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Original Theoretical Research



Transformation of “Patriotism” Concept in Conditions of Modern Russian Society

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Abstract

Introduction. Examining the evolution of the concept of “patriotism” in the context of contemporary socio-cultural and political-economic changes in Russia is relevant and topical. The influence of globalization, digital technologies, the socio-political agenda, and new forms of identity on the perception of patriotism among various social groups requires new research approaches. The analysis of sociological studies demonstrating the dynamics of changes in patriotic values and their adaptation to new conditions is promising.

Materials and Methods. The object of the study is the patriotic identity of Russian citizens in the context of the transformation of social, political and economic processes. To achieve the goals, the comprehensive methodological approach, including both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, is used in the study.

Results. The analysis of empirical data revealed a number of key trends in the transformation of patriotism in the modern Russian society: firstly, the growth of civil patriotism, among young people there is an increased focus on civil patriotism, expressed in activism, volunteering, protection of human rights and environmental initiatives; secondly, increased state patriotism – traditional values associated with national identity, military power and historical continuity dominate official discourse; thirdly, the digitalization of patriotism – the spread of social networks and digital platforms has led to the formation of new forms of patriotic expression, such as online actions, patriotic blogs and discussions.

Discussion and Conclusion. In the face of global challenges and instability, patriotism plays a key role in consolidating society and strengthening national identity. However, it should not be turned into an instrument of political manipulation or used solely for propaganda purposes. It is important to develop constructive patriotism based on respect for culture, history and civil rights.

Keywords: patriotism, transformation, Russian society, identity, sociocultural factors, globalization, digitalization

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Оригинальное теоретическое исследование

Трансформация понятия «патриотизм» в условиях современного российского общества

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Аннотация

Введение. Рассмотрение эволюции понятия «патриотизм» в контексте современных социокультурных и политико-экономических изменений в России является актуальным и своевременным. Вопросы влияния глобализации, цифровых технологий, общественно-политической повестки и новых форм идентичности на восприятие патриотизма среди различных социальных групп требуют новых исследовательских подходов. Перспективным являет-

ся анализ результатов социологических исследований, демонстрирующих динамику изменений патриотических ценностей и их адаптацию к новым условиям.

Материалы и методы. Объектом исследования является патриотическое самосознание российских граждан в условиях трансформации социальных, политических и экономических процессов. Для достижения поставленных целей в исследовании использовался комплексный методологический подход, включающий как количественные, так и качественные методы анализа.

Результаты исследования. Анализ эмпирических данных позволил выявить ряд ключевых тенденций в трансформации патриотизма в современном российском обществе: во-первых, рост гражданского патриотизма – среди молодежи наблюдается усиление ориентации на гражданский патриотизм, выражающийся в активизме, волонтерстве, защите прав человека и экологических инициативах; во-вторых, усиление государственного патриотизма – в официальном дискурсе доминируют традиционные ценности, связанные с национальной идентичностью, военной мощью и исторической преемственностью; в-третьих, цифровизация патриотизма – распространение социальных сетей и цифровых платформ привело к формированию новых форм патриотического самовыражения, таких как онлайн-акции, патриотические блоги и дискуссии.

Обсуждение и заключение. В условиях глобальных вызовов и нестабильности патриотизм играет ключевую роль в консолидации общества и укреплении национального самосознания. Однако он не должен превращаться в инструмент политической манипуляции или использоваться исключительно в целях пропаганды. Важно развивать конструктивный патриотизм, основанный на уважении к культуре, истории и гражданским правам.

Ключевые слова: патриотизм, трансформация, российское общество, идентичность, социокультурные факторы, глобализация, цифровизация

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Introduction. The concept of “patriotism” is an important component of national identity and socio-political discourse in any state. Patriotism in the Russian society has traditionally played an important role, but its content and forms of manifestation have changed depending on the historical context. In the 21st century patriotism underwent a significant transformation under the influence of globalization, information technology, political reforms and foreign policy challenges. Media narratives play an important role in these changes, as well as the digitalization of society.

In the conditions of modern Russia, it also undergoes significant changes due to both internal and external factors. Changing socio-economic conditions, the development of digital technologies, information wars, as well as the growth of globalization contribute to the formation of new approaches to understanding patriotism.

In addition, the structure of patriotic values is changing, which requires a more detailed consideration of changes in this aspect. The scientific novelty of research consists in identifying relevant forms of patriotic consciousness that are formed under the influence of globalization and technological processes. The empirical base of the study is based on data from large-scale sociological surveys, monitoring studies of public opinion and content analysis of patriotic rhetoric in the Russian media.

The theoretical basis was the works of Russian and foreign researchers, such as E. Durkheim, M. Weber, Yu. Habermas, as well as Russian scientists V.V. Lapkina, V.A. Levashova. Modern studies of patriotism rely on theoretical approaches, including cultural, historical, sociological and political perspectives. Patriotism can be considered as a traditional value tied to historical heritage, or as a dynamic construct that adapts to new realities. Key theories include the concept of “civic patriotism” by Y. Habermas, traditional ethnic patriotism, as well as modern interpretations of patriotism as the social capital of society. This study expands existing approaches, considering patriotism through the prism of digitalization and modernization of values in the global society [1].

Materials and Methods. Within the framework of this study, a multidisciplinary methodological approach was used that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to obtain an objective and comprehensive picture of the studied phenomenon. Sociological surveys such as an analysis of survey data conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Public Opinion Fund and the Levada-Center in the period of 2019–2024, revealed changes in the perception of patriotism among various age and social groups. The surveys were conducted in the format of telephone and online interviews, as well as by the method of in-depth focus-group discussions, which made it possible to identify both general and specific trends in the formation of patriotic sentiments.

Media content analysis, an analysis of publications by Russian media such as Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Kommersant, RIA Novosti and others, made it possible to determine the main narratives that form the public perception of patriotism.

Content analysis included the study of thematic publications, the tonality of materials, the frequency of the use of patriotic rhetoric, as well as a comparison of state and independent sources of information.

Analysis of social networks, the study of the discourses of patriotism in social networks (VKontakte, Telegram, Twitter) was carried out, which made it possible to identify current trends and alternative forms of patriotic expression. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of user comments, popular hashtags, reposts and audience involvement in patriotic discussions.

The historical and comparative method was used to analyze the transformation of the patriotism concept in different historical periods, from the Russian Empire, the Soviet era to the present day. The method made it possible to establish continuity or a gap in the interpretation of patriotic values at various stages of history.

Results. Modern forms of patriotism in Russia are formed under the influence of many social, political, economic and informational factors. In the 21st century this phenomenon acquires a multi-layered character, covering both traditional ideas about love for the Motherland and new interpretations related to the critical perception of state policy and the desire for social progress.

The process of patriotism transformation is due to the dynamics of domestic and foreign policy, changes in public consciousness, as well as the influence of digital technologies. State initiatives play a key role in the construction of patriotic values, which is manifested in the institutionalization of patriotic education, the inclusion of historical narrative in educational programs and the formation of official discourses. In recent years, state support for patriotism has been expressed in the development of youth movements (for example, Young Army Cadets National Movement), military-historical clubs and multimedia projects aimed at popularizing the Russian history.

Foreign policy factors and geopolitical tension also have a significant impact on the transformation of patriotic consciousness. Economic sanctions, diplomatic conflicts and armed confrontations contribute to the growth of patriotic sentiments based on the idea of protecting Russia's national sovereignty and geopolitical interests. Military events, such as the reunification of Crimea in 2014 and the beginning of a special military operation in 2022, contributed to the militarization of patriotic rhetoric, strengthening the significance of the concepts of "defense of the Motherland" and "national security". In this context, the import substitution program and support for domestic production are considered not only as economic strategies, but also as a form of patriotic behavior that contributes to strengthening the country's independence.

An equally significant factor is the role of media and digital platforms in the patriotic values' formation and broadcasting. State media actively use cinema, documentary and historical reconstruction as tools of patriotic education. At the same time, social networks (Telegram, YouTube, TikTok) are becoming platforms for the formation of alternative discourses, where bloggers and independent commentators contribute to rethinking patriotism among young people. In the context of information confrontation, patriotism is increasingly interpreted as an element of ideological struggle, in which control over information flows plays a strategic role.

In modern Russian society, patriotism is perceived in different ways: some consider it to be unconditional support for the state, others associate it with criticism of the authorities and the protection of civil liberties. Economic factors such as social stratification and living standards, influence the perception of patriotism, for some, it is associated with pride in the country and its achievements, for others, with the need to solve everyday problems. In the context of migration processes, some Russians who have gone abroad continue to maintain patriotic feelings, but in a different form, through cultural identity, the study of history or the support of the Russian-speaking community abroad.

Modern patriotism in Russia is formed under the influence of many factors: from state policy and foreign policy challenges to information technology and public opinion. In the 21st century, patriotism becomes more multifaceted and ambiguous: for some, it is the protection of traditional values and historical memory, for others, it is a critical view of power and the desire to develop society.

Thus, modern Russian patriotism is a complex, dynamic system, evolving under the influence of state policy, foreign policy challenges, economic factors and information technology. Its versatility is manifested in the combination of traditional values with new forms of civic engagement and media interaction, which makes patriotism one of the key elements of public consciousness in Russia in the 21st century.

The analysis of opinion polls shows that patriotism in modern Russia takes different forms. Among the younger generation, there is a growing interest in "civic patriotism" based on respect for human rights, volunteering and social activism. At the same time, traditional forms of patriotism associated with statehood, military power and historical memory are preserved.

In March 2024, the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion reported that 94% of Russians consider themselves patriots, 62% of which are unconditional patriots. This is the maximum figure for the entire observation period. The growth of unconditional patriotism has been especially noticeable since 2014, which is associated with the

events in Crimea and the beginning of a special military operation in 2022. Patriotic sentiments are evenly distributed among different demographic groups including age and regional categories [2].

In May 2024, the Public Opinion Foundation conducted a survey, the results of which showed that 50% of respondents consider criticism of the authorities to be unpatriotic. This indicates that half of the population associates patriotism with support for the current government and considers criticism to be a manifestation of disloyalty [3].

In the study of 2017, Levada Center (recognized as a foreign agent in the Russian Federation) noted the growing popularity of Joseph Stalin as “the most outstanding person in history”. The share of respondents calling Stalin in this context increased from 8% in 1989 to 38% in 2017. The growth of a positive attitude towards Stalin among young people is especially noticeable which may reflect changes in patriotic moods and perceptions of historical figures [4].

Content analysis of materials from leading Russian media shows an increased emphasis on state-patriotic rhetoric, especially during periods of political instability. At the same time, analysis of social media data reveals an increase in interest in alternative forms of patriotism, including digital activism, cultural heritage protection and participation in volunteer initiatives. As part of the study, patriotic movements were monitored on social media, during which it was found that the most popular topics include historical memory, volunteerism and environmental activism as manifestations of a modern patriotic position.

Thus, when analyzing the transformation of the patriotism concept in modern Russian society, it is important to take into account these nuances and rely on the data of various research centers to get an objective picture.

State policy actively forms patriotic sentiments through educational programs, media space and public initiatives. However, new challenges and trends need to be taken into account, such as digital environment, critical perceptions of information, and the rise of individualistic values. In educational institutions, patriotic education programs are being introduced, including historical education, military-patriotic events, the development of volunteering and civil initiatives. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure a balance between the official discourse of patriotism and the real interests of young people, stimulating their active participation in society.

Patriotic education plays a key role in shaping the national identity and identity of citizens. In modern Russia, it is actively developing at the state level, covering educational programs, youth movements, the army, media and cultural initiatives. However, its prospects depend on the effectiveness of the measures being implemented, the perception of society and compliance with the real needs of young people.

One of the most important areas is state policy in the field of patriotic education. Within the framework of the national project “Education” there is a federal project “Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation”, aimed at creating respect for Russian history, traditions and state symbols. Schools have introduced “Talk of the Important” lessons on historical and moral topics, as well as events dedicated to memorable dates such as Victory Day, National Unity Day and Russia Day. The key role is played by the military-patriotic movement “Young Army Cadets National Movement”, which covers tens of thousands of young people, offering them participation in military training camps, sports competitions and historical reconstructions.

Particular attention is paid to the connection of patriotic education with the army. Military service is presented as a form of patriotism manifestation, which is facilitated by the development of cadet classes, military universities and contract service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The image of a soldier-defender is actively promoted in the media and film industry, and films about military valor (“T-34”, “28 Panfilov’s”) are becoming part of cultural patriotic education.

However, despite the significant efforts of the state, patriotic education faces a number of challenges. One of the problems is its excessive formality: in many cases, patriotic events are reduced to formal actions without causing a deep emotional response among young people [5]. There is also a risk of excessive ideologization, which can lead to distrust on the part of young people, especially in the context of information openness and a variety of alternative sources of opinion.

Another challenge is the gap between patriotic slogans and real living standards. Young people strive for self-realization, high salaries, career opportunities, and if government initiatives are not accompanied by an improvement in the economic situation, patriotism can be perceived as an abstract concept that has no practical significance.

In addition, modern patriotism in Russia is becoming more and more multifaceted. For one part of society, it is associated with supporting government initiatives, military power and historical continuity. The other part sees patriotism in a critical understanding of current processes, the desire for social justice and the development of civil society. In the face of this split, it is important that patriotic education unites people, and does not become an instrument of political division.

The prospects for patriotic education in Russia are associated with its adaptation to the realities of the 21st century. It is important not only to preserve traditional forms of patriotism, but also to develop new approaches based on the cultural, scientific and economic achievements of the country. A successful example is the support of volunteer movements, youth initiatives, digital educational projects and social activity.

To ensure that patriotism is not perceived by young people as an obligatory ideological element, but as a natural part of national identity, it is important to make it diverse, modern and appropriate to the interests of new generations. Patriotism should be associated not only with historical memory and state loyalty, but also with concern for the future of the country, participation in its development, scientific and cultural achievements. Only in this case, patriotic education will work effectively for the benefit of society and the state.

Discussion and Conclusion. In the dynamically changing world, Russia faces a number of challenges related to preserving national identity and strengthening patriotic values. Among the main challenges, the following can be distinguished (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Preservation of national identity and patriotic values strengthening

In the 21st century patriotism in Russia continues to change under the influence of political, social, economic and technological factors. If in Soviet times patriotism was closely connected with ideology and the state and in the 1990s experienced a crisis due to the change in public guidelines, then in our time it is becoming multifaceted, including both traditional and new forms. However, the transformation of patriotism is accompanied by both prospects and serious challenges.

One of the main challenges is the division of society and the blurring of the concept of patriotism. In modern Russian society, there is no single understanding of what patriotism is. For some, it is the support of the state and its policies, for others, it is a critical attitude towards the authorities and the desire for change. This leads to a split: one part of citizens perceives patriotism as loyalty to the authorities, the other one as active participation in the life of the country in order to improve the situation. This division makes patriotism ambiguous and sometimes even contradictory.

There is also a problem of formalizing and ideologizing patriotism. State programs of patriotic education aimed at young people are often superficial and mechanical. Patriotism becomes an instrument of political mobilization, which can lead to a loss of sincerity in relations between citizens and the state.

Another challenge is the conflict between globalization and national identity. In a digital society, young people are increasingly faced with world cultures, which affects the perception of patriotism. Western values and alternative views are beginning to dominate among the youth audience, which sometimes raises doubts about traditional forms of patriotic education. Patriotism supporting state interests may face competition from world ideas and movements, which sets the task for society to integrate national values into the global context.

In addition, the connection of patriotism with the socio-economic situation is a serious challenge. Young people are increasingly focused on personal well-being, career opportunities and living standards, and if state initiatives for patriotic

education are not accompanied by real improvements in the social and economic sphere, then patriotism risks being perceived as empty propaganda. If citizens do not see real changes in their lives, they begin to doubt the sincerity of patriotic slogans [6].

The transformation of patriotic consciousness in modern Russia is a complex and multi-level process due to the influence of both internal social changes and global challenges. In the context of growing digitalization, ideological polarization and changes in the structure of social values, patriotism should go beyond traditional concepts and acquire new forms focused on civic participation, the development of society and the promotion of scientific and cultural achievements.

Modern challenges, such as increased ideologization, growing social inequality and the influence of globalization processes, require rethinking existing approaches to patriotic education. The formation of a relevant, inclusive and development-oriented society of patriotism of a new generation is possible only taking into account the breadth of its interpretations and adaptation to changing realities. This implies not only the preservation of historical memory and traditional values, but also the integration of modern social practices aimed at developing critical thinking, media literacy and digital citizenship.

The future of patriotism in Russia will depend on the ability of society to harmoniously combine historical and cultural traditions with modern social challenges. A comprehensive analysis of the patriotic identity transformation, based on empirical data, reveals key trends that can be used in the development of educational programs. In this context, the educational system is of particular importance, which must integrate innovative methods of forming patriotic consciousness, using the potential of digital technologies and social platforms.

In the global information space, where the speed of data dissemination has increased significantly, patriotic education strategies require adaptation to the new media environment. The influence of social networks and digital communication platforms on the perception of patriotism among young people is becoming a determining factor in the formation of public sentiment. Thus, further studies of patriotism in the 21st century should take into account not only traditional aspects, but also the dynamics of digital interaction, which will make it possible to develop more effective and relevant strategies for the formation of patriotic identity in modern conditions.

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