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THE ROLE OF MODERN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN SHAPING PATRIOTIC CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG YOUTH IN UZBEKISTAN: A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

The formation of patriotic consciousness among young people has acquired renewed significance under conditions of globalization, rapid technological development, social transformation and increasing cultural interaction. For contemporary Uzbekistan, the development of a socially responsible, intellectually active and culturally conscious younger generation is closely connected with the quality of education and the social environment in which young people develop. This article examines the role of modern education and the social environment in shaping patriotic consciousness among Uzbek youth from a socio-philosophical perspective. The study considers patriotism not merely as an emotional attachment to one's homeland, but as a complex system of values, civic responsibility, historical consciousness, social participation and respect for national and universal human values. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between educational institutions, family, mahalla, civil society, cultural institutions and digital communication environments. The article also analyses contemporary policy developments in Uzbekistan, including the state youth policy framework and the 2026 programme aimed at increasing the effectiveness of educating young people in the spirit of loyalty to national values and patriotism. The study argues that sustainable patriotic consciousness cannot be formed solely through formal instruction or symbolic activities. It develops more effectively when young people have opportunities for meaningful participation, critical reflection, social responsibility and practical contribution to their communities. The article concludes that modern patriotic education should combine national identity with respect for human dignity, cultural diversity, civic responsibility, critical thinking and constructive participation in society.

Keywords

youth, patriotism, patriotic consciousness, education, social environment, national identity, civic responsibility, values, Uzbekistan, socio-philosophical analysis.

Introduction

The formation of patriotic consciousness among young people is an important social and philosophical issue because youth represent not only a demographic group but also a significant bearer of the future social, cultural and intellectual development of society. The values, beliefs and forms of social participation acquired during youth influence the ways in which individuals understand their relationship with their community, state, culture and homeland.

In contemporary conditions, however, the meaning of patriotism is changing. Globalisation, digital communication, migration, cultural exchange and the growing accessibility of information have expanded the social environment in which young people form their identities. Young people can simultaneously participate in local communities and global digital networks. Consequently, patriotic consciousness cannot be analysed exclusively through traditional categories of loyalty and attachment to territory. It increasingly involves questions of civic responsibility, social solidarity, cultural identity, respect for law, participation in public life and responsibility for the future of society.

The educational system occupies a central position in this process. UNESCO's work on citizenship education emphasises that education can develop not only knowledge but also values, attitudes, social and emotional capacities that enable learners to participate responsibly in society.[1] UNESCO also identifies critical thinking, empathy, collaboration and digital citizenship as important competencies for responsible participation in contemporary societies.[2]

The issue is particularly relevant to Uzbekistan. The country's state youth policy explicitly identifies the protection of young people's rights and interests, their spiritual, intellectual, physical and moral development, and their participation in social life as important policy directions.[3] Moreover, on 28 January 2026, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 34 approving a programme intended to increase the

effectiveness of educating young people within the system of continuous education in the spirit of loyalty to national values and patriotism.[4]

These developments demonstrate that patriotic education remains a contemporary social and educational priority. At the same time, the effectiveness of patriotic education depends not simply on the number of educational events but on whether young people internalise values and translate them into responsible social behaviour.

The purpose of this article is therefore to examine the role of modern education and the social environment in shaping patriotic consciousness among young people in Uzbekistan from a socio-philosophical perspective.

Methods. The study is theoretical and conceptual in nature and is based on a socio-philosophical approach. The following methods were used: conceptual analysis of the notion of patriotic consciousness and its structural components; analysis of normative and policy documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, namely Law No. ZRU-406 “On State Youth Policy” (2016) and Resolution No. 34 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 28 January 2026; analysis of UNESCO publications on citizenship education and global citizenship education; and comparative-logical and synthesising methods, used to relate national and universal values, passive and active models of education, and educational and social-environment factors. The study does not involve empirical data collection; its findings are therefore analytical and interpretive in character.

Results

Patriotic Consciousness as a Socio-Philosophical Concept. Patriotism is a multidimensional social phenomenon. In its broadest sense, it refers to attachment to and concern for one's homeland and community. However, reducing patriotism to an emotional feeling would provide an incomplete account of its social significance.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, patriotic consciousness can be understood as a system of values, beliefs, historical perceptions and behavioural orientations through which an individual understands his or her relationship with the homeland and society.

This concept contains several interconnected elements.

The first is emotional attachment. A person may experience a sense of belonging to a particular country, culture, language, history and community.

The second is historical consciousness. Understanding the historical development of one's society provides individuals with a sense of continuity between generations.

The third is civic responsibility. Patriotism becomes socially meaningful when attachment to the homeland is translated into responsible behaviour, respect for law, contribution to society and concern for the common good.

The fourth is cultural identity. Language, traditions, literature, art and historical heritage contribute to the symbolic dimension of national belonging.

The fifth is social participation. A young person who contributes to the development of his or her community through education, work, volunteering, innovation or civic activity expresses patriotism through practice rather than merely through verbal declarations.

This broader understanding corresponds with contemporary approaches to citizenship education. UNESCO describes global citizenship education as an approach that develops knowledge, skills, values and attitudes enabling learners to contribute to more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and sustainable societies.[1]

Accordingly, national patriotism and responsible citizenship do not necessarily constitute opposing concepts. A contemporary understanding of patriotism can combine attachment to one's homeland with respect for other cultures, human dignity and universal ethical principles.

Modern Education as a Mechanism of Patriotic Consciousness Formation.

Education has traditionally played an important role in transmitting social values between generations. Schools and universities provide young people with knowledge about history, culture, literature, law and society. However, contemporary education has a broader function: it also creates opportunities for developing social competencies and forms of participation.

UNESCO's recent work emphasises that education for citizenship should help learners become informed and responsible participants in society.[2] Its 2026 discussion of education and democracy similarly stresses that education contributes to the knowledge, values and capabilities necessary for active citizenship.[5]

This perspective is important for patriotic education. If patriotism is taught only as a collection of slogans or abstract declarations, young people may perceive it as an external requirement rather than as a personally meaningful value.

A more effective educational approach involves connecting patriotic values with practical experience.

For example, history education can encourage students to examine the achievements and difficulties of previous generations critically. Literature can develop emotional understanding of cultural identity and human experience. Civic education can demonstrate the relationship between rights and responsibilities. Community projects can allow students to experience cooperation and social responsibility directly.

Thus, patriotic education should increasingly move from a model of passive value transmission toward a model of active value formation.

The distinction is important. In the first model, students are primarily expected to remember prescribed information. In the second, they are encouraged to understand, discuss, evaluate and apply values in real social contexts.

The latter approach is compatible with UNESCO's conception of citizenship education, which emphasises critical thinking, communication, collaboration, respect for diversity and social responsibility.[1][2]

The family and mahalla as elements of the social environment

Education does not take place exclusively within schools and universities. A young person's worldview is shaped through continuous interaction with family, peers, neighbourhood, cultural institutions, media and digital communities.

The family is often the first environment in which values are experienced rather than formally taught. Respect for parents and elders, solidarity, responsibility, mutual assistance and attachment to cultural traditions may be transmitted through everyday practices.

The concept of mahalla is particularly relevant to the Uzbek social environment. As a community-based institution, mahalla can provide a social space in which individuals experience collective responsibility and participation in local life.

The social environment therefore performs an important complementary function to formal education. A school may teach the principle of social responsibility, but its practical meaning becomes clearer when young people participate in community projects, volunteer activities or initiatives addressing local problems.

The state youth policy framework of Uzbekistan also emphasises interaction between institutions and the development of conditions for young people's social participation and personal development.[3] This suggests that youth policy and education should be considered as interconnected elements of a broader social environment.

The formation of patriotic consciousness is consequently most sustainable when the values communicated by educational institutions are supported by the practices of family and community life.

National values and universal human values

One of the most important philosophical questions concerning patriotic education is the relationship between national and universal values.

National values provide a society with cultural continuity. Language, traditions, historical memory, literature, art and collective experience contribute to the formation of national identity. However, national identity exists within a wider human context.

UNESCO's approach to global citizenship education emphasises respect for diversity, solidarity and a shared sense of humanity.[6] These principles indicate that education can strengthen local identity while simultaneously developing respect for other cultures and perspectives.

For Uzbekistan, this relationship is particularly relevant because the country's cultural heritage has developed through interaction among different peoples, traditions and intellectual currents.

Consequently, patriotic consciousness should not be constructed through rejection of cultural diversity. Instead, it can be based on the understanding that respect for one's own cultural heritage and respect for others are mutually compatible.

From a philosophical perspective, this can be described as a transition from exclusive patriotism toward responsible patriotism.

Exclusive patriotism defines loyalty primarily through distinction from others. Responsible patriotism defines attachment to the homeland through constructive contribution to its development while recognising the dignity and rights of other people.

Such an approach can help young people reconcile national identity with openness to the global world.

Digitalisation and the transformation of patriotic education

The digital environment has fundamentally changed the social context in which young people develop their identities.

Young people increasingly obtain information about history, politics, culture and social issues through digital platforms. Social networks allow them to encounter both domestic and international narratives about their country.

This creates new opportunities for patriotic education but also new challenges.

On the positive side, digital technologies can provide young people with access to digital archives, historical materials, virtual museums, educational platforms, documentaries and cultural projects. They can also enable young people to create their own content about their communities and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, digital environments expose users to misinformation, polarisation and simplified representations of complex historical and social issues. UNESCO has identified the need for education systems to strengthen digital citizenship competencies, including critical thinking and ethical participation in information-rich environments.[2]

Therefore, modern patriotic education cannot ignore digital literacy.

A young person who is capable of critically evaluating information is better positioned to distinguish between historical evidence and manipulation, between constructive criticism and deliberate distortion, and between cultural dialogue and polarising rhetoric.

This suggests that digital literacy should become an integral part of contemporary patriotic education.

Patriotism in the digital age should therefore involve not only knowledge of national history but also responsible digital citizenship.

The role of youth participation in developing patriotic consciousness.

A central weakness of purely formal approaches to patriotic education is the separation between values and action.

Young people are more likely to experience social responsibility when they have opportunities to participate in meaningful activities. UNESCO's work with youth in Uzbekistan has emphasised active citizenship and the importance of developing policy and programme solutions that respond to diverse youth experiences and needs.[7]

Participation can take many forms: volunteering, environmental initiatives, cultural projects, scientific research, entrepreneurship, community service, student organisations and social innovation.

Such activities transform patriotism from an abstract concept into an experience.

A student who contributes to improving the local environment, helps organise a cultural event, develops an innovative project or assists vulnerable members of the community may express patriotic values through concrete behaviour.

This leads to an important socio-philosophical conclusion: patriotism should be understood not only as what a person feels about the homeland, but also as what a person is prepared to contribute to it.

Participation also strengthens young people's sense of agency. Instead of viewing society as something created exclusively by older generations or public institutions, young people begin to see themselves as active participants in social development.

Contemporary Policy Context in Uzbekistan

The current policy framework of Uzbekistan provides an important institutional context for analysing youth patriotic education.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On State Youth Policy” identifies several principles, including openness and transparency, youth participation in implementation of youth policy, support for youth initiatives, priority of spiritual, moral and cultural values, and non-discrimination.[3]

These principles are significant because they suggest that youth policy should not be reduced to supervision or ideological education. Youth participation and support for initiatives are explicitly included among the principles of state youth policy.[3]

The 2026 Resolution No. 34 further demonstrates the contemporary policy emphasis on patriotic and values-based education within the system of continuous education.[4]

The significance of this programme from a socio-philosophical perspective lies in the recognition that value formation is a continuous process. Young people's attitudes are not established exclusively during primary or secondary education; they continue to develop through higher education, employment, family life, social participation and interaction with digital environments.

Therefore, the concept of continuous education should also include the continuous development of civic and social responsibility.

Discussion

From formal patriotism to responsible citizenship

The central challenge for contemporary patriotic education is to ensure that patriotism becomes a meaningful personal and social value rather than merely a formal expectation.

Three principles can contribute to this transformation.

First: knowledge should be connected with reflection. Young people should not only learn historical facts but also have opportunities to discuss their significance, compare interpretations and understand the complexity of historical processes.

Second: values should be connected with practice. Patriotic consciousness becomes more meaningful when young people participate in community development, volunteering, research, cultural activities and social projects.

Third: national identity should be connected with universal human dignity**.** A mature patriotic consciousness can combine love of homeland with respect for human rights, cultural diversity, peaceful coexistence and responsibility toward others.

Such an approach does not diminish national identity. Rather, it places national identity within a broader ethical framework.

The result is a form of patriotism based on responsibility rather than exclusion, contribution rather than rhetoric, and conscious identification rather than passive conformity.

Conclusion

The formation of patriotic consciousness among young people in Uzbekistan is a multidimensional process influenced by education, family, community, culture, state policy, social participation and the digital environment.

The analysis demonstrates that modern education plays a central role, but education alone cannot determine the development of patriotic consciousness. The social environment in which young people live and participate is equally important.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, contemporary patriotism should be understood as a combination of emotional attachment to the homeland, historical consciousness, cultural identity, civic responsibility and active social participation. Such an understanding allows patriotism to become a practical value rather than merely a symbolic expression.

The contemporary policy framework of Uzbekistan demonstrates continuing institutional attention to youth development and patriotic education. The 2016 Law on State Youth Policy establishes youth participation, support for initiatives and spiritual, moral and cultural development among important principles and directions of youth policy.[3] The adoption of Resolution No. 34 in January 2026 further confirms the current policy emphasis on strengthening patriotic and national-value education within continuous education.[4]

At the same time, the changing social environment requires new approaches. Digitalisation, global cultural interaction and expanding access to information mean that patriotic consciousness can no longer be formed exclusively through traditional educational methods.

A contemporary model should combine historical and cultural education with critical thinking, digital citizenship, community participation, volunteering and social responsibility. UNESCO's citizenship-education framework similarly emphasises knowledge, skills, values, critical consciousness, cooperation and respect for diversity.[1][2][6]

Therefore, the future of patriotic education depends not only on teaching young people to value their homeland, but also on creating conditions in which they can

contribute meaningfully to its development. The strongest form of patriotic consciousness is consequently not passive loyalty but responsible participation.

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