

**RPTSS 2017**  
**International Conference on Research Paradigms Transformation  
in Social Sciences**

**ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF POLITICAL  
TOLERANCE IN MINDS OF RUSSIAN YOUTH**

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***Abstract***

In the 1990s, in the Russian society in the conditions of formation and development of pluralism, the debate on the issue of tolerance has intensified. The problem of tolerance plays a key role in the quest for integrating the foundations of modern society. The solution of problems of the successful transformation of the Russian society is impossible without ensuring two conditions: on the one hand, the accumulation of various socio-cultural backgrounds, and on the other – a constructive one. These conditions allow solving common problems of social and political development. For political sociology, the youth share of the population is of particular interest. In future, they will form the basis of society, which presents peculiar idealism and a priori propensity for conflict. The article is devoted to the problem of the formation of political tolerance of modern Russian youth. It reveals the sociological meaning of the concept of political tolerance and the results of empirical studies, showing the complex and contradictory nature of tolerance formation in the Russian society. Besides, the authors of the article formulate conclusions about the nature of the relationship between the values and attitudes of political tolerance among students. The article proves that in Russia, young people are more intolerant in politics than in simple interpersonal communication.

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**Keywords:** Young people, tolerance, intolerance, political tolerance, values.



## 1. Introduction

The research urgency is caused by the dynamics of contemporary political processes, the tendency of alternation of generations, growth in the political activity of Russian youth. Studies have shown that the break-up of the former Soviet model and the transformation of Russian society in the post-Soviet period mostly affected the spiritual, moral and psychological spheres. The old value system is destroyed, and new democracies are still in the formative stage (Shestopal, 2014, p.61).

Russian society has entered a phase of generational change. The Millennium generation that includes people, who are now aged 14 to 29, comes to replace the older generation (aged 30-51). According to sociologists, the new generation should be much less prejudiced than their parents should. Globalization and simplification of communication of different parts of the world should lead to the development of tolerance, tolerance of different cultures to each other.

The same applies to race, nationality, sexual orientation, gender. In order to verify the hypotheses made in the period of 2013-2015, in the Murmansk region by the method of questionnaires was conducted an empirical study of political tolerance of student's youth. As a result of the empirical study it was found that the majority of young people were aware of the importance of political tolerance as a value of modern society, but political tolerance mindsets are formed at a sufficiently low level. In some young people, the political tolerance values are declarative in nature, they are not made actual in terms of interaction with a certain «political other» – at the level of mindsets, college students are mostly intolerant.

## 2. Problem Statement

The world is a much smaller place today. Globalization has blurred borders throughout the world. More people from different nations, cultures, religions and lifestyles are working together and living in the same neighborhoods than ever before. Tolerance of each other's differences is a very important key to keeping peace among co-workers and neighbors.

In Europe, the word tolerance appeared as early as in the 2nd century. The idea of tolerance has been put forward by philosophers time and again, but tolerance has always remained a contested concept. Its practice and limitations have been subject to societal debate from the time of Marcus Aurelius to the present time (Gibson,1992; Vogt,1997; Mondak Sanders 2003).

In the context of the theory of democracy, tolerance should be also the basis of social behavior. However, in Russia the formation of tolerance is a complex and contradictory process. This is especially true for young people. If tolerance is still present in the culture of youth, then behavior at the level of political tolerance is weakly manifested. The main goal of the study is to explain the nature of this phenomenon.

The political tolerance is one of the fundamental principles of democracy. Tolerance is not a «self-evident» phenomenon (Gibson, 1992): it is often fought for, and reached only after controversy, conflict or even war. Tolerance contains an internal paradox of accepting the things one rejects or objects to. To overcome or avoid conflict, one needs to tolerate the very things one abhors, disagrees with,

disapproves of or dislikes. This paper discusses the nature, antecedents and dynamics of political tolerance of the youth of Russia in the early XXI century

The study of problems of tolerance in democracy *has the certain traditions* (Vogt, 1997; Sullivan, Transue, 1999; Katnik, 2002; Gibson, 2006, Harell, 2010). In recent decades, there has been interest in the problem of formation of tolerance in the conditions of democratization of society (Peffley, Rohrschneider, 2003).

Broadly defined, political tolerance is a person's willingness to support the civic and political rights of fellow citizens with whom one disagrees (Booth, Seligson 2009). Tolerant citizens who support "inclusive participation" are a basic requisite of democratic consolidation (Dahl, 1971; Diamond, 1999; Linz, Stepan 1996).

Tolerance is the capacity of the individual to have mutual understanding and ability to perceive respectfully and to endure the diversity of the modern world, the presence of different points of view, opinions, values, norms of behavior therein.

Tolerance implies the construction of a tolerant attitude of the society (groups) to different ideological theories, moral, religious beliefs, cultural events, to people of different nationalities. However, the phenomenon of tolerance should be better explored «through back side of tolerance» – via "intolerance". Intolerance as a social and cultural phenomenon is complex and heterogeneous. It can be expressed in a wide range – from mild discomfort and irritation, not implemented in the behavior, to various forms of discriminatory behavior, up to the genocide. While tolerance is underpinned by the willingness to cooperate with people of other cultures, attitudes, beliefs, its opposite – intolerance – is characterized by the rejection of the people of other cultures, attitudes, beliefs. It is often based on the idea that one's 'own' is normal, natural, and the «other» is an abnormal and unnatural.

In practice, the intolerance is often manifested in acts of violence against others, "not ours". In this capacity, intolerance is closely intertwined with extremism and radicalism.

Paradoxical as it may sound, but tolerance must have certain limits, beyond which intolerance should occur to the phenomena in which the destructive potential is laid: crime, terrorism, xenophobia and extremism. At the time, Karl Popper put it as the "paradox of tolerance": Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If one extends unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if one is not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them. One should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. But one should claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force (Popper, 1992, p.328-329).

The results of empirical studies in the Russian Federation continue to capture the trend to the growth of social tension, intolerant behavior and negative attitude towards certain national, ethnic and social groups (Eliseev, Ustinova, 2010, p.49-50)

### **3. Research Questions**

The main question of the research is to find out through the analysis of values and attitudes the real level of political tolerance of modern Russian youth in the early twentieth century.

According to some scientists, the new Russian generation should be much less prejudiced than their parents should. The development of democracy and network communications have led to the formation of tolerance, to tolerance of different cultures to each other. According to our authors, this view of the problem is largely incorrect. The development of tolerance of youth happens in a variety of political, social and cultural contexts, which is likely to be manifested in the depth of tolerance to cognitive and behavioral levels, at the level of values and attitudes.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

In this study, youth is considered as a “marginal sociodemographic group which, by virtue of age characteristics, differs by little social experience, immature value orientations, the boundary location between a group of adults and a group of children (not yet an adult, but no longer a child), and as extreme maximalism and radicalism in judgment. The age of this social group defines a priori the proneness to conflict, extremism and manifestations of intolerant behavior. Tolerance in the sociological sense is understood as a social norm which regulates the social interaction of the subjects, belonging to different cultures and includes respect for the opponents, their worldviews, orientations, values, attitudes, norms and behavior patterns. Intolerance in the sociological sense is understood as a deviation from the social norm, which manifests itself in rejection, impatience to people of other cultures, attitudes, beliefs, values, norms and behavior patterns. Political tolerance is understood as a social norm that regulates the interaction of subjects belonging to different political cultures and includes respect for the political opponent, recognition of the possibility and necessity of the existence of different political forces, political and philosophical systems, orientations, values, attitudes, norms, political behavior models, etc. Political intolerance can also be defined as a deviation from the norm. But in this case the deviation is rather of socio-cultural nature than of social and legal one. Unlike other areas of public life, intolerance in politics has certain features. Intolerance in politics has often fuzzy or blurred boundaries, which may change due to the changes in the alignment of political forces. Political tolerance in the system of political relations takes the form of institutionalized conflicts, that is, the form of struggle for power according to certain rules (for example, the election institute, the institute of law and the judicial system, the parliamentary institute, the institution of political party and others).

A theoretical and methodological basis of the empirical study of political tolerance was made by the concept of values as abstract ideas expressing human beliefs about behavior types and preferred goals, as well as the theory of social attitudes associated with the ideas of La Piere (1934) and Jadov (1979). According to their views, the social attitude instructs the individual to act in a certain way. In various social situations personal attitudes must manifest themselves in different ways, i.e., situationally, depending on the nature of social distance. The methodology for identifying the political tolerance mindsets took into account such structural components of the mindset as an object of the social attitude; the individual's response to the object (positive or negative) which can occur at three levels - cognitive, affective and behavioral ones. The theory of social attitude assumes that the “Other” must be specified. Based on the positional approach, this research investigated the attitudes of young people towards Russian political parties. The study was meant to measure the students' tolerance mindsets concerning the Russian political parties. The methodology covered empirical indicators that reflect the structure of the

social attitude consisting of its structural components, such as an object of the social attitude; the social situation, where the object is placed in; the individual's response to the object (positive or negative), which can occur at three levels – cognitive, affective and behavioral ones.

## 5. Research Methods

Based on the idea, oral presentation of values and worldview, a questionnaire, in which the respondents had to answer questions about their past and present attitudes, preferences and opinions, was developed. For the analysis of the obtained data, the scale to measure political tolerance of the respondents was developed. Respondents were asked judgments, each of which was required to rate on a numeric scale. The technique represents the set of judgments and five-membered scales with which respondents are required to express the degree of their agreement with them. The method comprises 26 scales formulated in terms of tolerant and intolerant value judgments. Formalizing, processing and statistical analysis of obtained during the questionnaire survey data were carried out with the software SPSS Base 17.0 ("Statistical Package for the Social Sciences", "statistical package for social sciences"), Performing statistical analysis on the subject of the relations between units for a certain type of the demonstrated behavior and socio-demographic characteristics of the students.

## 6. Findings

As a result of the empirical study, it was found that the majority of young people were aware of the importance of political tolerance as a value of modern society, (Table 1). But political tolerance mindsets are formed at a sufficiently low level. In some young people, the political tolerance values are declarative in nature; they are not made actual in terms of interaction with a certain «political other». At the level of mindsets, college students are mostly intolerant.

**Table 01.** Level of political tolerance as value

Tolerance Level	Frequency	%
low	7	2,7
medium	70	2,9
high	183	70,4
Total	260	100,0

**Table 02.** Level of political tolerance as mindset

Tolerance Level	Frequency	%
low	163	43,1
medium	196	51,9

high	19	5,0
Total	378	100,0

As can be seen, the percentage of students demonstrating the high level of tolerance to the Russian political parties (at the level of social attitude) is very small in comparison with other subgroups. The study found that young people are more intolerant in politics than in the situation of simple interpersonal communication. Comparing the results of measurements in two situations, the authors observe that the number of tolerant persons prevails in the situations of interpersonal communication and the number of intolerant ones – in the situation of political struggle (Table 1 and 2).

## 7. Conclusion

The study of political intolerance is a vast enterprise at both the micro- and macro-levels and research on political tolerance constitute a subfield much too large to be able to be comprehensively surveyed in a short article. The authors have described only a small aspect of the problem of political tolerance. Our results confirm the findings of the previous studies on the role of socio-economic and demographic factors in the formation of tolerance. The institutions of family and education in modern society are still a powerful social and ideological factor in the formation of tolerance.

As a result of research, it was shown that in the families with high economic standards, children are more tolerant than in the families with a low economic status.]

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