

Specific Features of Human Potential Development of a New Generation in Russia*



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Abstract: The article on the basis of comparative analysis of terms such as human capital and human potential chooses the latter as one reflecting the specific features of the state and development of the society and an individual most completely. With this in mind, the author identifies the priorities of a new generation in the process of perception and transmission of socio-cultural and science and technology achievements of the previous generations, as well as evaluates the moral state of the society. The author also shows specific features of the communication process amid present conditions and their impact on young people's human potential. The article assesses the role of ideology in social stability and favorable state of human potential. Education and upbringing are compared as complementary elements in the system of shaping a new generation. The author considers in most general terms some specific features of a crisis situation in our country and gives a descriptive definition of a justice crisis as its component. He substantiates the thesis that the present crisis state of science, education and healthcare is the result of their inconsistent and inadequate reformation. The article contains a number of propositions for building up human potential of a new generation.

* The research is conducted with financial support of the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research. Project no. 17-22-03004.

For citation: Egorov V.K. Specific features of human potential development of a new generation in Russia. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 2017, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 100-113. DOI: 10.15838/esc/2017.3.51.5

Key words: human capital, human potential, generation, economy, social stability, crisis, education, upbringing, science, healthcare, ideology, religion, justice, morality, culture, reforms.

Due to its ambiguity, the concept of generation is undoubtedly one of the main sense-making concepts in the conceptual framework of a number of fundamental and applied sciences: from biology and history, social and national psychology to conflictology, pedagogy, literature studies, cultural studies and many other disciplines. It is impossible to imagine everyday communication without this concept, even if it is not explicit, when we are talking about the change of epochs, patterns, traditions and ways of life, values, etc.

The figurative mechanistic representation of a generation as a link of a continuous historical (evolutionary) chain. The chain in which there are no identical links.

In the work “The German Ideology”, K. Marx and F. Engels stated: “History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity” (1, 29). Understanding culture as “super-nature”, i.e. everything human-made, the author

argues that the main in the relations between previous and subsequent generations is the dialectical unity of cultural value preservation and transfer with the creation of qualitatively new values.

At the same time, since the human community is an extremely complex historical-cultural and socio-biological phenomenon influenced by an indefinitely large number of multidirectional endogenous and exogenous factors, its historical development is non-linear, the resultant vector at each stage has a complex configuration. The choice of a non-linear model of the historical process as one of the elements of theoretical substantiation of the declared topic is the author’s position which helps adequately comprehend what forms the socio-cultural state of the society can take in the changing historical conditions.

The non-linear model implies that the society represented at each successive historical stage of development by new generations can evolve either progressively, or regressively, with its individual social organisms being able stagnate and degrade. New generations are the least resistant to socio-psychological, economic and other deviations. It is obvious that in the social life of young people being at the very stage

of its formation and, therefore, most acutely perceiving social changes, there are predominant elements of non-conformist psychology in various forms. Hence, along with periods of constructive enthusiasm and positive social changes with young people's participation, periods of stagnation also take place, there emerge "lost" generations, "outsider people", times of spontaneous protests and activity of various young people's mass radical movements and organizations with relevant ideological attitudes.

Young people's critical attitude to the legacy left by previous generations, is dialectical, it is necessary and desirable to the extent that it stimulates the creative trend in using this legacy in the "changed conditions" of being on the way to progress. At the same time, both absolute denial of the legacy and radical rejection of "continuing legacy activities", as well as active obstruction of transfer of cultural values developed by previous generations to other social organisms can lead to cultural destruction.

The author points the great importance of perceiving by the new generations of cultural and material values, research and educational findings, legal principles and attitudes, i.e. everything that ensures full and safe physical existence; the most important, however, is inheritance and transmission of moral, ethical and spiritual values. It has at all times been the

purpose and the meaning of life and work of philosophers and educators, spiritual leaders, preachers and teachers. And, at all times, their activity, which created new doctrines, dogmas, religion, etc., was either treated with misunderstanding and rejection, or, which is worse, was persecuted followed by physical destruction by the dominant society following conservative ideas and beliefs.

In this case, both individual doctrines and ideas and their combinations were denied. In different countries, during the periods of rule of a particular national religion, adherents of heresies, schisms, dissents, etc. were prosecuted; in the early modern period, however, ideological struggle took place within and between secular states. According to official statements, a number of these states managed to fight it by abolishing the national ideology. In other words, the ideas remained, but non-unified by an ideology.

Experience shows that, no matter how active the denial of an ideology was and even its legal prohibition as a "system of views and ideas which characterizes a particular social group, class, political party, society" (7, 236), its intensity, including time, spread far beyond individual countries and eras; the basic principles turned it not only into a national, but into a global phenomenon. Although ideologies varied in form and content from country to country and from epoch to epoch,

their essence was and still is integrated, characterized by a phrase from the Gospel: “Quo vadis, Domine?”

The answer to the question about the meaning and value of life of an individual and the humanity, about whether the methods of their gaining and direction to a target are chosen correctly represent an ideology inherent, with some differences, in any social group or humanity as a whole. It is obvious that, no matter how varied in time is the idea of what may be the answer to this question and to what extent are its changing and contradictory postulates that previously seemed transient and unchanging, the ideology, regardless of its official status was, is and will remain one of the main *factors in human formation*.

This thesis is one of the main elements of the author’s attitude; and, given the ambiguous attitude of the Russian society to the issue of ideology and its values, in the present study attempts to define their role in the formation of “human potential” of the current new generation. Based on preliminary understanding of the stated problem, the author considers the concept of human potential expansion in most general terms as a *set of properties, qualities and abilities acquired in the process of evolution of a human as a “Homo sapiens” who creates super-nature culture and for this reason is the main factor in*

the development of both individual and human society as a whole (author).

Arguments in favor of this option are set by comparing it with the already existing definitions of human potential with subsequent conclusions. Without going into detail in terms of consideration of conceptual framework formation and use, the author adheres to the thesis set forth in one of the modern works close to the stated topic of the current study, which contains universal statements: “Lax and inadequate definitions not only distort the basic meaning and essential characteristics, ... but also significantly complicate the interpretation and productive use of both” (5, 410).

Scientific, popular-scientific and journalistic writings often contain the phrase “human potential”, which gives an impression of its conceptual certainty, while this certainty seems to be all relative, first of all, due to the fact that “human potential” is often considered synonymous to “human capital” which has long been used in the conceptual framework of economics. This is to a great extent due to prevalence of phrases such as “labor potential”, “production capacity” etc., which give the impression of synonymic concepts to human capital and human potential because of their overall economic determinism. Against this background, lack of an adequate definition to *human potential*

itself is notable, as well as predominance of scientific works of its various descriptive variants.

For example, the modern “New economic encyclopedia” (2011) gives the following definition: “Human capital – evaluation of an individual’s *potential ability* (highlighted by the author) to generate income. Human capital includes innate abilities, as well as education and acquired skills which enhance productivity. It usually implies the value created as a result of costs of training, education and healthcare” (6, 259). It is easy to notice that along with the economic determinant, this definition reveals the essence of human potential through an individual’s potential, *which most likely means there is interdependence, rather than synonymity*.

Over time, according to the changing technological paradigms and socio-political transformations in different countries, in global economy, the number of objects of human capital increased significantly: high technology, innovation, new sources of energy – in industrial manufacturing; occupational safety, healthcare, corporate responsibility, etc. – in the social sphere. The content of the concept has changed significantly, which, however, remained within its functionality. This can be judged by the above presented modern definition of human capital.

The current situation is explained by non-sufficient elaboration of the conceptual framework; the statement *about the ratio of human potential and human capital as the general and the specific* is the most appropriate. In one form or another, this is confirmed in various publications on the subject. Fundamentally important is the recognition that human capital is an important, but not the only form of human potential, including both in the organization and functioning of the economy.

To confirm this thesis, it is appropriate to quote modern researchers who study the problem under review. One of the leading researchers in this area I.V. Soboleva, Doctor of Economics (RAS Institute of Economics), in her monograph “Human potential of the Russian economy: issues of preservation and development” (12) notes that focusing the research on the role of a human as a producer, on labor potential damages the economic analysis of the role of needs and consumption, concludes that “employment potential is only one of the subsystems of a bigger category – human potential. The statistical aspect of the differences between labor potential and human potential lies in the fact that the carriers of the former are only able-bodied citizens, while those of the latter – the entire population of the country, including those beyond the working age... The concept of

human potential views the population with all richness of its abilities, knowledge, skills, personal characteristics regardless of the extent to which they use or may use them in their productive activity. From this point of view, even when analyzing the working population it is possible to distinguish between its labor and human potential” (12, 12).

Keeping the previously formulated author’s definition of human potential, it is also imperative to quote the definition from the monograph: “*Human potential of the economy can be characterized as a supply of physical and moral health, common cultural and professional competences, creative, entrepreneurial and civic activity accumulated by the population and implemented in various fields, as well as in the level and structure of needs*”. There is also an aphoristic conclusion: “If labor potential at an individual level corresponds to labor force, then human potential coincides with an individual. Of course, the boundary between the concepts “labor force” and “individual” is very flexible” (ibid.). It is easy to note that, maintaining economic determinism outward (“human potential of the economy”), the definition and the conclusion quite logically move the concept of labor potential to *the subsystem of human potential*, extending to sociological, psychological and philosophical categories. The monograph provides a list of specific

scientific disciplines (except economics) with human potential as a research subject. These include psychology, medicine, ergonomics, social and historical anthropology, bioethics, social genetics, ethnography. However, it appears that this list is not complete due to the variety of categories covered by the concept of human potential.

E. Kotyrlo, a researcher from Ume University (Sweden), when identifying the difference between human capital and human potential in the fact that “the former is involved in production process, and the latter *may be* involved”, emphasizes that “human potential has no age limits, health restrictions, but the age and sex structure, as well as the health condition of the society, measured through life expectancy are important indicators to make international, inter-regional and inter-area comparisons” (10.6.2011).

The reference in this quote to the fact that a number of indicators of human potential are essential for conducting international studies, is of significant practical importance for matching domestic techniques, practices and results of interdisciplinary research with the global ones, since the expanded understanding of human potential, which becomes more institutionalized in domestic conceptual framework, to a greater extent corresponds to the one generally accepted

concept of *opportunity* (capability) *for developing human abilities*. The concept of human ability development developed by the Nobel prize winner in Economics in 1998, Amartya Sen, became the basis for the proposed appropriate measurement technique – Human Development Index (HDI). This technique has been used since the early 1990–s in the development of the UN development programs and serves as one of the main instruments, including international studies.

To confirm the validity of the proposed variants of defining human potential and the relevant theses from works of various authors, the author gives an example of education as a sphere of social activity, in which economy itself is one of the main objects, but not the only one. Almost every able-bodied individual is aware by their own experience that education, especially special and professional, is necessary and required when determining their opportunities in full realization of their economic potential, i.e., gaining income. At the same time, education, both general and special, is often, according to the preferences and intentions of the recipient, able to be converted into revenues, but only indirectly or by giving them non-economic dividends in the form of personal improvement, their satisfaction with fullness, harmony and the meaning of life, successful socialization, etc.

As a rule, only partly is the economic element present in the implementation of the acquired systemic knowledge and creative skills in culture and art, sports, liberal arts, some sectors of fundamental research, the results of which can either become cost-competitive only in the vaguely distant future or not. The list goes on.

During the process of personal formation and development, which can be described in detail by human potential, the most important role belongs to education – the sphere of social activity closest to the human where an individual can, depending on life situations, serve as both object and subject of the influence of the social environment. The focus on the same object with the same objectives helps consider *education and upbringing as a unified system* in which education is the most systematically organized, institutionalized and respectively functioning part. Therefore, it is education, both special and professional, that can be capitalized (or not, see above). At the same time, education, having both formal and informal, infinitely variable ways and means of influence on the personality, plays a dominant role in generating, *first of all*, moral and ethical components of human potential.

The driving forces, the nature, the starting, intermediate and final states, formal and creative approaches, legal rules and traditions, freedom and moral constraints – all this and much more related to education, was and

remains an indefinitely large set of problems for humanology. In the present work, it seems sufficient to note that upbringing as a society-forming phenomenon manifests itself in all social strata and structures: family, formal and informal, temporary and sustainable associations, in manufacturing, civil and military service, in political, educational, humanitarian and other actions, in the media, religious and cultural institutions, etc.

The formation of sustainable ideas about morals, morality, ethics of interpersonal relations, which has been noted above, being a necessary and mandatory condition for maintaining social stability, is not always perceived as such in business relations nowadays. For example, a popular expression “It is business, nothing personal” has long been used by people as an excuse for their selfishness and excessive pragmatism. In time, in public life, especially in business relations, mutual respect, the sense of justice, conscientiousness and ability to support those who need help become less important and are replaced by unscrupulous business acumen, attitudes and recommendations: “the end justifies the means”, “it is your problem”, etc.

These and similar attitudes and recommendations are the result of morality-free written and unwritten laws regulating economic relations. It is appropriate to refer to Marx’s words used in his “Capital”,

which belong to an English publicist of the beginning of the 19th century T. Dunning that at a 100% profit, capital violates all human laws, at 300% – it is able to commit any crime even under threat of being sent to the gallows. In a mild form this statement correlates with the definition of “profit” given in Wikipedia. Part of it says: : “The amount of profit characterizes the success of entrepreneurship, *gaining profit is usually the main purpose and motive of all types of entrepreneurship*” (highlighted by the author). Apparently, doing business according to the aforementioned laws is implied “by default”, and, unfortunately, modern business practice confirms the willingness and ability of capital, just like 200 years ago, to do anything for gaining maximum profits.

In the past decades, Russia experienced fundamental changes both in the structure of social production, and, which is perhaps more important, in new generation’s motivation to participate in it. That is, fundamental changes in the structure of human potential as the most common characteristic of this generation took place. The mechanism of preserving and transmitting cultural values accumulated by previous generations is clearly broken. This statement may contain some signs of idealization of the recent past and nostalgic reasons, but even taking into account their possible presence, it is impossible not to

agree that the current set of developed values intended for transferring to the next generation is quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to what has been accumulated by the end of the 20th century and lost in subsequent years.

There is no point in listing the lost ground in science, underdeveloped modern technology and education, etc. To assess the prospects of the current state and future development of the nation and state, it is particularly important to promote socio-psychological transformations which can, amid current trends, lead to loss of identity of the population as a community. We are talking about the change in conceptual attitudes: *from permanent expanded reproduction of all types of benefits in the interests of all people to unlimited consumption of these goods by an insignificant part of population.*

Social and national psyche of the new generation are formed amid double social consciousness generated by the growing contradictions between the formally declared democratic principles, including statutory (a human is a supreme value, equality before the law, people are the only source of power, land and natural resources – are the basis for people’s activities, etc.), and everyday life realities. In general, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Russia constitutionally defined as a social state is quickly and consistently acquiring the features of a class state.

The abolition of any state or obligatory ideology pursuing a seemingly good purpose of expanding individual freedom was declared and rapidly carried out in a country where more than one generation lived amid command-and-control system and still retained survivals from the particular social psyche. One of traditional moderators of social relations, which previously ensured social unity and represented, although a significantly weakened, but one of the state bonds, ceased to exist in the absence of any adequate replacement.

It is hardly eligible to fully replace it with religion despite the state-supported revitalization of the country’s recognized traditional religions. Religion is not capable to fill in the ideological gap primarily due to the secular nature of the state, as well as due to the fact that the Church lacks the necessary moral capacity to rise above antagonistic social contradictions and try to unite the society against the deepening crisis of justice.

The crisis of justice is no longer a cliché ; it requires profound scientific analysis with a subsequent set of socio-economic and political measures at the state level to describe the current state of the country and society. V.V. Lokosov, Director of RAS Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population in one of his interviews said: “For the state to function normally, it is necessary that the difference between the average incomes of

the richest 10% to the poorest 10% do not exceed 8–10 times. According to Rosstat, the national average is 16. According to various expert estimates – from 25 to 40 times. For comparison: in the USSR, the gap was 4–4.5 times” (Moskovskii Komsomolets, 6.10.2016). As follows from the interview, “paid services in healthcare reached 48% (a few years ago – 20%). In higher education – 60%” (“Argumenty Nedeli”, 6.10.2016). Naturally, the social nature of the state, its constitutional freedoms, etc. in this economic scenario are purely declarative; legitimacy is not ensured properly amid corruption which has spread on an unprecedented scale in all government institutions including law enforcement.

Human potential of a new generation is formed amid social and psychological dualism, as major government institutions designed to ensure and develop the positive focus and content of this potential are unable to appropriately address these issues. We are talking about “non-elite” systems of healthcare and education focused on ensuring physical and moral welfare of the majority of the population of our country. People working in these areas do everything they can to maintain good physical and mental health of the people and “preach the reasonable, the kind, the eternal”, but under the current circumstances they first of all have to make the utmost efforts to

physically survive. “Optimization” of these systems accompanied by the fast-growing paid services amid proportional decline in incomes has led to a reduction in the number of relevant institutions and, as a consequence, in the number of doctors and teachers. The reforms do not reduce the pace.

In July 2016, a great public outcry was provoked by a unmotivated statement of Deputy Prime Minister O. Golodets that two-thirds of the Russian population do not require higher education. And this is despite the fact that the number of experts with higher education employed in modern manufacturing is lower in Russia than in most developed countries, the share of modern domestic high-tech products in world exports is less than one percent. Without going in detail, the author notes the apparent discrepancy between these proposals and the next steps for their implementation with the global trend to increase the level of training and education of workers employed in high-tech industries, as well as the apparent contradiction with the focus on innovative breakthrough development of modern national industry and development “knowledge-based economy” in Russia.

The reaction of the public to the statement of Deputy Prime Minister was mostly protest, but at the same time, the stated ideas had their supporters. There have even been attempts to explain to the public the meaning of the

statement. Here is an example feedback to the statement: “Nowadays young people, as Olga Golodets is trying to explain, need “education for life”. No matter what we call it, higher or would-be higher, it must help an individual not just fully realize their potential, but also feed them and their family and, ultimately, the whole country. This includes further education or self-education” (“Nezavisimaya gazeta”, App. 20.07.2016). Consequently, education in this context primarily seeks to “fully realize one’s potential”, while ensuring “individual’s development” has at all times been and still remains the main purpose of education – one of the most important functions of the state and society.

The above represents only one of a number of phenomena accompanying the long-term reformation of the Russian education, the sheer crudity and inconsistency of which, along with technological and economic costs cause inestimable damage to human potential of the new Russian generation and, consequently, to the future of the country.

Even more dramatic than the current situation in healthcare and education are the results of the reformation of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which, as it is now recognized not only by scientists, has led to the collapse of Russia’s oldest scientific and educational institution, one of its state-

constituting structures. (The present paper does not cover the complex history of the RAS reformation which is covered in the book “The Killing of RAS” by a famous writer V.S. Gubarev). According to the stated topic, it seems sufficient to note that this “reformation” has caused and is still causing considerable damage to the country’s research and creative potential.

One of the main results of the “reformation” is that the already substantial outflow of young scientists abroad has increased significantly. In search of social recognition of their abilities, self-realization, decent living and working conditions most talented and enterprising young Russian scientists went abroad and successfully work there not for the benefit of the Russian science. Amid anti-Russian sanctions unbalanced intellectual exports from Russia becomes an acute issue.

For objective purposes, it should be noted that in 2016 the State program on assisting voluntary resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad, which was approved by the President back in 2006. The program is very expensive, has little results and causes resentment from many scientists and experts who stay in the country in challenging organizational and financial and try to preserve Russian and global science for future generations.

Russia's new generation, despite all the difficulties of the present period, of course, produces new knowledge, ideas, materials, technology, and productive forces – all the elements of human capital which are liquid and profitable. Unfortunately, a significant amount of this capital remains unrealized or leaves the country with natural resources. In exchange, Russia receives the already imported consumer product or produces its “CKD” (completely knocked down) version in its territory. Illiquid part of human potential passed on by former generations, their ethical principles and ideals disappear with these generations.

According to the stated topic of the present paper, the author comes to a conclusion that *the most common characteristic of human potential, evaluation of its quality is the balance between the economic and the social component; the main trend in its development at present is the growing prevalence of the economic component. The growing imbalance in favor of the latter is the main cause of the crisis in the social sphere, especially in science, education, and healthcare. The economy can be self-sufficient without any restrictions and obligations in relation to the social development of the country; in the long run, such imbalance in the development of two components of a unified state body may lead to deep systemic crisis with unpredictable consequences.* Therefore, many economists believe that

it is now necessary for Russia to take into account the requirements (options) of social development on a normative basis when developing state economic programs and making individual decisions.

The acute issues of socio-economic development in Russia, search for ways of their solution became the focus of research of domestic scientists, economists and social scientists in general. An outstanding Russian economist, academician D.S. L'vov, whose works are classic and are deeply analyzed in the article of G.B. Kleiner “L'vov axiomatics”. Projects and detailed development management documents are proposed in the monograph by V.I. Yakunin, S.S. Sulakshin, etc., “Social Doctrine of the Russian Federation. Model project”. Scientists thoroughly and comprehensively cover the measures necessary for the formation of the state social policy, state the order of their execution, including in the form of programs and legal acts regulating social development. The number of researchers of this issue and the list of their works is increasing.

The final part of the paper once again emphasizes the special role of academician D.S. L'vov in the formation of the opinion about economy as an integral part of the state structure. Dmitry Semenovich who consistently advocated the introduction of moral principles into business relations,

defended *the idea of organic connection of social and economic goals and criteria*. He thought it necessary to develop and implement an integrated system of social regulation in Russia as a set of purposeful impacts on the economy and society ensuring sustainable social development. In his writings and numerous speeches, he argued that the drivers of the economy, along with competition and the accompanying individualism and pragmatism, are moral values and conscience. D.S. L'vov introduced the phrase “conscience economy” in the scientific circulation.

And no matter how much economic purists try to fight these ideas, exaggerated individualism and a purely economic conception of being are impossible and destructive in practice, as a human a social being. Hence the idea of a complex structure of human potential with its inherent moral component, as well as an important national and social objective of developing human potential of the new generation.

In terms of activities academic community, this may mean an initiative to develop joint large-scale research projects considering the specific features of Russian regions.

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Received October 21, 2016.