

## Great Patriotic War: on the crossroads of views of past and future Russian generations<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *This article presents the survey results of Russian students and schoolchildren regarding historical memory. 1,885 schoolchildren and 10,065 students were interviewed during the project. The fieldwork was conducted online and the research was completed in March 2020, on the eve of 75th anniversary of the Great Victory. The results of the online survey allow us to declare the influence of gender, educational and age factors to patriotic attitudes of the respondents. The term patriotism is used as one of the key words for the analysis; it is featured as a polysemantic conception of the worldview and ideological attitudes of the Soviet people during The Great Patriotic War and afterwards of contemporary youth. The article is focused on individual as well as general historical memory, concerning every young person who tries to comprehend this historical event. The answers of respondents allow the drawing of conclusions concerning the worldview of Russian adolescents and an indication of the influence of common history and various agents of socialization on their worldview.*

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1 The article examined results of a study undertaken in February-March 2020 under the leadership of the Russian Society of Sociologists involving 1,885 (96.5%) Russian schoolchildren (grades 8-11, age 13 to 17, 56% girls and 44% boys). The questionnaire of the research entitled “Students about the Great Patriotic War” conducted by Russian Society of Sociologists, was used as the basis of the toolkit (Russia and other countries). In 2020 the target group included 10,065 students of Russian universities (97.4% of respondents were students from 18 to 24 years old, comprising 61% young women and 39% young men). The survey became an integral component of the research initiated by a team of enthusiasts, like-minded people of the Russian Society of Sociologists under the leadership of Vishnevsky Yu. The study of schoolchildren included filling out an online questionnaire, the link was sent to the addresses of schools and posted on social media. Approximately 10% of respondents were interviewed traditionally, by filling out a paper version of the questionnaire. The study of students included an online form of methodology.

**Keywords:** *The Great Patriotic War, historical memory, generations, adolescents, youth, patriotism, volunteer activities, self-construction.*

**Sommario:** *L'articolo presenta i risultati della ricerca su adolescenti e studenti russi relativa alla memoria storica. 1.885 adolescenti (13-17 anni) e 10.065 studenti (18-24 anni) furono intervistati nel corso del progetto di ricerca. Il lavoro sul campo venne svolto online e la ricerca venne conclusa nel marzo 2020, in occasione del 75th anniversario della Grande Vittoria. I risultati della ricerca online ci permisero di individuare l'influenza dei fattori di genere, istruzione ed età sugli atteggiamenti patriottici degli intervistati. Il termine patriottismo è utilizzato come una delle parole chiave per l'analisi; esso è caratterizzato come una polisemantica della visione del mondo e un atteggiamento ideologico del popolo Sovietico durante della Grande Guerra Patriottica e poi dell'attuale gioventù. L'articolo è focalizzato sull'individuo oltre che alla generale memoria storica, riguardante ogni giovane persona che cerca di capire questo evento storico. Le risposte degli intervistati permettono di trarre le conclusioni relative la visione del mondo degli adolescenti e di indicare l'influenza della storia comune ed i vari agenti della socializzazione sulla loro visione del mondo.*

**Parole chiave:** *La Grande Guerra Patriottica, memoria storica, generazioni, adolescenti, gioventù, patriottismo attività di volontariato, auto-costruzione*

## **Introduction**

The radical changes which have taken place in Russian society during past three decades have entailed the transformation of traditional social institutions, including the sphere of education. Personality constructions occur through the life process but it is necessary to mention that the years in school and university are extremely important. During this period the ways of communication of young people with the wider world are founding, elaborating and transforming, their social roles are forming and their civil position is being established. Social memory as a phenomenon of social consciousness, which is seen as a foundation of any social community, also becomes a subject of social transformations.

The issues of the Great Patriotic War are closely connected with Russian history. Many ideas have been discussed in social literature. Others still need to be analyzed. Among these, as part of the topic of historical memory considered in the article we were able to highlight the issue of the historical memory of the most important social group – youth.

According to Piotr Sztompka's theory of social change, the social processes may take place at three levels of social reality, and each level of individual or mass consciousness is characterized by specific values<sup>2</sup>. The survey conducted among the senior schoolchildren on the eve of 75th anniversary of the Victory Day may show the factors that can have an influence on the social well-being of youth.

How true is the suggestion that during turbulent times, youth and adolescents become apolitical and indifferent to their historical past? What is the significance of the victory in the Great Patriotic War for modern Russian adolescents.

### **Great Patriotic War in the focus of schools**

The article is focused on the search for the answers, based on the data from a sociological online-survey of schoolchildren. Why do we try to explore the issue of historical memory, seen by schoolchildren, over and over again? This concern is far from being something new. What should it give to us as researchers?

Adolescents usually do not have their own opinion regarding political events, they mostly express the views of their social environment. Thus, the question is what does the environment transmit to schoolchildren? Are the material culture holders influencing the historical memory of the individual? The research conducted may provide an analysis of this problem and give answers to these numerous questions, highlighting the specific features of the civil socialization of modern adolescents.

One of the goals was to investigate the relation of Russian high school children to the theme of Great Patriotic War. Survey results show that the interest in the events of the heroic past stays permanent. Most contemporary

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<sup>2</sup> Piotr Sztompka, *The Sociology of Social Change* (in Russian), M.: - Aspect Press, 1996 – 416 p., p.43.

young people consider the issue of the Great past of the country to be personally very important (Table 1).

Table 1. Do you agree with the statement: “The Great Patriotic War was a long time ago, I’m not interested in it”?

Options	Schoolchildren (%)
Disagree	70
Partly agree	25
Agree	5
Total	100
Number of cases	1,885

The complete analysis of any subject seems impossible without an interest and focused attitude to the theme. Some part of the high school participants answered that they are not interested in the events of The Great Patriotic War and the fate of people who lived during those times, i.e. for every twentieth respondent the knowledge about their historical past is not emotionally colored. If we suggest that feeling, as a unique emotional disposition, may motivate one action or another, then the distribution of respondents’ answers to the following question appears to be extremely important (Table 2). The survey of schoolchildren was carried out as a part of The Russian Society of Sociologist monitoring, which enabled us to provide comparative data despite the quantitative difference in the arrays of the *respondents*<sup>1</sup>.

Table 2. “The 75th anniversary of Victory Day approaching. What does this date mean to you?”

Options	Schoolchildren (%)	Students (%)
The feat of older generations, their dedication and love for the Motherland will be the example for new generations	56	50
Over the years, the memory of the war is increasingly erased in the minds of new generations, it is overshadowed by other events and problems	18	24

Memory of the past war remains in the minds of my peers	18	17
Heroism and self-sacrifice during The Great Patriotic War are becoming alien to a large part of young people	8	9
Total	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	10,065

“The feat of older generations, their dedication and love for the Motherland will be the example for new generations” appeared to be a most popular answer regardless of the gender and age aspects of the respondents. “Memory of the past war remains in the minds of my peers” was ranked in third place. For answering a question on behalf of others (peers of the respondents), a person needs to communicate with them and discuss the actual theme. In a possible future we will realize that such communication with peers on the themes connected with Great patriotic War is not a priority, that is why the views about “opinions of friends” are quite vague.

Comparing the pool of answers to the question “What do you feel on the eve of 75th anniversary of the Great Victory”, we can underline the insignificant difference. Nevertheless, schoolchildren more often than students replied that “the feat of older generations, their dedication and love for the Motherland will be the example for new generations”.

The schoolchildren more often note the importance and relevance of the heroic memory, the exploits of older generations, believing more often than the students in the good example of future dedication and love to Motherland. It can be argued that the theme of war and historical memory of ancestors appears to be more significant for the high school respondents due their close connection with the influence of family and the school. By contrast, the students are more independent and experience the search for their own life strategies. It can be assumed that nowadays the disruption in the patriotic education of youth appears to be between high school and university.

We can also assume that the results of the civic and patriotic education of modern schoolchildren appear to be sustainable quite rarely.

## What is the source of historical memory?

Positive attitudes towards the preservation of the historical memory of the Great Patriotic War are extremely significant as the emotional part of memory. What are the sources of this knowledge, how are they transmitted? (Table 3)

Table 3. “From what sources did you get the knowledge regarding the Great Patriotic War?” \*

Options	Schoolchildren (%)	Students (%)
Teachers	73	77
Stories of relatives	71	65
Soviet movies	66	66
School textbooks	57	74
Meetings with veterans	43	43
Soviet documentaries	41	43
Fiction	38	43
Contemporary movies	37	35
Contemporary documentaries	31	28
Internet forums	30	19
Talk shows on TV	12	10
Scientific research	7	10
Memoirs of generals, participants in the war	7	9
University professors	2	28
Other	2	11
Number of answers	517	559
Number of cases	1,885	10,065

\* Due to the fact that each respondent could give multiple answers at the same time, the amount is more than 100%.

First of all, the answers are to be found in the stories of relatives and teachers. It should be noted that over the past three decades the focus on a patriotic upbringing has neither left nor returned to Russian schools. At the same time,

the family as previously remains the main source of information about the Great Patriotic War, although its influence is seen more by schoolchildren than by students. It was not a surprise for the researchers. Schoolchildren stay with their parents and students mostly live far away from their homes and families. Soviet so-called “classic” movies about the Great Patriotic War are highly valued by both groups of the respondents. It means the movies were produced before 1991. The next position was occupied by school textbooks and the interesting fact is that students placed them higher than did schoolchildren. Possibly, university education does not actualize the Great Patriotic War theme as prominently as schools.

Meetings with veterans as the source regarding the Great Patriotic War were ranked fifth by both students and high school pupils due to the reduction of these meetings in recent years. Obviously, fewer and fewer veterans may participate in active social life, discussing their experiences and the events of the heroic past. Specifically we shall investigate the role of fiction. It has always been one of the key sources of knowledge about war. Nowadays students place a higher value on fiction as a reservoir of knowledge compared to high school pupils.

Are young people keen to read more and more? It is a plausible hypothesis. Sociologists whose research subject is reading behavior remark that “nowadays in modern schools literature lessons have decreased, extracurricular reading is not popular, the culture of reading among pupils and their reading literacy are not forming correctly and their understanding of fiction is quite weak”. Nevertheless, the researchers conclude that modern school possibly performs its function on preserving and transforming the historical past<sup>3</sup>

Thus, on a par with the family, where the most important components of memory are formed, alongside teachers, on the basis of the school curriculum textbooks, fiction, programs of patriotic education and the school’s socio-cultural activity on the education of the modern citizen and patriot show a significant impact, forming attitudes to the memory of the Great Patriotic War.

Answers to the question “With whom do you usually discuss The Great Patriotic War theme?” reaffirm the previously noted hierarchical order of recei-

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3 Chudinova V. P., *Reading activity of children and adolescents in 2017: the opinion of children’s librarians* / / Sociologist psychologist in the library: Collection of articles and materials, Issue XI/ Russian State Library for Youth; Ed. – comp. M. M. Samokhina. ., 2018: 100.

ving knowledge. In the first place are teachers and professors. The next group is the senior generation (grandmothers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers) and only afterwards – parents. This theme does not register much popularity among friends' conversations. Representatives of this age group discuss other possible subjects and issues.

Gender also differences have to be noted: young men more often than women discuss the Great Patriotic War with friends (10% of respondents compared to 5% of female respondents), but the amount of those who do not talk about the War at all is also bigger (18% male against 11% female respondents). Various reasons may be attributed to this. One of them is the institutionalized opinion that “war does not have a female face”. Some other research shows that male respondents are the bigger fans of computer games devoted to war themes compared to females. Every seventh schoolchild never discusses war issues (which means here that he never expresses his own opinion).

We are far from overestimating the school's role; we appreciate the role and efforts of the schoolteachers and lessons of history regarding the formation of historical memory. A modern schoolchild spends a significant part of his daily life at school. Therefore, the events and reactions of school routines play a huge role in the forming and shaping of the self-identification of future citizens. During lessons of history, literature and extracurricular socio-cultural activities teachers have the opportunity to show their position towards the Great Patriotic War events. Their civic position influences the historical memory of the future generations. It must be noted that most teachers cope with this task quite successfully, and the results of research demonstrate this evidence.

However, the fact remains the same: the further in the past the event is, the less its significance for the next generations. The teacher of history Leonid Katsva says: “Honestly, I do not see any tragedy in fact that each next generation knows less and less about the war. That is quite sad, but I do not consider this is as tragedy, as it is a natural process”<sup>4</sup>.

Another question is how to relate to this pattern: to follow the flow or to resist it. Such an objectivist attitude of teachers decreases or removes the responsibility for attitude construction of schoolchildren regarding the Great Patriotic War.

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4 Ibid

We refer to Katsva's opinion again: "I remember the past and have to say that history textbooks or literature textbooks or any school textbooks at all never formed the knowledge or attitude to the War. Other sources formed the attitude: books, fiction and movies more than theatre, stories of grandfathers and parents, our *place next to apartments* where kids play 'Ours' (Russians) and 'Germans'"<sup>5</sup>. He is quite sure that school textbooks just formally introduce history to the schoolchildren.

Yevgenia Abelyuk, the teacher of literature argues: "Kids started to write me after I talked to them about the Great Patriotic War. The lessons inspired them so much that the kid began to tell the story of his grandfather. He taught Russian language in Adygeya (southern Russia), and a bomb hit the school, some kids died before his eyes. The grandfather still cries as he talks about it "The parents of other kids were killed in a train, as the train appeared to be mined".

"Most important, they start to write. For example: 'I like to listen to my grandfather, I feel his stories, understand them'. Another declares: 'My grandmother told me exactly what her mother, my great-grandmother told her about the war'"<sup>6</sup>. Stories told by grandmothers and grandfathers about the war as well as communication with other relatives make a big impression on children and adolescents.

Schoolchildren not only learn the details, but also have the chance to dive into the story of their ancestors, getting emotional experience. Undoubtedly, this may affect their relation to the homeland, whereby they appreciate the sacrifices of their grand-grandfathers and grandfathers for the sake of peace and future civilization.

### **To know historical memory or to act by preserving it?**

The self-assessment of high school youth regarding their knowledge about the Great Patriotic War from various sources of information is given in Table 4.

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5 Ibid

6 The Great Patriotic war through the eyes of schoolchildren (in Russian). The record made 10/05/2009. URL: <https://www.hse.ru/news/121696424.html>. Date of application 10.04.2020.

It is obvious that adolescents do not want to look worse than others do. Nevertheless, their self-esteem is quite indicative.

Table 4. “Do you think that you have enough knowledge regarding the Great Patriotic War?” Schoolchildren, (%)

Options	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Both genders (%)
Yes	20	30	25
Not really, I should have more, but...	48	34	41
Not really, but it is enough for me	26	32	29
No	6	4	5
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,056	829	1,885

Roughly every fourth respondent from high school considers his knowledge about the war to be sufficient. 5% of them were quite self-critical and acknowledged the inadequacy of their knowledge. It sounds natural that 10% more young men than young women suppose their knowledge to be satisfactory. Many more young women would love to know more, but... There is no surprise that the War theme is more thrilling for men.

Physiological and biological factors determine the behavior of maturing boys and shape their attitude to war through play, and upbringing from an early age forms man as a warrior and defender. Toys, especially cars, trains, constructors, toy guns, books about powerful and brave characters, different qualities and hobbies – all these items form conditions whereby a boy meets military games during early childhood. In later years, this knowledge about the art of war increases through computer games (their visual content). Girls and young women more frequently learn about war through real-life communication with those who can give personal information – grandmothers, grandfathers, teachers/lecturers. Furthermore, girls more often mention textbooks as a source of knowledge about The Great Patriotic War.

We can state the change of ideological priorities and the growth of a new population over the past years, when the patriotism became the national ideal and the feat of the Soviet people during the war is seen as the kernel of this

idea. Nevertheless, the number of participants in that war is precipitously decreasing in cities and villages. So-called communicative memory is becoming the public memory more and more, and it is forming through school textbooks, movies and the mass media.

### **Socio-cultural phenomenon or official boredom?**

Regardless of gender, the young generations believe that dedication and love to the Motherland and the feat of older generation will be an example for the young, but what is being done nowadays for the conservation of this memory? Do contemporary adolescents have the will and the energy to carry on this memory, to pass it on in the future? The number of Russians and residents of other countries which participate the Immortal regiment (also known as Memorial March) is growing annually. What are the assessments of the youth regarding this campaign (Table 5).

Table 5. Please indicate your opinion regarding the “Immortal Regiment” campaign

Options	Schoolchildren (%)
This is a good form of education in patriotism	66
The personal, family aspect is very important in this campaign	45
The campaign can be expanded, home front workers during the Great Patriotic War may be included into campaign	31
The campaign should also include participants in local wars and conflicts	14
Other	2
Too much officialdom and obligations are presented during the campaign	15
Number of answers	173
Number of cases	1,885

\* Due to the fact that each respondent could give multiple answers at the same time, the amount is more than 100%.

According to this research, more than 20% of high school respondents declare their will to participate in Immortal Regiment this year, they are sure that this campaign is a good form of patriotic education. Students, on the contrary, noted too much officialdom and obligations during the campaign (every fourth respondent).

However, the alternative opinion of high school students about the event in general is more positive than that of students. It is no coincidence that universities and students have always been associated with free thinking in the good sense of the term. Nothing that causes fear of restriction of freedom among students is considered unequivocally positive. It is easy to take advantage of this by presenting voluntary participation in the initiative as a forcedly organized event. While schoolchildren do not experience any public pressure when deciding to participate or not to participate in the action, since participation is decided as a family matter, personal. Thus, the memory of the people of the Great Patriotic War is constantly enriched and acquires deeper meanings, which is especially manifested in such a phenomenon as the “Immortal Regiment”, which has become nationwide.

### **Is it necessary to preserve the historical memory?**

There are material and non-material keepers and carriers of the memory of the Great Patriotic War. In addition to family relics, monuments to victorious soldiers, mass graves in Russia and abroad and other places of memory are considered to be material carriers. These objects of material culture – burial sites, memorials, monuments to heroes and soldiers, are preserved by the state as the evidence and the “echo of the previous war”.

Nowadays attempts to revise, rethink and to distort the role of the USSR in World War II leads to the fact that monuments devoted to Soviet soldiers have been demolished in various countries. What do the high school respondents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Victors’ generation think? (Table 6)

Table 6. Currently, monuments to Soviet soldiers are being demolished in a number of foreign countries. From your point of view, how should Russia react to this?

Options	Schoolchildren (%)
These countries are independent and free to do what they think. Russia shouldn't interfere.	44
It is necessary to reduce cooperation with these countries	29
Recently archives have been opened, many facts have become known that forced us to reconsider the role of the USSR in the World War II and the post-war period	11
Personally, I don't care	7
This is payback for the mistakes of the USSR in the post-war period	4
Other	4
Hard to say (I don't know, in any way...)	1
Total	100
Number of cases	1,885

Almost every second pupil thinks that it concerns the interest and responsibility of those countries where the monuments are situated. 29% of respondents support the idea of the reduction of collaboration with those countries. The proportion of uninterested respondents is quite high. Possibly, the explanation is that it happens outside the territory of Russia. Schoolchildren are more categorical on this issue than students. They more often support a reduction of cooperation with

other countries which have allowed the demolition of monuments to Soviet soldiers, and more rarely than students believe that those countries are free to do what they think and Russia should not interfere with this process.

The foreign policy issues and the borders of interference and non-intervention in other countries' actions on their territory in the field of historical memory are the fundamental indicator of the population's readiness to protect Russian interests in the framework of Europe and internationally. The question is how do adolescents assess the Russian government's actions regarding the preservation of monuments in Russia?

Table 7. Please, mark if enough attention is paid to the conservation of memory of the feats of soldiers, officers and home front workers in the Great Patriotic War?

Options	Schoolchildren (%)	Students, (%)
Yes	47	39
No	22	29
Hard to say	28	29
Personally I don't care	3	3
Total	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	10,065

Often the government's actions to preserve the memory of the heroic deeds of the people during The Great Patriotic War are assessed positively, although negative answers in combination with those who found it difficult to answer exceed the number of positive ones. This can be seen even more expressively in the answers of the students. At the same time, the number of students who found it difficult to answer is greater, and the number of those who believe that the Russian Government pays sufficient attention to preserving the memory of the heroic deeds of the people during the Great Patriotic War among students is much less than among schoolchildren. Students are more critical in their assessments of the Government's actions on the issue of saving memory than schoolchildren. One of the elements of preserving the memory of the heroic deeds of soldiers, officers and participants in the war is the direct preservation of burial areas in their hometown. When the question is asked specifically about the state of monuments and graves and burials during the Great Patriotic War in hometowns, the picture is different. There are significantly more opinions that these objects are in good condition. This is the answer of the majority of respondents among both students and schoolchildren.

### **The common and specific features in understanding the gender basis of patriotism**

The research of the Russian Society of Sociologists was aimed from the start at not only the past, but trying to gain a fresh perspective. In 2005 researchers

thought about the concept of patriotism and asked the question what it means for contemporary young people “to being a patriot of Russia”<sup>7</sup>.

In the present study of schoolchildren, the researchers have the opportunity to analyze the flow of two-dimensional allotments (by age and gender) towards the patriotic ideas and attitudes of high school respondents. Generally, in descending order, a patriot is someone who respects and knows the history of his country, feels proud of it, respects the veterans and soldiers of WWII, elderly people and the disabled, feels responsibility for the actual events in the country, is ready to make sacrifices for the country’s social interests, is ready to work honestly and conscientiously, participates in social and political life and does not avoid military service.

It should be underlined that we observe the same order of data in the survey conducted by Russian Society of Sociologists entitled “Students about the Great Patriotic War” since 2005. The same evaluations of such a definition as patriotism are presented in Table 8 (high school participants). To begin with, the Russian patriot must respect and know the history of Russia and must be proud of his country, regardless of the age and gender of the respondents.

Table 8. What does it mean to be a Russian patriot today?

What does it mean to be a Russian patriot today?	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male (%)
To respect and to know the history of Russia	68	73	61
To be proud of your country	59	63	54
To respect the participants of the Great Patriotic War, the elderly, the disabled	56	61	50
To feel a sense of responsibility for what is happening in the country	54	55	52

7 Abramzon M., Vishnevsky Yu., Ershov A., Ikingrin E., Pronina E., Ruzha V., Shapko V. Students on the Great Patriotic War // New Ark, Youth journal of publicism. 2005, №2. p. 8-13. (In Russian)

To be ready to make sacrifices for the sake of the country's interests	43	47	39
To work honestly and conscientiously	35	37	31
To take part in the public and political life of the country	30	30	29
Not to avoid military service	28	29	25
To be a volunteer	17	20	13
To follow traditional values in everyday life	13	13	13
Patriotism is an outdated concept in the era of open borders, the Motherland is where you feel at home.	13	13	14
To feel responsibility for your organization, city, country	7	5	10
To buy mainly domestic goods	5	4	6
Other	2	1	3
Number of answers	430	451	400
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

\* Due to the fact that each respondent could give multiple answers at the same time, the amount is more than 100%.

According to the female respondents, a patriot today can be called someone who is distinguished by sacrifice and willingness to help and serve people (47% of girls versus 39% of boys), patriotism among girls more often – 1.5 times – correlates with volunteering and a respectful attitude towards war participants (1.2 times). The position of activity and service to the country and people as a distinctive feature of a patriot is clearly seen in the responses of the girls. The image of the face of patriotism among boys and girls often does not coincide. Twice as many young men in high school as girls believe that a patriot is distinguished by a sense of responsibility in their organization, city and country. Also, young men more often than girls believe that “patriotism is an outdated concept in the era of open borders, the Motherland is where you feel good,” and they are more critical of the need for a patriot to serve in the army. The image of the face of patriotism among boys and girls often does not coincide. Twice as many young men in high school as girls believe that a patriot is distinguished by a sense of mastery in their organization, city and country. And

yet, such indicators as honest and conscientious work, taking part in the social and political life of the country, being ready to make sacrifices for the sake of the country's interests, not shying away from military service, being a volunteer – gain more answers than “patriotism is outdated concept in the era of open borders, home is where you feel good”.

It can be argued that the logical ideal model of a Russian patriot with an inclination to an active, practice-oriented character instead of a speculative understanding exists in the consciousness of the youth (Table 9)<sup>8</sup>.

Table 9. Can you consider yourself a patriot?

Can you express yourself as a patriot?	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male (%)
Yes	18	17	18
Rather yes than no	43	45	40
Rather no than yes	16	16	17
No	10	8	13
Hard to say	13	14	12
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

In summary, the majority of the respondents can call or can partly call themselves patriots (61%). That is quite significant number for Russian society. At the same time, almost every sixth and seventh pupil found it hard to determine. Uncertainty in a significant part of high school adolescents is a key feature for both females and males. In general, young men are less likely than young women to call themselves patriots.

8 Pronina E.I. The Great Patriotic War in the perceptions of high school students. In: Thanks to the great-grandfather for the Victory... Materials of the IV stage of monitoring Modern Russian students about the Great Patriotic War: collective monograph/ gen. ed. Yu.R. Vishnevsky; Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. - Yekaterinburg: Publishing House of Ural un-ty, 2020. - P. 311-323.

Table 10. How do you think those who voluntarily would go to war now would be...

If there were a war, how many people would go to it voluntarily.	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male (%)
Fewer compared to 1941	50	51	48
The same amount as in 1941	12	11	14
More compared to 1941	19	18	20
Hard to say	19	20	18
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

In the answers of adolescents to this question, the discrepancies are insignificant. Every second person believes that if such war happened today, there would be fewer people who voluntarily went to the front. This generation's self-esteem, perhaps, has nothing to do with the situation that would have been if... but, as forecasters and futurologists say, there is a phenomenon called a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words: a prediction that looks to be true, but in fact is not, but can significantly influence people's behavior. As a result, their subsequent actions themselves lead to the fulfillment of the prediction. R. Merton's position is interesting in this regard: "A self-fulfilling prophecy is a false definition of the situation evoking a behavior which makes the originally false conception come true". The common question was articulated as below (Table 11).

Table 11. Schoolchildren's opinion about the behavior of their friends in the event of a repetition of the situation of 1941

What would your friends do?	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male (%)
They would wait for state conscription into the armed forces	32	33	32

They would immediately enlist as a military volunteer	25	25	26
They would try to leave the country	17	18	16
They would try to find a job that would allow them not to serve in the army	15	15	14
Other	5	5	6
Hard to say	5	5	6
Total	99	101	100
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

It is argued that both young men and women have no special differences in their assessment of the potential behavior of their friends. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said regarding the participation in volunteering (Table.12)

Table 12. Do you participate in volunteering?

Do you participate in volunteering?	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male(%)
Yes	26	31	20
No	60	54	67
Hard to say	14	15	13
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

There are 1.5 times more female volunteers than male volunteers. What hidden factors are behind this discrepancy? Alongside female physical and psycho-emotional acceleration compared to male respondents, the orientation of women to voluntary movements is highly prevalent. Nevertheless, the data obtained require a deeper analysis.

### The better man: self-realization abroad or in the homeland?

Any kind of state needs citizens, workers and socially active individuals. What about young people's plans for further self-realization? Where and how would they like to be realized? The answer of high school students to this question is important for the formation of the state's social policy, taking into account the interests of the younger generation. That is, it should and will be the basis of the state in the near future. We asked a question about the plans of young people after receiving their education (Table 13).

Table 13. After graduation do you plan to live and work in Russia or try to go abroad?

Options	Both genders (%)	Gender	
		Female (%)	Male (%)
In Russia	44	45	42
It depends on the place where I will be offered a good job	29	27	32
Abroad	15	16	15
Hard to say	12	12	11
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,885	1,056	829

It is interesting to compare the data of the 2020 survey with the data of the survey of students in grades 8-11 of secondary schools, conducted on an interregional sample (Belgorod, Magadan, Nizhnevartovsk, Moscow region, Tver) in March-May 2007. In 2007, three out of every five respondents (59%) would not want to be born and live in a country other than Russia (20% would like to, 21% found it difficult to answer). Evaluating the data obtained, the authors (S.D. Lebedev and E.I. Pronina) noted: "This, in our opinion, is very indicative, given that all respondents were born in the first half of the 1990s and were brought up in the period of the deepest crisis of practically all moral guidelines.... when the values of patriotism were subjected to a particularly sophisticated attack. What is more, at the same time, Russia, objectively, unlike the 1980s, was by no means the best place to live in terms

of security, material well-being and self-actualization of young people”. Their conclusion was quite optimistic: “It means that in spite of everything, some still insufficiently studied deep resources and mechanisms of actualization of the most important values of the nation’s survival have worked”.

What has happened over the past decade to the self-determination of high school students regarding their desire/unwillingness to live and work in their home country? Less than half of the respondents to the 2020 survey answered that they plan to live and work in Russia. Significantly fewer (one in six) plan to live abroad, which is close to the answers of schoolchildren in 2007 about the desire to be born and live not in Russia, but in another country. Fewer students found it difficult to determine and express their opinion about their preferred place of residence after receiving education than in the 2007 survey. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in 2020 we included a position that received a fairly large number of answers, namely: it all depends on where a good job is offered. It was chosen by almost a third of high school students. Moreover, young men choose this option more frequently than young women do.

## **Conclusion**

In summarizing it is necessary to note the topicality of the gender aspect. Some researchers declare that human and moral values are more significant for women while economic values are more important for men. The research conducted revealed the following distinctive features and personal characteristics of youth during the preparations on the eve of Great Victory day and its memory conservation: young women are more active in volunteering, more often participate in discussions with their teachers and get more knowledge about the war than young men. At the same time, young women more often mark the necessity of knowledge about the war, participate in the festive and socio-cultural events, bring flowers to the Eternal flame and express a more active relation to everything connected with Great Patriotic War. Nowadays, in the modern socio-cultural environment, the civil training and socialization of adolescents happens rapidly. The first passport is issued to a Russian citizen at the age of 14. At the age of 16, with the prospect of a reasonable marriage young people can sign a marriage agreement, and

under certain conditions sign an employment contract. Besides that, from the age of 16 the Russian is a subject of full criminal liability (under the basic articles, liability starts from the age of 14)<sup>9</sup>. The main agents of socialization, such as the school, play the great role in a process of civil and political socialization of youth. A large body of psychological, sociological and pedagogical research illustrates the transformation of the system of values of contemporary schoolchildren during their education in high school. Adolescents are becoming mature, more independent, getting new knowledge about the environment. This influences significantly the construction of personal opinions and the prioritization of values.

We can also indicate the dynamics of opinions regarding the thoughts and feelings about the Great Patriotic War in senior classes. Only 16% of eight-grades and 14% of nine-grades agree with the consideration “the memory of the War is erased in the minds and hearts of new generations, because new events and problems become more important”. However, 21% of ten-grades and 23% of eleven-grades think the same as the youngest schoolchildren. The lack of the interest in this period is observed more often in responses.

During the transition from class to class, schoolchildren learn more about the Great Patriotic War, annually noting that they have enough knowledge regarding this event. Gradually, with age, schoolchildren have an increased tolerance of foreign countries’ negative actions regarding the monuments of Soviet soldier-liberators. Thus, eight-grades more often suggest the necessity of reducing cooperation with those countries compared to eleven-grades (37% vs 25%). On the contrary, 50% of respondents from 11 grade, against 40% of respondents from 8 grade suppose that Russia does not need to interfere in other countries’ actions, as these countries are sovereign and are free to do what they consider to be correct.

The meaning of socio-political values is growing and transforming during the transition from junior to senior classes. The requirement for a patriot to be ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of his country’s interests sounds more expressive as the time passes by. Growing up, adolescents become more prag-

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9 At what age can you vote in Russia (in Russian). URL: <https://okd1.ru/yuridicheskie-uslugi/s-kakogo-vozrasta-mozhno-golosovat-na-vyborah-v-rossii/> (ààòà íàðàùàíèÿ 1 ààðòà 2020 ãíàà)

matic in their evaluation of a hypothetical war situation: they consider that the number of military volunteers would be reduced, and lot of men would try to find a job not requiring joining the army. Mention should be made of a lag, that the difference between the ideal framework concept of a modern-day patriot and his hypothetical behavior in a war situation was observed. Nevertheless, we are quite far from being pessimistic. The older they are, the more often modern schoolchildren participate in voluntary activities, helping to solve numerous problems in the spheres of ecology, culture, health care, social policy, etc.

*In case of historical memory preservation, the quite radical outlook from the outside deserves attention. The French historian and Head of the Foundation for the Development of Russian-French Historical Initiatives P. Malinovsky considers that French veterans “do not receive such honor” as Russians: “In Russia people pay tribute to History! Everything that concerns the soldiers, the sacrifices, is very much remembered and cherished”. In France and in Europe this issue is not very important. The USA is also attentive to its heroes, but the level of propaganda differs there. In Russia, every family has its loss. During every war, Russia was devastated and destroyed but always appeared as the winner. And Russia always remembers to pay tribute to its veterans, its soldiers”<sup>10</sup>.*

In conclusion, the survey results underline that the new generation of young Russians (contemporary schoolchildren) with all their burdens and problems are making a worthy contribution to this common case of co-creation and co-remembering – the tribute to memory.

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10 French historian declares: the veterans are respected in Russia as nowhere else in the world (in Russian). URL: [https://news.rambler.ru/community/43644198/?utm\\_content=news\\_media&utm\\_medium=read\\_more&utm\\_source=copylink](https://news.rambler.ru/community/43644198/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink) 08.02.2020

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