

LEASECON 2020**International Conference «Land Economy and Rural Studies Essentials»****MODERN RURAL YOUTH: VALUES, MOTIVES, ATTITUDES IN
PROFESSIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION**

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Abstract

The paper, based on the materials of a sociological survey, provides an overview of the young generation as a socio-demographic group, describes the system of values, attitudes, life-meaning guidelines of modern rural youth, which allow for their professional self-determination and behavioral patterns. Modern Agro-Industrial Complex that plays a crucial role in ensuring the country's food security and is focused on innovative development requires high quality human capital, with one of the cornerstones being youth. The need to create conditions for the formation, development and effective use of the innovative capital of the young generation gives greater urgency to the task of studying its characteristics, values, life goals, interests and demands. A sociological survey has shown that family values, interesting work and material well-being form an axiological core of the worldview of modern youth. Despite choosing agrarian occupations and receiving a corresponding degree, rural youth are poorly encouraged to work in rural regions. Using education as a means of social mobility, young people turn their focus toward a non-linear type of career, characterized by a high level of potential geographic and professional mobility. High levels of material, labor, social and cultural satisfaction and a comfortable living environment are incentives to professional and geographic self-determination of young people in rural areas.

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1. Introduction

Ensuring food security of the country, creating conditions for sustainable competitive development of domestic agriculture, the market for agricultural products and foodstuffs, are among the priority strategies pursued by the state, which is especially important in the face of modern geopolitical and global challenges. The main state policies for the development of this sector of the economy are: assistance to sustainable development of rural areas; creation of an integral support system for farmers and agricultural cooperation; development of branches of the agro-industrial complex, providing accelerated import substitution of the main types of agricultural products, raw materials and food; technical modernization, digitalization of agriculture; scientific and technical support for the development of branches of the agro-industrial complex (On the State Program for the Development of Agriculture and Regulation of the Markets of Agricultural Products, Raw Materials and Food (as amended on June 25, 2020), 2020).

Current development of the agrarian sector of the economy, focused on innovation, will require high quality human capital that provides the industry. The most important resource for the human capital is youth. Youth, as the most active and mobile socio-demographic group of the population, is one of the key subjects of reproduction, development, renewal of the social system, building the capacity of the future innovative society. Improvement and effective use of human capital in agriculture, including youth as one of its main resources, gives greater urgency to the task of studying values, professional motives and attitudes of rural youth that determine their social, labor, geographic self-determination and behavior.

2. Problem Statement

The development of human capital in agriculture, as one of the most important resources of a modern innovative economy, is currently hindered by a number of pitfalls and negative trends. The strategic threats to the development of rural areas and the agrarian sector of the economy involve rural population decline, demographic aging of rural regions and decrease in the proportion of working-age population. From 1996 to 2018, a rural population in Russia decreased by 6%, and demographers still predict its further decline. Rural population decline is not only an expected result of urbanization, but also a consequence of the active migration of young people and qualified personnel to the city due to the lack of good jobs and a comfortable living environment. From 2010 to 2017, the share of the able-bodied rural population decreased by 8%, and this trend, according to demographers, will continue. The average age of the rural population increased, amounting to 42 years old for women and 37.2 – for men; among the heads of agricultural organizations, persons 50+ years old account for about 60% (Blinova, 2018, pp. 15-16). All this provokes personnel shrinkage in rural regions, reduces their quality, and hinders the solution of those global tasks that the state sets in the development of the agrarian sector of the economy. At present, when sustainable development of many rural entities largely depends on social reproduction, there is a strong need to keep young people, viewed as a source of reproductive and labor potential, in rural regions, and actively involve them in agricultural production (Shumakova et al., 2020).

In this regard, a reasonable need arises for a comprehensive assessment of rural youth being an independent socio-demographic and geographic group, its values, motives and attitudes important for

social regulation of behavior that determines the life trajectory, social, professional, geographic self-determination in the light of modern transformation of agrarian economic sector (Avlasovich et al., 2020).

3. Research Questions

The subject of research is characteristics and features of rural youth as a socio-demographic group, their value orientations, life attitudes, social well-being, and motivational grounds for choosing their professional future.

4. Purpose of the Study

The paper aims to identify and describe value-motivational foundations and behaviors of modern rural youth as a special socio-demographic group in the process of professional self-determination.

5. Research Methods

The main research method is an empirical analysis of the results of a sociological online survey conducted in 2020 at Omsk State Agrarian University named after P. A. Stolypin. The survey involved 586 respondents who were students of Omsk Agrarian University named after P. A. Stolypin P. A. Stolypin and College of Agribusiness of all courses and areas of training and who came to study from rural regions.

6. Findings

To define youth as a social group, it is necessary to highlight its group-forming attributes. From a socio-demographic standpoint, the main criteria for shaping young people in a separate group in the population are: demographic (age) and social (values, motives, interests, status, social status, etc.) (Boyak, 2012; Chigrin, 2006; Rostovskaya & Ryazantsev, 2015). The researchers note that indicators of age brackets of young people are changeable, since age as a result and stage of personal socio-psychological development is taken differently subject to specific historical and socio-economic conditions (Chigrin, 2006; Radchenko, 2012). In this regard, current national laws that specify the age limits of youth as ranging from 14 to 30 years old were assumed as the basis for age stratification of the target group.

The paper is particularly concerned with the standpoint postulated by modern researchers (Boyak, 2012; Chigrin, 2006; Chuprov & Zubok, 2020; Ilyinsky, 2001; Masalov, 2012), whereby in any society youth as a social group is characterized by due-to-age features. The highlighted features make it possible to provide a qualitative overview of the phenomena of “youth” and “rural youth”, to identify attitudes, motives for choosing a life and professional scenario.

The paper provides below the most significant insights into the essence of youth, which constitute the core of qualitative determination of this group forming a special substructure within social society:

- Young people are characterized by a transitional state both in biological and social terms, which explains the inconsistency and instability of their social behavior and attitudes. This is a group of incomplete entry into society, characterized by an intermediate position between childhood and maturity, adulthood (Kurysheva, 2014).

- Young people are dependent on adults and parents, since many of them do not make their own living and therefore live on credit, do not have personal independence in making their own decisions (Ilyinsky, 2001).

- The main tasks of youth involve self-determination: life, professional, moral and ethical, family.

- Young people are involved in inextricable processes of socialization and professionalization, which embrace all strata (Chigrin, 2006). Being a socializing group of society, it is part of current social frameworks and gradually joins production relations (professionalization). Professionalization implies integration into personally and socially significant professional activities through education, or based on experience until a stable professional status is acquired, and then can continue throughout life.

- Young people need to determine place of living as well. Separate groups of young people, neither in mind, in the system of personal values and orientations, nor in fact (especially for pupils and students) have not yet determined their geographic status (Chigrin, 2006; Ivanova, 2013).

Given the identified group-forming characteristics, the following definition of youth can be given: this is a socio-demographic group, in the age range from 14 to 30 years old, in a transitional state from dependence and lack of independence to responsibility and independence through self-determination during socialization and professionalization and is a capital and resource for the development of society.

One of the youth groups is rural youth. From a socio-demographic standpoint, it is characterized by the same group-forming characteristics, patterns of development and functioning, as for young people in general. Based on certain demographic characteristics like gender, ethnicity, age, “transitivity” defining the status of youth as a self-determining group, rural youth does not differ from urban youth. However, rural youth has a number of features that differentiate it as an independent socio-demographic group and a subject of value attitudes able to have a noticeable impact on attitudes, strategies, and social well-being. These features are as follows:

- Social and geographic affiliation. In this regard, rural youth can refer to the territorial-demographic group of the corresponding age, united by similar socio-economic conditions determining microsocial living environment (Ivanova, 2013, p. 126). Basic needs, attitudes, motives, and geographic interests of rural youth are largely determined by their place affiliation. They shape the social, labor and geographic behavior and well-being of rural youth, determined not only by differences in values and needs, but also by the possibilities for their satisfaction in different places of living (Kamenskikh, 2016; Popova, 2019; Zasedateleva, 2018).

- Qualitative characteristics of socialization and professionalization. Rural youth often have limited opportunities for social and professional mobility, lower levels of education, and are earlier involved in agricultural activities (Chigrin, 2006).

These theoretical conclusions served as the basis for a sociological study that made it possible to identify and analyze value orientations, social, professional, geographic attitudes, the type of labor motivation of rural youth in modern economic, political and socio-cultural conditions.

A system of values ranks high within personal motivation and self-determination. Values represent certain personal ideals and norms that a person strives all his life, global beliefs that determine his behavior in all daily life situations. Value orientations determine personal orientation, worldview, life position, behaviors, social activity, and life philosophy (Korzh, 2011, p. 8).

The framework of the respondents' value priorities is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Life priorities (values) appreciated by modern rural youth*

Value rank	Value type	Share of choice (%)
1	Love, family, children	82
2	Favorite job, career	53
3	Material wealth, money	46
4	Education, self-development	43
5	Independence, freedom	31
6	Socialization	25
7	Hobby, ability to live up to potential	24
8	Getting pleasure	20
9	Prestige, fame, power, social status	12

* Inquiry returns implied multiple choice, so the total number of answers was over 100%.

The survey feedback suggests that the priority value for 82% of respondents – representatives of rural youth – is the family. This is due to the importance of the family and personal happiness whose values augment either during social risks and uncertainty, or as the respondents grow older, reach minimum age of marriage, and acquire matrimonial interests. The next ranked values are closely related to occupation – interesting job, career (53% of the respondents). It is noteworthy that, although more than half of the respondents declare good job and successful career as one of the most important values, such values as creativity and abilities to live up to potential, a powerful tool for self-realization in the professional sphere, are only ranked seventh among the priorities of rural youth. Material and financial well-being was the third most important value (46% of respondents). An interesting job and career prospects turned out to be more valuable than material well-being and social status, prestige, fame, power (ninth position – 12% of respondents). That is, personal attitude to work and its evaluation tend to be more significant than social and status priorities accepted in society. The fourth most important position for our respondents is education, self-development (43%). Probably, education is viewed by rural youth as one of the tools in finding interesting jobs and achieving material well-being.

The youth, who became the target group, have already made their professional choice, they are getting professions linked with activities in the agro-industrial complex. The motives for respondents' choice of a professional future are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Motivational priorities of rural youth in choosing a profession *

Rank	Description of motivation	Share of choice (%)
1	Attractiveness of activity (interesting job; connection with modern equipment and technology)	37
2	Socio-economic impact (demand in the labor market; prestige, status of the profession; highly paid job)	23
3	Personal and psychological preferences (compliance with personal abilities, knowledge, character)	18
4	Situational motivation (random choice, HEI availability)	20
5	Following tradition (family dynasty)	2

The survey feedback suggests that most of the respondents (80%) chose agricultural occupations consciously, out of inner conviction. 57% of young people, made their choice based on vocation, conformity of interests and a certain subjective value, desire to follow family traditions. For 23% of the respondents, the choice was probably determined by meaningful socio-economic attitudes: demand in the labor market, opportunity to acquire a socially significant profession (status), guaranteed employment and social security. The rest of the respondents (20%) had situational motives; the profession was chosen by chance or subsequent upon a failure to enter another university. The rural youth who took part in the survey are generally satisfied with their professional choice. Learning in their chosen specialization is more consistent with future plans of 84% of young people, which justifies their informed profession-bound choice. Besides, 84% of the respondents say that the chosen profession really corresponds to their interests and abilities, while 90% are sure that it has a positive social status, benefits society and provides social recognition. However, all the same, 16% of students are disappointed in their choice and believe that their studies do not fit their future intentions.

The attributes of successful life, means of achieving life goals and building a successful career as perceived by rural youth are presented in Table 3. Based on the survey, rural youth is geared for conventional means in building a career and achieving professional success (professional skill, conscientious work, discipline). To a lesser extent, young people are ready to take various risks and are focused on mobility.

Table 3. Personality traits that ensure competitiveness in the labor market as viewed by modern rural youth *

Rank	Trait	Share of choice (%)
1	High professionalism	68
2	Willingness to work hard	58
3	Responsibility and integrity	51
4	Discipline	37
5	Continuous professional development, life-long learning	35
6	Flexibility	34

7	Entrepreneurship, adventurousness	20
8	Ability to quickly shift activities	19
9	Ability to make money in any way	12

Note: * Inquiry returns implied multiple choice, so the total number of answers was over 100%.

In general, rural youth are quite optimistic about the future. Among those surveyed, 82% believe that they can easily find a job in a field relevant to their degree, 73% of young people consider themselves competitive. Confronted with tasks of fulfilling their life and professional plans, rural youth rely mainly on their own capabilities and resources (74% of respondents), on the help of family and friends (16% of respondents), and only 10% of students – on various institutional forms of support (labor organization, state).

The paradox is that the majority of rural youth, having made a seemingly conscious choice of profession, being sufficiently confident in their abilities, competitiveness and job opportunities, do not plan to work in a field relevant to their degree in the future. Only 35% of the respondents declare their desire to find a job in the future based on their academic profile. The plans of young people include continuing their studies (21% of respondents), moving to another country or city (12% of respondents), starting their own business (7% of young people), changing a field of activity (4% of students), freelancing (1% of respondents), uncertainty (20% of respondents). At the same time, 67% of rural youth declare their willingness to entirely change their profession in the future; only 14% of young people plan to return to the village after graduation.

Yet, a question comes up as to the reasons for this position of rural youth in professional and geographic self-determination. Of those surveyed who do not plan to work within a degree-related field, the majority (63%) mentions occupational, labor and infrastructural uncertainty as the main reasons: lack of degree-related jobs (29% of respondents); low payment (24% of respondents). Moreover, 10% of young people highlight that working and living conditions, the way of life in the village are not yet comparable in comfort and livability with urban ones, and do not fit the needs of young villagers.

Young people relate possible incentives to living and working in rural areas with the possibility of meeting the following needs and attitudes: material (decent wages – 51% of respondents), professional and labor (good, modern working conditions – 13% of respondents, career prospects – 11% of young people, employment and the opportunity to work in a degree-related field – 7%); socio-economic and infrastructural-consumer (provision of housing – 13% of young people, a high level of the social, domestic and cultural and leisure environment – 5% of the respondents). The degree of satisfaction of the above needs largely determines the geographic behavior and social well-being and, ultimately, the migration behavior of rural youth.

7. Conclusion

Social reproduction in rural regions, aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the agrarian sector of the economy, needs to be addressed along with the material, infrastructural, socio-economic and socio-cultural values and attitudes of modern rural youth. At present, rural youth are focused on achieving

material well-being, successful career, and, unfortunately, barely connects their professional future with the village. Raising awareness of the value of education in the modern world, young people use it as a kind of social mobility, a tool to improve their status, and are focused on a non-linear type of career, flexible self-determination, professional and geographic mobility. In these informed circumstances, the state and representatives of agrarian business need to create good, acceptable working and living conditions to attract young specialists to rural regions, as well as develop and apply, where possible, alternative options for using urban labor resources in the agrarian sector (distance work, rotational work and others).

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