

Chapter 6

The Thesaurus Concept of Self-determination of Youth in Life: Socioeconomic Aspects



Snezhana V. Yavon, Maria P. Pavlova, and Tatiana N. Ivanova 

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6.1 Introduction

The system approach assumes the presence of important elements?the personality characterized by a multifaceted structure and the environment in three time periods (i.e., present, near future, and distant future). This approach helps to understand human behavior. There is a close relationship between personality and environment that cannot be identified and opposed but depend on each other and condition each other?s existence, activating the essence of each. An intrapersonal development and a person?s behavior are conditioned by internal factors. Personal behavior is influenced by goals, attitudes, motives, needs, values, and other components of the personality structure, which depend on the environment surrounding the individual.

The established contradictions cause the formation of self-determination of the younger generation. On the one hand, these contradictions have a traditional nature of education and socialization affecting personality development. On the other hand, they represent a contemporary set of possible solutions.

In choosing the place and path in life and realizing personal goals, each person is responsible for fulfilling his or her choices. L. N. Kogan wrote, ?The starting point for the creation of one?s own life is choice because it involves finding one?s own ways and means of life creation? (Kogan, 1998). In searching for themselves and their

S. V. Yavon
Volga State University of Service, Tolyatti, Russia

M. P. Pavlova · T. N. Ivanova (✉)
Togliatti State University, Tolyatti, Russia
e-mail: IvanovaT2005@tltsu.ru

paths, the subjects learn to identify themselves and evaluate their personality, actions, and attitudes toward life. Thus, a person builds a "self-concept" with its subsequent development and implementation as the main value of the personal system. According to I. M. Ilinskiy, "The creation of the self is an act preordained by the past. The search for the self is always tied to the present because it is only in the present that we exist" (Ilinskiy, 2011).

Scholars of different disciplines interpret the term self-determination in different ways. The scientific community focused on youth studies indicates that self-determination is shaped by politics, family, personal development, religious attitudes, stereotypes, morality, success, financial and economic status, and more. In this regard, the definition of self-determination in one term implies different content. From a sociological perspective, the Encyclopedia of Sociology identifies the term self-determination from three positions:

1. The subject's understanding or determination of its own nature or basic properties;
2. The conscious act of identifying and asserting one's own position in problematic situations;
3. The right of a nation, a people, etc., to determine their own form of government without outside interference ("Self-determination," n.d.).

The Concise Psychological Dictionary interprets this term very narrowly and specifically—"the conscious act of revealing and asserting one's own position in problem situations" ("Personal self-determination," n.d.). In general terms, self-determination is "a person's search for his place in the world."

Decomposing the word self-determination, we get the prefix "self," which can be found in other words (e.g., self-development, self-affirmation, self-expression, self-observation, self-regulation, etc.). Thus, the prefix "self" corresponds exclusively to personal activity, proper without anyone's help on one's own initiative.

The problem of youth self-determination is at the origins of sociological science. Sociologists A. Comte (Podvoisky, 2002), E. Durkheim (Dubitsky, 2005), Sorokin (1992), and others were more interested in professional self-determination, tending to the empirical nature of the research on this issue rather than theoretical. Cherednichenko and Shubkin (1985) were the first to study and develop the methodology for researching self-determination in life, expectations, and future directions of the younger generation. The developed methodology aims to explore the important points (related to professional choice, employment, and adaptation in a new team) in the lives of young people completing their university education and embarking on a new life path. Since the end of the twentieth century, theoretical research in the field of youth self-determination has become known due to the works of Nemirovsky (1989a, b), Rutkevich and Filippov (1970), Chuprov (1992), Grigoryev et al. (2006), Titma (1992), and others. The formation of the individual as a part of society is elaborated in the studies of Blinov (1975), Sak (1985), and others.

Many Russian scientists have studied life issues and problems of self-determination of the younger generation. The research object included the questions

of goal-setting, life plans, and their realization, and the culture of life with its principles, morality, spirituality, and values. Matulenis (1983), Rutkevich (2002), Titma (1992), Cherednichenko and Shubkin (1985), and others have investigated the entry of young people into society, the consequence of which was the development of the concept of life plans. Studying the issues of self-determination, V. A. Yadov developed the dispositional theory of personality. Korzheva (1976) and Naumova (1988) investigated the individual's behavior. Lapin (1997) focused his research on the life values of the younger generation. Markov (2010), Simonova (2008), Zakovorotnaya (2010), Trubina (2018), and others studied the issues of socialization and social identity and tried to conceptualize an understanding of self-determination of young people in life. In Western science, clinical sociology, the concept of life trajectories, applied methods of personality behavior research (projective and biographical), and the concept of strategic action is widely known (Self-determination of youth in life,? n.d.).

It is known that each stage is important in its essence throughout a person's life. S. L. Rubinstein's theoretical teachings on the life directions of young people point to the importance of actual attitudes of an individual. The scholar identifies three types of personal life attitudes: attitudes toward the object species, attitudes toward others, and attitudes toward oneself. The internal process characterizes the relationship mentioned above, which indicates the interdependence between personality and life. S. L. Rubinstein believes that a person is responsible for his or her actions and deeds, which are conditioned by the way chosen to deal with problems (Rubinstein, 1973).

Sociologists identify other human attitudes of prevailing importance in society (attitude to religion, attitude to the country, attitude to property, attitude to labor, attitude to family, and attitude to nation).

It is also important to examine the individual's life strategy. According to the doctrine developed by Abulkhanov-Slavskaya (1991), life strategy implies the ability of a person to independently plan and build his or her life path, overcoming three issues:

- Deciding on the right direction, approach to life, techniques, and periods of goal attainment;
- Resolution of life difficulties related to the desire or its lack to solve them;
- Solving life issues through a creative approach, self-realization of life through a value-based approach.

The researcher focuses on the interaction between the individual and society. For example, it is critical to understand how one gives of his or her strength and abilities and works to receive and consume the necessary reproduced benefits of society. It is also essential to study how socially teachable a person is and how their thoughts converge with society. That is, a person must be able to find his or her place in the system of diverse social relations.

K. A. Abulkhanov-Slavskaya believes that the living environment of the subject depends on the conditions created by society. Therefore, it is crucial to learn how to interact with society by incorporating norms, rights, values, and thinking to navigate

social conditions. A person can determine personality traits and the nature of behavior and form his or her aspirations, requirements, and goals only when he or she is aware of his or her place in life and role in society. Taken together, this makes it possible to realize what role the individual plays in society, how society influences or uses the individual, depriving a person of individuality and personal opportunities, or whether the individual takes full advantage of social benefits (Abulkhanov-Slavskaya, 1991).

According to D. I. Feldstein, the effectiveness and thoroughness of personal self-determination and the formation of consciousness and self-consciousness are especially expressed at a young age. The researcher notes that the consideration of ontogenetic development through the prism of social movement provides a search for new reserves of personal formation and opportunities to optimize the educational influences of various social institutions while highlighting and considering the presence in the development of periods of special openness of the growing person and the internal readiness to accept these periods and ensure self-realization in them (Feldstein, 1995).

D. I. Feldstein believes that self-determination is revealed at the moment of manifesting one's opinion and position on problematic issues with an initial decision of existential or pragmatic nature. According to the scholar's theory, the result of self-determination is the focus of the subject in a particular direction in accordance with the active resource and individual abilities, as well as the ability to independently carry out the personal natural and cosmic purpose.

Studying the structure and mechanisms of the independent formation of personality, some scholars indicate that self-determination is a period in the life of each person, which passes independently in relation to some areas of life. Safin and Nikov (1984) argue for the importance of the structure of objective social relations. K. A. Abulkhanov-Slavskaya explores the self-determination of the individual, pointing to the dependence of individual conditioning on society, predetermining their place in society (Abulkhanov-Slavskaya, 1980). Within the subjectivity and objectivity of social reality, we can note that the self-determination of young people is marked with both the continuity of generations (i.e., the acquisition of new social experience) and the creation of a new generation and social experience.

Self-determination in life is formed when an individual has the opportunity and the ability to independently develop moral foundations and principles, relying on them during life. There is a direct correlation between the assertion of self-determination in life and its successful outcome in human life. Nowadays, there is a problem with the successful assertion of self-determination.

Creativity and the possible potential of an individual with certain ideas about the meaning of existence expressed in the subjectivity is directed in a particular vector. Meaningful orientation of humans is aimed not only at the value aspect used in practical activity but also in forming the personal behavior. A certain worldview of the essence of life is built by each person individually when persons determine the subjective knowledge of nature, others, and themselves.

Therefore, the semantic reference point of the life process is some unconscious mechanism of influence on the personality. D. N. Uznadze and his followers developed a structure for this understanding of the meaning of life (Uznadze, 1961). In

his theory, D. Uznadze determined the basic social attitudes of the individual by the term "set," as certain prescriptions for personal behavior, as opposed to the term "attitude" used by Western sociologists and understood simply as social constructs.

Thus, we get a chain of connections?value orientations consist of "sets" (basic social attitudes), which include socially fixed "attitudes."

There are similarities between the concepts of social attitudes developed by Zdravomyslov and Yadov (1965) and Uznadze (1961) in terms of understanding the connection between attitudes and value orientations. Value is the object of value orientations with a sign of social belonging. Therefore, the attitudes of the individual began to be studied as social concepts. Studying social attitudes and values, scholars argue that there are attitudes with attributes of material and spiritual culture of society, which are the basis of value direction. From a scientific point of view, the presence of a life purpose implies meaningful ways to achieve these purposes. The achievement of the goal requires a factor that directs and conditions the motivation and actions of the individual in the social environment. Hence, the obvious social values observed by the individual, which are summarized in value orientations (Surina, 2008).

Turning to the history of sociology, we should note that values were already of interest in the early 1920s. W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki introduced the concept of "attitude" as a social construct. M. Smith, K. Hovland, G. Allport, and others studied social values and attitudes through the prism of social psychology. The works of R. Merton and P. Lazarsfeld present views on the stability of values and social attitudes and the reasons for influencing their change and formation.

Tolstova (2005), Batygin (1977), Deviatko (2020), Leontiev (1997), and Andreeva (1994) devoted many years to studying social attitudes and values of individuals, groups, and society. L. Thurstone (Pochebut, 2012) developed a mathematical method in the form of standard measurement scales based on the principle of paired comparison of respondents' answers.

6.2 Methodology of Empirical Research

In Russian sociology, there is a discourse about the possibility of using qualitative methods (e.g., observation and in-depth interviews) to study social values and attitudes. The works of Kozlova (1996), Voronkova (1994), Meshcherkina (2002), Semenova (2002), and Malysheva (2002) present theoretical views, approaches, and methodology of studying social orientations.

The essence of life with the possibilities opening for each individual includes learning about life and the formation of value orientations. A young person needs to plan for their life prospects and meet them. With the rapid pace of innovation and society, a young person must make a meaningful choice about his or her life direction. Society challenges young people to make their choices responsibly, despite the obscurity and uncertainty of the immediate future. Certainly, aligned life plans contribute to the prospective development of the person's future. Moreover, aligned life plans

are the basis for the purposeful motivation of actions formed based on predictive abilities. However, in the current realities of social development, it is impossible to plan for the long term; the question of the need to solve this problem arises. This problem has been raised by many scholars, including Abulkhanov-Slavskaya (1991), Kon (1972), E. P. Avduyevskaya (Sobkin, 1993), Arakantseva (1999), Ginzburg (1994), Dubrovina (2019), Nemov (2020), Markova et al. (1983), Chesnokova (1977), and others.

The following foreign and Russian scholars studying life plans of individuals are well known: Abulkhanov-Slavskaya (1991), Prikhozhan (2007), Lisovsky et al. (2000), Chuprov et al. (2001), Sardzhveladze (1989), Kon (1984), Golovakha and Kronik (1984), Allport (2012) Zimbardo and Leippe (2011), Golovakha (1988), Kovalev (1965), Aseev (1976), Cherednichenko (1985), Zubova (2002), Semenova (2002), Ilinskiy (1999), Ikonnikova (1989), Tolstykh (1984), Mudrik (1991), Maslow (1999), Grekhnev (1985), Cottle (n.d.), Reznik and Reznik (1995), Viliunas (1990), and others.

Thus, theoretical concepts, theoretical views, and empirical research on life plans, social attitudes, and values have formed a certain scientific paradigm. This paradigm is used to study the life perspective and the personal configuration of each person's future.

6.3 Results

Planning of life prospects includes worldview attitudes about the meaning of life and the value orientation of the individual. These factors together are the basis of self-determination in life. When active, processes of goal-setting directly affect the formation of life plans. Self-determination at a young age is justified by the prospective position of finding life goals, social attitudes, and values, followed by the decision of their successful outcome. Behavioral patterns, technologies, and means of behavior are a mechanism for implementing life plans in certain areas of life.

Nowadays, the time interval of transition from primary to secondary socialization is increasing, which affects the process and intensity of self-determination. Self-determination eventually ends with the self-determination in and the appropriation of social attitudes, norms, and rules (i.e., social subjectivity). Self-determination in life is considered part of social subjectivity.

Due to their age, young people have the potential and opportunities to realize their life plans. Current networks increasingly occupy a privileged place of hierarchy in everyday life. Reasoning about hierarchies and networks, one can vary the development and outcome of self-determination of young people in life.

The thesaurus concept of self-determination of youth in life includes the following provisions:

- Self-determination of young people is a process of purposeful self-organization of personal life through a conscious system of life meanings, values, and goals, as

well as the development of life strategies and tactics. Elements of the structure of self-determination of young people in life are life meanings, value orientations, personal plans, goals (value-sense bases), and behavioral practices;

- The mechanisms of self-determination of young people in life are identification (identity matrices), social construction, and projection of reality;
- The principle of ordering the diversity of value and meaning foundations of self-determination of young people in life and providing orientation trajectories in life activities is the triad 'own'/'other'/'alien'. This triad corresponds to the allocations 'value'/'non-value'/'anti-value,' 'current practices'/'irrelevant practices'/'unacceptable practices,' 'immediate social environment'/'distant social environment'/'farther social environment';
- Along with the basic hierarchical structure, the network structure of values and semantic foundations of self-determination of young people in life and their behavioral practices is actualized, corresponding to the traditional and innovative (Yavon, 2012).

Individually, the elements of the complex structure of personality formation include knowledge, comprehension, experience, and skills, which, in fact, are the self-affirmation of young people.

Jacques Lacan developed a model of the three elements (the level of real, the level of imaginary, and the level of symbolic). The developed model explained the psychoanalysis of the personality based on Lacan's understanding of language. The real includes unconscious content. The imaginary expands knowledge about the environment and, most importantly, about the self. The symbolic creates sociocultural norms and values in the unconscious level of personality. Social representations can be correlated with knowledge, value orientations'with understanding, and the practical activity of mastering the social and material'with skills and ability. The intensity, activity, and distribution between these elements directly affect the formation of self-determination in life.

The basic component of social representations is knowledge gained through the senses. The systemic encoding of time and space contributes to the formation of a symbolic structure that includes codes of emotion, temporal space, corporeality, practical activity, social communication, and values.

The interpretation of social knowledge is paired with the level of social values, indicating an element of understanding. At this stage, the effectiveness of the social experience of individuals in practical activities is important. Semantic variations on social time and space are essential to the understanding of social values in the process of the formation of personality.

The self-determination of individuals and groups depends on how social time is mastered and managed. Every social group is socially dynamic. Each social group evaluates and interprets the past, the present, and the future in its own way. The variation in the direction of each group differs in meaning: some are concerned with generational continuity, others with striving for the new and innovative, while others are content with the present day.

As a system, social space consists of the diversity of the composition of society, which is differentiated by national, ethnic, religious, professional, demographic, age, and other characteristics. The system is supported by political, religious, and cultural norms. The system is marked with inequality in power structures and divergence in the way of life and the rules of conduct. The diversity of social space is due to the variability of patterns of social groups and actors.

The value orientations of the subjects condition the behavioral action, that is, show the skills and abilities. Social representational systems (i.e., knowledge) determine the meaning of societal values.

6.4 Conclusion

The modern information society dictates its conditions to the symbolic element?general meaning is gone, there is a correlation between gender, status, and role; the role of a person as a subject and his or her orientation in the external environment increases.

The main features of the new thinking are as follows (Sak, 1985):

- Not the reproduction of knowledge but the ?production of own knowledge?;
- Opening of new opportunities for self-realization of self-potential (insight);
- Metamorphic cognition?the ability to see the connection between opposite things and a vision of the common and the particular in their interaction;
- Contextual awareness;
- Nonlinear understanding of causality;
- Considering the world as a text;
- Noospheric vision of the mind-biosphere connections.

Thesaurus resources are realized as facts of understanding. The way young people will behave during their self-determination in life will determine social reality.

It is necessary to note that the conditions set by society in the construction of personal life plans contribute to the formation of an independently created personal strategy. The implementation of an independent personal strategy is possible with a dynamic and proactive life activity that focuses on individuality. Active behavior implies new opportunities and perspectives in further acts, which conditions the creation, organization, and rational construction of self-determination in life. The constant innovative implementations force people to constantly work, think, and adapt to the external conditions of existence and the social environment in which people find and develop themselves. The contemporary world is characterized by individuality and the creation of independent planning for each individual?s personal existence.

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