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Features of the Formation of Social Maturity of Conscripts in the Socialization Process at the Military Service Stage

The article substantiates the urgency of studying the problem of the formation of social maturity of youth in the socialization process in the armed forces of Russia. The author offers results of the empirical study of social maturity of conscripts; 140 examinees, young people aged 18–23 years (110 conscripts and 30 students of universities for the humanities) took part in this study. The author concludes that because of insufficient social maturity, a low level of spiritual-moral and civil culture, lack of experience of independent constructive solving many life problems many young people are “infected” by civil infantilism and social nihilism, parasitical moods and lack of initiative that is directly and indirectly reflected in readiness of young generation for performance of the duties of a soldier for the defense of the Motherland.

Keywords: socialization, social maturity, military personnel, individual values.

Transformational processes which affected all the spheres of society's life activity have caused changes of social institutes and sociocultural processes. Changing socio-cultural conditions have also changed the process of socialization of rising generation.

According to scientists, the process of socialization of the person has become more complex and extended in modern conditions, and respectively criteria of his/her social maturity have become different. They are determined not only by his/her entry into an independent life of work, but also by graduating from the university, obtaining of a profession, real political and civil rights, material independence [2, 3, 6, 7, 8].

Formation of social maturity of youth takes place under the influence of many social institutes representing various spheres of the person's life activity, having a rigid organizational structure, for example, in army, and also spontaneous influence of various youth organizations and subcultures, mass media.

This plurality of institutes and mechanisms of socialization is not a rigid hierarchical system; each of them carries out specific functions in the development of personality.

The army is one of institutes of socialization of youth where young men gain the experience of combat training and marching, and also the experience of moral-psychological training, strengthening of civil and patriotic values, new experience of accommodation in a special mode of life. The army way of life is characterized by accommodation in conditions of spatial isolation, rigid regulation of life, the necessity to obey army rules and other special conditions of life, ceremonies and rituals unquestioningly.

Being a social institute the army carries out certain sociocultural functions: integrative, regulatory, identification, value-standard, socio-structural, socialization and education, social circulation. These functions are the basis of providing the state's sovereignty, formation of the society and army of a syncretical type [5].



The process of formation of social maturity of youth, young men's choice of a further course of life when serving in the armed forces in conditions of cardinal transformations of the Russian army has its specificity.

According to modern researches they have studied various aspects of social maturity: a number of scientists consider social maturity as a maturation boundary (S. N. Ikonnikova, V. T. Lisovsky), other consider certain aspects of social maturity (S. L. Bratchenko, S. G. Vershlovsky, V. N. Maksimova, T. E. Strachenko, A. Ya. Fliyer, V. I. Fomin), conditions of formatting social maturity (B. P. Bitinas, V. G. Bocharova, A. V. Mudrik).

As criteria of social maturity various researchers define: its value orientation (K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, L. I. Bozhovich, I. V. Dubrovina, K. K. Platonov, V. I. Slobodchikov, N. I. Soboleva, F. R. Filippov); consciousness, activity of behavior (K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, I. S. Kon); the highest degree of the development of abilities (A. A. Bodalev, A. V. Petrovsky, A. N. Sukhov); character traits – responsibility, self-dependence, independence (M. Robber, I. B. Slyusar); a person's achievement of certain results in life (I. A. Bayeva, I. S. Kon).

Features of formation of social maturity of conscripts at the stage of service in the armed forces are studied insufficiently. Problems of socialization and education of the military personnel are investigated in works of M. I. Tomchuk, B. C. Gorbunov, V. A. Polosin, V. N. Loskutov, V. E. Talyneva.

Within the limits of psychological-pedagogical researches there are studied: features of formation of social-moral maturity of cadets' personality in the process of higher education (A. O. Koshelev), personal features of officers of special service unit (E. V. Apasov).

Ideas of prevalence of one of times or time orientation in connection with personal features of the person have found reflection in works of F. Zimbardo, D. A. Leontyev, I. A. Spiridonova, A. V. Seryy, his/her biographic crises and life programs (K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, R. A. Akhmerov, I. A. Ralnikova) [6, 9, 10].

Military service is the major period of social and civil formation of personality, the period of interest in problems of social reality and their critical comprehension, definition of his/her own place in social relations. When serving in the armed forces the conscript acquires the language, social values, norms, culture inherent in the army life, social community, group, and reproduces social communications and social experience.

Modern researchers note that a socially mature personality is treated as an active member of society accepting and carrying out his/her social obligations in compliance with moral certainty.

Military service is young men's fulfillment of a social duty fixed in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

According to D. I. Feldstein, the degree of social maturity is shown in development of social norms, existence forms, in their concrete realization, i.e. in the level of self-consciousness [8].



Studying the character of conscripts' relation to the forthcoming military service has shown its contradictoriness. On the one hand, conscripts realize positive aspects of serving in military units, on the other hand, they feel uncertainty concerning the forthcoming everyday life of military service. Thus the inability to stand up for himself, or rather, ability to find his own place in the army life in the opinion of conscripts define uncertainty in army tests. Let's pay attention to the circumstance that leading motives in a positive feelings concerning military service are not social, but personal motives. "An aspiration to become self-reliant and independent people" is a factor which gained rather a weighty value (10,8 %) for a positive mood. Fears because of unpredictability of the development of situations during military service, possibility to spend resources and the potential of personality are negative components of health which prevail among them.

Considering conscription and the stage of service in the army as a certain stage of socialization which is characterized as a critical stage in conscripts' life, attended with changing the way of life, and reappraisal of values and vital attitudes we have made an attempt of studying these phenomena.

For the purpose of studying features of formation of conscripts' social maturity during military service in the armed forces of Russia we have used the following psychological techniques: F. Zimbardo's questionnaire of time prospect, "Sense-of-Life Orientations" of D. A. Leontyev (SLO), the test of viability (S. Maddi), the questionnaire on definition of coping-strategies of behavior [9, 10].

40 examinees, young people aged 18–23 years (110 conscripts and 30 students of universities in the humanities took part in this studying. The statistical analysis was carried out by means of the STATISTICA 6.0 package, the correlation analysis of r-Spearman; the following results were obtained.

The analysis of results of the "Time Prospects" technique has shown that values of indices of scales "the negative past", "the positive past", "the fatalistic present" in the studied group of respondents are typical. Young men-students and conscripts with secondary vocational education have showed the greatest values of "the negative past" scale. It is possible say that the young men of these groups have had a negative experience of feelings in the past which still disturbs them.

The correlation analysis results have showed that the index of sensemaking in life in SLO negatively correlates with "the negative past" (ZTPI) ($r = -0,55$; $p = 0,00003$).

About a half of respondents (48 %) have a high level of expressiveness of "the positive past" which speaks about the nostalgic relation to the past, actualization of the need for safety.

High indices in the studied group of respondents are also observed in scales: "the hedonistic present" and "the future". High results of "the hedonistic present" scale reflect the hedonistic, risky, "reckless" relation to time and life; for youth it is important to experience bright emotions, to establish positive relationship. Similar attitudes reflect



the orientation to pleasure, nervousness, excitement, pleasure in the present and absence of care of future consequences or victims in favor of future awards.

The obtained results may be explained by that the sphere of entertainment and rest plays an important role in a modern "information" era and is of great importance for youth. The media industry, the film industry, musical business and others promote strengthening of hedonistic guidelines which gain the increasing importance. If money has a high status, it is logical that they need to be spent "effectively", the sphere of entertainment is the most demanded here. Hedonism becomes a defining value of behavior and life choices for youth [2].

The orientation to the hedonistic present positively correlates with the positive past experience ($r = 0,4$; $p \leq 0,05$) where the past seems pleasant, they see it through rose-coloured spectacles, with a note of nostalgia. The orientation to enjoyment is positively correlates with confrontative coping-strategy ($r = 0,42$), which is characterized by a certain aggression and the tendency to risk; it negatively correlates with an interpersonal intolerance ($r = -0,4$).

Conscripts' fatalistic present is more predetermined by the past negative experience of respondents ($r = 0,79$) that can testify to the effect that respondents treat life as a preset situation which cannot be changed; the destiny is fatal and there is no possibility to affect the future and the present. There is a communication of the fatalistic present and with the positive past ($r = 0,45$), but less weak, than in the previous couple of variables. This fact indicates the discrepancy and a great influence of last experience on creation of own life in the present. Vital fatalism of the present positively correlates with viability parameters: involvement ($r = 0,51$), risk acceptance ($r = 0,41$) and viability ($r = 0,64$). These parameters of viability also positively correlate with the negative past experience of conscripts. The conscripts burdened by the past negative experiences are more inclined to risk and reckless behavior. The interrelation between the negative past and viability can testify to the effect that negative experience demands certain resistance to stress and promotes formation of a certain level of viability of personality.

High indices of the scale of "future" characterize conscripts' orientation to the future and possible prospects of own course of life. The future has a positive significant connection with life process ($r = 0,38$) which speaks about the fact that the more comprehended, emotionally rich, examinees perceive the process of life, the better they perceive the future. There is an inverse relationship between the aspiration to planning of the future and existence of a certain discomfort and static character in relations with others ($r = -0,4$), inability to accept another and to interact with him/her.

The modern young man has much greater liberty of choice of profession, patterns of behavior, partners in life, style of thinking, than his contemporary 20–30 years ago. Among many young men the level of requirements, claims, expectations is characterized by maximalism; it doesn't correspond to his mission, abilities, which often leads



to failure of plans and disappointment connected with this, dissatisfaction with the made choice.

The process of successful achievement of maturity at youthful age in conditions of military service is defined by sense-of-life and value orientations of personality, actualization of ethical and civil standards and attitudes when choosing and decision-making.

“At the stage of adoption of ethical standards through the system of personal values a person comes to “setting” of senses using all the mechanisms of generation of senses – when the sense of the comprehended content is revealed through a special existential act in which the subject establishes the importance of something in his/her life by his/her conscious and responsible decision” [1, p. 49].

Absoluteness of military obedience entirely follows from the character of military organization and is the immutable principle of service relationship, a core of military discipline. This fact is in a conflict with expectations of youth and its orientation to freedom and independence that also causes the crisis nature of adaptation to army life.

The positive past has the most great number of correlation communications. The respondents focused on the positive past when choosing the strategy of behavior more resort to search of social support ($r = 0,54$) and to escape, avoiding ($r = 0,58$) and to a lesser extent to planning of the solution of problems ($r = -0,4$). The positive past in many respects determines conscripts' relation to the hedonistic present ($r = 0,41$) and to the fatalistic present ($r = 0,45$).

The intensional relation to the past is positively connected with sensemaking in life. The communication of the positive past with the process of life once again confirms the communication of the past with the present; the present is supported by memories of the past. In this sample of respondents the locus of control – life is connected with the positive past. The ability to operate own life rests upon the past positive life experience. According to the data of the “Value Range” technique, the majority of respondents associate the past with the ease of life. Concerning the past the following dyads have obtained an equal quantity of selections: the past – completeness (12,5 %), the past – ease (12,5 %), the past – simplicity (12,5 %) [4].

Comparison of the positive and negative opinions on military service widespread among conscripts makes it possible to say that military service did not lose its value for them. At the same time uncertainty in real prospects of military service is shown in their mood. Besides, conscripts are inclined to share opinion on a low professional standard in the army.

The carried-out theoretical analysis of the studied problem and the psychological analysis of the results of empirical research have made it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- social maturity of the individual is especially shown in processes of the compelled change of the sphere of principal activity, in this case in conditions of military service;



- military service a critical stage in life of a conscript, changing a social situation of development, provokes the development of personal crisis, intensifies processes of sense dynamics and finds reflection in transformation of vital prospect of personality;
- in a time continuum “the past – the present – the future” conscripts demonstrate fixing on the past which may indicate the expressed infantility of conscripts;
- conscripts’ time orientation towards the hedonistic present determines the relation to life as to a full of entertainment and pleasures;
- when determining the value of military service young people appeal to economic benefits and individual values, rather than to social ones;
- military service comes into conflict with vital plans of the majority of youth, complicates the realization of significant individual values. In this regard values of military service lose their actuality in the consciousness of youth, become secondary; attitudes to its active avoidance are formed.

Thus, in view of insufficient social maturity, a low level of spiritual-moral and civil culture, lack of experience of the independent constructive solution of many life problems many young people are “infected” by civil infantility and social nihilism, parasitical moods and lack of initiative that is directly and indirectly reflected in readiness of young generation for performance of the duties of a soldier for defence of motherland.

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