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MICROSOCIAL GROUPS AND THEIR ROLE IN EDUCATING THE YOUNGER GENERATION

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Abstract

The article is concerned with the formation of mental world of the next generation of Russian society, inspired by the Chechen model. Educating young people in the country as such, and in its regions, is the most relevant issue today, because the future of the state and society depends on its successful implementation. The current difficult situation in the sociocultural, spiritual and moral sphere of Russian society requires new approaches to educational work with young people, the use of new and traditional forms and methods to educate them in the region, where the majority of the population is young. The article analyzes the influence of micro-social entities on the education of modern youth. Through empirical research, the authors attempt to visually represent educational impacts that microgroups at different levels have on mental development of different categories of young people. The authors believe that regions still recognize traditional forms of spiritual life. Consequently, educational work should strongly rely on micro-social youth environment, intensify spiritual and moral influence of traditional small groups and make full use of the opportunities provided by Muslim communities in this process. Moreover, it is necessary to use the educational potential of other social micro entities, in particular, the educational microsocial environment and various student microgroups with a view to improving the spiritual and moral education of a new generation of our society, which is successfully implemented today.

1. Introduction

A new generation is commonly cultivated in a certain socio-cultural environment. The representatives of this social environment include various segments that influence socialization of the individual either directly or indirectly. Social entities referred to as small groups in social psychology have the most effective, direct educational impact on young people in the traditional society, like Chechen society. In the mental system of society these groups are defined by the way they establish certain contacts. They have common goals and joint activities, set up and develop mutual emotional relationships, and show their sense of certain social identity (Betilmerzaeva, 2010). Due to these signs, the younger generation constituting these groups is mentally developed. Their motivation, internal attitudes, value systems, etc. are massively formed.

This approach regarding the role and importance of micro-social entities in the formation of mental world of modern youth can be found in the works of such domestic scientists as N. F. Golovanova, V. G. Krysko, A. I. Kravchenko, I. S. Kon, V. T. Lisovsky (Golovanova, 2017; Krysko, 2004; Kravchenko, 2016; Kon, 1967; Lisovsky, 2005; Muskhanova, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

Youth education has always been a priority for any ethnic group, including the Chechens. Its relevance is conditioned by the new post-Soviet realities that initiated the blurring of the traditional way of life and led to the adoption of new market relations. The system and its long-standing patterns changed so unexpectedly that the traditional worldview and psychology of young Chechens did not have time to adjust to a new capitalist way. Young people, faithful to traditional spiritual attitudes and principles, used to find a contradiction with the so-called "new Chechens", the voice of capitalist relations (Gadaev, 2011).

What is more, in the post-Soviet period of our history foreign aggressive sociocultural values plunged in an abundant flow into the fragile spiritual culture of Chechen youth. This spiritual aggression was committed in ways without precedent. The unsuspecting traditional local culture was incapable and unprepared to understand and perceive it critically, which, undoubtedly, made it difficult, and still does, for the young generation to look for spiritual background. It was at the junction of the struggle between old and new sociocultural values that the modern Chechen youth found themselves (Gadayev & Gadaev, 2017). In this context, educational functions of the Chechen family, various family micro-social groups, and religious communities are getting increasingly important. They should offer the younger generation a new, vital model of social life. This task is complicated by the fact that traditional foundations of ethnic groups need correction; the experience of living in the new conditions with the dominance of market imperatives has not been gained yet. Micro-social groups will synthesize traditions and innovations in organizing and conducting educational work with young people.

3. Research Questions

Micro-social formations in Chechen society have a complex framework. The important segments are various types of families, kindred microgroups, religious communities, reference groups where the spiritual and moral influence on young people has its own specific character. They have responsibility to previous generations (seven fathers), to the living – family, relatives, village, people, to their descendants,

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because, according to Chechens, both good and evil are expunged from people's memory only over seven generations. Such spiritual contact with the past, present and future makes the psychological state of a young Chechen more stable. However, in the kindred microenvironment, they appear to be in a harsh paradigm of moral and ethical values, the system of moral duties and prohibitions (Akhmadov, 2006).

What is important here is that harsh public opinion often serves as an impetus to make young people strictly follow the traditional moral norms. Every member of the younger generation, regardless of his or her social status, is most frightened of public opinion. Moreover, their fear is not disapproved but encouraged, on the contrary. Unfortunately, in our controversial class epoch, this attribute, that has been preserving the moral health of the Chechens for centuries, is gradually losing its former strength. Today the rich Chechens have their own public opinion, whereas the poor have theirs. The public opinion of the poor is of little concern to the rich, which is typical, however, for other peoples, separated by class barriers.

It is well known that the family is an important link in the personal microsocial environment. It should be emphasized that in the past marital relations did not use to be, and to a large extent are not, of primary importance in the Chechen family unlike the relations between children and parents. Hence, it is not the society but the family that plays a significant role in the formation of a young personality.

When addressing the educational impact of a family on young people, it is necessary to proceed from its structural features: 1) small (nuclear) families; 2) large undivided (joint) families; 3) single-parent families (without one parent); 4) childless families; 5) families raising orphans. The most common among Chechens are two groups of families: these are nuclear families with spouses living separately from their parents, and large, undivided families.

Basic cultural and moral principles of boys and girls in these families are created in compliance with different rules. Education in a nuclear family has a number of distinctive features. Closer observations reveal that parents, particularly a mother being in continuous contact with her children, have an educational effect on their children and other close relatives in these families. Spiritual and moral foundations of the future personality are therefore subject to his or her parents', in particular, mother's moral character.

A more effective moral impact on the younger generation can have large joint families that are prevailing in rural areas rather than in cities of the Chechen Republic. Such families, as a rule, consist of three generations living all in one household dwelling. The sociological data show that in large, joint families, the relationship between its members is characterized by a traditionally moral orientation. The head of the family has a major role in maintaining and producing such relations, consequently, the higher his moral level, the stronger the moral influence on his children and grandchildren. The incentives for young people to follow moral principles are largely affected by the public opinion of their family microenvironment, and in particular by the opinion of the head and other elder relatives.

It should be noted here that, submitting to the general intra-family spirits, mainly determined by the head of the family, other members are not only the object of his moral influence, but also transmitters of his moral imperatives and rules to other family members. "The opinion of elder brother, father, uncle is the law for Caucasians" (Bazaeva, 2010). The head of the modern undivided family also exerts control over the household, streamlining their activities and actions in the direction he desires. The failure of young people to comply with moral principles is viewed by the head and other family members not merely as a departure from national traditions. It is also thought to be insulting to the honor of the family and its head

in the face of severe public opinion, which often leads to family discords and even to serious conflicts. Such an acute response of family elders to any moral violations resembles sanctions, deliberately designed to neutralize the immoral acts of young family members and other close relatives. As can be seen, healthy kindred feelings of young people in a joint family are appealed by relatives to strengthen the ties of young men and women with the generally accepted ethnonational moral code.

Along with undivided families, a single-parent family (there is no head or one of the spouses' parents) has a significant educational impact on young people. However, in such families, other senior relatives perform the role of the head in terms of the educational impact on his members. Therefore, these families are specific undivided families, with a relatively stable educational impact on young people. All in all, both single-parent and undivided families, namely, their heads then, as now have had the educational impact on young people. In the event of Chechnya, where the population, as well as other North Caucasian peoples, obeys the hill code of subordination to the elder authority, in particular, the eldest in the family. The head of the family has an active educational impact on young people, thereby preventing them from departing from traditional moral principles.

Family and type kindred entities as well as reference groups of peer friends have a significant impact on young relatives thus creating positive educational potential in Chechnya (Natayev, 2013). In such groups, youth livelihoods are more strictly regulated by intragroup rules and norms.

Family group is a community of closely related families, all living most often jointly in one rural household dwelling and having a common family authority. Type group is a community of closely related surnames. The peculiarity of these related groups is the fact that they value the relations of mutual assistance and mutual help, feelings of kindred community, etc.

When considering the hierarchical structure of the family-type group, it becomes clear that their heads are, generally, elder relatives who have high moral authority and reverence. These family-type authorities and other elders supporting them in a related group make up the ideological core (subject of moral influence) determining the nature of the relationship between relatives. Family-related authorities and revered activists of the microgroup are dragging relatives into the orbit of their educational influence not necessarily from their blood-related family group (daughters-in-law, sons-in-law, their relatives, etc.). Family relations in the family-type group are sometimes closely intertwined with the conventional morally sanctioned traditions and customs. This is one of the effective factors that keep young people from unlawful actions and deeds, because moral indulgences are perceived as an attempt to ruin kinship relations. They are considered as an insult to family honor in the face of public opinion of relatives and near-by neighbors.

A group of peers, friends, etc., based on friendly or family relations, has a significant moral and educational impact on young people. Reference groups in Chechnya have their own characteristics. They are united not only on the basis of personal sympathies, common goals, ideals, value orientations, as indicated in the scientific literature (Lisovsky, 2005), but also subject to such factors as kinship and neighborhood residence. The public opinion of these groups in relation to moral values is generally determined by the opinions of the elder generation and informal authorities in these groups.

Local Muslim communities play a positive role in developing spiritual and moral principles of young people, in shaping their moral virtues, patriotism, tolerance, respect for creative work and creative process. Islam in Chechnya is presented in the form of Sufism that is segmented into two tariqas (tariqa is a road, a

mystical path) – Naqshbandi and Qadiriyya. These two tariqas include more than thirty wirds (wird is the mention of Allah). These wirds are divided into murid (murid is a novice) communities and murid groups. All the mentioned Sufi structures actively participate in the creation of the spiritual world of the youth, using all possibilities of the modern religious infrastructure (mosques, religious schools, sacred sites, etc.).

4.   Purpose of the Study

The activity of traditional microsocial systems and various microgroups is aimed at creating the mental world of a new generation, preparing it for life in a dynamically changing world that has a contradictory and disturbing intention. Noting their important role in the moral education of young people, it is necessary to highlight the major deficiencies, gaps and neglected points in the family activities and these small kindred groups. Real life shows that practice, for example, of family education and upbringing, live on different floors of a public building and, as it were, do not notice each other. A large number of modern Chechen families does not and cannot adequately accomplish its most important function attributed to socializing the child's personality. The social formation of a child in a modern family is rather spontaneous, sometimes under the single influence of traditional upbringing norms (obedience of parents, elders, politeness, diligence, etc.). These qualities, of course, are important, but the new epoch imposes new requirements on the subject of education (i.e., family). In accordance with these requirements, it is necessary to create a qualitatively new program assumed as the basis for a modern family to build its work aimed at raising children.

Based on sociological survey, parents do not have a clear idea of their priorities in the education and upbringing of children. Therefore, the state, as a whole, as well as ideological, scientific and educational institutions should provide guidelines for the family, goals and objectives in the upbringing of children, delineate specific qualities and socially significant values that need to be instilled in them.

The values that should be used as a basis to shape the social qualities of the next generation needs close consideration. This is especially true for peoples who, as was formerly presented, came to socialism, not through capitalism and feudalism. For example, the Chechen people came to socialism, avoiding feudalism and capitalism. Anyway, in the 21st century capitalism overtook the republic. Whether they like it or not, the Chechens henceforth will have to live not in conformity with old-fashioned (grandfathers') customs and traditions, but with the harsh and merciless laws of capitalism. Consequently, promoting a new generation should also toe these unfamiliar, incomprehensible and harsh conditions. Historically, the republic does not have a long, capitalism background and it is not clear what social qualities are significant in the new conditions; nor it is clear what to adopt from the past pre-capitalist experience. Blindly copying the experience of the imperialist West or the capitalist East is ineffective. Consequently, it is necessary to synthesize the patriarchal past and the capitalist present. While it is difficult to anticipate what will come out of this. However, the harsh reality already shows that relying on the experience of the "sweet old days" is worthless. The modern Chechen family should prepare a new generation for life in entirely different conditions. The mechanism of traditional patriarchal virtues should be combined with the ability to cope with complex social contradictions, merciless competition, acute interpersonal conflicts, etc.

By the way, the youth itself is already beginning to feel this ill new time. In this regard, it should be said that in the spiritual and cultural world of young men and women in our time, impacted by new

conditions, profound changes are taking place. The reassessment of values is gaining momentum and the spiritual fermentation is being intensified. All this means that we must be critical of our traditional education that was delivered in the historical past and in the Soviet era. This education was mainly geared to form such qualities as obedience, compliance, timidity, conformism, commitment to traditions, etc. in the younger generation. Of course, the modern family should form the spiritual world of their children against the solid background of these basic moral virtues, though, it is necessary to educate such vital qualities that are in great demand nowadays. In order to shape a personality able to succeed in modern difficult conditions, the family needs to be aware of those main qualities that have always been important but even more necessary for a new personality, namely: 1) physical health; 2) mental health; 3) necessary general intellectual development; 4) a broad cultural and educational outlook; 5) strong will (composure, resilience, determination, unbending persistence in achieving the goal, the ability to take risks, courage, etc.); 6) business skills (entrepreneurship, independence, prudence, wisdom, the ability to defend their interests, critical and straight thinking, etc.). The time of patriarchal hibernation and drowsiness has come into oblivion, the era of capitalist fever has arrived, which has put the dilemma before the Chechens as to whether to follow the path of marginalization or the path of modern, though, controversial civilization. Some modern Chechen families do not is till such qualities in their children, being unaware of them. Just a few parents believe that young men and women will learn to live in a new way from the life itself.

5.   Research Methods

When studying the challenges facing the microsocial environment and related microgroups as an attribute in the educational process, such methods of sociology as survey and observation were mainly applied. The household where related microgroups are mainly functioning calls for the survey, particularly long interview, oral conversation, participant and non-participant observation, sociometric survey, etc. To study the educational impact on the murid groups the most straightforward is the expert survey, i.e. assessment of the situation by knowledgeable people. For a deep study of micro-social attributes of the educational process among young people, large-scale ethnosociological research was conducted in 2016 by many well-known scholars in all North Caucasian entities (Dzutsev & Betilmerzayeva, 2016).

6.   Findings

As per the studies, the most effective factor in the educational impact on young people is the micro-social environment, various types of families, especially large, undivided families mainly comprising three generations. The family impact was recognized as rather important or very important by 99.0% of the interviewed Chechen youth (Dzutsev & Betilmerzayeva, 2016). The influence of kindred microgroups, friends and acquaintances (Dzutsev & Betilmerzaeva, 2016) was recognized as quite important or very important – by 90.8%. The influence of religion on the new generation is also high for 96.0% (Dzutsev & Betilmerzaeva, 2016). Studies have also revealed the effectiveness of public opinion not only of the older generation, but also of young people. Young people are obliged to fully comply with traditional moral standards imposed by a strict public assessment of the youth microenvironment. Sometimes even a slight deviation from moral standards is subject to harsh condemnation of a related microgroup, friends, peers, etc. It even does not take into account past moral merits. A young Chechen must constantly be in the "moral

form", any moral indulgence or vice casts a black shadow over his own living and his close relatives, on the moral well-being of future generations of his relatives. The desire to preserve the spiritual bonds of the family, family name, clan, kind name, (save their blushes) is the highest duty of any young person (Akhmadov, 2006).

7. Conclusion

The increasing role of the youth factor aimed to address topical issues in all social spheres seeks for deep consideration of spiritual and moral challenges encountered by young people in today's difficult conditions both for the country and for its regions. This is a particularly important task put forth before the educators. It is well known that the root of all problems lies in the socio-economic life of people and the younger generation is more sensitive to them. These problems include, in particular, a relatively high level of unemployment, non-involvement of a certain part of young people into any socially useful labor, lack of stable sources for the life worth living, decline in the quality of education and health care, full-fledged leisure, violation of social principles, development of unjustified social and property polarization and many others.

These problems are largely due to the recent dramatic past. The modern Chechen government has successfully been resolving many of the above problems in key areas of Chechen society. Based on the entire above, one can draw the following conclusions. For the intensive development of the spiritual and moral sphere of the young generation, the spiritual world of youth should be built based on the relevant socio-economic, political-legal, cultural-ideological, intellectual and educational prerequisites.

When building a reliable framework of the spiritual world of modern youth, it is necessary to bear in mind that spiritual and moral principles will be the core background. It should be based on authentic ethnocultural values, national customs and traditions that have been tested for centuries and have absorbed such virtues as honoring the past, love for national culture, language, traditional beliefs, etc.

To boost the spiritual and moral sphere of today's youth, it is necessary to use the entire educational capacity of traditional micro-social entities and different microgroups. They include: 1) small (nuclear), large undivided, single-parent, childless families and families raising orphans; 2) traditional kindred microgroups (family group, type group, reference group; 3) Sufi communities: tariqa systems, wird communities and wird groups). When developing the concept of spiritual and moral education of Chechen youth, it is necessary to proceed from the following specific characteristics inherent in the North Caucasus region and its ethno-cultural formations. The basic principles of Sufism are intrinsically implicated into the spiritual life of the North Caucasian peoples including mysticism, irrationalism, intuitivism, allegorical, metaphorical element and, to a limited extent, the ones of European cognitive culture and western rationality, which leads to the dominance of irrationality in the region. Psychological thinking, intuition trust, caution regarding innovations and commitment to sustainable cognitive patterns (Bilalov, 2018) are inherent in the educating entity of the Caucasian youth.

In the context of the spiritual development of modern Chechen youth, one can speak of natural selection in new conditions. Considering the well-known natural selection, it is thought to be, according to Darwinism, the survival process based on physical abilities, i.e. the physically strong survive, the weak die. In our time, with reference to modern society, it is not the physical factor that can be placed in the center

of natural selection, but the intellectual one. Today, when the population of the Earth is approaching 9 billion and the world is becoming more and more crowded, a person or an ethnic group with the necessary intellectual potential has the resources for the future life, i.e. the intellectually strong survive, the intellectually weak die. If the Chechens do not understand this simple truth in the shortest possible time and do not take urgent adequate measures to increase the intellectual potential of their new generation, they will have no future on this blessed Earth, in this paradise of the Caucasus. The haves will shatter across the world, saving their wealth, the worthy will fall for their native land, most of the ethnic group will dissipate in a foreign land in vain search for salvation. It is only knowledge and faith that can save our people and a new generation in today's tough competition.

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