

Ethnic and Cultural Socialisation of Youth in Kazakhstan: Poles of Snap



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Abstract

This study of Prof. A. Teslenko is focused on a social and cultural analysis of the process of Kazakhstani youth socialisation. The poles (absolute centres) of euro-centralism and pan-Turkism, permitting one to orient oneself within the various ethno-socialisation and socio-cultural dynamics of Kazakhstani society were defined in the Kazakhstani social groupings. The cultural-civilisation typology of socialisation models suggested by the author is a logical abstraction, but an abstraction which permits specification of the socialisation of Kazakhstani youth, to orient it scientifically within the various ranges of inter-cultural differences of its agents and participants.

Key words: *young people, youth socialisation, cultural models of socialisation, life style, strategies of personal self-realisation*

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of modern society entailed changes in social and cultural values and the social characteristics of various social groups, including youth. In general, socialised standards themselves have changed, i.e. the formalised ideas of the qualities a person should possess and what socialisation institutes can and must do to ensure the integration of an individual and society. In modern conditions we should distinguish the following basic peculiarities of the socialisation of youth:

- transformation of the basic institutes of socialisation institutions;
- deformation of values and the standard mechanism of social regulation, and establishing a new system of social control;
- imbalance of organised and spontaneous processes of socialisation towards the latter;
- changing of correlations between social and personal interests towards expanding the autonomy of a forming personality.
- The present study aims at investigating the following hypotheses:
 1. The modernisation and sharply growing polarisation of Kazakhstan society's influence on the process of youth socialisation, which may be described by its cultural models.
 2. Cultural models of youth socialisation are forming a special life style and the self-realisation strategies of young personalities.
 3. Youth socialisation as a process of accession in society will be successful if society provides adequate conditions for the self-organisation and self-actualisation of a young person on the basis of recognition by society of the revocable priority of a personality as a subject of social relations.

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of 2002 young people in the 14-29 ages (1004 male, 998 female) from four regions of Kazakhstan, students (47%), working youth (53%). In the present sample there are the following main ethnic groups: Kazakh (57.2%), Russian (25.4%), others (15.8%). Respondents living in the capital - Astana - (11.9%), large regional centres (31.5%), small towns (26.5%), villages/aul (28.8%). This correlates with the proportions of all people living in these territories.

Measures & Analyses

Collection of primary sociological data was conducted by survey. Empirical data was processed using a statistical software package for social sciences - SPSS.

RESULTS

Cross-cultural irreconcilable contradictions tear Kazakhstan into social and cultural sides: those of eurocentrism and pan-Turkism.

The Euro-oriented pole of cultural development focuses on industrial and urban civilisation values. Here all the natural relations bending a young man and integrating him into a local community with its close personal (natural and kin) dependencies disintegrate; the ties of a person and society gain an anonymous market character mediated with money. This allows an individual to become directly or indirectly an independent subject of socialisation. The pan-Turkish pole is based on the traditions of an agrarian nomadic civilisation and the dominance of patriarchal core (zhuz) and a paternal way of thinking from the aul (village) environment.

The parameters of a socialisation model are specified by intercultural antagonisms between the social and cultural sides of society. They are determined by the correlation of the opportunities to harmonise and satisfy basic social and spiritual demands of youth regarding the civilisation-historical vertical line, or regarding 'auyl - town' opposition. Taking into consideration the peculiarities of the historical and cultural progress of civilisation of the country's population we can differentiate the following types of socialisation models.

First of all, there is a traditional socialisation model intrinsic to numerous auyl youth and town migrants, whose first generation was born in a Kazakh (or mixed) auyl with its traditional patriarchal culture, authority of the elders, priority of the core, zhuz and finally the priority of the state over an individual.

The next socialisation model of Kazakhstani youth may be called a mobilisation one. It is characteristic of the Russian-speaking youth from villages and for some of the Kazakh youth who find themselves at the junction of the two cultures - Kazakh and Russian-European, between auyl and urban culture. The development (that of society and its relevant socialisation) in this case is led by personal development, aimed at the achievement of contingency goals by exceeding means and ad hoc regulations. Its distinctive feature is that it is going on under the influence of extreme external factors, first of all, an unequal start in socialisation in comparison with urban youth. They are half Kazakh, half Russian and characterised by two main determinants - their rural origin (ethnic-cultural component) and Russian education (civilisation component).

And finally, there is a modernisation socialisation model characteristic to urban Russian-speaking youth, among whom there may be singled out a scanty group (less than 3-5%) of those who come from families of Kazakh intellectuals of the second and third generation. Russian-European culture seems to have been their native environment since childhood and the Russian language is the only native one for them. Being the product of an urban civilisation, they are more receptive to an individual market world view resting on the person himself, but not on core community collective or state priorities.

DISCUSSION

Youth is a product of history and certain culture, at the same time it is a motive force and factor for change; its social value. Contemporary life demands a new understanding of youth as a self-valued stage of age, spiritual and social development. Youth ages aren't a preparatory stage of personal development as people have considered it recently, they are a main source of modern change.

The socialisation of Kazakhstani youth in modern conditions represents an acute struggle between tradition and modernisation in the process of socialisation. According to urbanisation and globalisation tendencies, the mobilisation model becomes the main model of socialisation at this moment of social development, which is more adequate than a transitive society.

Contemporary youth is oriented by Western social and cultural standards. From the point of view of social innovations it produces mobility within young people and an increase in their readiness to learn from cultural, territorial, professional, scientific and technological surroundings. But it creates perceptible disharmony in the social education and socialisation of the young generation as a whole. An ability to innovate damages the learning of long standing social and cultural rules and values, an ability to orientate well within a technological environment damages multi-cultural integration.

Socialisation of young personalities in Kazakhstan determines social and cultural differentiation. Cultural differentiation appears when the variety of cultural choices provides the background for a conflict of mental values between tradition and innovation, Eastern authority and Western democracy, collectivisation and individualisation. The limits of traditional culture are washed away by a new youth group identification. So the general factors of cultural socialisation are: gender, age, territory, education and profession.

Socialisation of the young generation must become specialised and a professional activity, because spontaneous socialisation cannot now ensure the necessary parameters for self-preservation and the reproduction of modern society. On the whole, the idea of socialisation will be widely used in social engineering and social management. A new model of Kazakhstani youth socialisation is possible; it will be built on the social technologies of organisation and self-organisation applied to the youth socialisation process. The author is sure that the theoretical thesis about forming 'order through chaotic stability' allows us to more exactly formulate the complicated interaction between society and socialised youth.

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