological problems associated with personal characteristics and social environment;

3. An integrated approach with the priority participation of state structures will allow a positive attitude of young people towards the state authorities, thereby creating and increasing the level of patriotism in young people;

4. Effective implementation of the solutions proposed by the authors will result in an increase of the overall level of social well-being of young people.

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