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Exclusion as a Criterion for Selecting Socially Vulnerable Population Groups*



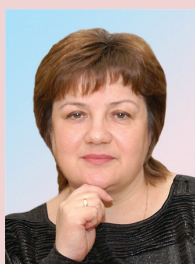
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Abstract. The article considers theoretical aspects of a scientific research “The Mechanisms for Overcoming Mental Barriers of Inclusion of Socially Vulnerable Categories of the Population for the Purpose of Intensifying Modernization in the Regional Community” (RSF grant No. 16-18-00078). The authors analyze the essence of the category of “socially vulnerable groups” from the legal, economic and sociological perspectives. The paper shows that the economic approach that uses the criterion “the level of income and accumulated assets” when defining vulnerable population groups prevails in public administration practice. The legal field of the category based on the economic approach is defined by the concept of “the poor and socially unprotected categories of citizens”. With the help of the analysis of theoretical and methodological aspects of this issue, the authors show that these criteria are a necessary but not sufficient condition for classifying the population as being socially vulnerable. Foreign literature associates the phenomenon of vulnerability with the concept of risks, with the possibility of households responding to them and with the likelihood of losing the well-being (poverty theory; research areas related to the means of subsistence, etc.). The asset-based approaches relate vulnerability to the poverty that arises due to lack of access to tangible and intangible assets. Sociological theories presented by the concept of social exclusion pay much attention to the breakdown of social ties as a source of vulnerability. The essence of social exclusion consists in the inability of people to participate in important aspects of social life (in politics, labor markets, education and healthcare, cultural life, etc.) though they have all the rights to do so. The difference between the concepts of exclusion and poverty is manifested in the displacement of emphasis from income inequality to limited access to rights. Social exclusion is characterized by the situation and state of exception that is linked to social status and self-perception of human rights and expressed through the senses of inferiority, anger, fear, despair, depression, shame. The status of social exclusion has many criteria: poverty, limited opportunities for employment and education, lack of access to social and community networks and activities, inability to plan one’s own life. The explanatory concept of social exclusion is based on the construction of the attitude toward socially vulnerable layers as the devalued social status. The barrier of social inclusion consists in the formation of a negative image of a representative of this category of the population in the eyes of more secure population groups; and the reason for this phenomenon lies in individual characteristics of an individual: lack of purpose, apathy, laziness, low motivation to labor and training, and bad habits. The prevailing social stereotype contributes to the stratification of entire families, including children, who are in advance deprived of the most important economic, political and cultural resources of society, and have no opportunities for the upward mobility. If no measures are taken to overcome social exclusion, it can lead to the fact that part of the population will fall out of social development and slip into a state of stagnation and complete social dependence. The concept of social inclusion shifts the priorities of state social policy from the allocation of social transfers to actively changing the mindset in society.

Key words: social exclusion, socially vulnerable groups, the poor, poverty concept, social inclusion.

Relevance of the study

Leading Russian scientists have repeatedly stresses the non-economic factors (especially those that lie in the sphere of public consciousness) in economic development of any country. These factors play a “significant and increasingly important role among the factors that determine the content and vector of the changes happening in our world and country”¹.

Nowadays, the Russian society is once again involved in the cycle of fundamental changes that determine the vector of its modernization and further development in the coming decades. We are talking about the formation of national identity, preservation of national sovereignty, enhancement of the role of society in public administration, overcoming of the crisis of confidence in state and non-governmental institutions, rejection of the pro-Western ideology of the “consumer society” and return to the native Russian roots of development based on spiritual and moral values². In this connection, there emerges an acute issue concerning the modernization of society, search for ways to intensify modernization processes, which are constrained by both economic and

social factors³. Scientific research pays more attention to the former. At the same time, mental barriers, behavior stereotypes (non-economic “agents”), along with economic factors, not only influence the reduction in labor supply, but also impede the full and effective implementation of labor potential, increase the load on the economically active part of the population, increase social tensions and create a society of unequal opportunities. Exclusion of socially vulnerable population groups also hinders modernization processes and limits the use of their resource potential. The present paper consider theoretical and methodological foundations of exclusion, the phenomenon that in these conditions becomes one of the cornerstones of the study.

Basic definitions

It should be noted that the conceptual framework of the study includes a number of definitions that require theoretical and methodological substantiation. The first one is mentality, because this concept and the framework of its empirical study are developed insufficiently⁴. Second, it is the category of socially vulnerable population that, as an object of social policy, requires special attention on the part of the government. But which groups of the Russian society can be

¹ Osipov G.V. Ne upustit' predstavivshiysya shans! [Do Not Miss This Chance!]. *Sotsiologiya i ekonomika sovremennoi sotsial'noi real'nosti. Sotsial'naya i sotsial'no-politicheskaya situatsiya v Rossii v 2013 godu* [Sociology and Economics of Contemporary Social Reality. Social and Socio-Political Situation in Russia in 2013]. Moscow: ISPI RAN, 2013. P. 17.

² Morev M.V., Korolenko A.V. Subjective Factor in Social Development as a Key Resource for the Consolidation of the Russian Society. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 2014, no. 5. DOI: 10.15838/esc/2014.5.35.6.

³ Ilyin, V.A., Shabunova A.A. O nekotorykh tendentsiyakh v ekonomicheskom razvitiy Rossii i regiona [About Some Trends in Economic Development of Russia and the Region]. *Sotsis* [Sociological Studies], 2015, no. 8, pp. 34-41.

⁴ Firsov B. Mental'nye miry sovremennogo rossiiskogo naseleniya (stat'ya tret'ya) [Mental Worlds of the Contemporary Russian Population (Article Number Three)]. *Teleskop: zhurnal sotsiologicheskikh i marketingovykh issledovaniy* [Telescope: A Journal of Sociological and Marketing Research], 2007, no. 6, pp. 14-27.

referred to this category and in accordance with what criteria? Modern Russian society has substantial differences in the provision of various population groups with economic, social, administrative, cultural and other types of resources. The socio-economic reforms of the 1990s and the permanent waves of economic, financial and political crises of the 21st century led to a profound differentiation in the Russian society and sharp polarization of people's incomes. Part of the Russians lost these resources, and more and more groups of the Russian society were pushed out to the periphery of social space. Transformation of the social structure of regional community⁵ that is happening today in Russia is due to the existence of a hierarchy of life opportunities (privileges and deprivations) in the distribution of access to desired benefits and values such as wealth, power, prestige and knowledge⁶. Socially vulnerable categories of population found themselves in isolation from the good things in life.

⁵ We understand regional community as a community of people who are united by temporal and spatial conditions of life, interact with each other in the framework of social institutions, groups and organizations in the interests of the region and influence the formation of social relations in it. Find more information on regional community in: Khomukha V.I. *Institutsional'nye determinanty transformatsii sotsial'noi struk-tury regional'nogo soobshchestva: dis. ... kand. sotsiol. nauk* [Institutional Determinants of Transformation of the Social Structure of Regional Community: Ph.D. in Sociology Dissertation]. Stavropol, 2006. 157 p.; Motalov Yu.G. *Regional'noe soobshchestvo i etnicheskie migranty: sotsial'no-filosofskii analiz sootnosheniya potrebnosti: avtoref. dis. ... kand. filosof. n.* [Regional Community and Ethnic Migrants: A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of the Correlation of the Needs: Ph.D. in Philosophy Dissertation Abstract]. Moscow, 2013. 23 p.

⁶ Sztompka P. Ponyatie sotsial'noi struktury: popytka obobshcheniya [The Concept of Social Structure: An Attempt to Generalize]. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies], 2001, no. 9, p. 6.

The concept of “socially vulnerable groups” is used in the legal and economic sphere, and in the practice of charitable organizations. Theoretical studies of social vulnerability were actively carried out abroad in the second half of the 20th century. A new surge of interest to this issue in the West was caused by a World Bank study of social risks initiated in the 1990s⁷. In Russia, the requirements of changing social practice also stimulated the research on vulnerability and social assistance in the early 2000s.

The concept of social vulnerability

In Western scientific literature, socially vulnerable groups are defined in accordance with the concept that treats vulnerability as a reaction to risks, which include social risks. The main components of risk are: a) risk events themselves; b) risk management; c) the result in terms of loss of welfare. A key role belongs to the indicators of magnitude, timing and history of risks and risk response. A household may be able to mitigate a risk or set of risks or cope with them in the current period, but this process can result in a limited ability to manage risks in subsequent periods, the ability characterized by resource constraints⁸. The basic principles of the concept are: prospect (vulnerability is defined as the probability of

⁷ Abrahamson P. Sotsial'naya eksklyuziya i bednost' [Social Exclusion and Poverty]. *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* [Social Sciences and Modernity], 2001, no. 2.

⁸ Holzmann R. Jorgensen S. *Social Protection as Social Risk Management: Conceptual Underpinnings for Social Protection Sector Strategy Paper. Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 9904*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1999; Siegel P., Alwang J. *An Asset-Based Approach to Social Risk Management: A Conceptual Framework. Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 9926*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1999.

experiencing a loss in the future); temporal dependence; relation to households in general; dependence of the degree of vulnerability on risk characteristics and on the ability of households to respond to risks; limited access to assets and limited ability to respond to a risk. The vulnerability of individuals within the household and its dynamics are crucial for understanding household vulnerability. Social actions can reduce risk or exposure to risk, this is why the main interest of social policy lies in the outcome of the process of households' responding to risks in terms of the loss of welfare.

Economic approach: the concept of poverty

Economic theories represent vulnerability within the concept of poverty as a result of responding to potential threats. Vulnerable households, according to economists, are those that have entered or can go into a state of poverty or destitution due to the cumulative process of risk and response measures. The main and most convenient tools for measuring vulnerability are the monetary indicators, especially when assessing the vulnerability as related to consumption deficiency. *The monetary approach* uses the indicators of per capita incomes and the subsistence level as instruments to measure vulnerability (the concepts of absolute poverty by C. Booth, L. Gordon, N. Rimashevskaya), and the median level of economic welfare (P. Townsend's concept of relative poverty). The findings of the research on poverty and vulnerability of the population in the Russian Federation conducted by a team supervised

by L. Ovcharova consider that the household is poor if it has incomes below the subsistence level, and other forms of restricting access to resources are proposed to be considered as manifestations of vulnerability⁹.

The *non-monetary approach* to assessing poverty as a criterion of population vulnerability takes into account the indices of opportunities and deprivations that determine the mismatch between the level of consumption of individual households and the standard accepted in society, and the lack of access to a specific set of benefits.

However, economic concepts have been criticized precisely because of the underlying idea that all losses can be measured in monetary terms. The theoretical-methodological problem of the concept of poverty is that it studies only one of the many aspects of vulnerability – the vulnerability that is expressed in the variability of incomes¹⁰. Researchers believe that the measurements of only income or consumption of households limit the analysis of the state of vulnerability (A. Coudouel, J. Hentschel): “Vulnerability is a broad concept that encompasses not only income vulnerability but also risks such as those associated with health, ... and result from violence or social exclusion ...”¹¹

⁹ *Dokhody i sotsial'nye uslugi: neravenstvo, uyazvимость, bednost': kollektivnaya monografiya* [Income and Social Services: Inequality, Vulnerability, Poverty: A Collective Monograph]. Supervised by L.N. Ovcharova; Nezavisimyi institut sotsial'noi politiki. Moscow: GU-VShE, 2005.

¹⁰ Coudouel A., Hentschel J. *Poverty Data and Measurement. Preliminary Draft for a Sourcebook on Poverty Reduction Strategies*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2000. April. P. 34.

¹¹ Ibid.

Theoretical and methodological issues in the study of vulnerability should include the necessity to consider the dynamics of the process and complexity of comparison of different types of vulnerability between each other due to the lack of comparability of individual categories of social risks. For example, what economic criterion should be chosen when comparing vulnerability to disease, social unrest or lack of education? Russian researchers refer the emergence of vulnerability to uncontrollable openness of the Russian society that generates specific risks associated with social fears and anxieties about instability and uncertainty in life, and external apprehensions¹². Local wars, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, wherever they occur, pose a threat for almost every Russian. In addition, the production of new marginalized groups increases – they consist not of temporarily unemployed people, but of the people who cannot adapt to the cultural innovations of an open society. At that, new social risk groups inevitably emerge.

“A minimum level of the quality of life in different areas” and the definition of vulnerability as the probability of falling below this level are considered as output. For instance, the work of Lant Pritchett and colleagues define vulnerability as the risk that a household will move into a state of poverty at least once over

the next few years¹³. Vulnerability, therefore, is defined as the probability of falling below the poverty threshold for a certain period of time. In this case, households have a greater or lesser degree of vulnerability. Judging by the amount of the time that a household spends below the poverty line, researchers define the structural (associated with chronic poverty) and temporal vulnerability (A.Coudouel¹⁴, M. Ravallion)¹⁵. The disadvantage of these ideas lies in the necessity to measure the probability associated with future conditions to compute current vulnerability, which complicates management decision-making.

Economic approach: resource concepts

The asset-based approach links vulnerability to the state of poverty that is considered to be a consequence of insufficient access to tangible and intangible assets. Tangible assets include land, labor, capital, savings (i.e. natural, human, physical and financial assets). Intangible assets include social, institutional and political relations, social infrastructure, and location¹⁶. This concept is based on the ability of households to manage risks by

¹² *Rossiya na novom perelome: strakhi i trevogi* [Russia at a New Turning Point: Fears and Anxiety]. Ed.by M.K. Gorshkov, R. Krumm, V.V. Petukhov. Moscow: Al'fa-M, 2009.

¹³ Pritchett L., Suryahadi A., Sumarto S. *Quantifying Vulnerability to Poverty: A Proposed Measure, Applied to Indonesia. Policy Research Working Paper #2437*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2000.

¹⁴ Coudouel A., Ezemenari K., Grosh M., Sherburne-Benz L. *Preliminary Draft for A Sourcebook on Poverty Reduction Strategies*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2000. April.

¹⁵ Ravallion M. Expected Poverty Under Risk-Induced Welfare Variability. *Economic Journal*, 1998, March, pp. 1173-1183.

¹⁶ Siegel P., Alwang J. *An Asset-Based Approach to Social Risk Management: A Conceptual Framework. Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 9926*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1999. Pp. 10-12.

expanding the responses to risks: “Vulnerability of the population also depends on its assets... Cashing in these assets during the crisis helps people survive. The differences in the types and amounts of such assets owned by different households and individuals partly explain the differences in their vulnerability”¹⁷.

The *livelihoods literature* points out that vulnerability has two sides: an external side of risks, shocks and stress, and the inner side manifesting in helplessness, lack of means to mitigate the blows, or the inability to do without losses¹⁸. Proponents of this concept distinguish between the “structural” vulnerability and “proximate” vulnerability¹⁹. Structural vulnerability is manifested in the families that due to their composition are more prone to risk and stress (for example, households with disabled members): they face high risks in the infrastructure, while having minimal opportunities for responding. The state of proximate vulnerability may vary from year to year, because vulnerability is not a steady condition but an evolving process²⁰.

Economic and legal approach

Despite the above drawbacks, it is the monetary approach, due to its clearly defined criteria and availability of statistical

information, gets enshrined in the Russian legislation. In determining the socially vulnerable segments of the population, Russian laws use rather broad definitions – “the poor and socially unprotected categories of citizens”, as, for example, in the Tax Code of the Russian Federation (Item 8 of Article 217, Item 14 of Article 251 of the RF Tax Code)²¹. However, the federal and regional legislation specifies only the term “poor citizens” on the criterion of per capita family income (income of the citizen who lives alone)²². A family obtains the status of needy if its amount of per capita income is lower than the subsistence level. In this case, the individual (family) receives the right to obtain targeted social assistance from the state. Thus, in accordance with Federal Law No. 512 dated August 20, 2003, the needy families (low-income citizens who live alone) include individuals in a state of neediness, regardless of demographic characteristics, social status, employment, and health status²³. Some socially unprotected

¹⁷ Eade D., Williams S. *The OXFAM Handbook of Development and Relief*. Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1995. P. 931.

¹⁸ Chambers R. Editorial Introduction: Vulnerability, Coping, and Policy. *IDS Bulletin*, 1989, vol. 20, no. 2, pp 1-7.

¹⁹ Davis A.P. Targeting the Vulnerable in Emergency Situations: Who is Vulnerable? *Lancet*, 1996, no. 348 (9031), pp. 868-871.

²⁰ Davies S. *Adaptable Livelihoods. Coping with Food Insecurity in the Malian Sahel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. P. 24

²¹ Nalogovyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii (chast' vtoraya) ot 05.08.2000 N 117-FZ (red. ot 15.02.2016) [Tax Code of the Russian Federation (Part 2) of August 05, 2000 No. 117-FZ]. *Konsul'tantPlus* [ConsultantPlus Legal Reference System].

²² Article 5 of Federal Law 512 dated August 20, 2003 “On the Procedure of Accounting the Income and Calculating the Average Per Capita Family Income and Income of Citizens who Live Alone for the Purpose of Recognizing Them Poor and Grant Them State Social Assistance”. The list of types of income used in the calculation of per capita family income and income of citizens living alone for the purpose of providing them with state social assistance is approved by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of August 20, 2003 No. 512 (as amended by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 30, 2005 No. 847).

²³ Kozhevnikov D.E. *Gosudarstvennaya sotsial'naya pomoshch' maloimushchim grazhdanam: pravovye voprosy: avtoref. dis. ... kand. yurid. nauk*. 12.00.05 [State Social Assistance to Needy Citizens: Legal Issues: Ph.D. in Law Dissertation Abstract]. Yekaterinburg, 2010. Pp. 13-14.

categories of citizens (minors in difficult life situations, disabled people and participants of the Great Patriotic War, combat veterans, blockade survivors, orphans, the disabled, etc.) are specified in other federal laws²⁴.

When implementing the economic and legal approach in practice, public authorities face many contradictions. Is the lack of income source a necessary and sufficient basis for defining people as socially vulnerable segments of the population, given the fact that the level of per capita income is not considered a reliable criterion of poverty. The standard of living is determined not only by current income, but by overall wealth. According to the viewpoint of M.I. Mallaeva and Kh.M. Khadzhalov, the standard of living is demonstrate much better by indicators such as the “volume and structure of consumption”²⁵.

Sociological approach

Representatives of the sociological approach believe that indicators such as income or consumption are not able to describe adequately the state of vulnerability. Sociologists often discuss the vulnerability

of social groups in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics or social status²⁶, i.e. they identify the groups that can be generally described as vulnerable (such as the elderly, people with disabilities, children in difficult life situations, families with single mothers, large families).

Social anthropologist Caroline Moser defines vulnerability as “insecurity of the well-being of individuals, families or communities in a changing environment”²⁷. She notes that the concept of vulnerability reflects more fully the processes of change, and the vulnerability analysis includes both the threat and the tolerance for risk – the ability to use all the opportunities to counter the threat and recover from negative shocks.

Sociologists propose to expand the definition of assets and, in addition to the physical and financial areas, they propose to include social capital and family relationships²⁸. Several authors draw attention to the fact that individual vulnerability cannot be separated from the concept of “social vulnerability”²⁹, because the presence of relationships between individuals forms the collective nature of vulnerability.

²⁴ Federal Law of August 02, 1995 No. 122-FZ (as Amended on November 21, 2011) “On social Services provided to the Elderly and Disabled”; Federal Law of January 12, 1995 (as Amended on October 16, 2012) No. 5-FZ “On Veterans”; Federal Law of December 21, 1996 No. 159-FZ (as Amended on February 29, 2012) “On Additional Guarantees on Social Support of Orphaned Children and Children Left without Support of Their Parents; Federal Law of June 24, 1999 No. 120-FZ (as Amended on December 03, 2011) “On the Fundamentals of the System for Preventing Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency”.

²⁵ Mallaeva M.I., Khadzhalov Kh.M. Metodicheskie podkhody k opredeleniyu ob’ektov sotsial’noi zashchity naseleniya [Methodological Approaches to the Definition of Objects of Social Protection]. *Vestnik Dagestanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* [Dagestan State University Bulletin], 2011, no. 5, p. 22.

²⁶ Loughhead S., Mittai O. *Urban Poverty and Vulnerability in India: A Social Perspective. Paper Presented at the Urban Forum: Urban Poverty Reduction in the 21st Century, April 3–5, 2000*. Chantilly, Virginia, 2000.

²⁷ Moser C. The Asset Vulnerability Framework: Reassessing Urban Poverty Reduction Strategies. *World Development*, 1998, vol. 26, no. 1, p. 2.

²⁸ Putnam R.D. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

²⁹ Dilley M. Climate, Change, and Disasters. *Managing Disaster Risk in Emerging Economies*. Ed. by A. Kreimer, M. Arnold. The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2000; Morrow B.H. Identifying and Mapping Community Vulnerability. *Disasters*, 1999, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 1-18.

The concept of social exclusion

Especially great attention to the disintegration of social ties is given in the *concept of social exclusion*. An aspect of social vulnerability is the loss of man's connection with the rest of society. And in this case we can speak about his social exclusion, under which A. Giddens understood a "mechanism that separates groups of people from the main social stream"³⁰. The term "social exclusion" was introduced by R. Lenoir in 1974 in his work "Les Exclus" to describe the life situation of the people who are rejected and not included in the social insurance system of the state of welfare; R. Lenoir also drew attention to the uneven distribution of wealth in society and access to its resources.

The civil law version of the concept in the context of social rights and social justice connected social isolation with the fact that an individual (or a group of people) has no access to rights. If the economic concept of poverty linked the essence of social vulnerability to the low income and low financial standard of living, then the definition of social exclusion is linked to social rights such as the right to work, housing, medical services or education³¹. According to A. Sen, social exclusion occurs when an individual is deprived of liberty to take those actions he considers necessary³². A. Sen emphasizes

³⁰ Giddens A. *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998. P. 105.

³¹ Lister R. *Poverty, Key Concepts*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

³² Sen A. Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny. *Social Development Papers*, 2000, no. 1. Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank.

the objective reduction in the range of capabilities of an individual. The essence of social exclusion consists in the inability of people to participate in important aspects of social life to which they have all the rights: participation in political processes, labor markets, education and healthcare systems, and cultural life of the community. When the focus is shifted from income inequality to the restriction of access to rights, there emerges the distinction between the concepts of exclusion and poverty³³.

People may encounter two different types of exclusion: that which occurs as the result of deliberate policies and practices in society ("active" exclusion) or that which is a combination of social processes that are not a deliberate attempt to reject ("passive" exclusion). The factors leading to active social exclusion are: discriminatory practices, unequal position in the power hierarchy, and institutional barriers that impede access to public services and political participation. Z. Bauman argues that even under the most democratic regimes, the government claims the "right to exclude"³⁴. Both active and passive social exclusion may lead to the limitation of human capabilities. Limited capabilities in one area may lead to deprivations in other spheres of life and contribute to the process of social exclusion.

³³ Learn more about the differences between the concepts of poverty and exclusion in: Abrahamson P. *Sotsial'naya eksklyuziya i bednost'* [Social Exclusion and Poverty]. *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* [Social Sciences and Modernity], 2001, no. 2, p. 160.

³⁴ Bauman Z. *Wasted Lives. Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004. P. 21.

In the past decade, several works that study the concept of social exclusion were published. The authors of these works are F. Borodkin (about the situation and condition of social exclusion), N. Tikhonova (on the phenomenon of social exclusion in Russia), V. Antonova, A. Dmitrieva (analysis of the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion)³⁵. The works of V. Shmidt are devoted to the issues of the interdisciplinary approach to the study of social exclusion³⁶. According to N.E. Tikhonova, it is possible to describe the processes that are happening in modern Russian with the help of “horizontal stratification, individualization of risks and social exclusion”.

According to F. Borodkin, social exclusion is characterized not only by a situation of rejection, but also by a certain condition associated with social status and self-perception of the individual, including feelings of inferiority, anger, fear, despair, depression

³⁵ Antonova V. Kontsepty sotsial'noi inkluzii i ekskluzii v global'nom obshchestve: dreif po sotsial'nym institutam, aktoram i praktikam [The Concepts of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Global Society: the Overview of Social Institutions, Actors and Practices]. *Zhurnal issledovaniy sotsial'noi politiki* [Journal of Social Policy Studies], vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 151-170; Borodkin F.M. Sotsial'nye ekskluzii [Social Exclusion]. *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal* [Sociological Journal], 2000, no. 3/4, pp. 5-17; Dmitrieva A.V. Sotsial'noe vyklyuchenie/isklyuchenie kak printsip strukturatsii sovremennogo obshchestva [Social Exclusion as a Principle of Structuration of Modern Society]. *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal* [Sociological Journal], 2012, no. 2, pp. 98-114; Tikhonova N.E. Fenomen sotsial'noi ekskluzii v usloviyakh Rossii [The Phenomenon of Social Exclusion in Russia]. *Mir Rossii* [World of Russia], 2003, no. 1, pp. 36-83.

³⁶ Shmidt V. Mezhdistsiplinarnyi podkhod k probleme sotsial'noi ekskluzii [Interdisciplinary Approach to the Issue of Social Exclusion]. *Zhurnal issledovaniy sotsial'noi politiki* [The Journal of Social Policy Studies], 2004, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 547-566.

and shame³⁷. The status of social exclusion has many criteria: poverty, limited employment and education opportunities, lack of access to social and community networks and activities, inability to plan one's own life³⁸.

The concept of social exclusion helps explain why there is no use in the proposals of the economic theory to alleviate poverty with the help of government subsidies and grants. The fact is that people who live on government allowances are subject to social stigma, and the risk of their exclusion from social resources increases. There develops the attitude toward poverty as an impaired social status and the reasons for this phenomenon are seen in individual personality characteristics: lack of commitment, lack of will, laziness, low motivation to work and training, and bad habits. A negative image of the representative of vulnerable groups is formed in the eyes of more prosperous groups, this image shows pessimism, depression, helplessness, extreme poverty and bad luck. The prevailing social stereotype of this category of people exposes their children to stratification as well; thus, they are in advance denied the most important economic, political and cultural resources of society, and their opportunities for upward mobility are impeded.

³⁷ Borodkin F.M. Sotsial'nye ekskluzii [Social Exclusion]. *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal* [Sociological Journal], 2000, no. 3/4, p. 6.

³⁸ Tikhonova N.E. Fenomen sotsial'noi ekskluzii v usloviyakh Rossii [The Phenomenon of Social Exclusion in Russia]. *Mir Rossii* [World of Russia], 2003, no. 1, p. 40.

The chances of the risks leading to social vulnerability and social exclusion depend on the socio-economic policy of the government that determines the result of the interaction between these risks and social norms, social institutions and behavior patterns. One of the solutions to these problems lies in changing the attitudes in society toward people who need support, in changing the very consciousness and perception in the representatives of the categories under consideration.

Criteria of social vulnerability

Many researchers argue that at present, the most important criteria for identifying socially vulnerable population groups as objects of social protection should include objective reasons that prevent individuals from living a decent life and being financially secure. There can be very different reasons for this: health status, social status, loss of breadwinner, temporary or permanent disability, old age³⁹. They are connected most often with the fact that the individual cannot work and thus cannot provide for his/her living. Therefore,

³⁹ Luk'yanova T.N. *Sovershenstvovanie regional'noi sistemy sotsial'noi zashchity sotsial'no uyazvimykh sloev naseleniya: dis. ... kand. ek. nauk* [Improvement of the Regional System for Social Protection of Socially Vulnerable Population Groups: Ph.D. in Economics Dissertation]. Moscow, 2009; Mal'tseva E.V. *Sotsial'no uyazvimyie kategorii naseleniya na rynke truda i organiza-tsiya ikh sotsial'noi zashchity: dis. ... kand. ek. nauk* [Socially Vulnerable Categories of Population in the Labor Market, and Organization of Their Social Protection: Ph.D. in Economics Dissertation]. Moscow, 2001; Sergeeva E.A. *Sotsial'naya podderzhka uyazvimykh semei (sotsiologicheskii analiz): dis. ... kand. sots. nauk* [Social Support of Vulnerable Families (Sociological Analysis): Ph.D. in Sociology Dissertation]. Moscow, 2006; Pokruchina A.A. *Politika sotsial'noi zashchity uyazvimykh sloev naseleniya (sotsiologicheskii analiz): dis. ... kand. sots. nauk* [Policy of Social Protection of Vulnerable Population Groups (Sociological Analysis): Ph.D. in Sociology Dissertation]. Moscow, 2000.

several researchers put forward the ability to work as the main other criterion of social vulnerability⁴⁰. However, the application of this approach to the determination of socially vulnerable population groups has its disadvantages. For example, a disabled citizen can count on his/her family for support, and the worker can only earn very low wages that do not provide a decent standard of living. We agree with N.M. Rimashevskaya, who points out that "...the working poor are a purely Russian phenomenon"⁴¹.

Vulnerability of the Russian family is the second point which should be highlighted. Due to increased dependency burden, the following categories of families are often included in the vulnerable population groups: families with minor children, families with many children, single-parent families, families that have children left without parental care and orphans in their care, families with disabled members, including children with disabilities, families of the unemployed, families consisting of the elderly who live alone, and the families of forced migrants. Therefore, the work with socially vulnerable population should be part of the family policy and should be based on a careful definition of the groups of families that require social assistance, and targeted

⁴⁰ Mallaeva M.I., Khadzhalov Kh.M. Metodicheskie podkhody k opredeleniyu ob'ektov sotsial'noi zashchity naseleniya [Methodological Approaches to the Definition of Objects of Social Protection]. *Vestnik Dagestanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* [Dagestan State University Bulletin], 2011, no. 5, p. 23.

⁴¹ Rimashevskaya N.M. Bednost' i marginalizatsiya naseleniya [Poverty and Marginalization of the Population]. *Sotsis* [Sociological Studies], 2004, no. 4, p. 7.

measures for its implementation. In addition, it is necessary to pay special attention to the categories of population, which in addition to their low material well-being feel a strong additional deprivation: former prisoners, persons of no fixed abode, etc.

Taking regional context into consideration

It might be possible to link social vulnerability not just to low income, but to a low quality of life. In this perspective, there arise additional criteria for allocating the population in need of social support for the reason that the specifics of a region (territory) and living conditions in modern Russia are extremely important factors that determine the quality of life. If a region has a tense socio-political situation or unfavorable natural-climatic conditions, then the government has to pay increased attention to their residents and even allocate the categories of the population (or families) who are in need of social protection according to the criterion of socio-territorial problems. It has a negative impact on the quality of life, which makes the issue of classification of the territories critical.

The regions where the socio-political situation is tense are characterized by increased insecurity of population caused by military action or active migration. The increase in the number of displaced persons and forced migrants, as representatives of socially vulnerable population groups, places the region among the socially disadvantaged ones and increases the burden on social expenditure items of the regional budget.

Regional factors that may increase individual risks and affect social exclusion are as follows: the situation in the labor market and basic infrastructure, environment, the presence of necessary facilities in rural settlements, the relationship between the city and the village, the presence of social or ethnic conflicts.

Thus, under *socially vulnerable categories of the population* we understand the population groups that at present have limited access to tangible and intangible resources or for which there is a risk of social exclusion in the near future if there is no support on the part of society.

Inclusion of socially vulnerable population groups

The opposite of the process of social exclusion is inclusion as the extension of opportunities for people who are at the bottom of society to participate in economic, social, cultural and civil processes. It involves the integration of excluded population groups in institutions and social networks with the help of the following methods:

1. Improving the accessibility of essential services corresponding to actual needs and adapted to changing conditions and the specifics of the individual for all residents of the region. First of all, we are talking about high-quality and affordable education, healthcare, housing, utilities, transportation and sanitary services. It is very important for social inclusion to understand the inertia of education systems and their potential role in the chain of social exclusion.

2. Expansion of employment opportunities for the population that can suffer social exclusion, improvement of professional education, active policy on the labor market, development of social economy.

3. Changing the way of thinking in society, increase in the level of tolerance.

4. Changing the way of thinking in socially vulnerable groups for the purpose of increasing their involvement in society.

5. Engagement of citizens in state management at different levels. Representatives of socially vulnerable groups should be involved in making the decisions that affect their lives, and they should have access to fundamental rights.

6. Orientation toward economic growth in the regions.

Summary

Summing up, we acknowledge the fact that the economic-legal approach to the problem of social vulnerability prevails in the state management practice; this approach based on the notion of absolute poverty and the criteria of “low income” has a number of disadvantages. First, it is criticized by the scientific community for the substitution of social vulnerability with the concept of economic insecurity. Recent works in this area reveal the limitations of the “financial” (“money”) approach to the problem – the indicator of the level of income is not a necessary and sufficient one to determine social vulnerability.

Second, under this approach, the provision of support from the government to low-income population is reflected in the allocation of

social transfers, which secures the dependency position of recipients of state assistance and causes the growth of social tension in regional communities. Managerial decisions in social policy must be based on the analysis of economic indicators, and criteria of the risk of social exclusion for households and the ability to respond to it.

In our opinion, in view of the above, it is necessary to develop more definite criteria of socially vulnerable segments of the population who need protection and support from society. The basis for the development of criteria should be the concept of social exclusion, this fact is confirmed by the shift in the focus of the research from the concept of poverty as a static phenomenon (insufficient consumption) traditional for economics to the study of social exclusion as a dynamic process. If no measures are taken to overcome social exclusion, it can lead to the fact that part of the population will fall out of social development processes, slipping into a state of stagnation and complete social dependence, thus limiting modernization of regional community. The use of the concept of social exclusion shifts the priorities of state social policy from the allocation of social transfers to actively changing the way of thinking in the society and changing the mentality of the Russian population. Changes should be made in all areas of social exclusion – exclusion from economic life, social services, civil society, social life and networking. New value orientations and behavior patterns will contribute to the consolidation of various segments of the population and help intensify modernization processes.

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