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**Adolescence, risk and difficult life situation: the construction**

**of social problem**

*For the last decade there has been a growing interest research of adolescence in difficult life situations. This study is in line with social constructivist approach to adolescents. In this article, adolescence is analyzed from the perspective of social constructivism. Adolescence is considered as a construct that is in the plane of various scientific, media and public discourses. The article presents an analytical view of constructing the image of "difficult teenager" in context of public space, media and scientific discourses. However the contemporary sociological discourses regarding adolescence discussed in the article The key findings of the article is the identification of the concept of "adolescents in difficult life situation", based on an analysis of current discussions in the Russian and foreign studies. The study contributes to social constructivism theory.*

**Подростковый возраст и трудная жизненная ситуация:**

 **анализ социальной проблемы**

*На протяжении последних лет вырос исследовательский интерес к изучению подростков, находящихся в трудной жизненной ситуации. В данной статье подростковый возраст анализируется с точки зрения социального конструктивизма. Подростковость рассматривается как конструкт, который находится в плоскости научных, медиа и государственных дискурсов. В статье представлен аналитический взгляд на процесс конструирования образа подростка, раскручивания и детерминации в публичном пространстве проблемы «трудного подростка», а также рассмотрены современные социологические дискурсы относительно подросткового возраста. Целью данной статьи является выделение концепта «подростки, находящиеся в трудной жизненной ситуации», на основании анализа актуальных дискуссий в российских и зарубежных исследованиях.*

**Keywords:** *аdolescence, constructionism, youth at risk, difficult life situation, delinquency.*

***Ключевые слова:*** *подростковый возраст, конструктивизм, молодежь группы риска, трудная жизненная ситуация, делинквентность.*

Currently, the problem of defining adolescence becomes relevant. Youth is seen as an ambiguous phenomenon, which is difficult to give a precise definition. Adolescence is defined as a complex social structure. This structure is interpreted differently depending on the territorial, ethnic, nationality. The phenomena of crisis, the dangers attributed to adolescence. Processes unwinding image «problem» adolescents give birth to a whole galaxy of discourse where adolescence is understood as a social problem. Problematical age is determined from the positions of the different approaches: in the media, the academic literature, legislative initiatives, targeted programs of the federal and regional levels. Research interest in this article is connected with the analysis of adolescence as a "created reality" from the perspective of the constructivist paradigm, especially foreign and Russian scientific practices, evaluation of concepts difficult situation of adolescents.

If the age is a social problem, a constructed reality, many of the processes that correlate with age problem can be opened with the help of constructivism. Kitsuse and M. Spector define a social problem as the activity of political nature nomination requirements. This is represented in the form of interaction between social groups. Social circumstances that cause the greatest controversy between groups reinforce social problem, and the object of disputes becomes a design [1]. From the point of view by Schutz, abstraction and idealization are the characteristics of structures, which is a form of ideas about the world [2]. That is an idealized concept of the age and the phenomena associated with it. The dichotomy of "childhood" and "adulthood", which is characterized through adolescence, and constructed by the senses in the social reality, it becomes a key element in the analysis of numerous discourses foreign and Russians experience.

 The boundaries of adolescence are not uniquely determined in foreign sociological, psychological and medical research practices. In 1995, the US Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) published a number of documents, which provides guidelines for determining the chronological adolescence. The boundaries marked between 10 and 25 years [3]. Also, the US Census Bureau uses a different structure where a person with a completely different age parameters are defined as adolescence: 12 - 17 years old and at the same time from 15 - 19 years [4]. The Russian border adolescence determined by an average of 12 – 17 age old. Russian research in psychology defines the beginning of the crisis in the age of 10.6 years at 12 – 13. The stable period of development begins with 14 – 15 years. The transition to adolescence was marked boundary in the 16 - 17 years old. Thus, the psychological and medical approaches focuses on chronological age within that predispose for crises and growing process.

The sociological approach to the analysis of the concept of "adolescence" defines, firstly, this unstable period, and, secondly, the correct behavior issues are of the greatest relevance in this age [5]. The instability of this period depends not only on psychological and physiological characteristics, but also the fact that the adolescent has access to the children's and adult types of behavior in the same proportion. This phenomenon is a dichotomy of "child" – "adult".

Adolescence as a sociological structure located in a plane different approaches, definitions within modern sociology of youth. In 1904, Stanley Hall gives one of the first definitions of the concept of "adolescence", which is the stage define standards of conduct and their corresponding biological changes [6]. Parsons calls into question only the physiological characteristics of the adolescent and makes reference to the formation of a clear structural definition that defines the age boundaries of childhood and adulthood. Parsons notes the role of institutional structures that shape the status-role system is in this context and design stamps. [7]

An analysis of foreign scientific literature shows that there are a number of markers that differentiate childhood and adulthood among adolescents. The sociological approach divides teens into two parts: childhood and adulthood. "Maturity" is understood as a state of certainty and awareness. The following symbols correspond to markers that definition: exit parental control, education, full-time and financial independence. Childhood is a state of innocence and some sentimentalize [8; 9].

Thus, the social markers play a key role in determining the groups of young people who have not yet reached "adulthood", but can be combined children and adult behaviors. Adolescence acquires the status of a complex structure which involves the manipulation on the one hand the individual is considered as a child, and on the other as a full member of society capable [9]. That is why teens become the object of social control by the state and social institutions (Fig. 1). Tendencies and attempts to prevent the risk of manifestation of age are one of the features of social control. "The fear of youth" is accompanied by interference in the everyday practices of adolescents who are regarded as undesirable and illegal. Therefore, the construction of a teenager delinquency takes place in conjunction with the construction of age and meanings.

Education

Government

Family

**Adolescent**

Adults

Childhood

 Markers Markers

Protection, "the impact on the fate of" the role and involvement in education

social commitments, "adult" attitude to adolescents have committed a crime

Incapacity

Social responsibility,

Status of innocence

Changes in the social status (institutional markers)

*Fig. 1. «Continuum of adolescents»*

According to the definition of adolescence crisis, conflicts often occur with the regulation of social life and interaction with society. This phenomenon is interpreted as delinquency. Many teenagers have trouble with the law, but a relatively small percentage become criminal in the future [10]. Trends observed in the prevention and correction of adolescent delinquency to the use of the punitive approach of the state and the public [11].

Unwinding image problem of adolescence going on the media. Media, television and radio, programs are a source of information on the problems of young people for the majority of the members of a modern society. [12] If the TV analysis to take into account the reports of the young offenders are accompanied by a demonstration of the lattice, which is associated with a dangerous man. Media broadcast a statement that a young man or young person, who commits an offense, becomes a "socially dangerous element". In addition, a number of other anti-social phenomena attributed to the youth and adolescents.

Social control is not always the strategy of rehabilitation in adolescents. Abandonment, neglect, crime and anti-social practices inherent in modern Russian society, but modern state approaches are strictly regulated by law and prevention system. Many discourses in the domestic academic literature exists about the juvenile system in Russia. David Konstantinovsky noted that a clear framework for the prevention of child neglect and homelessness does not exist today. Many specialized rehabilitation institutions are based on psychological-pedagogical and medico-rehabilitation care centers for drug addicts. [13] Much attention is paid to the peculiarities of preventive measures in the private specialized educational institutions. Special subculture that promotes the transfer of delinquent norms of subculture in closed institutions. Contouring of clear boundaries between the public and the specialized agency of the results in the formation of social exclusion and the construction image-criminal adolescents [14].

In accordance with the analysis of the phenomena of risk concepts should be considered, which are used to determine these social groups in the foreign and domestic practices. In foreign practice, risk analysis overcoming adolescence adolescent perceived as a child and as an adult at the same time. Rhetoric risk analysis suggests that the concept of «youth at risk» is associated with a particular social threat or danger [15]. The analysis of foreign literature allows the authors to conclude that social institutions involved in risk management and «youth at risk». It takes the form of state control over young people and their behavior. Also, the concept itself is an attempt of the state to regulate the youth, age, youth and teenage practice and behavior. Young people from this perspective, it is understood as a complex construct that includes both children and adolescents, as well as various social institutions (family, government, education and the judicial system), data control subjects everyday practices of young people.

The Russian approach is contrary focuses on age criteria for the definition of children, adolescents and young people who are at risk category. Two main approaches exist in local practices that characterizes a child or adult markers behavior. Characteristics of childhood as a state of complete innocence suggests soft state pattern in relation to the prevention and correction with the use of the concept of 'child, who is in a difficult situation. Abnormalities in behavior perceived as extremely vital difficulties that the child is not able to overcome himself. According to the law, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. The difficult situation in life includes a list of the basic criteria: complex family and living conditions, health risks, stay in prison.

"Youth at risk" is another opposite concept, which also determines the age limits. The term implies the use of markers of adult behavior and its regulation. Definition by Klyuchareva and Trofimova is "not only the young men and women are part of this group, who previously committed offenses, but also prone to deviant in terms of social norms of behavior" [16, p. 418]. Also, according to local researchers, young people at risk are young people aged 14 to 30 years, which is the life and health at risk [16, p. 420]. Thus, if a teenager convicted of an offense, the use of the concept of "at risk youth" is assumed. This term has a different meaning content as opposed to «youth at risk» or «children in difficult situations."

Thus, adolescence and adolescence have been considered as a social problem in this article. Adolescence is a social construction, which is interpreted by the dichotomy of "child" - "adult". This interpretation is delimited different social markers. Manipulation of age, the use of either "childhood" or "adult" behavior markers with respect to adolescent creates an imbalance in relation to existing monitoring youth and education standards. To date, there are no clear concepts. Based on the analysis presented in the article, the authors conclude that in adolescents are considered from the standpoint of the dichotomy of "maturity" and "childhood" in most discourses. Accordingly, the different interpretations from the viewpoint of social constructivism concepts are "children in difficult situations" and "at risk youth". The concept of "youth at risk" is the fear of the state and involves the use of a rigid system of sanctions and control, as opposed to the concept of "children in difficult situations." Milder forms of social control and social responsibility standards typical for this term. The problem of relating the two concepts becomes relevant when the application of soft rehabilitation intervention is expected in matters of education and correction of such phenomena. Thus, the need to removal of a new concept. Thus, adolescents in difficult situations are those aged 12 – 18 years old, difficult life situation are related to training and education in special educational institutions; persons have been subjected to all forms of physical and psychological violence, which have a tendency to illegal and criminal behaviors. This concept allows a comprehensive look at the problem of adolescents in difficult life situation, both in terms of the official rhetoric of the state and the media, as well as the individual characteristics of the age, including various manifestations of delinquency.

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