

Fear as a Characteristic of Student's Social Feeling (According to Materials of Sociological Study)

Liudmila N. Kurbatova and V.N. Stegnyy

Perm National Research Polytechnic University, Komsomolskiy Ave. 29, Perm, Russia

Abstract: Social feeling of person reflects the level and character of social tension in society. Social tension creates both psycho-physiological fear and social fear. Social studies of students in 1996, 2008 and 2012 allowed detecting dynamics of occurrence of objective, subjective and socio-psychological character of social fear, its connection with living conditions of young men. The following point have been defined: influence of gender, type of dwelling and educational form on appearance of this social phenomenon in youth environment. All factors are grouped in the following way: the first group stands for institutional and regulative factors (state as social and political institute of power, legal culture and legal behavior, system of cultural and moral values of society); the 2nd group represents social and psychological factors (fear complex, uncertainty about the future, destruction of society's integrity); the 3rd group represents structural and functional factors (political and economical situation in society, role and place of social organizations in human's life); the 4th group represents individual and personal factors (family and the person himself). The main factor that "destroys" the feeling of safety of the person is in students' opinion of socio-institutional character. Analysis of fears' structure and character of social vulnerability allowed detecting social sources that cause the largest influence on social feeling of modern students. They include: present social circumstances, personal life experience of students, media. Fears that formed under the influence of economic and political processes in 1996 became less prominent at students in 2012. During the past period social fears moved to the area of personal life of the youth which is conditioned by switch in cultural and moral priorities in post-soviet period. Students realize that they need to "fight for their place in the sun" for themselves in conditions of stuff competitiveness not only on labor market but in personal life as well.

Key words: Fear, students, social feeling, social tension, social factors, social crisis

INTRODUCTION

Social feeling of the person is an indicator of social dynamics and economic changes that occur in the society. Social feeling affects the structure of social needs of people that had earlier been formulated by Maslow (2007). In such structure of needs social and personal safety stands detached. At the same time, social safety of closely connected with such social phenomena as fear, social tension, social instability, social anxiety, stress, social conflict, social crisis, social security/insecurity of the person. Within the context of studying "social safety" such social phenomenon as fear becomes especially significant. "Fear" is usually considered as a subject area of such sciences as physiology, psychiatry, psychology, social psychology, philosophy, pedagogic, ecology, etc. (Shubkin and Yadov, 1997; Toffler, 1998; Luman, 2004).

In sociology "fear" is analyzed through the lens of "social disasters", "social crises", "social conflicts", "social risks" (Shlyapentokh *et al.*, 1999; Beck, 1986). Scientific literature presents the notion "fear is one of the most powerful and inner emotions of humans" as an axiom (Savina, 2004). "Anxiety for the unknown and unexplained is deeply rooted in human consciousness, probably, on genetic level" (Shlyapentokh *et al.*, 1999; Beck, 1986). Thus, first of all fear is conditioned by human's physiology as a natural being, thus, fear is physiologically rooted in human beings and, that's why, it represents necessary natural attribute. However Human as "Homo sapiens sapiens" creates artificial medium for living, engages in social interaction with other people, that's why, fear may be conditioned by products of work of the human himself and the character of social relations. In sociology study of phenomenon of "fear" is related to "reaction of individuals and groups on traumatic changes in environment as an assessment of levels of threats of

existing in such environment” (Vitkovskaya, 2006). Thus, influence of human on the environment his role of a being that can not only create, but also to destroy brings socially conditioned objective and subjective factors to phenomenon of “fear”.

Classifications of “fears” are rather diverse and depend on scientific interests and priorities of investigators (Riman, 1998). Modern world practice detected appearance and development of so-called “era of fear” in the latest third of the 20th century. Subjective indices of this “era of fear” were presented by:

- Activation and expansion of community of people who take drugs, alcohol, energizers and tranquilizers, smoke cigarettes
- Growing number of horror films, thrillers and action films
- Increasing number of people who ask psychiatrists, psychoanalytics and psychologists for help
- Increasing number of suicides
- Growing feelings of “the end of the world”, apocalypse

We may also refer the will of people to leave active social lives and get beyond the world of virtual relationships to indicators of growing of “era of fear”. This process is furthered by the internet, breakdown of collective model of society into individual micro-worlds. Here, an important role is played by capitalistic model of society, withdrawal of a person which creates condition for formation of “Homo-eremita” (human hermit). Factors that influence this process may be of both subjective and objective character.

Thus, we are going to consider “fear” as emotional and sensorial reaction of a person on anticipated or already occurred social phenomena which possess socio-psychological and socio-physiological excitants. However, considering the fact that we refer ourselves to “social human” species, people feel not only biological fears and anxiety for one’s life but also feel anxiety for one’s destiny, one’s social present and future state.

Consequently, “fear” is a symbiosis of sociality and psycho-physiological state of the person. Social fear is person’s reaction on social conditions of one’s life. At the same time, one should take into account the fact that psycho-physiological fear may be “satisfied” in accordance with the character of satisfaction of biological needs while social fear in the process of social interaction of people is of constant character, i.e., fear is a “Socialis-Constant” (a social constant).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Structure of student’s social fears: Sociological researches made by the researchers in 1996, 2008, 2012 allowed detecting character, degree and level of incidence of fear as a social phenomenon that reflects the mechanism of formation of young man’s personality in conditions of modern Russia (Stegniy and Kurbatova, 2009).

Researches allowed detecting both institutional peculiarities which were formed in prior period of our history and define new institutional opportunities of modern stage of establishment of new model of social fears. In the process of adaptation to new forms of life the man feels fear as a natural emotional and sensual reaction of perception of social situation that is inadequate to previous conditions.

In this aspect young students, may consider to be a social group of the most social risk. Today, the personality of the young man is formed in conditions of “surrogate culture”. Besides, the absence of social experience and expansion of influence of various social institutes lead to dysfunction of social and psychological protective properties of the person.

We will try to define which factors favored localization of fear in subjective space of students’ personalities. For this purpose, let us examine, how institutionalization of fear was taking place in the period from 1996-2008. This will allow us understand the mechanism of formation of young men’s fear (Table 1).

Table 1: Manifestation of fear in young men and girls as social phenomenon (Percentage from the number of surveyed students in 1996 and 2012)

Nature of fear	Young men Girls			
	1996	2012	(2012)	(2012)
Nature of fear				
Fear for one’s future	31.7	44.4	33.3	56.5
Fear of not to take	24.1	24.8	17.6	32.7
corresponding place in life				
Fear for one’s parents	18.9	58.2	54.1	62.6
Fear of not coping with	17.9	16.7	13.2	20.4
studying process				
Fear of living on air	15.7	24.5	17.0	32.7
Fear of making mistakes	15.5	16.9	14.9	17.4
Fear, caused by “beats of destiny”	14.3	12.7	9.4	16.3
Fear of losing one’s one “self”	12.8	18.6	17.0	20.4
Fear, related to high crime rate	10.8	14.4	11.9	17.0
Fear of not finding place of work	10.3	20.6	13.2	28.6
and stay unemployed				
Fear of get ill	8.8	15.7	9.4	22.4
Fear, connected with political	8.1	12.4	10.1	15.0
crises and wars				
Fear for one’s family and child	5.9	36.3	37.1	35.4
Fear for the future of one’s child	4.4	29.4	26.4	32.7
Fear of being outflanked by the others	3.9	5.2	3.8	6.8
Fear as a result of watching thrillers,	2.7	4.2	1.9	6.8
horror movies and similar types of films				
Fear, related to prediction of	1.2	4.7	2.5	7.5
“the end of the world”				

In the structure of fears of Russian students in 1996, in conditions of deep social and economic crisis caused by switch of formation system, mainly subjective factors are detached. To 2012, this process was stably growing.

Indices that reveal the essence of “era of fear” which are typical for Western culture, manifest themselves poorly, though they demonstrate some liveliness. However we may say that Russia hasn’t yet entered the condition of “chaos of fear”.

If we consider fear in terms of sociology, we may state the fact that social mass of fear is growing. At the same time, social space of girls’ fear is vastly superior to similar social space of boys. The area of social risk of young men concentrated in the sphere of family and their future children. Other spheres of young men’s fear kept at the same level or even became weaker in comparison to fear of youth of mid 1990s.

The character of fears of modern students of the 1st and 4th grades has its own specifics as well. By reaching senior grades, students widen social space of their fears. Social expertise obtained by the students in the process of education becomes the reason of frequent feeling of fear. By senior grades apprehension grows. Thus, being on the 4th grade, every second student 950% feels the fear from time to time and 14% of student feel it almost constantly in comparison with students from the 1st grade. This tendency is kept during the whole period that is being studies.

Depending on conditions of initial socialization students feel fear by 2008 more distinctly, especially at children of peasants and representatives of working class. Children from parents of professional class feel somehow more secure. Among them 5.3% feel the fear constantly or very often, in comparison to 14% of students that come from working class families, 11% from peasants’ families and 10% of students from families of trade workers. Type of dwelling prior to entering the university makes no difference, since distribution of students’ answers regarding the frequency of fear’s occurrence was almost similar in all the groups. At this one, should mention that within recent years social and economic conditions of life of people who live in small and big cities didn’t straighten and, vice versa, the differences became more evident. Apprehension straightened in its frequency of occurrence and thus became a fixed condition of global social culture and social classes. Based upon the character of fears, they may be grouped in the following way:

- The first group of fears is represented by subjective fears, i.e., personal fears (fear for one’s future, one’s family, fear of “losing oneself”, fear of getting ill, “beats of the destiny”)

Table 2: Classification fears according to character of their manifestation in young men and girls, students of full-time and part-time education (in percentage, research of 2012) *

Character of fears	Total amount in massive	Young men	Girls	Full-time students	Part-time students
Subjective fears	37.2	38.2	36.5	35.9	41.8
Objective fears	29.4	25.8	32.1	30.5	25.9
Socio-psychological fears	33.4	36.0	31.4	33.6	32.4

*Calculation was performed according to the following type the ratio of the students who marked each option in % to total sum of answers on all options of this question

- The second group of fears covers objective fears, i.e. fears that are connected with external environment (political and legal situation in society, fear of not having any money, unemployment, fears, related to one’s social status, influence of horror films)
- The third group of fears is represented by socio-psychological fears, i.e., fears that are related with one’s reaction on natural conditions of life (fear for one’s parents, fear for the future of one’s child, fear of being outflanked by the others, expectation of “end of the world”)

Classification of fears shows disposition of character of their manifestation into the sphere of personal life which is connected with socio-psychological state of young men (Table 2)

It should be noted that young men demonstrate complex of fears more distinctly than in other presented groups. The character of their fears is more personal and emotional. Part-time students are more realistic which corresponds to their social status as young men that already obtained some experience of independent life. Objective conditions of life fear girls and full-time students which is explained by discrimination against women and young men without employment experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social factors that from the feeling of fear and social vulnerability of students: Modern reality was referred by students to social sources that stimulate the feeling of fear. However, recently the situation has changed and we can see some decrease in tension that is created by current situation in society.

In the period from 1996-2008, each third student considered the reasons of their fears to be results of their own life experience (2008, 34.7% and 29% while the place of dwelling didn’t play much role (2008, 32.9% were represented by city residents and 31.1% were represented by country residents). Today, one’s own life experience “guards” each fourth student (26.5%) regardless of gender characteristics. Means of mass communications keep its stable position in fear mongering; besides, it applies to all territory types of dwellings of students.

Table 3: Social sources that further formation students' fears and vulnerability (Percentage from total amount of surveyed students)

Social sources	Young men			Girls		Total	
	1996	2008	2012	1996	2008	2012	2012
Mass media	14.5	24.2	26.4	32.9	37.5	31.3	28.8
Thrillers, horror movies	0.9	6.0	4.4	9.4	19.0	12.2	8.2
Pulp fiction (including bestsellers)	0.9	3.2	1.3	1.2	3.2	0.7	1.0
Warnings about "difficulties" that come from parents	4.5	10.7	6.3	16.5	15.4	25.9	15.7
Rumors	11.8	23.4	8.8	21.2	31.2	21.8	15.0
"Adventures", faced by friends	27.3	35.3	14.5	24.7	33.4	16.3	15.4
Realities of modern life	48.2	54.0	39.0	61.2	58.9	48.3	43.5
One's own life experience	42.7	44.0	27.0	24.7	20.6	25.9	26.5
Conversations with teachers	0.9	3.6	6.3	1.2	4.0	11.6	8.8

Table 4: Factors that further the feeling of vulnerability (Percentage from total amount of surveyed students)

Factors	Young men			Girls		Total	
	1996	2008	2012	1996	2008	2012	2012
Current political situation in the country	20.0	32.8	28.3	14.1	21.3	15.6	22.2
Current economic situation in the country	28.2	29.8	27.7	22.4	24.3	25.2	26.5
Current criminal situation in the country	45.5	54.3	21.3	45.9	50.2	21.8	21.6
Changes in the system of cultural and moral values	26.4	33.2	17.6	40.0	44.9	23.8	20.6
Occurrence of fear complex (fear for oneself, one's close ones, one's future etc)	16.4	21.5	23.9	44.7	46.8	41.5	32.4
Economic insecurity (how to find professional job and have enough money)	25.5	28.7	27.7	52.9	41.4	44.9	35.9
Formation of egoistic attitude "I'm alright Jack", "Near is my shirt" etc)	29.1	35.1	19.5	25.9	31.9	19.0	19.3
Lack of assurance that the state will protect one's citizens	42.7	52.5	40.9	32.9	44.9	30.6	35.9
Lack of assurance that organization in which students study or work would protect them	16.4	20.8	13.8	8.2	24.7	12.3	13.4
Lack of assurance that family would protect the person	1.8	4.2	2.5	-	5.7	6.1	13.4
Lack of assurance in oneself	6.4	9.1	7.5	14.1	14.8	11.6	4.2

Rumors and "adventures" of friends are also the reasons that create fear in young men and the peak of such influence was detected in 2008. Today this factor doesn't play such an important role anymore. On the one hand, it is evidence of more rational and pragmatic character of students' attitude to modern reality. On the other hand, authority of parents and pedagogues has grown. Girls appeared to be the most "obedient" category. Students who live in cities feel the influence of their parents more that the students from small settlements (17% against 12%). Pulp fiction and films have the least part in formation of fears.

Thus, social tension that appeared in Russia in 1990s was conditioned by the whole complex of social institutes. In 2008 it reached its peak. After 2008, we may observe redistribution of social roles among institutional means of influence on the character of formation of social fear. Now a days, the most active institutions that play this role are institute of politics and family (Table 3).

Students' attitude to one's social security is connected with both subjective and objective factors. All factors may be structures in the following way:

The first group is presented by institutional and regulative factors (state as socio-political institute of power, legal culture and legal behavior, system of cultural and moral values of the society):

- The second group covers socio-psychological factors (complex of fear, uncertainty about the future, breakage of society's integrity)

- The third group represents structural and functional factors (political and economic situation in society, role and place of social organizations in the life of the person)
- The fourth group is represented by individual and personal factors (family and the person him/herself)
- The main factor that "destroys" the feeling of security is, according to students, of socio-institutional character (Table 4)

Until 2008 this factor influenced significantly senior students (34.9% in comparison with 14.7% at the first grade). Present time may be called a period of time during which youth adapted to new cultural and moral types of behavior.

Social psychological factors keep temporal and spatial stability. Economic insecurity is more manifested in male students of non-state higher educational establishments; girls, vice versa, have started feeling some assurance in their future. However, in comparison with boys they are still crisis group (in 2012 this group consisted if 27.7% and among girls 44.9%). There may be observed some detachment of people from each other. At the same time, this circumstance is of social character and has its gender component. "Complex of fear" becomes actively developing group of influencing factors for male students of non-state higher educational establishments.

Structural and functional factor continue playing significant role in the life of students. They are most

influenced by economic situation in the country. This fact was mentioned by all groups of students according to gender, educational and status attributes. That's why, it may be called casually-generated factor that stimulates fear and feeling of insecurity in youth. Economic situation keeps its negative impact on social state of students. Besides, male students of non-state higher educational establishments feel it somehow more significantly organizational factor having reached the peak of its "social amorphia" in 2008, started activating bit by bit which allowed students hoping for the possibility of social warranties for student in labor sphere.

Subjective factors such as family, keep being a tower of strength for students from possible social disruptions. At the same time, girls are less self-confident than the boys. Personal tension rises sharply until the 4th grade (19.0% in comparison with 12.0% during the first grade).

Until 2008, characterized by crisis, each second student connected one's feeling of insecurity with role of the state as a subject of their social safety and social defense. And students think that this task is not fulfilled by the state. That's why, as we noted in our researches, students don't believe political institutes of power. Young men appeared to be more exacting and though it may sound strange, students of state universities as well (52.5 and 50.5% in comparison with 44.9 and 42.9% of girls and students of non-state universities). Until 2012 students' attitude to political situation in the country became not so much loyal as restrained.

The second factor that was noted by each second student of that period was crime rate in the society (45.9% in 1996 and 48.8% in 2008). This situation is emphasized by both young men and girls, students of both state and non-state higher educational establishments. Thus, legal culture of society is generalizing sphere of human's life which doesn't depend on gender and educational status of the person. During the time that passed since 2008 the situation has significantly changed; students perceive criminal situation in society more calmly. This problem is actual form each fifth student (21.6% in 2012).

The third factor is the system of cultural and moral values of the society in which the process of change of normative and moral values is still on going.

Summary: As it can be seen from the above, the feeling of fear and insecurity in modern students is first of all conditioned by institutional factors which create socio-psychological tension in both social group and personality of the student. As a consequence, students may form negative attitude to such structural and functional elements of the society as economic, political and labor spheres of life.

CONCLUSION

In the 1990s the society created conditions in which the feeling of social vulnerability grew. In that period young men were thrown into sand stones of social changes without being prepared to new social, cultural and economic roles. The system of life values formed in conditions of Soviet period took new form in post-Soviet period. During that period the character of fears became of subjective character having switched into the sphere of youth's personal life. This was connected with understanding of one's place and role in modern society. Illusions of quick reformation of the society which could create favorable conditions for social mobility in stratified structure of the new Russia, disappeared. Students realize that they need to "fight for their place in the sun" in conditions of stuff competition not only on labor market but in personal life as well.

At the same time, one should note that peak of social tension fell within 2008. This corresponds to condition of general crisis in Russia and in the whole world. Thus, "era of fear" that appeared in Europe in 1980s, projected onto Russia as a consequence of switch to social West European model of society by our country.

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