WHAT’S GOING ON?
EXPLORING HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS’ CIVIC VALUES IN RUSSIA

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Abstract:
After the collapse of Soviet Union, Russian government proclaimed democratization of the whole education system. Neoliberal trends in the policy prioritized skills and competences needed for market economy, putting values education aside. Meanwhile, democratic values are core principles that support strong civic society. This article focuses on Russian high-school students’ attitudes with regard to civic values such as equity and rule of law, human rights, tolerance and cultural diversity, connectedness. Mixed methods research design with explanatory sequential approach was used for the study. Sample size is 200 high-school students from the Russian Far East region. The results obtained from questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and coding technics, respectively. Main findings show that students acknowledge civic values, but have problems to internalize them. This issue has resulted from the gap between what students are taught in school and what happens in reality. Also, students are inclined to favor individualism rather than collective good. Neoliberal practices have their failures. Though it is dominant ideology in the world, Russia has the ability to find its own unique way for building strong civic society. This study contributes to theory and practice of citizenship education in Russia. It gives quick overview of Soviet Union education traditions and current Russian educational policies. The findings help to understand of the current social tensions in Russia, and Russian young people’s attitudes towards the society and the world they are living in. It also helps us to see if Russian young people are ready to interact with other cultures and different social groups based on the principles of respect and equality.

Keywords: citizenship education, Russia, civic values, high school students

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1. Introduction

Values are individual dispositions, beliefs and motives that guide people in life and influence their behavior. In the same way civic values direct people within a society, making them realize they are part of something bigger than themselves. People’s civic values show their attitudes towards various social groups and phenomena and how they intend to interact with others.

This article analyzes high-school students’ attitudes towards civic values (equity and rule of law, human rights, tolerance and cultural diversity, connectedness). Attitudes are judgments or evaluations of ideas, beliefs, situations, persons, and so on, that can change over time (Schulz et al., 2016). One individual can hold contradicting attitudes at the same time. The core civic principles and values are equity and rule of law, tolerance, human rights and cultural diversity. These values promote mutual understanding and justice among people which is an integral part of strong democratic society.

Equity and rule of law mean that all have the right to fair treatment, everyone is equal before the law, and the law is consistent with international standards and human rights (Schulz et al., 2016). Human rights are norms framed by the contents of UN Universal Declaration of Human rights (UN, 1948). Tolerance and diversity are acknowledgement and acceptance of the range of people and viewpoints that exist within and across community (Schulz et al., 2016). Connectedness with community in this study means to what level students value their individual development and interests comparing to society interests.

Many studies have been made concerning political activities, especially connected with elections and voting in Russia. The concepts of patriotism and democracy in Russian society are also quite popular topics. Though these researches make a good contribution to the citizenship studies, they mostly have used quantitative methods and only involved people who are over 18 years old. So far there is lack of empirical studies on citizenship education in Russia, particularly describing ‘the new Russian citizen’ and involving school students. The school students are important to investigate because the formation of core civic values is occurring during adolescence, and the main changes in citizenship education have happened in school.

The main research question of this study is: what are students’ attitudes towards civic values (equity and rule of law, human rights, tolerance and cultural diversity, connectedness) and how do they constitute students’ image of the society they are living?

The findings explore the issues of citizenship education and values education in Russia and show the role of civic values and cross-cultural interactions within Russian society. They contribute to the understanding of cultural and social diversity, social interactions in Russia and its conflicting values. The results raise questions and give ideas that can be useful for further research on citizenship and values education. The study also presents the image of Russian modern society through the lens of students’ views.
2. Education legacies from Soviet Union

In 1929, Stalin proclaimed a new era in schools. New education reform was used as a tool to teach people according to communist policy and morality (Eklof, 2005). School education became compulsory for children over 8 years old. The whole experience of school was to contribute to creation of the communist person (Heater 2004). All the school system was under complete and direct subordination to the communist party. Experimental and innovative pedagogy was excluded from the curriculum. Classrooms were in authoritarian, disciplinary environment.

To create a responsible citizen moral, patriotic and political education occupied most of the curriculum (Counts, 1957). Communist theory provided material for education of citizenship. School programs emphasized the sense of patriotism, and the following sense of public duty and responsibility before Motherland (Bereday and Pennar, 1960). Students were to love their state and have skills to protect it.

Soviet education was characterized by total control of the government, political education for soldiers, propaganda through media, and youth movements under the communist party control (Heater, 2004). Young people were taught to appreciate and promote Marxist-Leninist ideology, and concepts of justice, honesty, friendship, patriotism and internationalism were taught according to communist morality (Zajda, 1980).

Extra-curriculum activities of students were also controlled by the party. The main purpose was to upbring children in the spirit of patriotism, communist life style, and mutual help in learning and labor (Mareuil, 1960). Three party youth movements had been established: the Octobrists, the Pioneers and the Komsomols. The Octobrists accepted children of age 7-10, where they taught social morality and prepared children for being the Pioneers. The Pioneers had children aged 10-15. They conducted and participated in various civic and social activities. The Komsomol were for young people, 15-28 years old. They were to promote the party and Marxist-Leninist ideology. Social pressure to join these organizations was very high. Really small portion of people didn’t join (Heater, 2004).

Stalinist education discouraged individual initiative or choice. Every teacher and student knew his or her place in a system. There was also big suppression of local languages in an attempt to establish a ‘New Soviet Person’ implicitly dominated by Russian culture (Eklof, 2005). By 1953, whether in Ukraine, Russia, Central Asia, or Moldavia, all schools looked alike, all textbooks were the same, and all teachers followed the same lesson plans.

The achievements of the Soviet school were considerable. First, it was effective in delivering full literacy. The Soviet regime also opened up greater access to all levels of education for women. (Eklof, 2005) Primary and secondary schooling were universal and compulsory. Education was completely free at all levels including the tertiary one. (Karpov and Lisovskaya, 2005).

So who was that ‘Soviet man’ raised by Communist party? Russian scholar Maxim Popov (2004) tried to describe main characteristics of a Soviet person. The core
principles of national identity were collectivism, spirituality, solidarity, social equality and justice, stability and optimism. The ideal soviet citizen was an honest worker, who is devoted to the ideas of Soviet state.

Spirituality and heroism in soviet people were characterized by self-sacrifice for better good of society, self-discipline, and self-education – all these expressed moral freedom of a man and self-control. Collective identity was based on shared values like comradeship, collective over individual values, welfare of society and respect for the rights of human. Collectivism fostered altruism, friendship and democratic relations among Soviet people. Young people in school were taught to have positive attitudes towards labor, to have political awareness and to participate actively in the life of society in order to understand how it functioned.

According to Popov (2004), Soviet person had inner contradictions: dependence on authoritarian system in life existed with enthusiasm for creation of new society. The concept of spirituality included the principle of living peacefully with different ethnic groups, their culture and customs. However, Soviet society didn't accept the ideas of consolidation with other ethnic minorities, which also led to the collapse of the USSR caused by international tensions.

On the one hand, Soviet identity was based on individual consciousness, creativity, enthusiasm, optimism, and immateriality; on the other hand, it was based on collectivism, indoctrination, dependence and suppression of personal freedom.

3. New Russia: from crisis to stability

In December 1991, the USSR ceased to exist and later Soviet regime was announced as a tragic mistake for Russia (Vaillant, 2005). For the whole Soviet generation it meant that all their lives were devoted to the false ideals. The loss of the framework for moral education worried Russian theorists.

The 1990s were the years of great social and economic instability and intense discussions over the new shape of Russia. Education needed to play significant role in transmitting experience, new knowledge, values and skills for people to adapt to the new life. New Russian leaders recognized that school could help in defining new order. Citizenship education could change the mood of the country and promote better attitude towards the state.

The whole country was in chaos. The new policy sought to discard all the Soviet features in society. People’s old values, beliefs and ideas were told to be false, and it brought apathy and disappointment among the citizens, because they came to realize that their whole generation was living in a lie (Karpov and Lisovskaya, 2005). The economy crisis in 1991 and 1998 in Russia led to closing of many factories and people were out of jobs and salaries (Eklof, 2005). It was the years of instability and uncertainty.

Another challenge presented to the new government was national diversity of the state. The USSR had a strong national identity called ‘Soviet people’ that united all the nationalities in the country. The experience in the Second World War, achievements
in space programs and being a citizen of superpower nation created a strong Soviet identity (Castells, 2004). However, now the government has to define who that new Russian man is, and how to unite all 200 different ethnic groups.

Representatives of Russian and foreign human rights organization notified about the crisis in the field of human rights and democratic institutions. Attempts to centralize the power in the government led to high bureaucracy, corruption and suppression of civil rights and freedoms (Lipman, 2006).

Instability and economic and government crisis during 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s created a big gap between the government and society, as well as among people themselves. Researchers indicate the decline of participation and interest in political and civic activities, and raise of social differentiation (Eliasberg, 2006). By the end of 1990s, researchers reported that Russian young people are too much affected by drugs and alcohol than before. There were indicators of psychological problems, violent behavior, aggression, poor health and family issues (Kerr, 2005; Eliasberg, 2006).

Educators believed that schools played a special role in teaching not only new skills and knowledge but also new values and attitudes that would support democratic society. Politicians called for humanization of education, promotion of universal human values, democratic and law-governed state principles. They supported diversity, choice and decentralization of the whole education system. Education was to foster individual development and self-realization and economic and social progress at the same time (Vaillant, 2005). School curricular placed humanities at the centre of educational programs.

By 2000, the period of radical changes in Russia has slowly come to an end. Nowadays, education in Russia aims to focus on humanistic approach in pedagogy and giving high priority to student’s interests and individuality (Eliasberg, 2006). And to achieve it, values education plays an important role. It leads to a better mutual understanding among people and contribute to resolution of conflicts.

The content of official documents on education is influenced by neoliberal principles, promoting human capital, which includes teaching skills and competences that can be applied in competitive market economy. Therefore, some official documents emphasize on the priority of fostering civic competences and skills, and putting values on the second place. Other scholars (Anikeev et al., 2004) argue that values education should be the key component of citizenship education. For example, people with excellent skills and competences guided by hatred can threaten the stability of society, whereas people with high values contribute to mutual understanding and peace. At the same time, knowledge and skills are necessary to form a successful person who will bring improvement in the world.

An official study guide on citizenship education (Kadakin, 2004) states that schools should nourish the atmosphere of mutual respect, open communication and

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respect for civil rights. As for citizenship education, it is to be based on tolerance, social stability and unity of all cultural groups.

Official letter from Ministry of Education of Russia “On citizenship education of students of general educational institutions of the Russian Federation” describes a citizen as an individual who has a formed system of democratic principles, as well as national and global values.

Another official document the conception "On the development of citizenship education in Russia" asserts that our modern society needs educated and moral people who can make independent responsible choices and bear the consequences. They should possess tolerance, and respect for others’ opinions, human rights, freedom, equality, and dignity. Educators need to help students to analyze different social situations and to express their feelings and emotions. Students should understand such concepts as justice, cultural diversity, human rights and freedom, democracy, etc.

In 2012, President Vladimir Putin issued a decree “The strategy of the State national policy of the Russian Federation up to the year 2025” emphasizing on cultural diversity of the state. The main goals for the national policy, mentioned in this document, are:

- Strengthening Russian civic consciousness and togetherness of multinational people of Russia;
- Preserving and developing ethnic diversity of Russia;
- Reconciliation among ethnic nationalities;
- Protection of human rights regardless of race, nationality, language, religion and others;
- Effective social and cultural adaptation and integration of immigrants.

With reference to written above, civic values are integral part of citizenship education and should compose the main core of every individual. Development of the society and its improvement are in hands of young people who have strong sense of civic values.

Russian society is still in transition. Acts of terrorism, ethnic intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination are still current problems in Russia. Russian leaders emphasize the importance of citizenship education as the main tool for building peaceful democratic society, and it should teach citizens to understand and accept the values of civil society (Vaillant, 2005).

Former soviet principles are being replaced by democratic global values, which, furthermore, affect the society. On the one hand, Russia preserves old ideas, customs, habits and ways of behavior, on the other hand, it adapts to new conditions, is open to new ideas and new ways of life. This society is controversial, where new and old are intertwined.

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4. Methodology

Mixed methods design has been chosen for this study to understand the phenomena better. While quantitative methods give general idea of the topic, qualitative methods can help to explain results in more depth. It complements the strengths and overcomes weaknesses of a single design. The study used explanatory sequential approach (Creswell, 2014) and proceeded in two stages. In the first stage students’ attitudes towards equity and law, tolerance, human rights and cultural diversity, connectedness with society were identified using survey, and following up with the second stage where they were interviewed in order to explain or elaborate why students had these opinions.

The total of 200 students filled the questionnaire and 20 of them were purposefully chosen for interview. The criteria for participating in interview were students’ differences in opinions, belonging to ethnic minority groups, and their consent. There were 118 male and 82 female students, grade 9th to 10th, aged 14 to 18 years, from two public schools. They study took place in January 2017.

The participants live in Khabarovskiy krai, Russian Federation. It is administrative, industrial, scientific, educational and cultural center of the Far Eastern Federal District of Russia. It is ethnically and religiously diverse region. Its economic development is of average level in the country.

The questionnaire begins with the researcher short bio, brief description of the study and the guarantee of the anonymity and confidentiality of students. Further it contains questions of students’ background (gender, age, year of study, ethnicity), and questions of their attitudes to civic values, using four-level and five-level Likert scales. The interview questions are based on students’ responses in questionnaire. However, the general guiding questions are: What social issues are you concerned of? What problems in the society you see? What are the reasons of these problems? What values do you have?

Data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and also t-test and ANOVAs to find any significant differences. Interview data were coded, categorized to produce themes and give better understanding of the study results.

5. Findings from questionnaire

A. Cultural/ social diversity, tolerance

Students were asked how the following statement described their personality and to rate it from 1 (doesn’t characterize at all) to 4 (absolutely characterizes):

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Table 1: Students’ perceptions of themselves as tolerant citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect other people/social/ethnic groups opinion, culture and traditions</th>
<th>Doesn’t characterize at all</th>
<th>Somewhat characterizes</th>
<th>Characterizes</th>
<th>Absolutely characterizes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.0 %</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result indicates that participants consider themselves as respectful people, who recognize cultural and social diversity (M=2.35, SD=0.92).

In addition students were asked to express their opinion towards the following statements, by choosing from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5):

Table 2: Students’ attitudes towards discrimination

| | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree (%) | Don’t Know (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree (%) | N | Mean | SD | Missing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | There is no discrimination by race, religion, gender or age in Russia | 16.5 | 20.5 | 24.5 | 17.5 | 20.5 | 199 | 3.05 | 1.37 | 1 |
| 2 | People should have the right to express racist views | 33.5 | 18.5 | 19.0 | 15.5 | 13.0 | 199 | 2.56 | 1.42 | 1 |

As can be seen from the table, students differ in their opinions about statement 1. There is no certainty whether discrimination takes place or not in Russia. If to remember that most of the students (83.5%) describe themselves as tolerant people who respect diversity, the results on statement 1 from table 2 show that if to consider the whole society in general, attitudes may differ.

Participants are more likely to disagree with statement 2 (M=2.56, SD=1.42). This sentence could challenge some of the students’ understanding of freedom of speech. Should we give right to speak freely to those who express racism? It is called “paradox of tolerance” explained by Karl Popper (1945), who stated that if the society is tolerant without limit to those intolerant, it would lead to disappearance of tolerance. If intolerance has no rational argument, the society should be ready to defend its tolerance.

B. Human rights

Table 3: Students’ opinions on human rights

| | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree (%) | Don’t Know (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree (%) | N | Mean | SD | Missing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People should obey a law even if it violates human rights | 44.0 | 19.5 | 14.5 | 11.5 | 10.0 | 199 | 2.24 | 1.38 | 1 |
Students acknowledge human rights and think that the law should not violate them (M=2.24, SD=1.38).

C. Equity and rule of law

Table 4: Students’ attitudes toward refuges and equality before the law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 People who were not born in Russia but live here now, should have the same rights as everyone else</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Everyone is equal before the law</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refugees and immigrants challenge the conventional understanding of citizenship. They are the marker for what defines the outsider and what defines the insider (Malkki, 2002). Students show high tolerance in the results of the statement 1 (M=4.36, SD=1.05). They also agree that in just society everyone should be equal before the law (M=4.41, SD=1.07).

Table 5: Students’ attitudes towards the conflict of values and laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values and moral principles are beyond those of existing laws and conventions</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked whether values and moral principles were superior to existing laws, with which they were likely to agree than disagree (M=3.32, SD=1.15).

D. Connectedness with community

Table 6: Students’ attitudes toward individualism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Don’t Know (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual development is more important than obligations to the society</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results show that when it comes to individual interests students’ response is close to favouring individual development (M=3.75, SD=0.99).

In addition, with t-test I analyzed whether students’ attitudes significantly differ by gender. Female students score higher than male students in the following statements:
Table 7: Significant comparisons by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect other people/social/ethnic</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups' opinion, culture and traditions. t (198) = -3.428, p = .001, p &lt; .05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People, who were not born in Russia but live here now, should have the same rights as everyone else. t (197) = 3.480, p = .001, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is equal before the law. t (197) = 3.862, p = .000, p &lt; .0</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides, by using One-way Anova there was found a significant difference among students’ years of study and their attitudes on the statement (fig.1):

E. People should have the right to express racist views
F(2,196) = 4.39, p = .014

Figure 1: Comparing means among students’ grades

6. Findings from the interviews

During the interview, participants were asked to share their views and perceptions on cultural and social diversity, human rights, law and equity, and other social issues. Some students acknowledged the need for mutual understanding and tolerance:

“I think we need to understand each other, and we shouldn’t blame other people if they have different point of view.” (#73)

“I don’t like to humiliate people or be arrogant.” (#11)

However, when students talked about other people, not themselves, they pointed out hostility and intolerance. There was a disintegration of the society:

— See Interviews List at the end of the article.
“People cannot communicate with each other properly. There is no respect.” (#10)

“People are angry or arrogant. They don’t care about others; they don’t want to help people they don’t know. It’s sad.” (#11)

“Sometimes I hear kind of jokes about my nationality (I’m Tatar), or I see people make fun of others also based on nationality (gypsies, Azerbaijani). It is mostly coming from children. Adults also can have prejudices about it. Sometimes on the street adults can treat a person differently if he/she has another nationality.” (#76)

Likewise, when students talked about their understanding of human rights, they said:

“Human rights and freedom should be valued.” (#75)

In contrast, when they talked about the situation in reality, it was different:

“…freedom of speech, media freedom, and freedom to express your own opinion… but it’s not real. Because many laws that have been issued recently, contradict our constitution and freedom of speech.” (#73)

Students saw conservatism in Russian mentality as the reason why people abuse law:

“I think it’s a historical tradition, and our Russian mentality is different, not that democratic. We cannot exercise our rights properly. We always look for loopholes in the law to use it to our advantage even if it violates human rights.” (#75)

“… [there are] lack of education, and desire to stay in the past and not to move forward, conservatism.” (#73)

Interview participants showed an inclination to obey the law, because of fear of punishment. It pictured their society as a place where the law was superior to values and morals:

“I think the law is something that we need to obey and not contradict. And we should also follow values and moral principles… we should agree with them… but if you violate a law you can go to prison or be punished somehow. And as for moral principles and values only your consciousness judges you.” (#10)

Students favored individual development and their personal interests opposing to the society interests. They said that not only themselves but also other people concerned with their personal advantage:
“Because I think that I’m more important to myself than other people. If I have a choice to do something for me or for society I would choose myself. I’m a bit selfish.” (#73)

“…people are not concerned with each other problems. They only think of themselves and don’t care about others.” (#58)

7. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the questionnaire show that students are tolerant and respectful to others’ opinions and views, social groups, cultures and traditions. They want equal and fair treatment for refuges. In addition, female students reported even higher level of tolerance than male, which is consistent with the findings from International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (Schulz et al., 2016). Students acknowledged law and human rights, indicating that they prefer to live in democratic law-governed state. Also, the higher year of education of the students the more intolerance towards racism has been expressed by participants. This can be the result of education they’ve received. With each grade, they become more sensitive to ethnic and cultural diversity in the country.

45.5% of respondents have put moral values above laws, while 20% have disagreed. Nevertheless, in the interview students have shown obedience to authority, by saying they needed to obey and not contradict the law, even if it against moral principles. There was a study conducted by American social psychologists Stanley Milgram (1963), where he investigated the phenomena of obedience. The results of the experiment were shocking because 65% of the participant were willing to obey, even knowing that their actions were not humane. Civic values and moral principles are criteria of what is just and what is equal. They must be supported by civic virtue and good citizenship. Banks (2008) differentiated citizens by those who has mainstream established knowledge, and support popular dominant power relationships in the society. Mainstream citizens don’t challenge laws and conventions, but maintain existing social and political structures. In contrast, transformative citizens actualize and promote values and moral principles, and they are ready to take thoughtful action and challenge existing laws if they are unjust. Transformative citizens fight inequality within their community, country and the world. That’s why the ultimate goal of teaching should be to create transformative citizens.

The difference in students questionnaire results and interview can say that students aware of moral values but they haven’t internalized them. One of the main reasons why it happens lies in the gap between what is taught in school and the reality. Children are taught high values and morals but when they interact with outside world, they realize that our society is controversial.

During the interviews, when students talk about the society they live, they often repeat such phrases as ‘people don’t care’ or ‘no one wants to help others’. The chaos and instability in 1990s have led to insecurity, xenophobia, indifference and coldness among people. Powered by neoliberal trends, which have penetrated into all aspects of
human life, it has caused more alienation among Russians. Prioritizing on human
capital framework in education, students acquire skills and competences needed for
competition in market economy. However, competition leads to desire of only personal
benefit, envy, and lack of trust. Trust is the basic element of social capital that maintains
robust democratic society (Putnam, 1993).

Neoliberal features in government policies and alienation among people are the
reasons why students favor individualism (comparing to collectivism values in the
USSR). The nature of neoliberal man is self-centered egoist who does things only for
own benefit (Hobbes, 1963). Students see selfishness in the society, precedents of
inequality and unfair treatment.

Russia is in the process of establishing its own image. Students notice the society
desire to hold to old traditions and conservative ideas. At the same time neoliberalism
has shown its failures, and cannot be relied as the only way out. Soviet education
emphasized on moral values and promoted civic virtue, conversely, nowadays priority
is given to knowledge and skills. Neither of the approaches needed to be superior,
rather than every aspect of education should be taken into account. We need to rethink
and re-elaborate our policies and priorities, which can be the topic for further research.

The study has been conducted in the Far East region of Russia and cannot
represent the whole population. Any research in different contexts (place, nation,
participants’ age, etc.) can get different results, not consistent with the current findings.

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Appendix: Interviews List

| Respondent #10. | Interview took place on January, 18, 2017. Gender: female  
Ethnicity: Russian  
Age: 15  
Year of study (grade): 9th |
| Respondent #11. | Interview took place on January, 18, 2017. Gender: female  
Ethnicity: Russian  
Age: 15  
Year of study (grade): 9th |
| Respondent #58. | Interview took place on January, 17, 2017. Gender: female  
Ethnicity: Russian  
Age: 16  
Year of study (grade): 10th |
| Respondent #73. | Interview took place on January, 16, 2017. Gender: female  
Ethnicity: Russian  
Age: 17  
Year of study (grade): 11th |
| Respondent #75. | Interview took place on January, 16, 2017. Gender: female  
Ethnicity: Russian  
Age: 17  
Year of study (grade): 11th |
| Respondent #76. | Interview took place on January, 16, 2017. Gender: male  
Ethnicity: Tatar  
Age: 17  
Year of study (grade): 11th |
WHAT'S GOING ON? EXPLORING HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS' CIVIC VALUES IN RUSSIA