

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY

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Abstract

A study was carried out to review the motives and manifestations of the political activity of the Armenian youth. The study involved 100 undergraduate and graduate students of the Armenian State Pedagogical University. The following varieties of the survey method were used: written survey - questioning; oral group survey - conversation. The data obtained were compared with the results of similar studies conducted with young people in Russia. According to the survey results, the majority of Armenian youth are interested in politics, but only a few believe that politics plays a significant role in their lives. Politically active youth are convinced that their demands can be heard in the public and political life of the country. The following motives condition the political activity of the Armenian youth: preserving the integrity of the Motherland, restoring the infringed human dignity, demanding the restoration of social justice, improving the economic situation of the country. Most young people do not have clear political preferences: their attitude is often conditioned by sympathy for the personality of the party leader, rather than knowledge of party programs. Young people's political activity is predominantly affective in nature: their attitude towards politicians is very emotional, the reasoning and analytical components are weakly expressed. Armenian youth has a subjective attitude to political events and gives opposite assessments. On the one hand, young people demand freedom of expression in their political behaviour, but on the other hand, they show intolerance towards dissent.

School and university education for teenagers and youth should contribute to developing a culture of conducting a civilized dialogue.

Keywords and phrases

Youth, political activity, subjective point of view, polar assessments, civilized dialogue.

**ՀԱՅ ԵՐԻՏԱՍԱՐԴՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ԱԿՏԻՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ
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ՄԱՐԻՆԵ ՄԻՔԱՅԵԼՅԱՆ

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Համառոտագիր

Հայ երիտասարդների քաղաքական ակտիվության շարժառիթներն ու դրսևորումներն ուսումնասիրելու նպատակով անց է կացվել հետազոտություն: Կիրառվել է հարցման մեթոդը (անկետավորում և զրույց): Հետազոտությանը մասնակցել են Հայկական պետական մանկավարժական համալսարանի բակալավրի և մագիստրոսի կրթական աստիճան ստացող 100 ուսանողներ: Ստացված տվյալները համեմատվել են Ռուսաստանի երիտասարդների հետ անցկացված նմանատիպ հետազոտությունների արդյունքների հետ: Համաձայն հարցման տվյալների՝ հայ երիտասարդության մեծ մասը հետաքրքրվում է քաղաքականությամբ, սակայն քչերն են գտնում, որ իրենց կյանքում քաղաքականության դերը մեծ է: Քաղաքական ակտիվություն ցուցաբերող երիտասարդները վստահ են, որ իրենց կողմից առաջադրվող պահանջները հնարավոր է լսելի դարձնել երկրի հասարակական-քաղաքական կյանքում: Հայ երիտասարդների քաղաքական ակտիվությունը պայմանավորված է հետևյալ շարժառիթներով՝ հայրենիքի ամբողջականության պահպանում, ոտնահատված մարդկային արժանապատվության վերականգնում, սոցիալական արդարության վերականգնման պահանջ, երկրի տնտեսական վիճակի բարելավում: Երիտասարդների մեծ մասը չունի հստակ քաղաքական նախընտրություններ. նրանց դիրքորոշումը հաճախ պայմանավորված է կուսակցության լիդերի անձի հանդեպ ունեցած համակրանքով, ոչ թե կուսակցության ծրագրերի իմացությամբ: Երիտասարդների քաղաքական ակտիվությունը հիմնականում կրում է աֆեկտիվ բնույթ. քաղաքական գործիչների հանդեպ նրանց վերաբերմունքը խիստ հուզական է և զգացմունքային, դատողական և վերլուծական բաղադրիչն ունի նվազ դրսևորում: Հայ երիտասարդները քաղաքական իրադարձությունների նկատմամբ ունեն սուբյեկտիվ վերաբերմունք և տալիս են բևեռային գնահատականներ: Երիտասարդներն իրենց քաղաքական վարքագծում պահանջում են սեփական կարծիքն արտահայտելու ազատություն, սակայն դրսևորում են անհանդուրժողականություն այլակարծության նկատմամբ: Դպրոցական և բուհական ուսումնառության ընթացքում պատանիների և երիտասարդների մեջ պետք է ձևավորել քաղաքակիրթ երկխոսություն վարելու մշակույթ:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ

Երիտասարդություն, քաղաքական ակտիվություն, սուբյեկտիվ տեսանկյուն, բնեռային գնահատականներ, քաղաքակիրթ երկխոսություն:

ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ АКТИВНОСТИ АРМЯНСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ

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Аннотация

Проведено исследование с целью изучения мотивов и проявлений политической активности армянской молодежи. В исследовании приняли участие 100 студентов бакалавриата и магистратуры Армянского государственного педагогического университета. Были применены следующие разновидности метода опроса: письменный опрос – анкетирование; устный групповой опрос – беседа. Полученные данные сравнивались с результатами аналогичных исследований, проведенных с молодежью в России. Согласно результатам опроса, большинство армянской молодежи интересуется политикой, но лишь немногие считают, что политика играет большую роль в их жизни. Политически активная молодежь убеждена, что их требования могут быть услышаны в общественной и политической жизни страны. Политическая активность армянской молодежи обусловлена следующими мотивами: сохранение целостности Родины, восстановление ущемленного человеческого достоинства, требование восстановления социальной справедливости, улучшение экономического положения страны. У большинства молодых людей нет четких политических предпочтений: их установка часто обусловлена симпатией к личности лидера партии, а не знанием партийных программ. Политическая активность молодежи носит преимущественно аффективный характер: их отношение к политикам очень эмоциональное, рассуждающий и аналитический компоненты выражены слабо.

Армянская молодежь субъективно относится к политическим событиям, дает полярные оценки. С одной стороны, молодые люди в своем политическом поведении требуют свободы выражения мнений, но с другой стороны, проявляют нетерпимость к инакомыслию.

Школьное и университетское образование юношей и молодежи должно способствовать развитию культуры вести цивилизованный диалог.

Ключевые слова и фразы

Молодежь, политическая активность, субъективная точка зрения, полярные оценки, цивилизованный диалог.

Introduction

Political views are the combination of beliefs regarding the economy, the structure of the state and society. Political views include ideas about how the law and social morality should be.

The psychologists and neurobiologists of the USA and UK conducted studies to find connections between a person's political views and the neural processes of their brain. Darren Schreiber used magnetic resonance imaging to study the brain's activity while making important, risky decisions. Schreiber emphasizes that while people with conservative and liberal leanings made similar decisions, different parts of their brains showed activity [7].

Studies conducted with monozygotic twins show that there is a partial genetic predisposition towards some political views. Of course, political beliefs aren't being inherited in an obvious way like height, the colour of eyes and hair. Still, there is a basis to assume that people are born with some predisposition towards different ideologies [6].

John R. Hibbing and Read Montague studied the inborn predispositions in the brain. For that purpose they studied people's instinctive reactions towards fear and disgust provoking visual stimuli. As a result, they found a link between the strength of the reaction to the corresponding images and the degree of conservatism of the subjects' views. Hibbing points out that people who are wary of immigration, opponents of abortion, supporters of more cruel punishment for criminals are much more sensitive to images that cause disgust [8].

At the moment, it has been discovered that there is a correlation between the political worldview of people and how they perceive risk, fear or disgust [see 6]. John Hibbing assumes that subconscious motivators could drive our political views. People think that their political sets are rational, and when they are hinted that this may be a predisposition, which they are not fully aware of, people don't want to believe it. For clarity, Hibbing compares people's ideological tendencies with which hand they prefer to use. It was believed that being left or right-handed was a habit that could be changed

for a long time, but today it's known for sure that there is a deep biological predisposition behind this.

Indeed, the studies of Darren Schreiber, John R. Hibbing and Read Montague can't be a reason to assume that a person's political views are only affected by genetics. In reality, political views are mainly formed under the influence of the environment. Though, we must admit that there are people who never change their views under any circumstances.

The nature of the political behaviour of young people is largely determined by the specifics of their attitude to politics, their level of political knowledge, their awareness of political events and processes, i.e., cognitive political orientations, which are customarily included in political culture. The cognitive component of the political culture of a young person is formed both on a passive basis and on an active one. According to L. A. Lipskaya, political culture passively develops in the process of socialization and actively forms when a person is independently, consciously and purposefully interested in political life [2]. The level of political awareness of young citizens can be considered as a prerequisite for their political activism.

Methods

To research the manifestation and the reasons behind the political activity of the Armenian youth, a study was conducted using the following varieties of the survey methods: written survey– questioning and oral group survey - conversation. The respondents of the study were 100 students from the Armenian State Pedagogical University. The latter study in the first and second courses for their bachelor degree and in the second course for their graduate degree. The results were compared to the results of similar researches done in Russia [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. The author relied on the analysis of Yu. R. Vishnevsky, L. A. Lipskaya, V. V. Petukhov and A. V. Ribakov.

Results and discussion

According to the author's poll conducted, 84% of young Armenian students are interested in politics, and the other 16% are not.

According to research from Russia, 37% of young people are interested in politics, and 62% don't show any interest. Despite the lack of interest in politics, the majority of the younger generation of Russia are confident that their life depends on politics: 51% consider this dependence strong, 23% consider it weak, and only 15% believe that their life does not depend on politics at all [4].

26% of the Armenian youth think that politics heavily influence their lives, 48% consider that influence weak, and 19% are confident that their life isn't influenced by politics at all. 7% didn't have an answer.

To the question "Do you watch or listen to programs about politics?" positively answered 68% of the Armenian youth, 32% responded negatively. Remarkably, 68% of the youth participate in political discussions too, and 32% don't. It's evident that those young people who follow political broadcasts using mass media also actively discuss recent political events.

According to sociological polls, 90% of the Russian youth sometimes listen to or watch political broadcasts. But according to A. V. Ribakov, interest in politics among most young people is passive mainly since, having a common understanding of political events in the country, young people do not seek active participation in political life, showing civic and political apathy. Young people are more willing to discuss politics rather than participate in it. Instead of meetings and demonstrations, a significant part of young people prefers virtual political Internet discussions, politicized talk shows, which are a kind of entertaining game with a superficial presentation by participants of their ideological positions that attract a specific part of young people with their expression of emotions.

This suggests that many young people are characterized by affective political orientations, which are built on the basis of feelings and emotions caused towards various political figures [5].

Both Armenian and Russian young people usually assess political events from a subjective perspective, giving polar assessments to the political events. They often give these designations "good-bad", "like-dislike", "white – black", "ours – not ours", "revolutionary – non revolutionary".

53% of the Armenian youth thinks that they take part in the country's political life, and only 21% believe they are completely apoliticalized. According to the poll's results, the main reasons behind the apolitization of young people are: thinking that being involved in politics is pointless, that politics are constantly changing and unstable, the unimportance of political life, or simply the existence of other interests in their life.

Yu. R. Vishnevsky thinks that the reasons and motives of apoliticity among the Russian youth are: uncertainty that personal participation may matter, distrust of politicians, poor awareness of the political processes, indifference to politics, presence of other interests, lack of free time [1].

It's evident that the Armenian apoliticalized youth mainly has negative or indifferent opinions towards politics. The Russian youth distrust politicians and are uncertain that personal participation can matter.

The question "Are you ready to take part in political protests?" positively answered 94% of the Armenian youth; moreover, 70% of them are sure that their voice can be heard in the social-political life of the country.

V. V. Petukhov thinks that some Russian youth do not want political upheavals and do not encourage violent methods of political activity. Others are sure that one of the most effective ways to influence the authorities to defend their interests is direct action: going out into the streets, participating in rallies and demonstrations [3].

Armenian youth are actively motivated by the following political motives (the list goes from most to least significant).

1. Preserving the integrity and security of the borders of the Motherland;
2. The requirement of giving a person the sense of self-worth;
3. The sharp demand for the restoration of human dignity;
4. The need to restore social justice;
5. The need to improve the economic situation of the country;
6. The need to solve environmental problems.

By showing a high level of political activity, Armenian students, however, aren't always able to clearly articulate their political position and true motives for their attitude towards a particular political direction or party.

65% of Armenian youth do not have a clear political orientation. Often, the basis of their political choice is only the personality of the party leader, personal sympathy for him, and no knowledge of the party's programmatic orientation.

In the political struggle of young people, there is also a lack of experience in political culture, which is manifested in the form of contradictory tendencies in the political culture of young people. On the one hand, young people make fair demands of civil liberties, and on the other hand, they are often not ready to listen and accept any dissent and do not tolerate the opposite opinion or approach. In this situation, the socializing role of educational institutions grows; they should form the ability to conduct a civilized dialogue among young people.

Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the study, the author can come to some conclusions.

- Most Armenian youths are interested in politics, but few think politics plays a significant role in their lives. Armenian student youth cannot be considered over-politicized even when the participation of young people in the political events of Armenia is crucial.

- Politically active youth are convinced that their demands can be heard in the public and political life of the country.

- The following motives condition the political activity of the Armenian youth: preserving the integrity of the Motherland, restoring the infringed human dignity, demanding the restoration of social justice, improving the economic situation of the country.

- Most young people do not have clear political preferences: their attitude is often conditioned by sympathy for the personality of the party leader rather than knowledge of party programs.

- Young people's political activity is predominantly affective in nature: their attitude towards politicians is very emotional, the reasoning and analytical components are weakly expressed.

- Armenian youth has a subjective attitude to political events and gives opposite assessments. On the one hand, young people demand freedom of expression in their political behaviour, but on the other hand, they show intolerance towards dissent.

- School and university education for teenagers and youth should contribute to developing a culture of conducting a civilized dialogue.

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