Social Portrait of a Modern Student

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Introduction. Sociological studies of the social portrait of students are an urgent problem of science, which has recently acquired special significance in Russian conditions. This is due to those circumstances, which, on the one hand, follow from the special characteristics of students as a specific social group, for which the problems of successful socialization are especially relevant, and on the other, they are dictated by the significant dependence of students on those factors that are formed in the political, economic and the legal space of different regions. In conditions of social transformations and turbulence, almost always young students find themselves in a more difficult situation than older generations. In particular, a number of problems arise on the basis of the divergences and nuances of the social perception of reality, which are formed among students who, to varying degrees, are adapted to the local conditions of the university.

Methodology and sources. The theoretical foundation of the study is the concept of youth as a cultural group, the methodology of sociological research of risk and social uncertainty, the works of foreign and national researchers of student youth, which reflect various aspects of students' social life, in particular, the results of a study of the effects of social factors in the information space, new phenomena of youth subcultures, etc., which involve the development of new strategies for a sociological study of the social portrait of young students.

Results and discussion. Particular problems of students' socialization arise in those regions of the country where new legal and political realities are forming. Compared with other social groups, in such social spaces, it is more difficult for young people to integrate and join in a new reality, because the usual mechanisms of socialization, formed earlier, are not actual now, and how to achieve full potential in the new social space is not yet clear to everyone. In particular, such contradictions are clearly visible in the Crimean realities, in the university community of Sevastopol. The purpose of the sociological research conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research of Sevastopol State University was to study the characteristics of the social portrait of student youth in Sevastopol, including those representing various groups of students according to the period of their residence on the peninsula. For this purpose, two groups of young people were distinguished in the analysis, differing by the period of their residence in Sevastopol: an “indigenous” one – those who live in Sevastopol from birth or moved here at an early age, and a “new” one – those who moved to Sevastopol after 2014. The results of the study made it possible to determine the strategic life goals of university students, which can be

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described as ambitious: starting a business, acquiring a car and housing, providing material wealth, pursuing career success and self-realization.

**Conclusion.** Most of the “indigenous” youth and “new” residents of the southern capital of Russia have shown their attitude to Sevastopol as a city that they want to develop together. This fact was assessed as a phenomenon of social gratitude: the young generation, who found in Sevastopol the opportunity to live peacefully and fulfill itself, binds itself to the city, but wants to make it better. The study also confirms the relevance of highlighting among students social and demographic groups that differ in the perception of social reality, due to the time spent in this social environment. In particular, this is noted in a higher degree of readiness of “old-timers” for practical participation in changes in social reality – participation in public life, volunteering, etc.

**Key words:** youth, life goals, values.

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**Социальный портрет современного студента**

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**Введение.** Социологические исследования социального портрета студенчества – актуальная проблема науки, приобретающая в последнее время особое значение для российских условий. Обусловлено это теми обстоятельствами, которые, с одной стороны, вытекают из особых характеристик студенчества как специфической социальной группы, для которой особенно актуальны проблемы успешной социализации, а с другой, продиктованы существенной зависимостью студенческой молодежи от факторов, которые формируются в политическом, экономическом и правовом пространстве различных регионов. В условиях социальных трансформаций и турбулентности практически всегда студенческая молодежь оказывается в более сложной ситуации, чем старшее поколение. В частности, целый ряд проблем возникает вследствие расхождений и нюансов социального восприятия действительности, которые складываются у студентов, в различной степени адаптированных к местным условиям нахождения вуза.

**Методология и источники.** Теоретический фундамент исследования составляют концепция молодежи как культурной группы, методология социологического исследования риска и социальной неопределенности, работы зарубежных и отечественных исследователей студенческой молодежи, в которых отражены различные аспекты социальной жизни студентов, в частности, итоги изучения влияния социальных факторов информационного пространства, новых феноменов молодежных субкультур и пр., что предполагает разработку новых стратегий социологического исследования социального портрета студенческой молодежи.

**Результаты и обсуждение.** Особые проблемы социализации студентов возникают в тех регионах страны, где складываются новые правовые и политические реалии.
В сравнении с другими социальными группами в таких социальных пространствах молодым людям сложнее интегрироваться, включиться в новую действительность, так как привычные механизмы социализации, сформированные ранее, уже не работают, а как реализовать себя в новом социальном пространстве, не всем еще понятно. В частности, такие противоречия отчетливо видны в крымских реалиях, в университетской среде г. Севастополя. Цель социологического исследования, проведенного Центром социологических исследований СевГУ, состояла в изучении характеристик социального портрета студенческой молодежи Севастополя, в том числе по времени пребывания на полуострове различных групп студенчества. Для этого в рамках анализа выделены две группы молодежи, отличающиеся по периоду проживания в Севастополе: «коренная» – те, кто живет в Севастополе с рождения или переехал сюда в раннем возрасте, и «новая» – те, кто переехал в Севастополь после 2014 г. Результаты исследования позволили определить стратегические жизненные цели студенческой молодежи вуза, которые можно охарактеризовать как амбициозные: открытие собственного дела, приобретение автомобиля и жилья, обеспечение материального достатка, достижение карьерных успехов и самореализации.

Заключение. Большинство «коренной» молодежи и «новые» жители южной столицы России продемонстрировали отношение к Севастополю как к городу, который хочется вместе развивать. Данный факт был оценен как феномен социальной благодарности: молодое поколение, нашедшее в Севастополе возможность мирно жить и самореализовываться, связывает себя с городом, желая сделать его лучше. Проведенное исследование также подтверждает актуальность выделения среди студентов социально-демографических групп, отличающихся особенностями восприятия социальной реальности, обусловленными временем пребывания в данной социальной среде. В частности, это отмечается в более высокой степени готовности «старожилов» к практическому участию в изменениях социальной действительности – участию в общественной жизни, волонтерстве и пр.

Ключевые слова: молодежь, жизненные цели, ценности.

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Introduction. The social portrait of a modern student, despite the apparent homogeneity, presents a profile of young generation consisting of various social and demographic groups with different tastes, interests, needs, and systems of values. There are many reasons for the formation of such differences, and therefore a constant analysis of social, economic, cultural, political and other factors determining the system of students’ values is of permanent interest of sociology. Obviously, this interest is both, scientific and pragmatic. Young generation of students represents the social potential of the society, its future elite. With regard to Russian conditions, a lot of tragic events have fallen to the fate of modern students, which accompanied the demolition of the economic and social system and formation of new conditions for students’ growth and socialization. The students of modern Russian society are people of a new (post-communist) formation who have special values and develop life strategies focused on new social and economic goals.

Researchers document some stable trends in the social portrait of modern students. The main trend is a fundamental change of the paradigm of student’s social formation, its cultural, moral,
ideological content. Further, students have a steady desire to obtain higher education, based on pragmatic interest in upcoming activities and profession; transforming ideas about gender differences in professions, eliminating the distinctions, for example, in the economic and technical fields. The features of obtaining higher education in urban and rural conditions cause a number of problems. The problems of education of children from rich and poor families, from families of peasant, workers, and intellectuals are becoming socially acute.

New problems of students' value systems arising in the conditions of modern Russia can make up a rather long list. The study of the consequences of informatization deserves the attention. The constant transformations in the value-meaning structures of young generation in the modern world take place under the influence of the development of new information technologies and means of communication, new world views and the conditions of social everyday life. In such periods the social subjectivity of the young generation is manifested most fully, and these manifestations are significant for formation of new trends in the portrait of a student. New social conditions, the reaction of young people to the events of economic and political life puzzle the authorities and expert communities, which carry out social research of young generation. It is obligatory to take into account and investigate these changes; otherwise it threatens not only tensions and generational conflicts, but also political instability and social disorientation of society.

Changes taking place at a time of sharp transformations of social and political spheres of public life are especially relevant for the students’ systems of values. In particular, such changes are observed in the Crimea. The reunification of Crimea and Russia has made the study of the social portrait of the young generation of Sevastopol actual, as their attitudes were formed in various social environments: partly in the Ukrainian period and now, in new historical conditions, in the Russian Federation. This process crucially influences on the social portrait of a young Sevastopol citizen, on his consciousness, on his system of meanings and values, on his attitude to himself and to his generation.

**Methodology and sources.** The concept of youth as a cultural group serves as the theoretical foundation for this study (E. Spranger, R. Benedict, B. Malinovsky, M. Mead, J. G. Mead and others). The idea formed by M. Mead that in certain eras, the way of transferring cultural codes from older generations to younger ones can be replaced by the equality of generations, when young people cannot rely on the experience of older people to achieve success in life, and even opposite, elders need knowledge of young people and their vision of the world, they listen to younger people, is important for our analysis of the social portrait of young people in transformational conditions [1].

A separate scientific interest for our research is the methodology of sociological study of risk and social uncertainty (U. Beck [2], [3], A. Giddens [4], [5], N. Luhmann [6]). The collaboration of the topics of risk society and social development of youth makes it possible to use the riskological concept of youth, which opens the prospects for understanding of modern social phenomena and processes in formation of the social portrait of the young generation.

Within the frames of our study, we addressed to the works of Russian researchers in the field of youth M. K. Gorshkov, Yu. A. Zubok, I. M. Ilyinsky, A. I. Kovaleva, V. A. Lukova, E. L. Omelchenko, V. I. Chuprova, F. E. Sheregi. The most worthwhile publication focused on the theoretical and methodological approach of structural functionalism is the study by M. K Gorshkov and F. E. Sheregi “Youth of Russia: a sociological portrait” [7]. A number of recent scientific papers present a broader understanding of empirical material used for the
development of the program of the research, which reflects new aspects of the social life of young people, in particular, the results of studying risks to which new generations are exposed [8], new phenomena of youth subcultures.

**Results and discussion.** The purpose of the research was to study the social portrait of the young generation of the Sevastopol city and was disclosed through the solution of the following tasks:
- identification of life goals and plans of the young generation of the Sevastopol city;
- determination of the rating of problems of the young generation of the Sevastopol city;
- analysis of the social interests of young people living in Sevastopol city;
- analysis of the level of sociopolitical activity of the young generation of the Sevastopol city.

The method of interviewing using the face to face technique of collecting information is the method for collecting of information for this study.

The sample totaled 1 000 people taking into account the statistical error equal to 3 % and was based on the quota principle of respondents’ selection, relying on the statistical data of Sevastopol statistic office on 01.01.2015 and the available statistical distribution by gender and age groups. According to the statistics of Sevastopol statistic office on 01.01.2015, the young population of the city of Sevastopol aged from 14 to 30 years old totaled 86 862 people. The design of the sample was based on the quota principle of selecting respondents, in particular by gender and age (distribution of groups from 14 to 30 years: 14–16, 17–19, 20–22, 23–25, 26–30). The sample totaled 1 000 people. The quota distribution is shown in table 1.

| Table 1. Sampled population (gender and age arrangement) |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Age         | Man and women | Man | Women | No response |
| 14–16       | 107          | 40  | 67   | –           |
| 17–19       | 433          | 155 | 278  | –           |
| 20–22       | 213          | 96  | 117  | –           |
| 23–25       | 109          | 49  | 60   | –           |
| 26–30       | 112          | 56  | 56   | –           |
| Sum         | 974          | 396 | 578  | 26          |

The survey involved 41 % of man and 59 % of women. The largest groups by age were young people aged from 17 to 19 years (44 %), the second place – the age group from 20 to 22 years (22 %), and the third place – the group from 26 to 30 years (11 %).

Most of our respondents (63 %) had incomplete higher education, 15 % graduated from high school, 9 % had intermediate vocational education, and 8 % did not graduate from high school. The majority of those who took part in the survey are university students and college students (79 % and 14 %, respectively).

Evaluating their own financial opportunities, young people answered that the main sources of their income are money obtained from parents (65 %), temporary and periodic earnings (26 %) and scholarships (24 %), while half respondents (48 % ) outlined that their the average monthly income was 6 000 rubles and less.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the results of the study, we would like to stop on some of the identified characteristics of the sample. In particular, on the distribution of the sample according to the time spent in Sevastopol city. Half of our respondents were those who have lived in Sevastopol since birth (42 %) or moved here in early childhood (9 %). The second half of our
respondents does not belong to the “indigenous” residents of the federal center: 32% of the respondents moved to Sevastopol after 2014 due to admission to a local university and 6% due to personal reasons; 6% of respondents moved to Sevastopol shortly before 2014 due to admission to a local university and 5% of respondents due to personal reasons. Thus, we distinguished two groups of young people according to their period of residence in Sevastopol: “indigenous” – those who live in Sevastopol from birth or moved here at an early age, and “new” – those who moved to Sevastopol recently due to admission or for personal reasons, shortly before and after 2014.

**Challenging issues of the younger generation.** Higher education is the most urgent problem for young people. On the second place is the solution of financial issues, on the third – employment, then the problem of self-realization, successful sessions completion and creation of a family (table 2).

| What problems are most relevant for you?                          | The number of respondents, % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| To obtain the higher education                                   | 56                          |
| To secure material wealth                                        | 49                          |
| Employment, getting a good job                                   | 41                          |
| Self-actualization, find oneself, profession                     | 39                          |
| To purchase ones accommodation                                   | 19                          |
| To pass all exams successfully                                   | 26                          |
| Make a family                                                    | 21                          |
| Arrange a personal life, find a loved one                        | 14                          |
| Maintain ones health                                             | 12                          |
| Solve ones problems with alcoholism, smoking, drug use           | 0,6                         |

**Long-term and short-term life goals of younger generation.** More than half of the responding young people (58%) indicated that they would like to get higher education in next five years. On second place in the list of immediate life tasks, 47% of respondents have a desire to get a job. The third place in the rating of life plans of Sevastopol younger generation is shared (by 34%) by such ambitious desires as starting their own business and buying a car, then – buying a house (30%). In the next five years, 27% of surveyed young Sevastopol citizens seek to create a family (fig. 1).

Moreover, it is necessary to focus on the fact that for a modern young Sevastopol citizen, creation of a family is not a priority task for the next five years, but acts as a main life strategy: achieving a happy family life is important for 69% of respondents. On the second place in the ranking of strategic life goals are material (ensuring material wealth – 48%) and professional (building a successful career – 41%). Self-realization as a strategic goal is significant for 36% of respondents. For a third of respondents (28%), high quality of health is important (fig. 2).

![Fig. 1. What tasks do you plan to complete in the next 5 years (as a percentage of the number of respondents)?](image-url)
Fig. 2. What tasks do you plan to complete in the future (as a percentage of the number of respondents)?

When asking the younger generation about on whom they rely when achieving their short-term and long-term goals, the vast majority (90%) said that they rely on themselves and on their strengths. Half of the respondents (45%) expect support from relatives and family. 13% of respondents expect the support from friends and acquaintances. A tiny fraction of the respondents (3%) rely on government support in solving their problems.

**Planned areas of employment.** 41% of respondents plan to start their own business, which indicates the ambitiousness of the young generation of the Sevastopol citizens and their willingness to work and realize, setting great goals. 24% of respondents intend to work in the entertainment and hotel business sector, 20% in the financial and banking sectors (table 3), as well as in the field of law and jurisprudence – 22%, in the public sector – 17%, in the IT-technology and programming – 12%, focused on military service 12% of respondents.

**Table 3.** In what sphere of activity would you like to work?

| In which sphere would you like to work?                     | Number of respondents, % |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The field of entertainment and hotel business             | 24                       |
| The field of transport and communications                 | 8                        |
| The field of Finance and banking                          | 20                       |
| The field of Agriculture and agribusiness                 | 2                        |
| The field of Energy industry                              | 3                        |
| The field of Shipbuilding                                 | 3                        |
| The field of Construction                                 | 3                        |

**Factors in choosing a profession.** When choosing a profession, the determining factor is financial one (62%). A third of respondents (35%) outlined the prestige of the profession. The altruistic criterion – the ability to benefit people – is relevant for 27% of young people surveyed.

Fig. 3. What factors for you personally are decisive when choosing a profession (as a percentage of the respondents)?
**Leisure of younger generation.** Most young people (77%) spend their free time at home. 70% of respondents spend their leisure time with friends: either on the street (45%) or at their home (30%). Cafes and restaurants are popular with 21% of respondents. 20% of young people surveyed spend time outdoors. 21% of the polled young people participate in sports sections (table 4).

| Where do you most often spend your free time? | Number of respondents, % |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| At home                                      | 77                       |
| Outside with friends                         | 45                       |
| At friend’s house                            | 30                       |
| At the cafes, restaurants                    | 21                       |
| At the night clubs, discotheques              | 3                        |
| Outdoors                                    | 20                       |
| At the sports sections                       | 21                       |
| At the cinema                                | 15                       |
| In the country                               | 3                        |
| At the theatres, museums, in the libraries    | 8                        |
| At the internet cafes                         | 2                        |
| At gambling establishments                   | 1                        |

**Popular topics in the media.** The most popular interests of young people in mass media and networks are art and cinema (44%), leisure and entertainment (34%), news (29%), sports (24%), fashion and style (19%), informative shows (18%), education and science (18%) and politics (13%). Thus, we can say that young generation of Sevastopol city as a whole is interested in positively-entertaining topics and, and in particular, the interest in art and cinema can be used in working with younger generation, but applying methods of youth involvement in the events taking into account the increased ambitiousness of the younger generation (table 5).

| What subjects of media and Internet materials spark your greatest interest? | Number of respondents, % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Leisure, entertainment                                                  | 34                       |
| Sport                                                                    | 24                       |
| Art, cinema                                                              | 44                       |
| News                                                                     | 29                       |
| Automobiles and motorcycles                                              | 10                       |
| Family and relationship between man and woman                            | 11                       |
| Healthcare                                                               | 7                        |
| Crime                                                                    | 12                       |
| Education and science                                                    | 18                       |
| Fashion and style                                                        | 19                       |
| Cognitive programs                                                       | 18                       |
| Show Business                                                            | 8                        |
| Politics                                                                 | 13                       |
| Economics and finances                                                   | 8                        |
| Religion                                                                 | 3                        |

**Attitude to alcohol, drugs and obsessive habits.** The vast majority of respondents do not consider the use of light (85%) and hard drugs (96%) acceptable. Alcohol use is considered
unacceptable by 42% of respondents, but 40% of respondents regard alcohol consumption without objection. Smoking is considered inadmissible by 57% of respondents, but almost a third (28%) have normal attitude towards smoking. 64% of respondents are negative about visiting gambling establishments, but 18% of respondents consider visiting gambling establishments acceptable (fig. 4).

**Fig. 4.** What is considered to be normal, acceptable?

**Interest in politics, social and volunteer activities.** A quarter of the representatives surveyed are interested in politics and participation in political movements (26%), of which 29% are “indigenous” Sevastopol city residents and the same number are “new”. For 58% of respondents, political activity is uninteresting. Involvement in public work is interesting to half of the respondents (48%), of which 47% are “indigenous” Sevastopol residents and 34% are “new” residents of the city. 39% of responding young people would like to participate in volunteer projects and movements: these are 48% of the “indigenous” Sevastopol residents and 35% of the “new” ones. 44% of respondents are not interested in such projects (fig. 5).

**Participation in urban development projects.** 38% of the responding young people are willing to personally participate in city development projects. This group comprises 46% of the “indigenous” Sevastopol city residents and 36% of the “new” residents of Sevastopol city. Half of the respondents (49%) did not think about participating in urban development projects. They represent the so-called “youth passive”, which consists of 54% of the “indigenous” Sevastopol city and 30% of the “new”. Only 12% of respondents are not ready to participate in development projects of Sevastopol city. To the question “What is Sevastopol for you?” 62% of
respondents said that they regard it as a city that they want to develop together; among them are 34% of “indigenous” youth and 36% of “new”.

**Conclusion.** Analyzing the problems, strategic life goals, interests and attitudes of Sevastopol city young generation, we can note that young people are concerned, first of all, with higher education, financial security through employment, self-realization and formation of family.

In order to understand what mechanisms to use for the successful integration of Sevastopol young generation, it is necessary to analyze the tasks that young people set themselves. Among the short-term life goals of Sevastopol younger generation are higher education, a desire to get a job, open a business, purchase a car and accommodation. The inclusion of such long-term personal goals as the acquisition of movable and immovable property in short-term tasks shows the increased ambitions of our young generation. The long-term life tasks of young Sevastopol citizens include achieving happiness in family life, material wealth, career success and self-realization.

The answer to the question in which area young Sevastopol people want to work, once again confirmed our conclusion about the ambitiousness of Sevastopol young people. Almost half of the respondents plan to start their own business, and the main criteria for choosing the profession is its prestige and decent pay.

The revealed attitude of young people to Sevastopol became noteworthy: the majority assesses it as a city that one want to develop together. And this attitude is observed not only among “indigenous” young people, but also among “new” residents of the southern capital of Russia. This fact can be assessed as a phenomenon of social gratitude, since young people who arrived after events happened in Ukraine in 2014 and found in Sevastopol an opportunity to live peacefully and fulfill their goals, younger generation want to make the city better, feeling it already their own.

Summing up the consideration of the world of students’ value orientations, we want to say that the surge in the activity of these studies in Russian sociology is not accidental. According to the results of the present and other studies, it becomes apparent that the values of students in Russia are more likely to gain differentiation potential than integration potential. Among many factors that stimulate this differentiation, the regional characteristics of the socio-economic order and the political environment in the region have a significant impact on the values orientations of students. Therefore, ensuring of a systematic study of the value orientations of young people will contribute the analysis of dynamic social processes in the student community, the timely fixation and study of new transformations and changes in these values.

In addition, in our opinion, it is scientifically important to achieve the integration of the advantages of the concept of youth as a special cultural group, on the basis of which the present study was conducted, with the methodological foundations of the study of risk society and social uncertainty, a society in which information processes render the most significant impact on the socialization of students. It requires the development of principles that ensure the interconnection of these theories. In particular, sociological research strategies based on the platform of a network approach, which makes it possible to systematize data relevant to the theories discussed above, may become promising in this case. In turn, network data on the values of students can be used both in social work and in the management activities of universities. The pilot studies carried out in this direction show certain positive results of such work.
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