

# Patriotic Education of Youth in Contemporary Conditions

V. Cherkasova

Ural Institute of management, branch of RANEPa,  
Yekaterinburg, Russia,  
vio-lett.cherckasowa@yandex.ru

O. Kopalova

Russian State Professional Pedagogical University,  
Yekaterinburg, Russia,  
kopalovaos@bk.ru

S. Abramova

Ural Federal University,  
Yekaterinburg, Russia,  
sofia\_abramova@mail.ru

**Abstract**— The main purpose of the research was to identify how the policy of patriotic education should be formed in the conditions of a transforming society. The authors consider patriotism in the context of realities of Soviet and modern Russian society, what allows them to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of using the Soviet experience in the current conditions. Particular attention is paid to a comparative analysis of the two models of patriotism: as devotion to the state and as a love for one's country and nation. One of the main provisions of the article is the idea of the need not only to renew state efforts in the sphere of patriotic education of youth, but also to transform its goals, the basic values, the channels of translation and principles of heroization of patriotic behavior patterns. A secondary analysis of the results of sociological research has made it possible to indicate a stable and stereotyped dominance of the elements of the "state patriotism" model and the absence of everyday practices of patriotic behavior. The author's research was conducted by the method of focus-group discussion among specialists in youth policy in 2017. The results of the expert survey conducted by the authors noted the fuzziness of the content of the category "patriotism", which does not allow it to become an effective instrument of the social policy of the Russian state. At the same time, it is revealed that the formation of patriotism in the second sense is actualized as the feeling of love for the Motherland. This feeling is based on personal responsibility and critical perception of the history and culture of your own country. The perspective of this approach should be the formation of a harmonious personality of a citizen capable of embodying patriotism at the level of a micro-society, macro environment and intercultural interaction.

**Keywords**— *Patriotism, Patriotic Education, Youth, Social Politics.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of patriotic education in contemporary conditions of the transforming Russian society is very relevant. Patriotism and patriotic education are interested both at the level of scientific research and at the level of public administration. Moreover, this topic raises many discussions among ordinary people.

Numerous studies and everyday questions of whom to count, and whom not to consider as a patriot, new bills ("on

the patriotic education"), programs, patriotic movements of schoolchildren, all this seems to be a systemic approach, but in fact it is not. There is no single integrated system of patriotic education, which was, for example, in the Soviet Union.

Thus, the formulation of the question of patriotic education requires not only a corresponding state policy on this issue, but also the formation of public opinion and values that form the basis for a patriotic civil position.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Before considering directly the system of patriotic education, it is necessary to determine the key concepts. The object of patriotism is the Motherland as a complex of elements of the natural and social environment of society. The subject of patriotism are various social formations: personality, social groups, strata, classes, nations [1].

The definition of "patriotism" in modern sociological science has several interpretations, two of them are interesting for us. The first approach considers patriotism as a category that measures the relationship between a person and the state, analyses patriotism from the point of view of devotion to the country, which manifests itself in a sense of duty, readiness to defend their homeland (perhaps at the cost of their own lives, not to leave their country for a long time, etc. This approach in domestic scientific literature was demonstrated by N. Luzik [2], S. Mel'kov [3], E. Petrova [4], S. Tomilina, R. Tuktarov [5], Ya. Turbovskoy [6], M. Chaurov [7], etc.

The second approach emphasizes the special feeling of unity arising from contact with your family, a group, a nation, and so on. Here patriotism is seen as a phenomenon of social consciousness (A. Vyrshchikov, M. Kusmartsev [8, 9], O. Karpukhin [10], T. Kolyabin [11], A. Kuznetsova [12], E. Kublitskaya [13], L. Pahar [14], V. Chuprov [15], and others).

Accordingly, patriotism defines one of the fundamental aspects of the relationship between society, the state and the individual. At the same time, the state receives the greatest opportunities to manage patriotism in the implementation of the first approach: here patriotism is regarded as a moral category that determines the level of devotion to the

Motherland (by which the state is understood), willingness to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of state interests.

In turn, patriotic education means the process of interaction between the state and the individual through the formation of key patriotic values, the adoption of patriotic behaviour patterns, the development of a sense of devotion to the state and the willingness to demonstrate this devotion. Such education of patriotism is often based on the formation of the image of an external enemy and the identification of heroes to follow (role models).

As an example of a system of the first type, consider the Soviet system of patriotic education, which was based on the fundamental values of Soviet ideology. Different age groups were chosen as the key elements of the impact: they largely coincided with the stages of the person's growing up and, as a result, were maximally adapted to the psychological and physiological changes, as well as to a change in activity, interests, lifestyle. In addition, for each age group a certain mythology was created, assigned to both for real and fictional heroes. These heroes had their own history, worked, loved, acted in accordance with the uniform system of values of the Soviet man, clearly demonstrating that in order to love the Soviet state, one must sacrifice oneself.

The first age unit was the age of 7-8 years, when children go to primary school, they form value orientations. As an example of heroes, the characters of children's books and films were used: Malchish-Kibalchish, Timur and his team, Vasyok Trubachev, etc.

The next unit of analysis was the group of 10-11 years old, the beginning of adolescence, when children go to secondary school, join the pioneers. Here the great influence was exerted by images of pioneer heroes: Volodya Dubinin, Valya Kotik, Marat Kazey and other "heroic" peers.

The time for Komsomol heroes begins from the age of 14-15. Getting general education, growing up, joining the Komsomol and first love caused the choice of more romantic heroes, who nevertheless demonstrated heroism in its most hypertrophied manifestations: Ulyana Gromova, Oleg Koshevoy, Pavel Korchagin.

The last age group is 18-19 years old, school graduation, the choice of the adult path, for someone joining the party determines the choice of new heroes. At the forefront is set of adult characters of the "Communist heroes" personifying the heroics of that time: Alexei Meresyev, Alexander Matrosov, Ivan Kozhedub and others.

In addition to the "heroes" themselves, a complex of elements was developed to support the selected values, certain patterns of behaviour based on them were proposed. A key role in this system was played by the media, which broadcast the necessary models for imitation and fixed the algorithm of behaviour.

Is it possible to transfer this system of patriotic education to the present stage of development of our country? In its purest form, of course not. The need to sacrifice oneself for the modern generation is not so relevant, the examples are out of date, the age intervals also shifted somewhat. However, the algorithm of the Soviet system of patriotic education can be

used as a basis for developing a new system of teaching state patriotism.

For in-depth study of the formation of the system of patriotic education, the authors of the article undertook a secondary analysis of the results of Russian sociological surveys on the problems of patriotism of Russian citizens. Also in 2017, a focus group was conducted on the basis of the Research Centre "Analytic". The focus group was aimed at analysing the peculiarities of youth policy and understanding patriotism at the regional level. Nine experts, specialists in the youth policy of the Sverdlovsk region took part in the focus group.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to research conducted by the Foundation Public Opinion" in 2017, 78% of Russians consider themselves patriots, this is a very favorable basis for development of a system of patriotic education. However, almost half of Russians do not know what to do with their patriotism: 42% of respondents found it difficult to answer the question in which actions their patriotism manifests itself. The greatest number among "those who know" (8%) was convinced that patriotism is a service in the army, a readiness to defend their Motherland. Among other answers: unwillingness to leave Russia (6%), love and respect for their country, pride in it (5%), support to Vladimir Putin, support the leadership of the country (5%), active civil position and participation in the affairs of the country (5%) [16].

As we can see from the presented data, patriotism is mainly connected with interaction with the state. At the same time the respondents point to the "aging" of the idea of patriotism: 40% believe that patriotism is more characteristic of the elderly population, 28% – middle-aged people, and only 10% of respondents believe that patriotism is more typical of young people.

These results also indicate the absence of an effective system of patriotic education, the importance of which is steadily increasing in societies of high uncertainty.

Studies of patriotic and unpatriotic behavior, conducted in 2017 by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM), also revealed a general tendency to preserve the perception of patriotism as responsibility to the state. For example half of respondents (52%) said that citizens wishing to go abroad are considered unworthy to be called patriots. Despite the fact that the indicator has decreased since 2014 (68%), it still illustrates the stability of the orientation toward "state patriotism". Thus, other illustrations of unpatriotic behaviour, according to respondents, are bribery (77%), evasion of service in the army (69%), work in a firm classified as "foreign agents" (52%). Almost half of citizens condemn public manifestations of unpatriotic behavior (47%), some even suggest criminal penalties. Unpatriotic performances of show business stars are criticized by the majority of respondents (60%), the statement of a personal position diverging from the official line of the state is blamed by 37% of respondents [17].

On the other hand, there are great difficulties with modern heroics. According to the VCIOM study, 57% of respondents do not have idols, and 16% found it difficult to name people from whom they take the example. That is, 73% of respondents did not have samples to follow. The closest relatives and close people (for 8% of respondents), historical figures (7%), show business stars (5%), sportsmen (5%) and V. Putin (4%) are chosen as idols [18].

Accordingly, before introducing patriotic education, it is necessary to develop a system of values that could be taken as a basis. It is necessary to determine the qualities of "heroes" who would become carriers of these values. The new, modern characters (real or virtual), corresponding to today's life and the goals of patriotic education should become idols. Channels of translation of new "heroes" should become not only media, literature and cinema, but also new forms, : comics, blogs, social networks and computer games.

Also at this stage it is impossible to impose patriotism only through propaganda and advertising it is necessary to apply more "soft" and unobvious technologies (soft power). With the help of these technologies it is necessary to promote patriotic values in a way of life, to form fashion, attributes, habits.

The proposed system can be realized only for a long time. Complex work is required, the creation of special structures responsible for the methodological, information, research and organizational support of this work [19].

But is such a system of patriotic education necessary for modern Russian society? How effective is state patriotism?

A. Sanina conducted a comparative research of the manifestation of patriotism and official documents on patriotic and civic education, having the status of state programs. The objects of analysis were state programs of patriotic education in Russia, the United States, China and Singapore [20].

Based on the results of the answer to the question of pride for one's nationality, Russia ranks last among four countries. At the same time, most Russians agree with the statement: "I see myself as a part of the state". We rank first in this indicator.

This orientation on the state allowed the author to conclude that the level of personal responsibility of Russians for the development in the country is low: "It is easy to demonstrate a sense of belonging and responsibility for the country as a whole. It is much more difficult to take responsibility for what happens in your own yard, house or porch" [20, p.48]. It is interesting that Russia is in the last place of four countries willing to serve in the army and defend their Motherland. While the main emphasis of Russian state patriotism is on military-patriotic education.

As a result, A. Sanina argues: "The basic postulates that are declared from the program to the program in Russia do not solve the actual problems of forming tolerance, the development of civil society, increasing the responsibility of citizens for their country" [20, p.52].

Accordingly, understanding of state patriotism focuses on the special emotional connection with the state, and its manifestation in some exaltation, lack of responsibility, and intolerance of another opinion. At the moment, only the

emotional component of patriotism is partially formed, which largely depends on external events (joining the Crimea, the Olympics, external enemies), rather than from systematic activities on patriotic upbringing. Moreover, the understanding of patriotism as exclusively "state" is initially erroneous and can not lead to a constructive interaction between a person and the state.

Thus, discussing the topic of patriotism, experts-participants of the focus group emphasize: "in our country there is no clear awareness of what "patriotism" is. There is a set of state requirements regarding patriotic behaviour. I. Kadochnikov, a representative of the Public Chamber of the Sverdlovsk Region, believes: "Patriotism is the performance of state functions. For example, the task is to serve in the army. Or the task is to be a good mother. Is it a state function? Yes, it is. This is the state ideological order that exists, and its implementation in practice. The fact is that the love of the Motherland is an ephemeral concept, there must be an understanding of how and what to do. And this is a question of ideology, which we do not have".

Participants in the focus group compared the Soviet system of patriotic upbringing and the modern, and came to the conclusion that a worthy alternative to the Soviet system at the moment does not exist. Patriotism should unite the whole country, there must be things that all people can be proud of, but according to research, many people consider themselves patriots but can not name anything what can be proud of.

Yu. Dobrovolskaya, head of youth projects at the Sverdlovsk Regional Medical College, says that patriotism is now understood very formally, it all boils down to symbols and slogans, but it must cultivate personal responsibility: "Patriotism is a painful topic for me, because I am repelled by the idea of a universal unification of some patriotic moods. Now de facto patriotism is understood from two sides. On the one hand, patriotism is a certain duty and state order, for example, to serve in the army. On the other hand, this is an attempt to influence the minds of young people, through some symbolic actions, that cost nothing. This is instead of nurturing personal responsibility, a personal understanding of their attitude towards their country and their loved ones. In addition, people need to form critical thinking, and this is not always necessary for our state".

Within the framework of the second approach ,where patriotism is understood as the national idea of the unity and uniqueness of this nation, the patriotic education system will be able to foster personal responsibility, personal attitude towards one's own nation and country. On this unity and uniqueness of each nation influences history, culture, customs, traditions, mentality, stereotypes and so on. Within the framework of individual consciousness, love of the Motherland is manifested as a pride for it, aspiration to learn, understand and improve its fatherland. At the same time, there is a difference in the needs and interests of various social groups, including the patriotic component. Perhaps a different understanding and manifestation of patriotism, which is reflected in various forms, such as morality, ideology, artistic creativity and religion. It is allowed and supported the

understanding and manifestation of patriotism as a love for the small Motherland, for the family, friends, relatives, to the place where you were born and raised, to the house, the court and the city in which you live.

This conclusion is confirmed by the opinion of experts from the focus group. In the opinion of E. Zvereva (chairman of the Sverdlovsk Regional Committee of the Russian Union of Youth), patriotism includes many components – that are love for your family and the place where you were born and grew up, transferring this love to your children, caring for the elderly, responsible attitude to your work.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The most modern and productive approach to the content of the category of "patriotism" is its definition of a constructive love for one's country, one's nation, history and culture. A patriotic education should focus on the development of curiosity in the study of the history, literature, culture of your country and region. It is also necessary to form a feeling of unity and love for one's neighbour, starting with family, friends, neighbours and, as a result, the whole country. This unity should be formed on the allocation of the common in the private, that is, with respect for the individuality of everyone, all people have identical basic values.

Patriotic education, based on the provisions of the second approach, should be focused on the development of a harmonious person who has critical thinking, who knows and understands the strengths and weaknesses of his city, region and country and who is ready to be responsible and do everything possible to improve the situation in them.

In addition, it is necessary to raise the level and quality of life of the population, from childhood form a sense of self-esteem and own worth. It is necessary to revive the friendship of peoples (which was very well developed in the Soviet Union), emphasize the development of universal values that are relevant to people around the world.

Perhaps then there will be no need to educate the "patriots" of a single country and we can talk about a "citizen of the universe" – a man who perceives the planet Earth as his homeland and feels his responsibility for it. In the era of global disasters, this patriotism would be most appropriate.

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