

# Problems of civic education in Russia (practice and metaphysics)

## Problemas de educación cívica en Rusia (práctica y metafísica)

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Received: 07/06/2018 • Approved: 15/07/2018

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#### ABSTRACT:

This article is to show how education, which is the most important form of activity in the social medium framework, changes the cultural image and awareness of individuals, shapes and transforms their political attitude towards surrounding day-to-day realities. A comparison analysis is used to explore a system of civic education in the formation of national and state identity of a person as a derivative of an 'imagined community'. This phenomenon shall be regarded as a result of designing the social and political values and internalization in public consciousness thereof. Sociological method allows to reveal the dependence of civic education from society, its relationship with various spheres of social life. The following conclusions have been made in the course of normative value analysis of the current condition (practice and metaphysics) of civic education. Results: First of all, loyalty and public spirit contribute to understanding a role and place of public awareness in the system of existing political institutions and regulations. Secondly, a conscious submission to general rules and standards adopted in the community in the course of civic education is being elaborated. It can be reached due to loyalty. Thirdly, a specific method of relations between an individual and the authorities, community and state, when all the political process participants serve as equal to each other will be implemented in the civic consciousness phenomenon. This approach makes it possible to optimize the process of civic education.

**Keywords:** civic consciousness, civic education, 'imagined community', metaphysics of education

#### RESUMEN:

Este artículo pretende mostrar cómo la educación, que es la forma más importante de actividad en el marco del medio social, cambia la imagen cultural y la conciencia de los individuos, moldea y transforma su actitud política hacia las realidades cotidianas circundantes. Se utiliza un análisis de comparación para explorar un sistema de educación cívica en la formación de la identidad nacional y estatal de una persona como un derivado de una 'comunidad imaginada'. Este fenómeno debe considerarse como el resultado de diseñar los valores sociales y políticos y la internalización en la conciencia pública de los mismos. El método sociológico permite revelar la dependencia de la educación cívica de la sociedad, su relación con las diversas esferas de la vida social. Las siguientes conclusiones se han realizado en el curso del análisis de valor normativo de la condición actual (práctica y metafísica) de la educación cívica. Resultados: En primer lugar, la lealtad y el espíritu público contribuyen a la comprensión del papel y el lugar de la conciencia pública en el sistema de instituciones y reglamentos políticos existentes. En segundo lugar, se está elaborando una sumisión consciente a las normas y estándares generales adoptados en la comunidad en el curso de la educación cívica. Se puede alcanzar debido a la lealtad. En tercer lugar, un método específico de relaciones entre un individuo y las autoridades, la comunidad y el estado, cuando todos los participantes del proceso político sirven como iguales entre sí se implementará en el fenómeno de la conciencia cívica. Finalmente, un comportamiento bien informado

basado en la responsabilidad personal de las fortunas de la patria de uno, la supervivencia de la cultura y la tradición histórica se reflejará en el patriotismo. Este enfoque permite optimizar el proceso de educación cívica.

**Palabras clave:** conciencia cívica, educación cívica, 'comunidad imaginada', metafísica de la educación

## 1. Introduction

'Political' aspect is traditionally referred to as anything that is relevant to distribution of power in the community and a possibility to influence such a distribution (Weber, 2010). Though, there are different modes of interpretation of 'political' aspect.

The essence of Plato's 'political' theory is to make the inhabitants of the just city as virtuous as possible, and therefore everything possible is done to achieve for this. The result is a completely controlled environment in which all resources are dedicated to the instilling of virtue. The main institution of the city is the *education system*. Its other institutions are intended to provide an environment in which the task of education can be successfully realized. As Plato says, the city must be governed by philosophers. As a result of continuous, intensive education, all inhabitants rise to the highest level of virtue possible for them. Accordingly, in addition to educational institutions that make the many as virtuous as possible, the higher education system is designed to create a class of political wizards. Plato describes a similar system for teaching future philosophers (they are raised to knowledge of the Form of the Good). But Plato makes more precise that 'education isn't what some people declare it to be, namely, putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes' (*Rep.* 518b-c). It is the instrument 'with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole body. This instrument cannot be turned around from that which is coming into being without turning the whole soul until it is able to study that which is and the brightest thing that is, namely, the one we call the good' (*Rep.* 518 c-d). We see that the metaphysical and epistemological views of Plato are the essential supporting basis of his 'political' philosophy.

C. Schmitt wrote about irreducibility of 'political' aspect in the exceptional sphere of the state activity. He harshly opposes political to economical, technical or legal aspects. The 'political' aspect was understood by him not as a way of life and not as combination of institutions, but as a criterion for adopting a definite type of decision. He understood the political aspect as a political division, whereto all the political actions and motives, distinction between friend and enemy can be narrowed down: 'The specific political distinction ... is that between friend and enemy' (Schmitt, 2007).

The 'political' aspect for Arendt (2005) appears as a dimension of the 'general world' only, where the people recognize each other equal and are capable of solving problems of indigenous social life. Arendt says that it is 'through political action that we develop who we are and acquire meaning and purpose to our lives' (Hull, 2002). The human and political in its logic appear to be isomorphic to each other. Arendt emphasizes that political action is essential as well as unique to human life, that it is the highest form of philosophy, and that it differentiates human beings from all other species. It is these claims in particular that we are interested in (Arendt, 2005).

The authors of this article proceed from a broad interpretation of the 'political' aspect being guided by a principle of equivalence between public conscience and objective reality in the creative transformative activity of a person. The political perception (and knowledge as the result of it) is a combination of the consecutive social practices: (a) appropriation of the world by a person, converting it into a subject of observation, investigation, apprehension; (b) perception of the world by conscience as the task, problem, question; (c) responsibility before the world, or permanent state of exploring a sense of its personal existence by a person. Accordingly, the civic education is such a specific organization of discursive space, which is called upon to satisfy a fundamental need of a person for self-expression and meaningful life in the public environment.

A contemporary society generates these demands as a peculiar 'social mandate' for

adequate civic education under conditions of developing cultural crisis (democracy deficit, increasing extremism, co-existence of omnidirectional vectors of multicultural aspects and national security, problems of economic growth, migration flows, new network social relations, etc). The politically oriented education is called upon to render assistance to the people in their public self-determination, in realization of their rights and obligations.

Anderson (2016) thinks that the modern nationalism and citizenship are new phenomena typical for the modern society and they present a method to integrate the space, time and social bonds into a perceptual unit. A particular feature of this combination is that it is not possible without imagination that is the medium and the basis for the social ties; it aggregates the culturally integrated imagined communities. It is a kind of a modern society's religion that promises immortality for a man as he imagines himself as a member of the eternal nation. The European models of the 'official nationalism' formed by the elite and implemented through various educational or language policies or cultural revolutions are considered by Anderson (2016) as the reaction of the elites currently in power to the unifying influence of the 'printed-books capitalism' and spreading of the mother tongue as a means of communication and, at the same time, as a model to consolidate the national ideology.

As the meaning-creating experience of the national conscience is the material to build the form of the imagined community, it is logical that the modern political discourse uses such notions as 'global citizenship', 'digital citizenship', 'media citizenship'. Nevertheless, it must be noted that in the conditions of the modern Russia that is economically backwards, the civic education essentially differs from the forms established in the majority of the 'western-world' countries.

A specific character of perceiving the tasks of civic education in the Russian Federation is justified by the fact of a relatively recent supremacy of the state-level communist ideology. During a long period of time the civic (more revolutionary ideological) education was charged with an upbringing of a 'new man', who should unquestionably follow the instructions of the so-called 'Moral Code of the Builder of Communism'. At the same time the 'western' model of civic (more liberal partisanship) education based either on an alternative, anticommunist ideology, or on the principles of escaping from any speculative ideological rhetoric.

By the present time, particularly the communist and anticommunist forms of political awareness have practically lost their relevancy due to global propagation of deideologization processes in the contemporary world. Naturally, it does not mean that the communities will not anymore take care of a political socialization of a personality. But here too we can see two dissimilar models, two fundamentally different approaches to the target functions of the contemporary national civic education. In one case (the 'western world') the civic education liberated from the 'excessive' educational tasks gets reduced exceptionally to awareness. In the other case (present-day Russia) the attempts are being undertaken to form a fundamentally new system of civic education ('duhovnye screpy') not free from official ideological doctrines, which sets special educational strategies adopted by the ruling groups.

Despite the available differences, a 'generation' of citizens possessing a 'reserve of decisiveness' (Almond *et al.*, 1992) can be referred to as the common basis of civic education (both for the 'western world' and for present-day Russia). A citizen is an integrative property of a personality characterized by taking and implementing the socially-significant values, including the national identity. The question is about free, initiative and competent individuals, who are at the same time responsible, law-abiding and featuring political partisanship and skills of public participation. A citizen irrespective of the place and time of its existence will consecutively implement culpability to the social medium through such forms as the loyalty, civic consciousness, nationalism and patriotism. As Anderson (2016) pointed out, in this process of creating a self-contained and internally consistent outlook, the state schools need to form a huge and highly rationalized and centralized hierarchy, which will be structurally similar to the state bureaucracy. Uniform textbooks, standardized education certificates and permits for teaching, strictly regulated grades of ages, classes and teaching materials-these all are the means to form a new 'imagined

community', in which the aboriginal population will, at some moment, be offered a national identity of its own to support for a person or group without fair consideration of the facts and circumstances.

Civic education as such is aimed at changing the consciousness of a human being orienting him at purposeful and rational behavior but not at occasional, spontaneous and non vicarious by reflection actions. The authors' concept provides for discussion of the system of civic education in the wider context as building up political communication which is understood as interrelations between a human being and social medium, an individual and the nation (Baltovskij *et al.*, 2015; Baltovskij *et al.*, 2016).

Therefore, the authors of this work had the following tasks at hand: (1) To define the essential meaning of the 'civic conscience' in the conditions of restoring the role of the state and the official nationalism (identity). (2) To further investigate the 'projecting' type of the identity acting as an 'imagined community'. (3) Then, to analyze the problem of education as a cognitive component of the nationality. (4) Finally, to present a discussion section related to the analysis of the civic education during the crisis of the culture and practice of patriotism as a national orientation. (5) In the end, we made a conclusion that the practice of the civic education in Russia reflects a deep structural transformation of the state officials' imagination towards extreme militarization and politization of the civic discourse (whereas the main task of education is forming an active citizen having a potential of a civic influence level to form a community where truth telling is essential to political life).

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## 2. Methodology

The authors use culturological, politological and sociological methods to analyze the system of civic education and forming the civic conscience of Russian citizens. The structural-functional and the system method were used to investigate the theoretical basis for civic education and civic conscience, their elements, structures, features etc.

The decision upon the model of the study was defined by the following circumstance. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting disintegration of the social ties gave rise to many fundamental conflicts in every sphere of the society, which destabilized the social and political life in Russia. The revolutionary process of transformation in the social values and the human life caused the changes in the individual and public conscience, whereas the lack of the official national orientations as a basis for the mass civic conscience was one of the reasons why the society entered a stage of the aggressive and unstable conservatism (instead of stable ideological pluralism). That is why the authors consider it important to investigate the problem of finding and forming the integrating values, which has become the central theme of this study. A complex investigation is required on civic education as a multi-stage phenomenon of human conscience.

As during the primary socialization stage and early in the secondary socialization stages of the generation of the 90-es there was no patriotic education system in Russia, the civic conscience of this generation is clearly different from that of the previous and following generations, which can cause difficulties in co-operation between different generations in the future. In order to analyze this problem, the authors used the system analysis methods, when each object is examined with consideration of its system character. Each element of the system can also be contemplated as a sub-system. At the same time, it is considered that the system as a whole has the properties not belonging to any of its components.

The authors' concept has been shaped on the basis of the modern theories of citizenship, according to which the procedural and institutional arrangements are not sufficient to attain a balance of private interests as the purpose of political social life. A definite level of civic virtues and civic awareness is required (Galston, 1991; Macedo, 1990). The authors distinguish the following approaches to forming them as the methodological guidelines. The first approach underlines the role of organizations and institutions of the civic society, where the people adopt the ideas of self-discipline, cooperation and duty (Janoski, 2010; Rosenblum, 1989; Walzer, 1980; 2009). The second approach points to a necessity of formal instructing on the civic consciousness, which shall be used to append or correct what the people have been taught in the civic society and at the same time it refers to a person as

the highest value of the community and the self-fulfilling prophecy of public development (Bridges, 2004; Callan, 2010; Feinberg, 2000; Levinson, 2004). Such an axiological approach to forming a citizen helps address directly an axiological sphere of public political conscience. From the axiological viewpoint, political conscience is one of the levels of the individual social thinking, too. The essence of individual political conscience is the ability to define own interests, relate them to others' interests and find ways to solve tasks in regard to these interests using the state and other social institutions. From the behavioral viewpoint, political conscience is a form of the rational thinking, namely, a combination of views and notions of an individual used by him for defining his roles and performing his functions in the sphere of power. In this case, political conscience is represented as a kind of extended thinking superimposed onto the politics.

Thereupon Foucault's approach (Foucault, 2006, 2013) 'consists of an investigation into implicit practices related to a change in social and economic conditions; i.e., an analysis of power is implied. Conversely, this methodology includes sharp criticism of cultivated public discourses and contemplates reconstruction of concealed (from the viewpoint that critics do not seek to understand any deeper than what is apparent) conditions for implementing power policies. Thus, Foucault's position connects both epistemological (discourse of knowledge), and descriptive (discourse of rules) aspects of a problem including an analysis of different social practices and aspects of power relationships' (Tolstenko, 2016). Then Heidegger's approach (Heidegger, 1987, 2009a, 2009b; Krell, 2015) 'relies on the fact that our civilization only features a metaphysical ("superphysical") image. Dasein-analytics infer that the process of annihilation becomes relevant for the possibility to learn about the meaning of being (Seyns) because everything is immersed in the immaterial world (Machenschaft) and participates in the domination of material things (des Seienden). The main disadvantage of our era is expressed in widespread revolutionary enlightenment, and despotism, which lead to an unbounded deprivation of being (Seyn), and substitute origins with power deployment' (Tolstenko, 2016). So the authors reckon that particularly the synthetic and value-conscious approach (i.e. on the basis of mutual adaptation of universally acknowledged values and the world culture taking into account the domestic peculiarities and traditions) to researching the civic consciousness and identity in present-day Russia can be implemented.

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## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Changing attitude to state and statesmanship**

The civic education is the most important part of the democratic education. The 'national state' and 'statesmanship' come forward as the basic concepts of mature civic awareness. There exists a stereotype that a distinctive feature of the Russian mindset, unlike the western one, involves anarchism, a hardly concealed contempt towards the state institutes. In fact nowadays, the same as before, a range of people's attitude towards the Russian state, political and economical institutions involve both a support and a non-confidence. A process of disintegration of the Soviet statesmanship has pushed the society to percept the state as a hostile force opposing the interests of the majority of people.

A negligence of the country's national interests, cultivation of non-confidence to the institutions and regulations in the Russian society have brought about a gradual erosion of awareness of the national and state identity not only with an essential number of people, but with the state officers too. This process has been accompanied by a slump of production, degradation of economical structure and reduction of level quality of people's life and the system of education. An inevitable anomaly of state weakening processes consisted in the fact that the artificial minimization of state participation in economic and social spheres has finally triggered even higher control centralization and a trend of state role reanimation.

By the beginning of a new millennium the role of the state will start changing, more frequently it is acknowledged to be a source of positive changes. It took almost a decade to realize a necessity of strengthening the state and the statehood. An increasing number of people think today that Russia needs a strong state. However, the value-conscious

perceptions on the strength of such a state differ significantly. According to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (RPORC) the Russians speculating of what makes the country stronger in the eyes of the world community, most frequently mention the army and armaments (31%). According to the opinion of 15% of respondents the might of the Russian Federation is maintained by the foreign policy and the public esteem of the head of state. Another 13% of the survey respondents refer to the Russian spirit, culture and traditions of the country as the main source of force, while 11% mention the abundance of natural resources (RPORC, 2014).

Taking into account the differing points of view, we will characterize a modern strong state as an independent sovereign community capable to guarantee security and free development to its people supported by the conscious unity of citizens. Meanwhile, the awareness always functions between such opposite poles of political aspect as the regulatory direction and individual self-awareness. It is no coincidence that two types of relations took shape in the Russian consciousness between a state and a citizen, two sorts of civic consciousness: official faithful consciousness and opposing counteracting consciousness (Lange, 2012).

A transition from perceiving a citizen as a passive subject in the direction of an active subject of political action has began with the post-industrialism era. The independence, responsibility, flexibility, mobility, professional accomplishments and ability to get incorporated of the civil society in order to satisfy its interests become its basic characteristics. Accordingly, the present-day discourse shall be also oriented to democratic ideals and democratic forms of political behaviour, instead of consolidating the discredited forms of power and elites.

### **3.2. Engineering civic consciousness**

We understand the civic education as a multi-staged phenomenon of activity of human self-awareness. The initial stage of civic self-reflection implies intentionality, interested human attention to its public function. The rules and regulations, according to which a person puts in order its perceptions of the civic aspect; ideas, theories, ideological practices, scientific presentations, according to which it explains and changes the world, all these are the examples of the secondary stage of civic self-reflection. At last, the third and the final type of civic reflection implies observation of the reflection proper and designing it as an object of civic consciousness and action.

The statehood as the national and state identity disclosed in such concepts as loyalty, civic consciousness and patriotism, is the product of purposeful engineering and designing. The state comes forward as the key subject of this process in the contemporary world. The identity is the process of designing individual value based on any cultural feature or a related set of cultural features, to which the preference is given over the other sources of individual importance (Castells, 2010). The 'engineering' type of identity corresponds to a complex composition, which gets formed both on the part of self-awareness and on the part of direction. The point at issue is about engineering the social reality in the human's conscience through identification tools. At the same time the identity comes forward as an object of engineering and designing. The identity being designed features a complex nature. First of all, it is a process and a result of shaping the social and political partisanship' solutions. Secondly, this designing takes place not in the social vacuum, but gets supported by the dominating type of culture, styles of thinking, traditions and other various social and historical prerequisites.

The model of the communist revolution had a defining influence onto all the revolutions during the XX century, as it made them contemplable in the societies that were even more backwards than Russia (Anderson, 2016). As a result, nationalism – this 'imagined community' – penetrated every modern society. Russian national and state identity is understood within a framework of our investigation subject as a result of designing social and political values and internalization thereof in public conscience. The formation of democratic statehood is influenced both by the elemental indirect mechanisms: e.g., fragments of collective historical memory circulating in the public conscience and a

purposeful process of civic education (Scheuerman, 1999).

Presently, the special institutions of civic education have been created and function in many developed democratic countries of Europe and North America. A dedicated research committee of the International association of political sciences deals with the development of civic education subject. At the beginning of the XXI century the Council of Europe has adopted a number of recommendation documents as well as a large-scale program for teaching democratic civic consciousness. Many particulars of these documents can be used in Russia too, where a search for an optimal model of the civic education is presently going on.

### **3.3. The system of education as a cognitive component of the national state**

The system of education shapes a cognitive component of the statehood (Zafirovski, 2014). So, the Federal state educational standard of the secondary (full) general education in Russia specifies that the personalized results of the basic educational program shall be reflected in the following parameters. These are the Russian civic identity, patriotism, respect to its nation, sense of responsibility and pride for its motherland, the past and the present of the multinational peoples of Russia, respect to the state symbols (emblem, flag, anthem), civic stance of a personality as an active and responsible member of the Russian society realizing its constitutional rights and obligations, respecting law and public order, possessing self respect, consciously accepting the traditional national and panhuman humanitarian and democratic values, readiness to the service of the Motherland and its defense. Particularly these qualities get actually concentrated in the concept of national and state identity.

A course of the social science plays a decisive role in the civic education and accomplishment, exposure of the students to democratic value orientation recorded in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Its study becomes permanent during entire period of school education. A specific feature of this course consists in the fact that it includes the apparently abundant problems of gnosiology and philosophy, anthropology and sociology, politology and culturology, law and economy. Such a vicious paradigm results in the fact that acquirement of the social-science material is confined with the majority of students to a methodless remembering of a set of definitions. The educational process does not rise to developing 'cultural democracy' (Ahearne, 2010), i.e., shaping skills with the students to look for the cause-and-effect explanations, analyzing events and processes, give independent, substantiated, moral and civic estimations thereto.

The analysis of politological components of the social-science school books used today in the upper forms of general-education schools testifies to the fact that they have been compiled on the basis of scientific concepts of the middle of the last century (including Leninism and Marxism standards). It is offered to the school students to master the basic problems of politology, which will become for many of them a subject of study in the higher education system. Alongside with that these school books do not comprise practically the relevant tasks of the development of Russia, the facts related to the political system change. It is clear that without giving consideration to the real political processes the study of political system will actually change in the schools to a scholastic exercise and farcical doctrinization.

The standards of basic educational programs of bachelor degree course and masters course in the system of higher education do not directly set a mission of establishing and developing values of the Russian statehood with the students. Many people are of the opinion today that politological education fulfills the role of civic education in the Higher Education system (HEI). However, the political and politological forms of education are not identical to each other. We will highlight two very important problems in this context. The first one is related to a possibility of political partisanship and ideologization of political knowledge (a culture of powerful ideologies) (Oakes, 2012). The second problem is determined by the fact that politology is studied today as educational subject by some part of the Russian students only. It means that many graduates of the Russian HEI are

unacquainted with the present-day characteristics of the politics, political relations and political systems, regulations and principles of political activity, i.e. political knowledge in the Age of the Internet (Perloff, 2014). An expectation that the task of training the state-oriented graduates of the Russian HEI will be solved automatically under conditions of general reduction of the educational impact of Russian education looks illusionary.

### **3.4. Civic education in the conditions of the crisis of culture**

The society of the beginning of the XXI century is in the state of culture crisis, changes, which are especially noticeable as compared with the greater part of the previous century (Wilkins, 2002). According to Michel Foucault (1994), 'criticism should concentrate on the task of "re-actualization" of prior discourses into a new problematic field with the aim of transforming and understanding modern day-to-day realities' (Tolstenko, 2016). According to Martin Heidegger (2001), 'we can only understand that which is already given to us, to a certain extent, even though it may only be in a fragmentary and unauthentic manner. This constitutes pre-understanding (Forhabe), which precedes any understanding, an existential pre-structure of our own presence. A hermeneutic circle occurs here. To clarify, the implicit preknowledge always precedes explicit interpretative affirmation. In this regard, the critic's task is highlighting the event, adding nothing to it by means of critical interpretation, the possibility of which is originally present' (Tolstenko, 2016). The determination of the present time as the 'post-modern' means that the social medium changes over to a new development phase, which name has not been defined yet and which subject matter is to be expressed yet. The civic education of students shall take upon itself such functions as tracking, systematization, shaping and modeling future.

An opinion poll carried out by Levada-Center (2013) showed that the level of patriotism with the Russian people fell by 10%. The poll used the representative all-Russia sample retrieval for the urban and rural population among 1603 people aged over 18 living in 130 locations in 45 regions of Russia. Frankly speaking, the results of the poll are not very optimistic. Whereas in 2007 78% of citizens considered themselves patriots, in 2013 this number fell down to 69%. The number of people who declare they are not patriots, has grown from 12 to 19%. The Russians' understanding of the meaning and essence of patriotism has changed. The most popular response was that being a patriot is simply loving one's country. The number of this response fell from 66 to 59%. Fewer people now think that patriotism is working for 'the country's good and prosperity' – not 27 but 21%. 21% was each of two variants that being a patriot is 'thinking that your country is the best' or 'protecting your country from any abuses and accusations'. 11% of the respondents said that a true patriot always speaks the truth of one's own country, however bitter the truth is; 6% said that a patriot is he who sees no fault with one's own country. The respondents had differing opinions on the dynamics of patriotism in the society. 24% said that the Russian citizen have become more patriotic, with the same number thinking the opposite. However, 37% saw no change in this respect at all. At the same time, there is a type of patriotism that has been so popular lately – which is the 'reactive patriotism'. Such type of patriotism is a protective reaction of people to the words (pretty well-spread lately) that 'Russia will never become a civilized country', 'Russia is in for a catastrophe', 'Russia will never rise from the knees' etc.

Let us try to explain the meaning of the changes in people's conscience. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the lost 'cold war', the fall of our country's authority-these all are the reasons why certain images of traitors, defectors, enemies etc. were formed in peoples' minds. It is this 'reactive patriotism' that is currently pretty well-spread among younger people; it gives rise to a certain inferiority complex a.k.a. the complex of 'homo sovieticus'. This shift of notions is, most of all, dangerous in that it can cause aggressive nationalism, xenophobia and false patriotism. The modern political conscience as well as the modern political discourse is often limited to the ideological forms of the past (Van Ree, 2002; Fried, 2010). The disintegration of the USSR caused liquidation of the old system of civic education that was formed when a single ideology dominated, with the one and only party in an undemocratic Soviet state.

It should be noted that the new model of nationalism is actualized at the moment when the



'innovators' gain control over the country and get the possibility to use the state's capacity to put their imagination into reality (Anderson, 2016). Early in 1990-ies, new people came into politics, who had a strength of imagination typical for nationalism. Most of them had no political experience or theoretical knowledge. However, the very process of the internal and foreign policy impels the Russian ruling class to shift to a new form of the imaginary community, to acknowledge the necessity for political socialization. Its task includes formation of the civilized political behaviour of the Russian people, reasonable and positive approach to political processes and events bridling the destructive and violent forms of demonstrations against official powers. It creates pre-requisites for the new and constructive system-related and goal-oriented activity for civic and political education in Russia.

At the same time formation of the new system of democratic civic education in Russia faces a number of problems. The historical experience of paternalistic and despotic etatistic power in Russia gave birth to a custom with some representatives of the political elite to refer to the citizens of the country as to an easily controllable object, indifferent and apathetic not realizing independently its interests, not having its explicit position and not capable of defending it. It is frequently considered that the criterion of identity is popular with the Russians only in case of emerging real external military threat and there is no need and it is even dangerous to emphasize it under normal conditions. The seeming successes of contemporary conservative strategists attaining the intended political results through intensive fake propaganda and manipulations with public opinion, simulations of news and PR-actions, create an illusion of the systematic work for shaping the civic position as well as the civic education.

According to Anderson (2016), as the modern nation has no Creator, its biography cannot be written in an evangelic way, 'from the past to the present' through a long procreative chain of rebirths. It should only be organized 'from the present into the past', to the Neanderthal man or king Arthur of the decisive importance is how far the light of archaeology can be cast. Such organization, however, is marked with deaths. Due to the above-said, the historical memory has preserved the repressive totality of the branched structure of the Soviet propaganda system oriented to servicing and maintaining Communist party and the essentially bureaucratic state administration with a considerable number of Russian people. That is why an attitude to civic (more revolutionary ideological) education as the phenomenon of the ruthless totalitarianism persists (Tolstenko, 2016).

A development of civic education in contemporary Russia, which means that the development of democratic values, paradoxical as it may be, most frequently takes place against a background of the progressing state system bureaucratization, its suspension from the real needs of a society. Consequently, a weak state support of education, culture, in general, absence of well-advised education policy appears. A value-conscious lack of definition of the modern civic education proceeds thereof (Parker, 2002).

On the other hand, during the cultural crisis, the Internet radically changes the ways of the civil education. According to Friedman (2009), not the citizenship or place of living is of primary importance now, but the education level, capabilities, creativity and access to the global communication system. This has radically changed the conditions of living of enormous masses of people who live on the brink of the 'flat world', feel its influence and can use its advantages. The world has degraded to be a 'flat world' through information technologies. Generation Z has come to life-people of digital technologies ('digital natives'). Let's talk about them in more detail. They are teenagers with the 'creative imagination'. In Russia, generation Z is presented by 23 mln of young people who were born between 1991 and 2010 in the world of the Internet as a necessary element in life.

They adopt roles and rules from the social networks that more and more tend to substitute parents or teachers. The law of cycles states that the 'gen-z' will have a lot in common with the 'silent generation' (born in 1923-1943). The 'silent generation' was maturing during the period of electrification, industrialization and boy scouts' movement. Today we hear of energy-saving, modernization, youth groups. Besides, both generations encountered a global economic crisis. The generation Z will be influenced by hyper-guardianship-children are constantly being supervised by the seniors. After school they go to hobby clubs or

evening classes. As a result, those in the 'gen-z' lack communication with people of their own age. The 'digital natives' have more knowledge of the gadgets and technologies than of human emotions or liberal values. Lack of communication with the external world will often be offset with increased interest to one's own inner world and generation Z will, most probably, be interested in the art and science, developing their imagination. We often hear that science needs to be developed; innovations and start-ups should be supported. Students hear that. Scientific-popular entertainment is more and more popular, like-exciting illustrated encyclopedias, or computer games, or travel. 'Gen-Z' people, who are used to visual information from their early years, cannot perceive texts. This may cause a certain decline of the verbal and mental culture. Live communication is superseded by technogenic communication. In this respect, civic education is more and more dependent on various administrative manipulations ('brainwashing') aimed at putting the visions of the past into reality. It is that the particular feature of the 'Gen-Z' is 'living in the world of fantasy'.

Inside the generation Z as a large and non-uniform group, sub-generations can be distinguished. One of the most significant is the 'generation of iron' – people who were born in early 90-es. The Russian word for 'sheet iron' sounds similarly with the word for cruelty or harshness. This is a sub-generation with more aggressiveness and proneness to conflicts. They do not consider cruelty as something wrong; quite the opposite, they are proud of it. It is no coincidence that in the social conflicts of the recent past related to violence (e.g., fights in Manezh square on Dec, 11, 2010), the role of the 'soldiers' was played by teenagers 15-17 years of age. This is also one of the reasons for the growth of teenager crime marked during the late 2000-es. This is an echo of social stresses that happened during their childhood. This generation is more easily controlled as they lack the enthusiasm and the need to perceive the world about them, as the previous generations had. They are users waiting for a leader. It is the difference between the creators and the users that can be the distinctive feature of generation Z. The former will achieve the wealth and power. The latter will come to be totally controlled by their leaders, financially and socially. Therefore, the society can be split in two which will finally bring about a totalitarian state. As a result, the process of true civic self-education will become impossible. At present time, the civic education of Russian citizens is effected by means of translating political values (variable being optimized) into public conscience through massive use of controllable mass media capabilities as well as through a practice of political participation.

### **3.5. Patriotism as a national orientation**

As Murphy (2006) emphasizes, the target function is a dependence between a variable (target) being optimized and controllable variables, which appear as the conditions for solving a set task. It is no coincidence that mathematicians interpret a target as a variable being optimized with the assumption that optimization is an activity aimed at attaining the best results. Accordingly, such a system of rational arguments will act as ideology, which is used for explaining a method of implementing a declared optimal result (Murphy, 2006). If one approaches politics in general as the process of public changes, the purpose of activity of the politicians will inevitably be this very same controllable optimization. Loyalty is the first stage of such sort of optimization, which contemplates a conscious subordination to general regulations and rules adopted in the society. Further, the civic consciousness as the second stage contemplates a specific method of communication between an individual and power, society and state, when all the political process participants come forward as equal to each other. Finally, the patriotism will be presented as a controllable form of knowledgeable behaviour based on the personal responsibility for the fortunes of one's motherland, continuity of culture and historical tradition (Leary and Platt, 2001).

It could be that the present understanding of patriotism expands, it includes an attitude of a person to its country as a whole and to the small motherland, to their history, culture, traditions, people surrounding it. This state of individual awareness is expressed in the everyday activity of an individual (Haynes, 2010). Since the practices of the recent years abound with the examples of behaviour of the public employees and functionaries deprived according to the expression of A.S. Pushkin of 'patriotic scrupulosity', the formation of

patriotism with this part of the Russian population becomes an extremely important and difficult task. It is no coincidence that the Ministry of Labour has developed a 'Code of conduct for functionaries'. A procedure of selecting personnel for the state civil service contemplates as the criteria not only a professional level of applicants, their business-like meritocratic qualities but orientation to the interests of society and state. The post-Soviet mechanism of civic education in Russia has not got rid of the old problems of formalism, order of precedence and awkwardness of plans and reports thereto, i.e. everything we call the 'state' machiavellism. The state program 'Patriotic education of citizens of the Russian Federation' being implemented in the country beginning from 2001 is used as the proof thereto. The contents of patriotism have been confined in the official ideology of the Soviet past practically to the state component: readiness to sacrifice private interests to the benefit of its interests.

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## 4. Conclusions

- Plato believed that the true education is 'the art of citizenship (τὴν πολιτικὴν τέχνην)' or making men 'good citizens' (*Rep.* 319a), that after people are properly educated, they will become free (*Rep.* 591a). Therefore, the formation of genuinely new and creative thinking and imagination is only possible on the way of self-cognition and critical estimation by a person of its own status in the world that found itself under the press of the official nationalism. The contemporary Russian society needs developed and self-educated citizens rather than those who 'living in the world of fantasy'.
  - The civic education begins to play a special role during complex periods of states development, when it is necessary to unite the efforts of citizens and high responsibility for the fortune of its motherland. The loyalty, civic consciousness and patriotism come forward as the specific forms of communication between the society and the state, between individuals and the power. Nevertheless, for regime leaders, the patriotism (in its simplest, clearest and most unquestionable meaning) is nothing more than as an instrument for achieving ambitious and selfish goals. For the managed ones ('silent generation', 'digital natives', 'generation of iron') the patriotism is a renunciation of human dignity, reason, conscience, and is a slavish subjection to those who remain in power
  - The civic education and upbringing in Russia, especially of the young generation ('gen-Z') comprises a multiplicity of formal measures, it is still at the low level to form a community where truth telling is essential to political life. An excessive militarization and politicization of patriotic discourse is inherent in bubbling the alarmist and chauvinistic sentiments and devotion to looking for enemies, which reflects a deep structural deformation in the imagination of the Establishment
  - An education is to comprehend the whole of life. Therefore, the main institutions of any just state should be designed to facilitate the education. Acknowledging the insufficiency and often an imitational character of civic education in contemporary Russia, let us emphasize that the merit of civic education consists in the fact that it shapes an active citizen 'through political action that we develop who we are and acquire meaning and purpose to our lives'
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Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015  
Vol. 39 (Nº 46) Year 2018

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