

The background of the slide is a complex, abstract pattern of white and light blue lines and shapes on a dark blue background. The lines are thin and crisscrossing, creating a dense, web-like structure. There are also some faint, illegible text fragments scattered throughout the background, possibly representing a network or data flow. The overall aesthetic is modern and technical.

**Civic Patriotic Practices in
the Regional Communities
in the South of Russia**



CIVIC PATRIOTIC PRACTICES IN THE REGIONAL COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTH OF RUSSIA

PRÁCTICAS PATRIÓTICAS CÍVICAS EN LAS COMUNIDADES REGIONALES DEL SUR DE RUSIA

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Abstract

Patriotism is mostly well regarded in modern Russian society, being associated with love for the motherland, willingness to defend it, support for the state. However, state patriotism in Russia lacks citizenship, that is, the willingness of individuals to actively participate in social affairs geared toward [the well-being of the society](#). The article will discuss various formal and informal civic patriotic practices related to volunteer, charitable, environmental and human rights activities in regional communities in the South of Russia.

Keywords: civic patriotism, civic patriotic practices, formal civic patriotic practices, informal civic patriotic practices, volunteer activities, charitable activities, environmental activities, human rights activities.



Resumen

El patriotismo se considera principalmente bien en la sociedad rusa moderna, y se asocia con el amor a la patria, la voluntad de defenderla y el apoyo al estado. Sin embargo, el patriotismo estatal en Rusia carece de ciudadanía, es decir, la voluntad de las personas de participar activamente en los asuntos sociales orientados hacia el bienestar de la sociedad. El artículo discutirá varias prácticas patrióticas cívicas formales e informales relacionadas con actividades voluntarias, caritativas, ambientales y de derechos humanos en comunidades regionales en el sur de Rusia.

Palabras clave: patriotismo cívico, prácticas patrióticas cívicas, prácticas patrióticas cívicas formales, prácticas patrióticas cívicas informales, actividades de voluntariado, actividades de caridad, actividades ambientales, actividades de derechos humanos.

Introduction

Patriotism has recently been suggested for Russian society as a national idea and unifying principle well perceived by the majority of Russians, who associate it with love for the motherland, willingness to stand up for it, support for their state. However, such kind of state patriotism that emphasizes national pride and gives people a feeling of a great country citizens, turns out to be, as some researchers note, not too critical and self-critical (Gorshkov, 2016).

As a result, patriotism in Russian society today lacks citizenship, that is, the desire of people to actively participate in the social and state affairs. Therefore, local communities are lacking grass-roots civic subjectivity. This is due, on the one hand, to the specificity of the ethnic-paternalistic mentality of Russians (Lubsky et al., 2016), and on the other hand, to the underdevelopment of civil society and the lack of grass-roots civic subjectivity. Nevertheless, the level of civic activity of Russians is gradually growing in local communities. Civic patriotic practices are struggling to make their way through the thickness of state patriotism. In this regard, the study of civic and patriotic practices in regional communities in the South of Russia, due to their ethnocultural specificity, acquires special scientific and practical value.

Scientific literature review

The scientific literature has already considered various aspects of citizenship (Skalina, 2009; Citizenship in Russia and the European Union, 2014; Yagodka, 2015; Lubsky, 2016) and patriotism (Khali, 2017; Lubsky and Serikov, 2016; Good, 2016), civic and patriotic practices in Russian society, including in regional communities in the South of Russia (Volkov et al., 2018; Lubsky et al., 2018). At the same time, researchers note that the complex ethnocultural structure of their population significantly affects the forms of civil activity in the southern Russian regions (Erokhin and Vorobiev, 2009). Field of academic interest also include such issues as the lack of citizenship in the patriotic consciousness of the population (Vereshchagina, 2018), the influence of citizenship on the formation of patriotism among Muslim youth (Koichuev, 2011), positive civic practices and risks of civic development (Shulga and Kuznetsov, 2014; Zeibote et al., 2019), civic patriotism and youth consolidation (Shevchenko and Vagina, 2017).



The main body of scientific literature dealing with the study of patriotic issues in the South of Russia focuses primarily on the practices of patriotic education in the youth environment (Aslanov, 2016; Shevchenko and Vagina, 2017). Also the authors, drawing attention to the high level of patriotism in regional communities, regardless of the ethnicity of their population, note that the level of patriotism among young people is lower than among the older generation (Shakhbanova, 2017). In this regard, special attention is given to patriotism among young people in the context of the study of ethnic and social issues in the South of Russia (Vereshchagina et al., 2015).

Thus, academic writings have already considered a number of patriotic and civic practices in the south. However, real civic patriotic practices, being the most important channels for the formation of civic patriotism in regional communities in the South of Russia, have not yet been the matter of specialized scientific research.

Methodology and sources of empirical information

State patriotism, also known as "blind" patriotism, along with civil or "constructive" patriotism (Schatz et al., 1999) can be distinguished as part of the methodological construct of scientific research in society. State patriotism, associated with the normative type of national pride, which is the result of people's exposure to indoctrination, is characterized by their attachment to the homeland, its unquestioning positive assessment, as well as intolerance to criticism of their state. Civic patriotism, associated with a rational type of national pride, suggests the willingness of people aware of organic belonging to their homeland, to active and responsible social actions for the good of the motherland, as well as their desire to make their personal contribution to the development of the society and change the situation in the country for the better within the critical attitude to social reality.

Civic patriotic practices in regional communities represent various repertoires of social actions connected with individual or collective social activity of citizens that is aimed at solving problems of public interest. Thus, it seems possible to mention formal civil-Patriotic practices supported "from above" by public authorities and caused by normative legal acts and the informal civil practices developing in the process of social communication as a result of self-organization of citizens.

The study of civic patriotic practices in regional communities in the South of Russia was based on Internet resources (websites of public organizations and associations, social networks, news agencies). The value of this source of empirical information lies in the fact that it contains information about the organizations initiating civic patriotic practices, the membership and their activities that allowed to identify the main types of formal and informal civic patriotic practices in such constituent entities of the Russian Federation as Rostov region, Stavropol Krai, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Republic of Adygea and the Republic of Crimea.

Results and discussion

Volunteerism has significantly developed in the regional communities in the South of Russia. It began with small volunteer projects implemented on the initiative of citizens or within socially-oriented non-profit organizations. At the same time, volunteer movement in Russian society today in its major part should be attributed to formal civic patriotic practices supported "from above" by public authorities, involving legal and financial means.



The announcement of the year 2018 as "The Volunteer Year" acted as an accelerant for the volunteer movement in Russian society. It was accompanied by a large-scale information campaign aimed at popularizing volunteer activities. In December 2018, the Russian President chaired a meeting of the State Council devoted to the development of volunteerism and socially oriented non-profit organizations (Meeting of the State Council, 2018).

In 2018 the national legislation was amended, creating a legal basis for the development of the volunteer movement in Russia and cooperation of public authorities with voluntary organizations (Federal Law of 5 February 2018 N 15-FZ). The government of the Russian Federation has worked out "The Concept for the development of volunteerism (volunteering) in the Russian Federation until 2025" (2018), defining the main goals of the development of the volunteer movement, aimed at expanding opportunities for self-realization of citizens, increasing the role of volunteerism in innovative practices and social activities. These goals are to be achieved by enhancing the competencies of volunteers and increasing their participation in all public relations, primarily in the field of health, culture, sports, nature protection and emergency management.

Volunteer centers are continually being established in Russian regions and organizations. "The Association of Volunteer Centers" has been founded with the view to enhance volunteerism in Russia, promote values of volunteerism and social activities of citizens in order to assist implementation of civil, personal and professional potentials in volunteering (AVC). There is a unified information system "Volunteers of Russia" which provides opportunities to register for various volunteer activities, participate in the contest "Volunteers of Russia", enroll in training, as well as keep records of volunteer activities. Resource centers to support volunteer activities are being created. Training programs for volunteers are also under implementation.

The financial issues of the volunteer movement are being addressed with the assistance of the state. Since the year 2017 non-profit organizations have been allowed access to social services through the budgets. Subsidy tenders are contributing to form volunteering support as a stand-alone direction in the regions. Presidential grants also provide financial support of volunteer movement.

Volunteering as a kind of formal civic patriotic practices is widely represented in all regional communities in the South of Russia. The study of the official websites of volunteer organizations in the southern regions proved that the significant part was created by state or municipal authorities, either directly or through the administrative structures of educational institutions. In particular, in all southern Russian regions there are nationwide volunteer organizations, such as "Volunteers of Russia", "Be on the Map" that receive state financial support.

In addition, in the South of Russia there are such regional volunteer organizations as "I am a Volunteer" (Rostov region), "The Labor Ecological Detachment of the Kabardino-Balkarian State University named after H. M. Berbekov"; "Green Watch" (Kabardino-Balkaria), The Volunteer Center of Kabardino-Balkarian State Agrarian University named after V. M. Kokov", "Save the Roots" (Adygea). By the end of 2018 there were nine volunteer organizations in Adygea, twenty-four in Kabardino-Balkaria, and fifty in Crimea operating under the control of state authorities.



However, "grass-roots" volunteerism continues to develop in regional south Russian communities as informal civic and patriotic practices resulting from self-organization of citizens in the process of social communication. The mission of such volunteering can be judged, in particular, on the basis of the network group "Volunteers. Stavropol Krai": "To be a volunteer is to do important and meaningful things for people. The ability to share our time and experiences can change the world we live in (Volunteers. Stavropol Krai, 2014, <https://vk.com/wall-68795694?offset=0>). If you have free time, you want to help people, animals, nature, you want to make new friends, tackle problems or just have at least some occupation, become a volunteer. To be volunteer is great because we are friends and light up each other's useful ideas. Good deeds are fun! Stay with us!» (Volunteers. Stavropol Krai, 2014, <https://vk.com/volonters26>).

Such "grass-roots" volunteering with no clear organizational structure is usually a small community of activists who support a specially created group (mostly in social networks "VKontakte" or "Odnoklassniki") and are engaged in the distribution of civic activity in order to assist people in need. An administrator's statement of the community "Club of Volunteers" (Rostov-on-Don, Stavropol), posted in "VKontakte" network can serve as a vivid example of that sort of activities. It says you can help in several ways: dissemination of information on the Internet, thus attracting even complete strangers to participate in promotions; collection of necessary things for children (in accordance with enclosed lists); visiting orphanages and shelters to entertain children and help them to adapt in the future independent life (Volunteers Club. Rostov on Don, https://vk.com/topic-33661657_25755359).

The foundation "Food for life" (Rostov-on-Don) has its own page in "VKontakte" and operates in a similar way. Its highest activity occurred in 2015–2016, when the activists of this organization were helping the needy population of the Luhansk People's Republic. Another Rostov-on-Don Foundation focused on volunteers' help is "Help Children". Its main coordination activity is implemented through VKontakte network. Administrators initiate collection of funds and necessities, organize volunteers' participation in actions providing assistance to children. The foundation reports show that during the last two years it has actively assisted nine orphanages of the Rostov region and Krasnodar Krai.

Similar network platforms are also engaged in civil and patriotic activity of Stavropol Krai. In particular, the largest number of entries have been made in the network group "Volunteers. Stavropol Krai" opened in March 2014. Its characteristic of a platform that posts information for all citizens seeking to provide selfless and voluntary support for those in need. This platform is actively used by both ordinary volunteers and volunteer groups, who declare already done things and are looking for like-minded people to implement the planned projects.

The largest volunteer organization in Crimea is "The Good of the World – Volunteers of Crimea" established in October 2015 (Charity Foundation "The Good of World – Volunteers of the Crimea», <https://volonterykryma.ru/about>). This organization represents a volunteer movement phenomenon: having arisen as an element of civil society on the initiative of a small group of citizens, it currently combines several units in different cities of Crimea and has three active network platforms ("VKontakte", "Facebook" and "Odnoklassniki"). The volunteer organization carries out a variety of activities: 1) support, socialization, education, support of children deprived of parental care, prevention of



orphanhood; 2) collection containers, storage of things for the needy, comprehensive assistance to families in distress; 3) assistance to hospitalized children, fundraising, charity events; 4) popularization of donation, mass donations, actions; 5) social events for a variety of leisure: #PicnicDobra, #ParkKino, #ArtPerehod, #PrichalDobra, #AvtoKvestRespubliki; 6) clean-ups, improvement of public places, eco-events, sports, healthy lifestyle; 7) assistance nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, leisure activities, classes, patronage. In regional communities in the South of Russia the most common type of informal civic and patriotic practices is social charity. An especially high number of charity organizations, mainly of interregional nature, operate on the territory of the Rostov region. Their names indicate the nature of their activities. The most active, having their own websites, financial reports, instructions on activities, are: charity foundation "Benefit to Children", "Charity Foundation Named After the Holy Great Martyr Anastasia Uzoreshitel'nitsa", charity foundation for children with oncohematological diseases "DARINA", non-state charity children foundation named after Grand Duchess Elizaveta Feodorovna Romanova, charity foundation for children "Good Deed", charity foundation to support children in distress "Mother's Hands», children charity foundation "Power in Good", Charity Foundation "St. Nicholas the Wonderworker to Help the Needy", charity foundation for the protection of abandoned babies "I am without a mother", youth project "Donors of the Don", Rostov public organization for children with autism and down syndrome "Special children", Rostov regional public organization "Rostov Without Drugs", Rostov regional public organization of disabled people "Center for Medical Pedagogy and Social Therapy "SveCha". Similar organizations operate on the territory of the Stavropol Krai: charity foundation "Humanitarian Group "Angel" (<https://angelbf.ru/glavnaya/otchyoty>), charity foundation "White angel» (<http://angelfond.ru>), charity foundation "Save the Childhood» (<http://detstvo26.ru/indexx.html>).

There are significantly fewer charitable organizations in the national republics due to their religious specificity, which leads to greater social solidarity and family mutual assistance in Islamic communities. The peculiarity of charitable organizations here is that they are often created on an ethnonational basis and do not have an interregional character. Thus, in Kabardino-Balkaria there is a charity foundation "IKH'SAN-الرحسان KBR", which positions itself as a "group to help the poor and orphans" and carried out its activity exclusively within in Kabardino-Balkaria (<https://vk.com/public92681309>).

Currently, the charity movement in Crimea is experiencing some difficulties. During 2014–2016, dozens of charitable organizations were closed in the Republic due to lack of funding. That was connected with the fact that the majority of charity projects in Crimea before its reunification with Russia had been carried out by funds of US and Western Europe charity foundations. At present the population of the peninsula is self-organizing in order to restore the charity movement. In 2017–2019 such foundations as "Blagotvoret's", "We are Sevastopol Citizens" and "Rainbow for Children" actively participated in charity activities in Crimea. The peculiar feature of Crimean charity is its orientation not only on helping sick children, people in distress, the elderly, orphans, but also on enhancing the infrastructure of the Peninsula in order to improve the quality of life of the local population, as well as to increase the tourist attractiveness of the region. In this regard, the charity foundation "Heritage of Crimea" is illustrative. Its purpose is "to create a comfortable tourist infrastructure of Crimea with the help of volunteers and benefactors, which are local residents, tourists, vacationers – all those who love Crimea in all its diversity and seeks to



improve this fertile land on their own." In 2018 this foundation, bringing together charity and volunteering, started the project "For Clean Crimea-2018" (Charity foundation "The Heritage of the Crimea", <https://vk.com/naslediekryma>).

In general, this kind of desire to unite charity and volunteering is typical for many organizations of Crimea, because the peninsula, due to its special territorial location, has all necessary resources for involving young people in civil activities in order to provide mutual assistance and change living conditions. This resource is equally interesting for the residents of the peninsula and citizens of other Russian regions, especially students, traditionally free in the summer months due to the vocations in higher and secondary educational institutions. A less common type of informal civic patriotic practices in regional communities is environmental organizations activities, which involve mostly older citizens. The specific feature of these organizations activity is that the state does not show much interest in it. In addition, against the background of extremely low level of environmental awareness among the population and state administration, environmental organizations are the most vulnerable objects of pressure from the authorities, because they do not have broad support among the public (Dudin et al., 2019; Pechancová et al., 2019). In Rostov region there is an Ecological and Educational Organization "Order". The founders of this organization are the Joint Stock Company "Rostovvtorpererabotka" and an initiative group of citizens. The project is implemented with the information support of the Education Department of Rostov-on-Don. The organization was created to "promote sustainable lifestyles and develop a culture of resource saving and sustaining environment in the city of Rostov-on-Don and Rostov region". It performs the following tasks: "1) building and strengthening eco-friendly culture in society and increasing social activity; 2) improvement of environmental conditions by preventing paper and plastic waste from entering the environment and their involvement in economic turnover; 3) environmental education and information of the population, as well as adaptation to innovations in waste management system; 4) creation of conditions necessary for developing the habit of resource saving and optimization in local areas within the city of Rostov and the Rostov region» (Order, <http://civil-society.donland.ru/Default.aspx?pageid=155734>). In 2015 the environmental organization "Rostov – the City of the Future" was established to promote separate garbage collection. Now its scope of activities includes improving environmental thinking and environmental lifestyle.

In the Republic of Crimea there is a "Crimean center of ecological well-being", the purpose of which is to protect "nature and living creatures, preservation and restoration of nature and cultural heritage of mankind, physical and spiritual health of people, ensuring nuclear and environmental safety, sustainable (balanced) development of living beings and humanity" (Crimean Center of Environmental Well-Being, <https://vk.com/kcebru>). In 2014 the Republican environmental organization "Clean coast" Crimea" was established in Crimea. Its purpose is to organize public actions in order to attract public attention to the environmental situation on the coast, as well as the organization of environmental volunteer movement ("Clean coast" Crimea", <https://www.facebook.com/groups/chisto/about>).

In the Republics of Adygea and Kabardino-Balkaria the public organization "Environmental Watch for the North Caucasus" is considered the most influential. The main focus is to prevent activities of business structures and state (municipal) authorities that can cause serious danger to nature (Environmental Watch in the North Caucasus,



<http://www.ewnc.org/node/5682>). Since 2016 it has experienced difficulties, as it was included in the list of foreign agents. However, under the public pressure, the organization was removed from this list. In Stavropol Krai the highest activity is carried out by the public organization "Ecological Patrol" created in 2009. The main directions of its work are: 1) cooperation with economic subjects of the city of Nevinnomyssk (enterprises and organizations), participation in development and adopting ecological programs, working out specific recommendations for the enterprises and the organizations on carrying out environmental recommendations; 2) creation of information database on reliable information on environment status of the city of Nevinnomyssk and damage caused to the health or property of citizens by environmental violations (Environmental Patrol, <https://vk.com/public174320982>).

One of basic types of formal civic patriotic practices in regional communities is the activity of human rights organizations (Schouten, 2019). An autonomous non-profit organization "Public control" (<http://твойконтроль.рф/ок>) has been functioning in the South of Russia since 2006. It provides services in the field of citizens' rights protection. A regional human rights public organization for the protection of constitutional rights of citizens "Rostov human rights center" was established in 2010 (<http://твойконтроль.рф/гpc>). These organizations, affiliated with public authorities, function through presidential grants. They are engaged in monitoring the work of law enforcement agencies, protection of rights of citizens in distress (including in places of detention), providing free legal advice, legal education, increasing public confidence in law enforcement agencies. Human rights organizations in regional communities in the South of Russia that are not affiliated with state authorities and funded by foreign funds have recently been recognized as foreign agents and self-destructed. In the Republic of Crimea the situation with human rights organizations is special. On the peninsula, on the one hand, there is a "Human Rights Committee "Matter of Honor" supported by the official authorities" (<https://www.facebook.com/affairofhonor>). On the other hand, new human rights groups, operating as network communities, still remain and are being created. These anti-Russian groups, registering under foreign domains, proclaim their operation on the territory of Crimea. One these network groups is the Crimean human rights group. Its functions are broader than those of the network community, as it actually operates as an information agency whose purpose is "to promote the observance and protection of human rights in Crimea by drawing wide attention to the problems of human rights and international humanitarian law on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula, as well as the search and development of mechanisms for the protection of human rights in Crimea» (Crimean human rights group, <https://crimeahrg.org/about>).

Conclusions

State patriotism in Russia is focused on national pride and provides people the feeling of a great country citizens. However, it lacks citizenship, that is the desire of people to actively participate in the social affairs. Therefore, today in regional communities, in particular, in the South of Russia, there is a shortage of grass-roots civil activity associated with work for the benefit of society. At the same time, the level of civic patriotic consciousness is constantly growing in regional communities. Civic patriotic practices are gradually covering the most active part of the population, contributing to the solution of common social problems in the regions.



In the regional communities in the South of Russia civic and patriotic practices related to volunteering, charity, environmental and human rights activities appear as the most developed. Today the volunteer movement should significantly be attributed to the formal civic patriotic practices, supported "from above" by state authorities. Since the year 2018, declared as "The Volunteer Year", the activity of volunteer organizations, mostly created by state or municipal authorities, directly or through the administrative structures of educational institutions, have become widespread. This year the legislation was amended to create a legal basis for the development of volunteer movement in Russia and its cooperation with public authorities. The government of the Russian Federation has developed "The Concept for the development of volunteerism (volunteering) in the Russian Federation until 2025". The problems of state financial support of the volunteer movement were also solved to some extent. In the regional communities in the South of Russia "grass-roots" volunteerism continues to function as informal civic patriotic practices, being developed in the process of self-organization of citizens. Young people, in particular, using Internet resources, mobilize the civil potential of citizens in order to provide assistance for people in need.

In regional communities in the South of Russia the most common type of informal civic and patriotic practices is social charity. The largest number of charity organizations of an interregional nature operate in the Rostov region and Stavropol Krai. In national republics there much fewer charity organizations, due to their religious specificity, which leads to greater social solidarity in Islamic communities. The peculiar feature of the Crimean charitable organizations is their focus not only on social assistance, but also on improving the infrastructure of the peninsula in order to improve the quality of life of the local population, as well as to enhance the tourist attractiveness of the region. In regional communities in the South of Russia a less common type of informal civic patriotic practices is environmental organizations, involving older citizens. This is due to the fact that the state does not show much interest in this activity. In addition, against the background of extremely low level of environmental consciousness of the majority of the population, as well as representatives of state and municipal authorities, environmental organizations are subjected to constant pressure from these bodies, often associated with business interests.

One more type of formal civic patriotic practices in the regional communities in the South of Russia is the activity of human rights organizations, closely associated with public authorities and functioning mainly through presidential grants. Recently, a number of human rights organizations, recognized as foreign agents due to their financing by foreign funds, has sharply decreased in the South of Russia. The study of civic patriotic practices in regional communities in the South of Russia shows that they cover a small proportion of the population due to the insufficient development of civil society and the ethnic-paternalistic mentality of Russians on the one hand, and the lack of the necessary institutional and financial conditions on the other. As an exception in this regard serves volunteering, which has recently become the matter of Russian state policy.

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