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Changing Social Reality amid Crisis in the Russian Society



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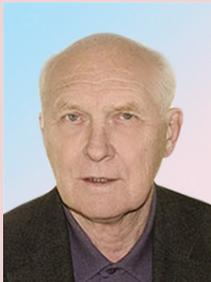
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Abstract. The sociological interpretation of reality and the processes occurring in it is determined by various approaches to understanding its nature. The diversity of these approaches is eventually reduced to its definition as a reality of the social world, which reflects, on the one hand, objectively existing phenomena and processes and, on the other hand, people's subjective perceptions about the objective reality. Social actuality as objective social reality exists beyond the subject of social cognition, i.e. objectively. Each new generation inherits from their parent generations a complex system of economic, social and political structures, institutions, organizations and the established relationships which form the social infrastructure of objective reality (social reality). But people perceive directly only the part

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of objective reality in which they have their own knowledge. Due to knowledge of its particular sphere or different objects of reality, people get its more or less adequate subjective perception. Therefore, the study of social reality focuses on the process of formation of subjective ideas about the objects of social actuality and attitudes to it, which is included in the subject area of sociology of knowledge. That is, from the standpoint of sociology of knowledge, the research object is not reality, but ideas about the reality. Based on subjective perceptions of reality, people construct their own reality. These perceptions change under the influence of various factors affecting the changes in social reality in the process of its formation. A significant change factor is the crisis which affects all spheres of the Russian society. The article analyzes the impact of the crisis on the changes in social reality in different population groups in Russia and the way it is reflected on people's attitudes to each other, to family, work and education. Based on analysis of data from nationwide studies it has been revealed that there is a contradiction between Russians' traditional attitudes to each other, family, work and education and the emerging modern attitudes. Amid crisis, this contradiction tends to exacerbate due to the impossibility of maintaining the traditional principles underlying the old way of life, which leads to uncertainty and formation of new forms of certainty through the change in life paradigm.

Key words: changing reality, crisis, interpersonal interaction, family, work, education.

1. Change as an immanent feature of social reality

From the standpoint of phenomenological sociology of knowledge, social reality as an object of the cognitive interest of the person involved in the learning process, “exists only in the minds of its subjects” (M. Heidegger). According to A. Schutz, the term “social reality” refers to “a set of objects and events of the socio-cultural world as an object of mundane consciousness of people living their daily lives among their own kind, and various interactions connected by different types of relations”¹. When studying reality, personal and group experience, individual and shared

feelings, latest expert opinions and traditional ideas are mixed, folding into a single image of reality².

The social world is discrete and changeable. It is a constantly changing combination of different spheres of reality. According to P. Berger and T. Luckmann, “I realize the world as the one consisting of multiple realities” which, firstly, can be connected to each other, and secondly, can be in the state of a constant change³. Accordingly, the society as a whole and its separate elements – social groups, communities,

¹ Schutz A. Formirovanie ponyatii i teorii v obshchestvennykh naukakh [Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences]. *Amerikanskaya sotsiologicheskaya mys'* [American sociological thought]. Moscow, 1994. P. 485.

² Barkan S.E. *Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World*. Jussim L.J. Social Perception and Social Reality: why accuracy dominates bias and self-fulfilling prophecy. Oxford University Press, 2012.

³ Berger P., Luckman T. *Sotsial'noe konstruirovaniye real'nosti: traktat po sotsiologii znaniya* [The social construction of Reality. A treatise on sociology of knowledge]. Translated from English. Moscow, 1995. P. 21.

organizations, institutions cannot exist without changing. Various processes constantly occur within them, something changes influenced by both internal (endogenous) and external (exogenous) factors. Becoming the subjects and objects of these changes, people constantly reconstruct their own reality. When interacting with each other within the changing structures and gaining new knowledge about their real state and the nature of the changes, people adjust the images of objects of social reality and their attitude towards them. But only those objects understood by people as space of their own life become real for them.

The sociological analysis of changes in social reality emphasizes the term “social”. It means that not any changes occurring in the society are taken into account, but those reflected in the mundane consciousness of people during their social interactions. I.e., social changes underlie the changes in social reality. Moreover, as noted by P. Bourdieu, the most fundamental social changes do not occur when new structures are established, but when the habitus (behavioral predisposition to certain types of activity) is changed.

The existing theories of social change, though different in terms of the variety of approaches to their sociological interpretation, agree in the statement about the changing nature of the society. Each theory substantiates the mechanisms through which they produce and reproduce social reality. However, it does not reflect

the mechanisms, but the results of their actions in the social actuality – real social change. Social reality itself is characterized as changing, flexible, but reconstructing and always complexified⁴.

Understanding social reality as dynamic is associated with the process of its design. The concept of social construction of reality by P. Berger and T. Luckmann reviews the process of its objectification in interacting with other people. I.e., it answers the question of how subjective perception of reality takes an objective form. The design of social reality in the phenomenological paradigm is a “continuous production by people of specific values, symbols which form subjective reality”⁵. Continuous production of new knowledge in the design process implies constant changes.

Thus, amid market relations a person who is not directly involved in them adjusts their interactions with the others based on new realities. The changing role structures in a family makes young people to take the new forms of marital relations for granted (for example, the so-called common-law marriage). Liberalization of labor reveals a

⁴ Alexander J.C. *The Meanings of Social Life. A Cultural Sociology*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003; Urry J. *Global Complexity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003; Sztompka P. *Sociology. Analysis of modern society*. Moscow: Logos, 2005; Bauman Z. *Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009; Bauman Z. *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.

⁵ Kravchenko S.A. *Sotsiologicheskii entsiklopedicheskii russko-angliiskii slovar'* [Sociological encyclopedic Russian-English dictionary]. Moscow: Russo, 2002. P. 174.

new reality in relations between the employer and the employee. The transformation of education into the service sector is becoming the new reality in interactions between students and teachers. In all these cases, the mechanism of individual experience objectification by means of typification of external environment, which contributes to the extension of the objects of social reality in the minds of individuals.

The forms of production and dissemination of knowledge vary in different social conditions. They depend not only on the ability of self-reflecting life experience, but also on the availability of different ways of their acquisition and transfer through education, literature, training, which is also socially determined. The more opportunities for acquiring knowledge, the wider the space of social reality and the subject area of its change.

Amid crisis conditions characteristic of the market and being one of its regulatory tools, the changing nature of social reality acquires new manifestations associated not only with the aggravation of market challenges, but also with the emergence of new opportunities for optimizing social interactions in various spheres of society.

According to Rosstat⁶, in the crisis 2014 compared to 2011 Industrial Production Index declined from 105 to 101.7%, Labor Productivity Index declined from 103.8

⁶ *Official website of the Federal State Statistics Service.* Available at: www.gks.ru

to 100.8% economy-wise. Economic recovery which started in 2010 slowed down demonstrating a negative trend by; the gap in imports and exports of Russian goods rose from 3.3 to 5.4 times in favor of foreign production⁷. The decline in production also had an impact on the escalation of inflation which amounted to 11.4%. The fall in the global oil prices, according to the estimations of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, has partly led to ruble devaluation – by 30 percentage points since 2014, and the sanctions caused additional ruble depreciation by 20 percentage points. Becoming long-term in nature, the crisis also affected the financial status of the Russians. It caused the reduction in their per capita income from 109.6% in 2011 to 107.1% in 2014 against the background of price increase, including the prices of basic consumer goods. Consumer Price Index for goods and services amounted to 111.35% nationwide in 2014. The minimum wage per capita rose during this period from 6369 rubles a month to 8050 rubles. In 2015, the number of Russian people with incomes below minimum wage increase by 3.1 million people (an almost 20% increase). At the same time, the number of people with incomes below minimum wage in 2015 amounted to more than 19 million people, i.e. 13,4% of the total population⁸.

⁷ *Regiony Rossii: sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie pokazateli. 2015: stat. sb.* [Russian regions: socio-economic indicators. 2015: statistical book]. Rosstat [Federal State Statistics Service]. Moscow, 2016. 1266 p.

⁸ *Rosstat* [Federal State Statistics Service]. Available at: <http://www.gks.ru/dbscripts/cbsd/dbinet.cgi>

More than a half of the total Russian population (56%) admitted their inability to exist without state support⁹. This is the objective reality which inevitably changes subjective reality, being reflected in socio-cultural characteristics of the Russian people, especially young people¹⁰.

Let us consider how these changes influenced the Russian's perceptions of social reality.

2. Trends and contradictions in the changing social reality

The crisis increases the uncertainty during the people's reality design process. Social uncertainty is associated with the emergence of new structures and norms, new aspects of relations which they face in the changing reality. The emerging social relations, relationships, interactions, on the one hand, serve as a necessary source of choice of possibilities in designing social reality, on the other hand, they, being turned into reality, become certain. Therefore, uncertainty and certainty are phases of the process of social design of the changing reality. The transition

of uncertainty and certainty from one state to another causes risks which, in turn, affect the change in reality, giving it a risky character.

Based on information available from comparative studies conducted in the relatively prosperous 2011 and the crisis 2014¹¹, the authors consider how social reality changes in terms of people's attitudes towards each other, their families, labor and education.

Crisis changes in reality in interpersonal interactions. When interacting and assessing each other, people do not always take into account individual manifestations, but are guided by generalized (figurative) socio-personal characteristics. The more formalized are the interactions, the more attention is drawn to the social characteristics of an individual which together form an image of the Other. They include ethical, status, socio-cultural and behavioral characteristics. Therefore, the change in the image of the Other in crisis conditions is considered as a feature and a factor in changing social reality in interpersonal interactions.

Comparative analysis has showed that the attitude of Russians to the Others as partners

⁹ Gorshkov M.K., Petukhov V.V. (Eds.). *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo i vyzovy vremeni. Kniga pervaya* [Russian society and the challenges of time. Book 1]. Moscow: Vés' mir, 2015. Pp. 34, 41–42.

¹⁰ Leonidova G.V., Golovchin M.A. Transformatsiya sotsiokul'turnykh kharakteristik molodezhi [Transformation of youth's socio-cultural characteristics]. Zdorov'e molodezhi: sravnitel'noe issledovanie. Rossiya, Belarus', Pol'sha: kollektivnaya monografiya [Youth health: comparative research. Russia, Belarus, Poland: a multi-author monograph]. Moscow: Ekon-Inform, 2016. Pp. 191–208; Ilišin V., Bouillet D., Gvozdanović A., Potočnik D. Youth in a Time of Crisis. Institute for Social Research – Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Zagreb, 2013.

¹¹ The study is conducted by the Department for Sociology of Youth of Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences by a representative sampling of the Russian adult population in 66 locations in 13 Russian regions. In 2011, 1301 people aged 18 and over were interviewed, in 2014 – 1459 people aged 15 and over. Research supervisor – Zubok Yu.A., Doctor of Sociology, and Chuprov V.I., Doctor of Sociology, Professor. Field research is conducted by Qualitas Institute of Public Opinion under the supervision of Romanovich N.A., Doctor of Sociology.

in interpersonal interactions are dominated by ethical socio-personal characteristics. When building relations with each other, Russian citizens primarily expect the demonstration of moral (82.9% in 2011 and 82.6% in 2014) and business (53.3% in 2011 and 55.7% in 2014) qualities. As can be seen, the values of moral and business qualities of the Others did not significantly change during the crisis in 2014, which demonstrates the stability of moral and ethical criteria in the attitudes of Russians towards each other, they remain dominant amid both social stability and crisis.

Status and behavioral characteristics of the partners are taken into account in interpersonal interactions to a lesser extent, although their influence in a crisis is increasing. The ratio of the values “influence” and “not influence” was as follows: the social status of a partner (39% to 61% in 2011 and 45.1% to 54.9% in 2014), their belonging to a certain circle (45% to 55% in 2011 and 52.2% to 47.8% in 2014); political party membership (13.5% to 86.5% in 2011 and 20.8% to 79.2% in 2014); activity in public life (42.4% to 57.6% in 2011 and 45.2% to 54.8% in 2014); success in life (43% to 57% in 2011 and 47.4% to 52.6% in 2014); leadership qualities (39.8% to 60.2% in 2011 and 44.5% to 55.5% in 2014). It is noteworthy that the partner’s political party membership is the least important in people’s attitude towards them; however, the value of this characteristic also rose in the crisis 2014. I.e., political engagement of modern Russian citizens in

crisis society is becoming lower. The authors conclude that amid crisis, the role of status and behavioral characteristics of partners in the space of social reality in interpersonal interactions is increasing. This is reflected in the fact that people become to reconstruct their subjective reality.

Amid crisis, the role of the degree of influence of socio-cultural characteristics on people’s attitudes towards their partners is significantly increased. Due to national and ethnic characteristics the ratio of the values “influence” and “not influence” in 2011 amounted to 22.2% to 77,8%, in 2014 – 28.2% to 71.8%; due to people’s belonging to different religions – in 2011, 21% to 79% and in 2014 – 29.8% to 70.2%. This demonstrates increasing ethnic and religious tensions between people amid crisis, which is also reflected in the change in subjective reality.

The most common type of interpersonal interactions is communication. On the one hand, in the process of communication the partners learn about each other’s personal characteristics, on the other hand, they exchange knowledge about social reality. Therefore, the value of communication is an important basic characteristic of interpersonal relations. The answers to the question “What is the meaning of everyday communication with other people?” implied analysis of value attitudes related to communication between actors of interpersonal interactions, which distinguished terminal and instrumental values. Terminal value of communication

(its inherent value for the respondent) was determined by a set of semantic values: internal need, pleasure (communication with a pleasant person), habit (communication itself). Its value amounted to 65.3% in 2011 (internal need – 24%, pleasure – 35.2%, habit – 6.1%) and in 2014 – to 60% (internal need – 27%, pleasure – 26.7%, habit – 6.3%). Therefore, amid crisis, communication remains a terminal value for most Russians, although its value is reduced.

There is an increasing proportion of semantic values of communication as an instrumental value (achievement of other goals through communication), which are distributed as follows: communication is a means (exchange of information) – 19.1% in 2011 and 21.3% in 2014; a need (when necessary), respectively 12.7% and 15.4%; duty of courtesy – 2.9% and 3.3%. In general, the instrumental value of communication amounted to 34.7% in 2011 and 40% in the 2014 crisis.

In crisis, all groups – by age, level of education, financial status, type of settlement according to place of residence – demonstrate a clear trend of declining terminal values of communication and its growing instrumental value. This trend is the most explicit among young people aged 18–29 (the instrumental value of communication amounted to 35% in 2011 and 40.1% in the crisis 2014) and in the age group over 50 (32% and 40.6% respectively); among people with higher education (Bachelor's, Master's

and specialist's degrees; 31% and 42.3%); in middle-class people by financial status (31% and 42.5%); among urban residents (33.3% and 42.6%). The instrumentalization of communication is reflected in the social reality of interpersonal interactions in different social groups, determining the focus of its change during in the crisis Russian society.

The conducted analysis suggests that ethical characteristics of the historically formed image of the Other as an object of social reality, which do not change their values in a crisis, are its sustainable basic grounds. They are also represented by terminal values of communication which still remain important.

A change in the conditions of the crisis of socio-cultural, social, status and behavioral characteristics of the image of the Other in interpersonal interactions are factors in the changing social reality. They are distributed by degree of importance of Crisis Change Index¹² as follows: socio-cultural (average total index equals 1.3), socio-status (1.27) and behavioral (1.07). Among socio-cultural characteristics, religious characteristics turned out to be the most significant factor in social

¹² "Crisis Change Index" is an indicator of the degree of connection between the characteristics under analysis and socio-group factors in the crisis 2014 compared to the values of the same characteristics in 2011. The degree of importance of social reality change factors was identified based on average total values of crisis change indices. It should be noted that if the borders of the limits of the measuring range are narrowed, the significance of even small differences between factor importance automatically increases (in deciles and hundredths).

reality change in interpersonal interactions (1.35); among status characteristics – political party membership (1.55); among behavioral characteristics – leadership qualities (1.09). In the social-group context, social reality in interpersonal interactions changes mostly due to the differences in financial status (1.21); level of education (1.2); type of settlement (1.2); social-age features (1.18). Factors identified as a result of analysis contribute to the growth of certainty and trust in relations with each other in a crisis society, influencing the change in social reality in interpersonal interactions.

Crisis change in reality of family relations.

In order to identify trends and factors in changing social reality of family relations one uses indicators of underlying characteristics of a family image considered as an empirical referent of attitude towards it. The indicators composing a generalized image of a family in this study are as follows: family as a value, distribution of roles in a family, the number of children, attitude towards children, nature of family ties (one- or multi-generational family), contents of family ties (independence of each member of the family or joint household management), attitude towards inter-marriages.

Value attitude towards the family was analyzed on the basis of distribution of answers to the question “What is the meaning of a family for you?”. The family as a terminal value was determined by a set of semantic values such as a need (cannot imagine my life

without a family); a purpose, i.e., it has to be; love. The instrumental attitude towards a family was determined by the following set of semantic values: a family as a means (for career, comfort); as a need (the sense of duty or unease without a family); as a burden. The attitude towards family as a value did not change compared to 2011. Both in prosperous years and in a crisis the family remains a significant terminal value for the majority of respondents (84.2%).

In 2014, the proportion of respondents with a traditional view of the role of a husband as head of the family increased (from 33.1% to 40.9%); however, the number of supporters of equal roles in the family decreased (from 60.8% to 53.7%). The enhancing role of a man in the family is reflected in the strengthening authoritarian motives in attitudes towards children based on severity and submission to parents’ will (from 11.4% to 16.7%). The percentage of respondents approving of inter-marriages increased (from 26.5% to 22.5%). The proportion of respondents willing to have three or more children decreased from 21.3% to 18.3%. These trends reflect the changing social reality of family relations in a crisis society.

Thus, in a crisis, a family remains the basis terminal value in the Russian social reality. The greatest changes in the image of a family as a phenomenon of social reality are associated with the ideas of distribution of family roles, attitudes to children and inter-marriages.

In terms of importance of average total values of crisis change indices, factors in the changing social reality are distributed in the following way: authoritarian attitude towards children based on severity and submission (average total index equals 1.54); a husband as head of a family in the distribution of family roles (1.24), equal distribution of family roles (0.91) and positive attitude towards inter-marriages (0.85)¹³. This means that in a crisis there is an upward trend of confidence in the traditional family model and a downward trend of confidence in its current model.

In the social-group context of social reality in interpersonal interactions changes mostly due to the differences in financial status (1.16), by the type of settlement (1.13), level of education (1.11) and by social and age characteristics (1.11). I.e., the impact of a crisis on the change in social reality in the sphere of family relations is significantly differentiated due to different living conditions of different population groups.

Crisis change in reality at work. When constructing the image of labor, the meanings which people associate with their expectations are the most determining. The social meaning of labor is revealed in interaction with other people in their view of its feasibility, usefulness and effectiveness. Labor acquires personal meaning in the process of interactions through its evaluation as a measure of consumption,

as well as a way of self-expression and self-affirmation. The variety of actual meanings composes a subjective perception about social reality in the sphere of labor relations.

Empirical indicators of the image of labor in this study are as follows: value of work, expectations and opportunities for their implementation at work, ethical characteristics of employment relations. Value attitude towards labor was analyzed on the basis of distribution of answers to the question “What is the meaning of labor for you?” Labor as a terminal value is determined by a set of semantic values: feeling of one’s usefulness, internal need, creativity. Instrumental attitude towards labor is determined by the following set of semantic values: opportunity to earn money, forced necessity, communication. Despite the fact that throughout the post-Soviet period instrumental attitude towards labor was predominant, in a crisis the importance of terminal value of labor is increased – from 27.7% in 2011 to 31.3% in 2014. This means that the potential of inherently valued attitude towards work typical for most Russians is activated, serving as a way of self-realization and self-affirmation. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that among this set of semantic meanings of values related to labor an increasing need for the feeling of one’s usefulness is distinguished (18.4% in 2011 and 22.5% in 2014). The highest increase in this value of labor is noted in population groups of the most active period of working age (aged

¹³ Positive index values (> 1) demonstrate an increasing trend of social reality change, negative (< 1) – a decreasing trend.

25–29 – from 12.1% to 22.3%; aged 30–39 years – from 12.3% to 23.2%; aged 40–49 years – from 14.8% to 23.8%). Consequently, traditional values of labor have an ability to activate their self-regulation function in extreme crisis conditions.

Significant characteristics of the image of labor are the expectations with which people associate their perception of labor in general, not just of their work. These expectations reflect their needs and interests which could be implemented through labor. Depending on what people expect from labor, their motivation to labor and their attitude towards their own work is formed.

Compared to 2011, in the crisis 2014 labor expectations for interesting and creative job decreased (from 34.6% in 2011 to 24.1% in 2014), for self-assertion among staff (14.6% and 9.5% respectively) and even for improvement of the standard of living (73.9% and 51.9%); however, people are more hopeful about ensuring their basic sustenance (21.9% and 35.5%). However, in different age groups crisis change in expectations, keeping the revealed tendency, differ markedly both in terms of values and the area of change. Among young people, for example, amid declining values of the enumerated expectations increases the need for professional identity (from 38.3% to 46.2% in the group of people aged 18–24, from 36.4% to 41.5% in the group of people aged 25–29). In older age groups the reducing expectations for professional identity are decreased compared to other age

groups (from 27.5% to 20.9% in the group of people aged 50–59 and from 26.4% to 14.7% in the group of people aged 60 and over); the need for providing basic sustenance becomes more relevant (from 24.5% to 41.2% in the group people aged 50–59 and from 20.5% to 44.1% in the group of people aged 60 and over). Every third respondent's answer to the question "To what extent have your labor expectations been realized?" was negative (22.3% – "sooner not realized" and 7.7% "not realized").

All this means that in a crisis the area of labor interests and the possibility of their implementation are narrowed. The most critical needs and interests become relevant. Focusing their efforts on meeting them, people increase their inner potential, thereby expanding opportunities to meet them. Thus, the changing reality increases the role of the subjective factor which is manifested in initiative and activity aimed at overcoming the crisis.

When analyzing changes in workplace ethics in a crisis, the answer to the question "To what extent are these qualities inherent in labor relations of the representatives of your generation?" was "Fully inherent". The crisis significantly affected the change in workplace ethics in different generations of Russians. The estimates of qualities such as diligence, honest and due approach to work, responsibility, thrift and mutual typical of the Russian archetype, significantly increased during the crisis in 2014 among young people

and people aged 30–39. This suggests that in extreme crisis conditions, traditional ethical attitudes at work become more relevant in the Russian social reality. At the same time, the percentage of respondents representing supporters of modern workplace ethics – feelings of freedom and independence from everyone – in these population groups increased. I.e., in the social reality of Russians under 40 whose labor socialization took place in the post-Soviet period, there are efforts made to adapt to the crisis by optimizing the ratio of traditional and modern workplace ethics qualities.

However, in older generations the crisis is controversial. It is the most controversial in groups of people aged 40–49, whose period integration to work coincided with the end of the perestroika period and the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this group, on the one hand, there are increasing values of traditional workplace ethics characteristics in the crisis 2014. On the other hand, the value of traditional characteristics such as mutual aid and support is reducing (from 57.2% in 2011 to 51.5% in 2014), and the share of supporters of the principle of “every man for himself” is dramatically increasing (from 18.6% to 26%). In generations over 50 in a crisis there is a reduction in values of diligence, responsibility, mutual assistance and a significant increase in the values of the principle of “every man for himself”. Most likely this is due to age-related changes in labor activity, subjective perception of which is enhanced in a crisis

by a threat of being fired by reason of old age. The need to adapt to the changing conditions contributes to the replacement of traditional ethical attitudes with more rational ones based on individualism, which is becoming a significant factor in the changing social reality in labor relations in the older generation. I.e., the older generation forced to survive loses its most important function – preservation and reproduction of traditional values in labor relations.

Thus, in a crisis there the following changes in social reality at work took place. Amid the instrumental value of labor predominant in the majority of Russians’ social reality, in a crisis the share of respondents who consider labor as a terminal value is increased. This means that it activates the potential of inherent value of labor (typical for most Russians) as a way of self-realization and self-assertion. Activation of deep attitudes is a kind of a regulator in a crisis becoming unique in the regional context¹⁴.

There is also a clear trend of rationalizing expectations from labor and employment relations ethics, as evidenced by the crisis change index values. In expectations from work: provision of basic sustenance – 1.74; professional identity – 0.72; interesting, creative work – 0.71; improvement the standard of living – 0.7; self-assertion among

¹⁴ Golovchin M.A. Mental’nye osnovy formirovaniya obraza zhizni u molodezhi: na materialakh Vologodskoi oblasti [Mental bases of formation of young people’s lifestyle: case study of the Vologda Oblast]. *Problemy razvitiya territorii* [Problems of territory’s development], 2016, no. 5, pp. 72–89.

staff – 0,64; business opportunities – 0.53. In employment relations ethics: feeling of freedom and independence from everyone – 1.19; the principle “every man for himself” – 1.15; thrift – 1.06; responsibility – 1.01; diligence, honest and due approach to work – 0.98; mutual aid and support of each other – 0.95. This means that in a crisis in the Russian social reality in the sphere of labor primary needs become more relevant (according to A. Maslow), which provide basic sustenance; confidence in labor as a way of personal self-realization is reduced. However, there are increasing efforts to harmonize workplace ethics by optimizing modern characteristics based on self-perception of freedom, independence and individualism, and traditional – thrift and responsibility.

In social-group terms the trends of social reality change in the sphere of labor are connected with the differences in financial status (0.98), in the level of education (0.98) and in socio-age characteristics (0.98), as well as in type of settlement (0.92) but to a lesser extent. Negative values (< 1) indicate a downward trend in the changing social reality in these groups in a crisis of confidence in labor as possible personal self-realization.

Crisis change in education. The attitude to education involves understanding its meaning and functions in the space of social reality and its role in spiritual reproduction of the society and personal self-realization, which is manifested in people’s value attitudes. Accordingly, the change in the value of

education and knowledge in a crisis is considered as a feature and a factor in the changing social reality.

Education as a (terminal) value is determined by a set of semantic values such as development of abilities, need for knowledge, general culture. In general, aggregate values show that the terminal value of education amounted to 49.7% in 2011 and 34.5% in 2014. Such a sharp decline in the terminal values of education is apparently connected not only with the crisis, but also with the education policy implemented in the country throughout the post-Soviet period. The crisis only exacerbated the negative consequences of this process.

Inherently valued attitudes to education which historically formed in the national archetype were traditionally typical of most Russians. It composed the basis of the Soviet system of education, which largely determined its qualitative superiority in the world. Reformation of education in the post-Soviet period according to Western models aimed at its rationalization and transformation into an education service contributed to the instrumentalization of the value of education, especially among the youth. Gradually declining, the proportion of Russians who share the terminal value of education graded up in the pre-crisis 2011 with the share of supporters of instrumental attitude towards education. In the pre-crisis period, the share of young people aged 18–29 considering education a terminal values

was significantly lower (38.3%). Two-thirds of young people (61.7%) adhered to the instrumental attitude towards education as a means of achieving other goals (diploma, prestige and career).

In the crisis of 2014 young people demonstrated the increasing indicators of terminal values of education (from 38.3% in 2011 to 42.2% in 2014). This means that the crisis activates young people's terminal values such as development of abilities (from 20.9% to 26.6%) and need for knowledge (from 12.6% to 15.1%), i.e. young people value these characteristics more and more in the changing social reality.

In order to study the value of knowledge the authors used the question which consisted of several alternative judgments, the choice of which assumed proper assessment. The alternative – “Knowledge is the person's main asset” or “It is not necessary to possess knowledge if you have money” – implies the assessment of the respondent's understanding of the role of knowledge in the life of a modern young man (terminal or instrumental value of knowledge respectively). The next alternative – “One should acquire knowledge for general development, even if it is not in demand in real life” or “Knowledge is not a purpose, but a means of solving the set objectives” – clarifies the previous assessment for identifying the terminal and instrumental aspects of the cognitive value.

Analysis shows that among Russians in general, the terminal value of knowledge

exceeds its instrumental value, the ratio of which almost did not change in a crisis. This is evident in the following estimates: “Knowledge is the person's main asset” (61.8% in 2011 and 61.5% in 2014) and “One should acquire knowledge for general development, even if it is not in demand in real life” (59.4% and 57.8% respectively). Young people also demonstrate a positive balance in the ratio of terminal and instrumental attitude towards knowledge; in a crisis the terminal value of knowledge is increases in the estimates of both judgments (from 54.2% to 61.1% and from 53.7% to 56.2% respectively). The share of the instrumental value of knowledge among the youth remains high. In 2014, among young people aged 18–29 nearly half of them (43.8%) believed that knowledge is only a means of solving the set objectives, 38.9% of young people believe that money can replace knowledge.

The predominance of the instrumental value of education and relatively high values of the instrumental attitude towards knowledge in the Russian social reality demonstrate a contradiction of the Russians' traditional attitude to education with the state policy in this sphere. In many ways, this contradiction is associated with the introduction of majoring education at the students' choice, as well as with the Unified State Examination (USE). Majoring education and the introduction of USE ruined the integrity of the educational process

at school, limiting it to a narrow range of knowledge required for entering a university.

More than a half of young people and their parents believe that the purpose of general secondary education is preparing a young person for life, which requires that he acquires a wide range of knowledge and general culture. Moreover, this opinion was strengthened even in a crisis of 2014. As can be seen, it does not match the Federal educational standard for senior secondary school, which emphasizes majoring education at the students' choice¹⁵. Every second student has a negative attitude towards USE (52.1% in 2011 and 56.9% in 2014). The declining quality of school and university knowledge is becoming generally acknowledged. In 2014, the answer to the question "How satisfied are you or your children with the quality of knowledge acquired at the place of study?" was accompanied by dissatisfaction to different extents (not satisfied, rather than satisfied or dissatisfied): young people aged 18–24 – 25.8%, young people aged 25–29 – 29.8%, parents aged 40–49 – 34.9%. All this suggests that the wrong course of education reformation is reflected in the contradiction of the changing social reality intensified in a crisis – the forced need to follow it if one disagrees with its fundamental principles.

By degree of significance of average values of crisis change indices, factors in the

changing social reality are as follows. The upward trend of the impact of values of education in the social reality is associated with getting a diploma – 1.5 and with a career – 1.29. A downward trend – with the development of abilities – 0.81; with prestige – 0.78; with the need for knowledge – 0.6; with general culture – 0.48. That is, in a crisis, these instrumental values of education play a decisive role in the construction of social reality of Russians, which suggests an increasing confidence in education as an opportunity for social advancement and a downward trend by factor of personal identity. In social-group context significant changes in the social reality in the sphere of education are associated with different standards of living depending on financial status (1.16) and type of settlement (1.02).

Thus, analysis suggests that in a crisis, the contradiction between traditional historically inherent attitude of Russians to each other, family, work and education and modern, rational and pragmatic attitude towards them as objects of the changing social reality is increased. The crisis which affected the living conditions of each person, makes him choose between different behavioral patterns. Up to a certain moment, people try to keep the usual traditional principles determining their way of life. But facing different life situations, when keeping to these principles does not meet people's expectations; they experience the state of uncertainty, overcoming which is possible only by changing life paradigm.

¹⁵ The framework of majoring education in secondary school is included in Federal Law "On education in the Russian Federation", dated 30.12. 2012

The state of uncertainty is aggravated by the underdeveloped public policy and by the influence of the media. The search for other life principles is fraught with risks due to unpredictable consequences of applying them. The increasing risk in the changing social reality does not promote certainty, preventing optimal implementation of the

selected strategies. Overcoming the arising contradictions is associated with the need to increase the society's confidence based on people's trust in life principles historically inherent in the Russian mentality. It is obvious that a set of measures aimed at achieving this goal should be reflected in the Government anti-crisis program.

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