

## CORRELATION OF 'SOCIAL' AND 'INDIVIDUAL' IN THE VALUES STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIANS

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**Abstract:** High relevance of the problem under research is stemming from a controversial nature of changes in the basic values of Russians. The need has arisen for determining the value priorities and orientations adequate to the modern times. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the methodological and conceptual approaches to the construal of national values of Russians in a globalizing world, along with the sociocultural and economical transformations in the Russian society on a continuum "youth - family - society - civilization". The paper presents the models of "convergent" and "communitarian" life styles and public conscience. Leading in the exploration of this problem was an axiological approach which was highly useful for revealing contradictions in the values of the contemporary Russians, and for developing the models of "convergent" and "communitarian" life styles and public conscience. The research employed the general scientific methods. In the conclusion, the key results of our research are provided: 1) two opposing value systems were analyzed; 2) a model of a "convergent" and "communitarian" life styles and public conscience aimed at reconciling the two value paradigms is presented; 3) the essence of concepts "social" and "individual" on a scale of values is discussed. The paper proceedings may be useful for developing youth cultural and social policies, in the analysis of interpersonal interactions and tensions between representatives of different social groups, for realizing the significance of an "alien" culture in a modern system of basic values of Russians.

**Keywords:** globalization, values, youth, family, society.

### 1 Introduction

In the modern humanitarian knowledge, a debate is heating up over the direction of changes in the basic values of Russians, especially young people, either toward the rigid "conservation" and strong "traditionalism", or toward "individualization" thereby moving closer to the development model of Western countries, with their algorithm of openness and opportunities for personal self-fulfillment (Svadbina, 2000). A scientific controversy is caused, on the one hand, by globalization processes and profound reforms in political, economic, social, cultural and legal (legislative) dimensions of the Russian society, as reflected in the revised Constitution of the Russian Federation in force from July 1, 2020 (2020), and on the other hand, the greatest concern for preservation by the Russian people of their national and ethno-cultural identity, intergenerational continuity in keeping historical memory and a unique Russian national chronotope.

A family is a perfect object of research into the controversy between opponents and supporters of transformation in the modern values, as evidenced by numerous publications and sociological surveys (Burina & Kudina, 2020; Golubev et al., 2018; Terentyev, 2018). Yet, strange as it may seem, the family institution (amidst the hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia and across the globe) appeared to be that prime and stable social unit playing a crucial role in the human survival, the only space where a search for compromise and progress in dialogue is possible, and where the "opposing" parties may make steps towards each other and shake hands.

The relevance of this research is attributable to the need to study the dynamics of modern values in the context of transformation of the family and the whole Russian society.

### 2 Literature Review

The value dimensions in the contemporary sociocultural space is the research topic of greatest relevance. Paradoxically, but

despite oversaturation of the scholarly literature with various reviews of value systems, this topic has not lost its novelty. The rapid development of culture brings new value orientations currently undergoing another renaissance in the Russian cultural tradition, which is associated with large-scale "extravert" socio-cultural changes of the last decade and the transformation of the basic values of Russians, their split into "Western" and "non-Western" values. According to the conception of A.N. Yanitsky (2019), we are entering a new era of the fourth industrial revolution, based on a new system of values of the information society.

The transformation of Russian values towards europeanization was noted by such authors as: H.A. Barlybaev (2018), V.V. Kuzmenko (2017), V. Magun, M. Rudnev, P. Schmidt (2015), E.A. Burina, A.E. Kudina (2020), T.V. Svadbina (2000), O.A. Nemova (Svadbina et al., 2017), D.Yu. Vagin (2016), V.V. Retivina (2019) explore the values through the prism of intergenerational continuity as a source of life orientations. Based on the results of sociological surveys, I.A. Golubev, A.Sh. Dubina, L.V. Rozhkova (2018), V.V. Kuzmenko (2017), A.A. Mironova (2014) identified trends in the development of Russian society and explored the value orientations of young people.

A.P. Khavrak and N.V. Nikolaeva (2018), N.I. Gorlova (Gorlova et al., 2020) and her colleagues contemplate about special role of the government in adoption of certain value orientations, while focusing on sociocultural institutions.

The rising incidence of asocial, aberrant, deviant and delinquent behavior in interpersonal relations triggers a need to explore the correlation of "individual" and "social" in the culture of behavior of a modern human. The transformations occurring in the traditional system of values driven by rapid changes in the value paradigms expose the problems related not only to individual culture of each person, but also the culture of the whole society.

### 3 Research Methodological Framework

The purpose was to reveal the correlation of 'social' and 'individual' in the structure of values of Russians.

The research objectives were as follows:

1. explore the dynamics of ideas related to "social" and "individual" in the conditions of rapidly changing world, globalization, convergence, integration, communitarization, sociocultural and economic transformations;
2. based on the review of secondary sociological data, reveal a global picture of the modern sociocultural space where new value attitudes and orientations are born.

The analysis relies on the principles of integration and integrity. The principle of integration broadened a spectrum of value orientations from the perspective of interdisciplinary research, traditional and contemporary views, and intergenerational continuity. The principle of integrity provided a perspective on the value orientations of Russians as a single system and helped to identify its key components.

The research employed general scientific methods: analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, comparative-historical and dialectical methods (Tikhonova, 2012).

### 4 Results

The values of Russian people get shaped, evolve and get eroded during challenging times. According to the Professor A.N. Yanitsky (2019), Russia and the entire world are entering an era of the fourth industrial revolution (STR-4), when global community transforms into a single information and communication system, which inevitably results in

"hybridization" of social, natural, technical, biological and other systems, and emergence of integrated socio-biotechnical systems (SBT systems), when a human of new formation comes into being, who does not separate himself from computers and robots, and becomes a supplement to digital machine. He is deeply "individualistic", he does not need anybody, he has lost connection with his homeland. He is like a marginal man at the junction of different cultures and societies, but the scale is global (2019).

The division of values into "Western" and "non-Western" at the macro-level has led to a division among Russians. The researchers V. Magun, M. Rudnev, and P. Schmidt (2015) believe that this division into supporters of "social" values and "individualistic" values became evident in Russia after the year 2012. This shift (toward "the individualistic profile") is mainly driven by younger generations under the influence of political, technical, and cultural factors starting from the early 1990s. "Social" values are associated with care for others and nature. The adherents of these values have little resources - educational, professional, career, living conditions, money; the general assessment of health, success and future prospects is low and these citizens seek preservation, protection and help from the state.

"Individualists" uphold the values of self-fulfillment according to A. Maslow, openness to change, readiness for risk –they seek independence and rely only on themselves; they have a strong determination for achievements, power, wealth, self-empowerment, an aspiration to achieve greater heights than others; they also have more resources (higher education, high income, excellent living conditions, cars, traveling abroad; high self-esteem and assessment of health, success, career opportunities, etc.) - these are the values of Growth. A share of that population is incomparably higher in developed countries, while in Russia it is represented by only 2% in the general population of representatives with "weak" and "strong" individualistic value orientation.

V. Magun, M. Rudnev, P. Schmidt (2015) conclude their study of the basic values of Russians with a curious statement that they didn't find proof of the phenomenon of Russian "cultural genotype", Russian "archetype", or unselfishness, altruism, collectivism, "togetherness" often attributable to Russians.

It is clear that the results of this study and construal of the basic (traditional) values of Russians leave no stone unturned in their appeal for young people and their viability. However, doubts arise with regard to the research methodology itself. First, the authors relied on the theory of basic values of S. Schwartz (1994) as their leading approach (Magun et al., 2015). He defined basic values as desirable trans-situational goals that vary in importance, and serve as guiding principles in human life. S. Schwartz arranged values in a circular structure with opposing values on the scales of individualistic orientation and social orientation characterized by selfishness - creativity and altruism – conformity respectively. But how legitimate is it to apply this model to the study of the values of Russians today? Moreover, basic values do not reflect trans-situational goals and desires, but rather represent the socio-cultural foundations of the entire Russian civilization, proven to have enduring importance in all historical epochs and under all socio-political changes (Terentyev, 2018).

Secondly, the questionnaire itself looks rather unusual, the respondents were offered to describe those people who adhere to "social" and "individual" values, and characterize four Russian value classes /types/. These included: industriousness, obedience, attitude toward gays and lesbians, making requests to local authorities, watching TV shows, etc. How does this relate to basic (traditional) values? Instead the authors could have referred to any federal document of the Russian Federation (issued after 2011-2012) stating the basic national values: patriotism, social solidarity, citizenship, family, etc.

Thirdly, it is not clear how, on the basis of this questionnaire, the adherence of Russians to "togetherness" (=collectivism) could

have been put in doubt? Fortunately, not only the significance of this value for our citizens is being demonstrated and proven daily and even hourly (not to mention the current situation with the coronavirus), but there also exists a profound scientific justification for it being an important quality of the Russian mentality: "Togetherness is an organic combination of personal and public achieved through the spiritual and moral unity; the care of each for all and all for each; service to the common cause, the interests of the country and society. Togetherness is expressed in communality, cooperativeness, collectivism, assemblage, comradeship, brotherhood and solidarity, as opposed to individualism, selfishness and bourgeoisness of the Western socio-cultural type of personality, fierce competition, rivalry, reciprocal devastation in the struggle "for a place in the sun" (Terentyev, 2018).

Solidarity, in turn, as a merger of personal relations and interests with public ones, is most vividly manifested in family, where an individual acquires knowledge about the past and present achievements of their native country, develops high moral qualities by learning behaviors from their relatives, cultivates an unconscious, sacred, transcendental sense of longing for care and communication with others (Barlybaev, 2018).

Intergenerational solidarity in Russian family is unique, and in addition to the transfer of sociocultural experience, traditions, and customs from the older generation to the younger one, implies various other transfers. These intrafamily transfers are performed selflessly, as opposed to the market relations. These are not only various services (assistance in housekeeping, especially in rural areas), child care, planning of family holidays and leisure, help to family members in need of service, but also financial assistance.

In 2010, an average amount of transferred cash was 50% of the paycheck of respondents (sociological survey participants) at their main place of work; which was 5 times higher than the study allowance; 3 times higher than the average unemployment allowance and 2 times higher than the interest paid on deposits (Mironova, 2014).

Today the basic values for the Russian youth are family, health, good education, interesting job, financial prosperity. Family represents higher value for girls than for boys (73.3% vs. 58.4%). While in terms of what makes the family so important, different family values are emphasized: support, care, understanding, emotional and psychological comfort are in the first place; love and children are in the second place; good financial standing is in the third place (25%). About 40% of respondents (from among students) are planning to have children, but the girls add a comment that they will have children only under certain conditions, among which is adequate assistance for the families from the state (Golubev et al., 2018, p. 55).

Some Russian researchers note the transformation of values of the Russian family and family lifestyle towards individualization. This is particularly evident when comparing answers of the older respondents with answers of the youth. The high importance of family and children and satisfaction with family life was underlined by almost 74% of respondents having a long record of family relationship; while the number of youngsters having the same opinion is twice less. Changes can also be seen in the gender attitudes of young women: declining importance of motherhood in a woman's life; transition from child-centered to marital intrapersonal values; and the variability of individual value systems. For 16-year-old girls the most important in life are wealth (59% of respondents), success (39%), freedom (35%), property (29%). Personal independence seems to be the main alternative opposed to family values state (Vagin, 2016, p. 53).

The role of modern mass media and the Internet in the transformation of basic family values among young people cannot be discounted. Thus, according to the results of a survey among students being light users of virtual space, family is definitely the basic value (73.6%); the medium internet users

rated the value of family 10 points lower (62.7%); while in the group of heavy internet users much less respondents chose family as the basic value (36.8%) (Vagin, 2016, p. 54).

## 5 Discussion

Young people in Russia are oriented toward individual achievements (career, status, success) and toward comfort as a necessary condition for having a family; they consider having children only under certain conditions. Late marriages, late pregnancies, unregistered marital relationships, etc., are becoming common for Russians; in other words, a picture similar to the Western way of life is observed. In view of this, it becomes necessary to map the way forward ensuring convergence of values, inter alia family values (Sidorkina & Fadeeva, 2017).

Especially striking is the gap in the basic values transmitted and passed on from the older to the younger generation. In the family space this contradiction takes the following form: the elders (parents) know and understand these values, but in practice, in everyday life neglect them; or young people have an idea of the potential and orientation of this or that basic value, but consider them "useless" in building their personal trajectory of success (Vagin, 2016). In this situation, as researchers argue, it becomes crucial to strengthen the role of the state in all social institutions responsible for socialization, education and upbringing of the younger generation (Tikhonova, 2012).

It should be mentioned that these expectations and concerns over the fate of the young generation of Russians expressed by scientists are equally applicable to other ordinary citizens of our country, a huge cohort of teachers, educators, prominent figures of culture and artists, and the state responded to them by making significant amendments of fundamental nature to the Russian Constitution (July 2020) (2020). Here we give a few examples:

Article 67, Paragraph 2: "The Russian Federation united by thousand-year history, holding in remembrance the ancestors who transferred us strong ideals and faith in God, and also succession in development of the Russian state recognizes historically developed state unity."

Article 67.1, Paragraph 3: The Russian Federation should revere memory of its defenders and keep the historical truth protected. The heroism of people defending our Motherland may never be diminished".

Article 67.1, Paragraph 4: "Children are the highest priority of the Russian state policy. The state should build an environment conducive to the holistic spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of children, fostering their patriotism, civic engagement, and respect for elders. The state, while ensuring that the family education remains a priority, should assume parental responsibility for children deprived of parental care" (Russian Federation Constitution, 2020).

The issue of the convergence (approximation) of two types of value systems is still on the agenda. We are not talking about the "Westernization" of our basic values, but about establishment of a special integral social order - a solidary society, a socially responsible economy that includes all types of property, where there is a strong, effective, social rule-of-law state pursuing the principles of social justice; where poverty and social division do not exist (Terentyev, 2018).

There has long been a concept of the "golden middle," a dialogue between two systems of thought, values and socialization, which has found support in American social philosophy and social management theory. This is so-called "communitarian thinking," which organically absorbed individualism and pragmatism on the one hand, and communality, "collegiality" and morality, on the other. Communitarism represents that degree of tolerance and mutual respect without which a modern human cannot survive.

The communitarian concept of a lifestyle of an individual, family, and society is quite consistent with the formula we propose: "economic man" + "passionate personality" ("benefit and profit" + "moral integrity and social responsibility") (Svadbina et al., 2017).

## 6 Conclusion

An intergenerational gap in the transmission and passing on of basic national values is particularly noticeable in the sociocultural sphere. Family, as the most important social institution, in the conditions of substantial social, political and economic modernization has found itself virtually one-on-one with the need to adjust to the realities of the market economy and transmit the most fundamental mental values of the Russian society. The two value systems are inherently contradictory. The core of the Western value system is personal success, while in the Russian society it is justice. This contradiction causes a value dissonance, i.e. a lack of understanding how to teach and which values to instill in today's youth. Our research brought us to the following conclusions:

The basic values of the Russians get shaped and evolve amidst new challenges of globalization, the integrated socio-biotechnical systems emerged that threaten the very existence of the subjects themselves, the carriers of values – the humans.

The methodological principle of Western and Russian social philosophy and sociology, consisting in differentiation between Western and post-socialist values as "individualistic" and "social" values, does not meet the requirement of scientific reasonableness, since it defines basic values as "trans-situational", but not as inherent in the immanent mental, historical, sociocultural foundations of the Russian civilization.

The basic values of Russians against the backdrop of political, socio-economic, cultural and moral transformations have also undergone certain changes toward individualization and neglect of some traditional values relating to the family and the family way of life.

Russian society has assumed responsibility to protect and strengthen in the minds of young people the enduring importance of basic national values that give our people a sense of identity and enable intergenerational continuity in the defense of ideals and meanings of Russian civilization.

Following anomic transformations in the sphere of family and marriage in the post-industrial societies (Russia and Western countries, the USA), which led to changes in the basic, traditional values of Russians, and in order to relieve tensions and distrust between two social systems, scientists from both sides propose compromise models of interaction – "convergence" (approximation) of values, development of an "integral" way of life (solidary society) and a "communitarian" society (which combines humanistic values and values of rational economism).

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