

Labour Socialization of Young People in Today's Russia: The Specificity of Sociological Discourse

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Abstract

The paper considers the problem of labour socialization in the light of theoretical approaches, ideas and concepts existing in scientific literature. This problem is one of the most topical in modern Russian sociology of youth. The socialization of modern Russian society deals with various risks and hazards which form a crisis background for the labour socialization of Russian youth. While being studied this background causes different viewpoints to the development of professional values of young people, the specificity of their self-determination and behaviour in work sphere. The authors suppose that, at the level of sociological reflection, it is essential to develop alternative methodological strategies to study youth labour socialization, the state of main labour education agents of Russian young generation and the reconstitution strategy for the efficient system of labour socialization. This system should become a basis for moral and spiritual development of young people and labour potential of the country. The theory of creativity is an important methodological base for the study of labour socialization of young people in the author's concept. This theory determines the essence of a perfect labour socialization model for youth. If implemented, it can promote not only the efficient labour socialization of Russian young generations but also the swift modernization of Russian society.

Keywords: socialization, labour socialization, youth, professional values, work ethics, creative model of labour socialization

1. Introduction

The interest in labour socialization of Russian youth is caused by the fact that youth is the main source of society reproduction inter alia in work sphere. Thus the analysis of its professional values and the way they form in the context of socialization is a significant line for the study of not only youth but also the whole Russian society. The erosion of work ethics in modern Russian society, the disintegration of the uniform labour education system and the spontaneous labour market cannot but cause defects in the labour socialization of young people. Informal relations and practice prevail on Russian labour market. Expectations do not correspond to the real situation in work sphere. These facts also amend the mind of young people and influence their attitude to labour as a value. The attitude becomes instrumental. Taking into account that labour determines the character of society and acts as a cornerstone of its life, one cannot but be worried by crisis in labour socialization of youth. Professional values are being devaluated and become instrumental. That is why every sociological research on the above stated problem is topical, timely and practically important.

2. Methods

From the viewpoint of sociological analysis, youth is interesting as a socio-demographic group. During its vital activity, it seeks to achieve a social status, a certain position in society and self-fulfillment. Thus it reveals its subjectness which is impossible without labour. In fact, subjectness starts the period when we can consider youth as a subject of social relations. From this position, a theory of youth subjectness is a methodological base for the study of labour socialization of Russian young people in this paper. This theory was deeply reflected in a number of youth concepts and first of all in the concept of social reproduction (Chuprov & Zubok, n. d.).

The creativity theory of Yu. G. Volkov is another important methodological source of this research. It grounded the creative model of youth labour socialization based on person able to create in contrast to destructive tendencies when the value of labour becomes instrumental. Labour is treated as a thing to serve a consumer.

Since the labour socialization of young people is a part of their general socialization, the author uses the theory of socialization, and also the sociology of family, education and labour in the context of social role of basic socialization agents in labour education of youth in modern Russia.

3. Findings

The following inference is a key conclusion of this paper: the labour socialization of Russian young people in forming market is studied as a rule in a wide social context and in close connection with large-scale transformation which determines Russian labour relations and work ethics in the whole Former Soviet Union. Russian researchers are not always as one in assessing the state and key trends of youth labour socialization. But they are in full agreement in assessing the conditions for forming and developing the labour values and guidelines of Russian young people. They assess them as extremely unfavourable due to a number reasons: there is no a single area of values and standards for successful labour socialization; the declarative nature of proclaimed principle of equal right to labour and education; uncoordinated basic socialization institutions (first of all, family, labour and education); a detached observer policy of government towards the problem of youth socialization including professional one. These and other reasons provoke young people to display behaviour far from the key principles of work ethics which ruled in Soviet society.

The theory of creativity chosen as the basic one determines the methodological priorities. In terms of them, the efficient labour socialization is connected with the formation of person with creation as the main life goal. Consequently, the ideal model of labour socialization is a creative model. Its implementation depends on many political, economic and social factors, on youth itself and its readiness to realize creative strategies in professional self-fulfillment and on the modernization line of Russia and its regions. This line is conditioned by the transitive activity of Russian state and the development of its democratic institutions.

4. Discussion

Labour socialization helps young people to form and change their labour values and guidelines which become a base for work motivation and adaptation strategies on labour market. Labour socialization is a part of more global problem of socialization. Thus it is necessary to decide how this process can be defined. There are many definitions of socialization in social science. From the viewpoint of structure-functional approach, socialization is a full integration of individual into social system with the most effective adaptation to social environment. G. V. Osipov puts the adaptation aspect into the definition of socialization in the sociological dictionary: "Socialization is a process when an individual adopts behavioral patterns, psychological mechanisms and social norms and values essential for his effective functioning in this society". The Social Topical Vocabulary defines socialization as "personality formation and development based on the adoption and comprehension of certain behavioral patterns, psychological mechanisms, social norms and cultural values which help an individual to enter the social life and act efficiently in it". In our opinion, this definition of socialization reflects the essence of the process in the most complete way.

There are many approaches to socialization in sociology depending on processes in sociocultural space and how scientists interpret them. The concept of socialization norm of A. I. Kovalyova and the culturological concept of M. Mead are the most popular in science. Both of them are results of trying to understand new social reality in which, according to A. I. Kovalyova, socialization norm as an essential component of socialization was significantly transformed. In the opinion of M. Mead, the way social norms, rules, values and behavioral patterns are passed on from one generation to another changed as intergenerational relations transformed.

In her concept, A. I. Kovalyova emphasizes the fact that there is a pluralism of norms in modern society. Norms lose their shape and the socialization norm vanishes while the efficient socialization depends on it. According to Kovalyova's concept, socialization norm is the thing that ensures the efficiency of socialization, i.e. the efficient reproduction of social links and relation, sociocultural norms and values and their further development.

When the transmission of norms and values from one generation to another break under social transformations, the divergent socialization begins to spread and causes deviant and delinquent behaviour, crisis socialization, etc. The destruction of socialization norm in fact reflects the destruction of consensus concerning basic norms and values and the pluralism of norms and values that we can see today in Russian society. Such discord of norms and values cannot but influence socialization which contains all processes in society and its subsystems.

M. Mead studies the problem of socialization in the light of intergenerational relations and cultures forming in their space. The researcher distinguishes three types of culture: post figurative, cofigurative and prefigurative in dependence on relations formed between generations in the course of socialization. Besides, the character of these intergenerational relations determines the process and speed of innovations in society. In post figurative culture social changes and innovations are slow because this type corresponds to traditional society where young generation adopts social experience accumulated by previous generations and do not challenge the authority of elders and sociocultural experience. Older generations are the bearers of traditions which are the main measure and base for young generations. The violation of them is considered a deviation from social norms and the infringement of the existing order.

When society passes through a crisis, the cofigurative type of culture comes into effect. It does not challenge the authority and experience of elders either, but at the same time it admits that it is possible and necessary to keep an eye on peers. That is the behaviour of contemporaries becomes an ideal and model for young people. Besides, there is a great respect for older generation. Its experience is still a base for the system of norms and values of society determining its development. In periods of social cataclysms, it is the innovative strategies of young generations that become the source of new development lines for society which desperately needs innovations to overcome the crisis. This brings youth into the forefront of social life while older generation keeps its status of an authoritative guardian of traditions and norms as a base of social order.

The third type of culture, called "prefigurative" by M. Mead, deals with completely different intergenerational relations. Here youth not only comes to the forefront of social life and determines innovations but also becomes a model for the older generation which realizes the advantages of young people in dynamically changing world. It is youth that is able to cope with innovations and introduce them in various life spheres in rapidly developing society, engineering progress and informational revolution. No doubt, this type of culture is a product of today. It is characterized by the rapid development of information technologies and engineering discoveries. Peoples realize that social experience accumulated by older generations is already useless for youngsters who live in a different world - the world of information and communication technologies where they begin to feel at home more successfully than their parents. This type of culture is based on the role of youth as a determining force in innovative development of society. At the same time this culture conceals a danger which cannot be found in two other types described by M. Mead. The point is that young people completely turn down the authority and experience of elders and together with this they reject their cultural and spiritual potential. The loss of this potential is fraught with a spiritual catastrophe of society.

Attaching people to labour is an important part of socialization. Labour socialization forms the professional values and guidelines of individual and his attitude to work. The role of labour in personality formation was always paramount and very significant. Both at the dawn of humanity and today, labour in fact forms man as a creator. This is extremely important today when consumer's values are intensively distributing, consumer society is forming and consumer replaces the creator. Such a turn in the development of humanity can be only considered a decline because social evolution and progress are possible only through creation. So, to be guided by total consumption and to treat labour just as a way to satisfy consumer's needs is a civilization deadlock. It can lead the humanity to social collapse as consumer mental setup spreads all over the world.

That is why the problem of youth labour socialization in the spread of consumer ideology becomes very urgent and needs a thorough sociological study.

The theoretical discourse of youth labour socialization in Russia has many different opinions, ideas and points of view formulated by various schools and concepts. Thus we believe that it is necessary to cover the methodological potential of modern Russian youth sociology in order to connect all different opinions about labour socialization with certain research lines.

In the modern era, the ideas of youth, its relations with society and social relations in general significantly change. V. A. Lukov thinks that this fact influenced theoretical sociology in recent decades. The study of changes in relations between youth and society resulted in the risk concept of youth, the theory of youth subcultures and the thesaurus concept of youth based on social subjectness which is basic also for the very popular theory of social reproduction. Besides there appeared a number of youth socialization concepts reflecting the specificity of socialization in modern globalization, virtualization and network character of social relations when the system social values and norms breaks down and mass culture dominates.

The positions of researchers often differ when they analyze the state and key tendencies of labour socialization of young people. Nevertheless scientists admit that modern conditions for the development of labour values, guidelines and skills in Russia has changed significantly as Russian society shifted to a market economy and lost

the system of values and norms. This makes the problem topical and creates the need to study the conditions and factors of labour socialization of Russian young people thoroughly.

Youth clearly shows its social autonomy and the right to the self-regulation of socialization because social relations become democratic. Young people choose by themselves what component of labour is significant to them. However one should not forget that this takes place in particular society with its family traditions, labour behaviour, the attitude to work and labour market features. The majority of Russian young people with professional qualification are unused. Russian researchers have good reasons to emphasize the fact that Russian people, first of all youth, are not satisfied with the work and are disappointed in the employment sphere. This inevitably affects their social feelings and health.

The sociology of labour always paid much attention to the satisfaction with work. It is obvious that *inter alia* it depends on the possibility of person's self-fulfillment in the course of work. Yu. G. Volkov considers creativity a reason of Russia's historical breakthrough and her prospects for leaving "the vicious circle of historical lagging" to acquire assurance and authority in today's world. Only the creative labour treated as an important value of man's inner world can help Russian society to make this historical breakthrough, become a creative society and go away from unprofitable social imitation. This imitation puts obstacles in the way of a new social order based on social cooperation, consolidation, responsibility and creation.

From the viewpoint of sociological analysis, youth is interesting as a socio-demographic group which seeks to achieve a social status, a certain position in society and self-fulfillment. Thus it reveals its subjectness which is impossible without labour. In fact, subjectness starts the period when we can consider youth as a subject of social relations.

That is why we think that it is methodologically right to study the labour socialization of young people in terms of youth subjectness as a goal of labour socialization. The effectiveness of this process is determined by labour socialization in family, at school, at university and in work team.

Today young people have to cope with labour and professional space and to join into it without governmental support in strict labour market with its rules hard to meet if one does not have work experience. Here creativity becomes a social asset which can make up the deficiency in work experience in some cases because the dynamically changing reality needs innovations, mobility and good adaptation skills. Modern young people display these qualities more vividly than older generations do.

Another thing is that the realization of creative strategies and person's creative potential is almost impossible in today's Russia where people including the youth have to survive in rigorous conditions. The survival strategy makes person adapt to the reality where creation is opposed to formalization and standardization and where only a few manage to make a breakthrough and realize their creative intentions. As a result, people move from creation to the sphere of risk in chase of material wealth and demonstrative consumption. The value of creative person will remain extremely low until society forms a need for creation.

In this situation, the profitability of profession but not its correspondence to person's interests and creative gifts is the criterion for its prestige. This fact is confirmed by author's sociological research on "Work Motivation and Adaptation of Russian Young People on Labour Market" performed in June-July 2014. Total 184 people participated in the research.

The key goal of this empirical research was to study factors and conditions for the work motivation of Russian young people and their adaptation on labour market and also the role of all-Russian youth social movement called the Russian Student Teams in forming their professional skills and professional competence. The survey was carried out on-line (public URL <http://www.surveio.com/survey/d/L0F1C5W5P2U7I8M4A>) among the members of the Russian Student Teams (The Rostov Regional Department).

The Rostov Regional Department of the Russian Student Teams was created in May 2008 to develop social and labour activity and to promote the creative initiative among the youth of the Rostov Region. In accordance with the Regulations of this public organization, the goal of this association is to educate young people, to solve the material and social problems of students, to solve the employment problem of youth, to promote the socio-economic development of the country and to promote the safe conditions for the work of student teams.

The survey showed that today's youth prefers such professions as businessman, entrepreneur (47.83%); military officer (36.96%); public servant (34.78%); lawyer, attorney, notary public, prosecutor (33.15%). The young people asked were students. That means they had already chosen their future profession. However, our survey showed that they are not completely confident in their choice: only 25% of respondents never had doubts about their chosen profession (see Table 1).

In modern Russian labour market, young people evaluate the employment problem quite adequately. For example, 46.20% answered that the problem of employment is very acute for young people in modern Russia; 22.83% think that there are some employment troubles; 26.63% of respondent believe that Russian young people do not have any employment troubles, but they cannot always find a job according to their profession.

Table 1. The answers to the question: “Do you have any doubts about your chosen profession?”, %

| Answers | Percentage, % |
|--|---------------|
| Yes, sometimes | 51.63 |
| No, never | 25.00 |
| I realized long ago that I had chosen the wrong profession | 7.07 |
| I do not know | 15.22 |
| Other | 1.09 |

We suppose that this is the reason why a great part of Russian young people take interest in labour migration abroad. Anyway, the research revealed more than 50% of people who would leave definitely or probably if there is a chance (see Table 2).

Table 2. The answers to the question: “What will you do if you’re given a chance to go to work abroad?”, %

| Answers | Percentage, % |
|---|---------------|
| Of course, I will take this chance | 27.72 |
| Probably, I would go | 38.04 |
| Most likely I would not go to work abroad | 15.76 |
| No, I would not go under no circumstances | 7.61 |
| I do not know | 10.87 |

As we can see, only 7.61% of respondents are sure they would not go to work abroad under no circumstances. These data correlate with the data about the low significance of patriotism in the value system of asked young people. When asked the question “What does it mean for you to be a patriot?”, only 7.61% of respondents answered “to live and work in my country”. At the same time, 34.24% of them chose a similar position but without obligation to live in their own country (see Table 3).

Table 3. The answers to the question: “What does it mean for you to be a patriot?” (several answers allowed), %

| Answers | Percentage, % |
|---|---------------|
| To protect the country against enemies | 31.52 |
| To work for the benefit of my country | 34.24 |
| To love my native land | 58.15 |
| To be proud of my country | 57.07 |
| To glorify my native land | 20.11 |
| To know the history of my native land | 40.22 |
| To know the culture and traditions of my nation | 39.13 |
| To live and work in my country | 7.61 |
| Other | 0.00 |

This situation is caused by the poor interaction of educational institutions and labour market in Russia. Consequently, the skills acquired during education do not correspond to employer’s demands. Moreover, Russian labour market is not controlled by the government and other social institutions and powers. Thus it is not focused on helping young people who begin their career. Young people have to adapt to difficult and unfavourable market conditions. That is why there appears a need for organizations that would prepare young people for work and

provide them with a flexible start. There is such an organization in today's Russia. This is the all-Russian youth social movement called the Russian Student Teams. It works in the system of higher and secondary professional education. It has several regional departments including one in Rostov-on-Don.

Today the Russian Student Teams are an efficient way to organize the work and professional adaptation of young specialists. They earned the reputation of a serious and successful organization with strong normative legal base. It includes 280 thousand members who work in federal entities. RST objectively promote youth adaptation in Russian labour market and their successful integration into Russian professional sphere by attracting them to labour and giving them the opportunity to get professional skills.

We conducted our research among the men of the Rostov Regional Department of the Russian Student Teams. More than 80% of them evaluated the work of this organization positively. The respondents expressed an opinion that the Russian Student Teams actively promote the social activity of youth (76.50%), the formation of its professional skills (45.36%), the employment of young people (32.79%), their spiritual education (32.24%), the managerial skills (31.15%), the skills of life successfulness (31.15%), the increase of work adaptiveness of young people (30.05%), the increase of patriotism among young people (28.96%). As we can see, the student labour movement has a high socialization potential. However, it is necessary for its full-fledged realization to recreate the system of patriotic and labour education in Russia. But this is not an easy task. It needs a systematic, prolonged and cardinal policy of Russian government concerning the education of young people and realization of their creative potential without which the innovative breakthrough of the society is impossible because innovations are the product of creation.

Every society immanently has the demand for creation and creative personality. In this situation, much depends on the system of education. It should be focused on the development and augmentation of the intellectual and cultural potential of society and forming the person of an innovative type. The creative development programme for Russian society with creative class formation needs a creative environment where young people can improve their creative skills. First of all, such environment should exist in educational sphere. Today, in spite of many negative phenomena in Russian education, the hopes for the formation of creative society are connected with this environment.

Russian educational system needs structural and institutional reforms, but it still has its socio-cultural potential and its important mission to form generation as an object of social renewal. This mission can be carried out only if the value of creation is considered a cornerstone and there are legal ways for social creation. Otherwise, this social creation becomes marginal or dies away taking the shape of imitation.

Isn't it what happens to modern Russia? Imitation became a synonym of modern Russian reality where activity is substituted in all its aspects. We believe that the potential of the creative concept consists in overcoming negative tendencies connected with institutionalized imitation in Russian social life. In spite of its seeming impropriety for Russia, this concept is quite timely because the potential creative strategy is an alternative for the fearfully real imitational strategy of social development in Russia.

In our opinion, the efficient labour socialization based on the above stated creative theory is connected with the formation of personality whose main life strategy is creation and innovation. The ideal model of labour socialization is the creative model. We are aware of the fact that today the creative model is only a desirable and normative model to aspire to. But we also realize that the implementation of any model is preceded by the development of this model and its methods with a glance to real conditions.

That is why we search for a way to the ideal model of labour socialization which, in our opinion, should be a creative model. At that we consider labour socialization as a personality formation process based on certain professional values, behavioral patterns, norms and rules adopted by an individual during his life. They promote his integration into the work sphere and his successful career.

The creative model of labour socialization stated in our concept is founded on the creative personality formed and developed by adopting basic creative values. These values make for professional success and effective integration into the sphere of work relations.

5. Conclusion

Labour socialization as an independent object of sociological analysis not often is discussed in scientific studies of modern Russian researchers unlike other kinds of socialization (professional, economic, political, etc.). This can be easily explained from the viewpoint that this process lost its ideological and educational ground and governmental support as market came. It transformed into an autonomous and particular phenomenon which is almost not controlled and forecasted. In Soviet society, labour socialization was a base for socialistic education

and socialistic way of life. Thus it was at the center of scientific attention. It needs the same attention in today's Russian society where the destroyed system of labour socialization makes the value of labour transform from terminal to instrumental. It happens in the course of distribution of consumer ideology which threatens to deprive Russian work ethics of a spiritual principle as a base for creative and socially useful work. This is the price for the destruction of the united area of socialization and the model of work ethics existed in Soviet society. Modern Russian scientists are almost as one in assessing the situation in Russian work sphere. They define it as a crisis with extremely unfavourable conditions for youth socialization.

In Russia, there is no a uniform system of youth labour socialization as a system of interaction between socialization agents and social institutions responsible for the reproduction of national professional and labour potential. In this situation, labour socialization is ruled by the uncontrolled labour market and prepares specialists with high work mobility focused on the improvement of material welfare to the prejudice of professional self-fulfillment. Such character of youth labour socialization causes the deprivation of professional and labour values, reduces the importance of creativity in work and leads to the loss of professionalism among young people who are ready to trade their professional sets and goals for the material welfare and financial sustainability.

All this is the evidence of the necessity to recreate the uniform system of youth labour socialization and labour educational mechanisms based on the creative attitude to labour and creative potential as an essential component of their social asset.

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