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Barriers to Social Integration of the Older Generation in the Context of Intergenerational Communication Issues*



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Abstract. Over the past few centuries, humanity has made the transition from a “society without the elderly” to an “aging society”. The consequences of global population ageing entail changes not only in the economic and demographic space, but also in the social space. At the same time, this category of consequences caused by the increase in the share and number of representatives of the older generation is the least amenable to empirical measurements and forecasting. One of the most important tasks of the “ageing” states is to solve the problem of social integration and secondary socialization of the elderly, but in the conditions of increasing technological progress there emerges a powerful structural barrier, which is expressed in the growing communication distance between generations. The “generation gap” issue originates in ancient times, but at the moment in the context of global demographic aging it is becoming increasingly important. The aim of our research is to study barriers to social integration of the older generation in the context of intergenerational communication. To achieve this goal, we carry out a conceptual review of the existing theory of generations and fundamental works in the field of research on intergenerational communication, we analyze and interpret the data obtained through a series of in-depth interviews with representatives of the older generation, and formulate main conclusions of the study. The above goals and objectives aim to test the main hypothesis of the study, according to which the gap in

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intergenerational communication is one of the main barriers to social integration of the older generation. The first part of the paper presents a theoretical overview of existing approaches to the concept of “generation”, laws of their change and factors leading to the break of intergenerational communications. It identifies theoretical and empirical limitations in the allocation of universal characteristics of the change of generations. It concludes that the process of breaking intergenerational communication is linked to the formation of barriers to social integration of the elderly. The second part of the paper presents data on the results of a series of in-depth interviews with representatives of retirement age population living in Vologda. The study confirms the hypothesis that the break of intergenerational communications is one of the fundamental aspects that prevent the inclusion of the older generation. This process is determined by many factors, the main ones of which include the loss of relevance of skills and experience of the older generation, as well as the loss of the demand for these qualities on the part of the younger population (and also within the family).

Key words: population ageing, older generation, intergenerational communication, generation gap, barriers to inclusion.

Introduction. The society’s attitude to old age and older people has been changing throughout the history of mankind. The scientists, such as M. Blackner, W. Henry, E. Cumming, A. Rose, studied the evolution of society’s attitude to representatives of older generation. The main conclusion, summarizing ideas of most research in this area, is that the place and role of older people is determined by many factors, which can include historical, geographical, social, economic, etc. At the same time, the mental features of perception of the place and role of older generation both by a society as a whole and by the elderly themselves are an important aspect to form a socio-cultural paradigm of old age. The fundamental issue of contradictions arising in the process of intergenerational communications is one of the main barriers to social integration of the older generation. The problem of “fathers and children” is a universal form of the whole spectrum of manifestations of a complex system of interaction between generations [2; 3; 4]; it is based on the discrepancy in perception of social reality due to the inconsistency of the set

of socio-cultural characteristics inherent in a certain age [5; 6].

Problem statement. Given the complexity and ambiguity of the problem, it is necessary to make a methodological digression in order to clarify a concept “generation”. In demography this term has quite a clear description and is interpreted as a “set of people born at the same time” [7]. It is common to distinguish “real” and “conditional” (hypothetical) generations that have the following differences: in the first case, a generation is considered as a “set of people born in one time period (peers)”, and in the second – as a “set of people of different ages, but living at the same time (contemporaries)”. In family demography a generation also differs in the line of kinship (grandfather, father, son, etc.). In sociology this term is considered not only in the context of a particular age group, but also in the historical localization [8]. Based on the ambiguity of the term definition, we can assume that the category under study can not have strictly universal characteristics in different areas. Moreover, generation boundaries and features

are often set in accordance with research objectives and historical analysis parameters [9].

The determination of balance in the combination of biological and social components is the key issue in understanding a nature of generations and their interaction. Obviously, age and demographic rhythms of births and deaths are key factors in the formation of a structure of generations and social changes. We should mention one of the most significant scientific works devoted to the theory of generations, such as Karl Mannheim's article "The Problem of Generations" (1928), which includes a fundamental justification of the importance of a social component in the study of this problem [10]. Mannheim consistently criticizes positivist (O. Comte, J. Dromel, F. Mentré) and romantic-historical approaches (W. Dilthey, W. Pinder) to the definition of an essence and factors of the change of generations. Despite obvious differences in the conceptual approaches (the first can be called "quantitative", and the second – "qualitative"), Mannheim speaks about a unifying idea: an attempt to find a biological basis that allows to understand variability in intellectual and social life and, thus, identify a progress direction [10]. The German scientist reasonably comes to the conclusion about the insufficiency of the search for universal laws of the change of generations through the prism of only biological justification. Without determination of the social relevance of biological factors there is no sense in making generation boundaries; this statement is confirmed by transformations of an old age paradigm in the 21st century.

In the positivist approach the older generation plays a role of the conservative force that hinders development. In particular,

O. Comte argues that the increase in life expectancy reduces a progress pace due to a rise in the time interval "hindering" the influence of older people [11]. H. Ortega y Gasset in his theory gives older people a place on the "roadside" of history, considering that population aged 30–60 make the main contribution to its creation. In many ways the researcher's argument is built around the following statement: *"It is vivid that there are very few people over 60 compared to those of other ages, and in this sense their very existence is something exceptional"* [12]. And it is this thesis that has become the Achilles' heel of Ortega y Gasset's generations method. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century the phenomenon of population ageing in European countries was rather an exception to the rule, and the "oldest" countries (France and Ireland, where a share of the population over 60 barely exceeded 10%) would be considered the "youngest" in the 21st century. However, the process of intensive demographic ageing in developed and developing countries has led not only to a permanent increase in the proportion of older persons, but also to a rise in their contribution to social development [13; 14].

The attempt to find strict limits on generation boundaries is the second aspect, hindering many generation theories to pass the test of time. Different periodizations and cycles of generation change are used (most often 15-year-old and 30-year-old), however, the age of 60 years is defined as a period of "refusal of activity" [12]. The main postulate of Sanderson and Scherbov's theory of "prospective" aging [15] states that around the world the objective boundaries of old age are constantly shifting, provoking a revision of attitudes to certain age categories of population, which until recently were

considered as the elderly (relatively speaking, the current 80-year-olds are 65-year-olds a few decades ago). Thus, the ongoing process of increasing life expectancy provokes changes in the former boundaries of “old age”.

Special attention should be paid to one of the most popular generation theories, formulated by N. Howe and W. Strauss. In 1991 they published a book “Generations: the History of America’s Future, 1584 to 2069” [16], which largely determined the modern understanding of the problem under analysis. The authors studied behavior of different generations of American society since the beginning of the 16th century and identified many common features. They singled out 4 main types: “prophets/idealists”, “nomads/activists”, “heroes/conciliators” and “artists/adaptors”, changing every 20 years [16]. Certainly, N. Howe and W. Strauss’ theory is an achievement of modern sociology, but it is often subjected to reasonable criticism. Primarily, this refers to strictly identified periods of generation change that seem highly unreasonable. Second, the possibility of adapting the theory based on data on social transformations of American society to other countries raises certain questions. Is it possible, in particular, to consider a so-called Z generation or “digital” generation (individuals born in 2000–2005) the same in the United States, Mexico, and the Central African Republic? The same question arises concerning a baby boomers generation (born in the 1940–1960s), for example, in Russia and Sweden. So, this theory has an important component of “historical localization”, neglected in many other theories.

Let us consider the work of Karl Mannheim. The German scientist is skeptical about the possibility to identify strict laws in the change

of generations, as well as their cyclicity. The 15–30 year periods are extremely small time intervals in terms of history, and we can only talk about a temporary and conditional trend (or tendency), which can subsequently be only part of a long-term cycle [17].

However, it is difficult to deny the fact that even conditional generations are involved in intergenerational communication. J. Habermas emphasizes the importance of this process for social development in his concept “life world”, where interaction between generations is one of the most important factors of cultural reproduction and social integration [18]. It is obvious that this phenomenon has the opposite effect – the gap in intergenerational distance leads to social disintegration.

The process of social communication has undergone changes throughout the history of mankind. Summarizing the available data, the sociologist G. McLuhan singles out three types of communicativeness: traditional, functional-role and mass [19]. The latter type is typical for the modern stage, when the development of technologies helps an unlimited number of individuals to communicate with each other, easily overcoming space-time barriers. However, the transition from a functional-role type has led to the situation where insufficient skills of using modern communication means create barriers to social integration of older generation and result in difficulties in performing the most important function of older people – transmission of experience. The old means of transmission are becoming obsolete, thus creating a gap between generations. The sociologist and anthropologist M. Mead has a similar theory [20], though paying much more attention to a cultural component. The types of cultures, she identifies, are rather controversial,

although the factors of changing a process of social communication between the older and younger generations are described quite clearly and tested. Let us consider them in more detail.

1. Post-figurative culture: younger generations adopt experience of older people; older people act as intermediaries in its transmission from generation to generation. Such cultures are conservative and are poorly subject to change. This type is characterized by isolation and prevalence of labile (short-term) cultural and historical memory transmitted from generation to generation. Older people are highly valued, as they maintain historical heritage and realize the function of transmitting values.

2. Co-figurative culture: younger generations adopt experience both of older people and peers. The transition to this type is most often caused by some revolutionary events (transition to a new political system, technological changes, adoption of a new faith, etc.), followed by a change in the structure of social values. In addition to the function of transferring values, older generations set certain limits that will prevent a complete change of norms. So, intergenerational conflicts naturally arise due to confrontation between the system of “old” and “new” values. In the concept of M. Mead, gradual transition to a nuclear family model is one of the main characteristics of the co-figurative culture. Thus, two generations (parents and children) are involved in the process of direct interaction and values transfer, intergenerational communication is reduced to a minimum. The gap in cultural distance leads to age discrimination based on a conflict of values.

3. Pre-figurative culture: not only younger generation adopts experience of the older, but

vice versa. In the modern society science and technologies develop so quickly that humanity does not have time to get used to them. We can speak about an effect of “future shock”, described by A. Toffler in the book of the same name [21]. Thus, older people with a certain value system are forced to regularly adapt to innovations of both technological and social type. Increased life expectancy of population also plays an important role. A few centuries ago the life expectancy of European people amounted to about 30 years and the intensity of scientific and technological progress was significantly lower. It contributed to the formation of post- and co-figurative cultures, where older people have much more opportunities for adaptation and finding their place.

The importance of intergenerational communications in modernization processes should also be noted. According to R. Inglehart’s theory, successful cultural modernization of a society, expressed in the transition from materialistic to post-materialistic values, is only possible in the absence of disintegration processes, such as intergenerational conflicts [22]. The manifestations of age discrimination and stereotyping are social rudiments and barriers to cultural modernization.

The given review suggests that the problem of intergenerational communication is a factor in the formation of barriers to social integration of older generation. This phenomenon called “conflict of generations” is reflected in many sectors of public life. The evolution of generation theories makes it possible to draw an important conclusion: it is difficult to define and empirically evaluate strict laws of change of generations and their interaction. The hypothetical cyclicity of generation change is, probably, a temporary trend in the

linear process of transition to the pre-figurative culture. Its many indicators are typical for most developed and developing countries (including Russia). At the same time, the generation concept seems to be extremely complex and ambiguous. Undoubtedly, the research in this area should include territorial specifics and the so-called “historical localization”. Thus, in this work we understand older generation as representatives of statutory retirement age in the Russian Federation (both working and non-working), since in modern realities the factor of “retirement” discourages intergenerational communications and hinders social integration of older people [23].

Research method. The positivist ideology, a cornerstone of sociology at the present time, as well as the desire for objectification and digitalization of sociological data, has somewhat overshadowed the use of qualitative methods. However, in our opinion, the application of the biographical method in the study of intergenerational communications and barriers to social integration of older generation can potentially give results that are difficult to obtain with the help of quantitative methods.

In 2017 the VolRS RAS conducted a series of interviews with representatives of older generation. The research program and its internal logic were based on results of the sociological survey devoted to the study of barriers to inclusion of socially vulnerable categories of population¹. The selection of

respondents did not imply strict compliance with the proportions of a gender and age population structure. The achievement of statutory retirement age and the status of employment (working or non-working) were key formal criteria. Their selection was based on the sociological surveys results:

a) a “retirement” factor hinders inter-generational communication and forms barriers to social integration of older people;

b) representatives of retirement age who continue working are less likely to experience social exclusion due to the maintenance of many social ties and self-identification with the productive part of population.

Twenty people aged 59–82 (4 men and 16 women) were surveyed; the proportions of 40% of the employed and 60% of the unemployed were observed (the shares were determined according to official statistics). The interviews were carried out at the cultural-leisure centre “Care” (Vologda) and the VolRS RAS.

The interview guide was based on the biographical method. A respondent presented a brief story about his/her life path, paying greater attention to certain aspects (marriage and family relations, education, work). Thus, the first part of the interview allowed us to determine respondents’ life trajectories, as well as their impact on social integration in old age. The second part included several blocks of questions aimed at studying health state, factors, features and motives for continuing employment in retirement, and problems associated with retirement. Social relations, elements of intergenerational communication and interaction with young people were evaluated.

Results and their discussion. The first part of the interview included a short biography and

¹ The survey “Socio-cultural modernization of regions” was conducted in two waves, in 2016 and 2017. People were interviewed in certain regions of the Northwestern Federal District: the Vologda, Murmansk, Kaliningrad and Novgorod oblasts, and the Republic of Karelia. The method of the survey is a questionnaire poll by place of residence of respondents. The sample was purposeful and quoted. The volume of sample population was 3,101 people in 2016 and 3,108 in 2017; the sampling error did not exceed 5%.

description of the current marital status of respondents. It is worth mentioning that the interviewed older people who currently live in Vologda were born in different places: Murmansk, Ulyanovsk, Belgorod, Moscow, Tver, Novosibirsk, Arkhangelsk, and Vologda oblasts, as well as the Komi Republic. The postgraduate work assignment, actively used in the USSR, left an imprint on the trajectory of their life strategies, as the change of residence was quite frequent. Sometimes people were born, educated and employed in different regions of the country:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "I was born in 1946 in Melekess, the Ulyanovsk Oblast... In 1969 I finished the Ivanovo Medical School. By assignment I went to the Kemerovo Oblast ... My husband and I decided not to go so far and chose the most unpopular place – the Vologda Oblast".

This phenomenon, probably, plays a positive role in terms of possibilities to overcome barriers of social integration. The interview repeatedly noted a greater ability of "that" generation (born in the 1940–50s) to adapt to changing conditions.

As for a marital status of the respondents, the vast majority of them live alone or with a spouse. As a rule, the process of territorial division of a family coincides with the birth and maturation of grandchildren:

G.P., aged 82, woman, "In the one-room flat, so... So we had to separate: they moved in the one-room flat, four of them also lived in the one-room flat, raised children. And I had a three-room flat, my husband, I and our daughter lived there, then my husband died, and then my daughter died. My daughter died, I said, "Let us, Misha, change flats". At first my son and I changed flats, and now my granddaughter and I did. Now, I think, forever".

Due to a number of circumstances older people participate in upbringing of grandchildren and communicate with them actively before their achievement of school age:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "No, we see each other not often. I had spent a lot of time with my grandson till he achieved school age, then not much".

Health of older persons is the main limiting factor; older people often find it difficult to perform these duties. However, this is not the only reason. Intergenerational contradictions, expressed in the divergence of values and attitudes to education, are also an important element:

V.F., aged 77, woman, "I as an elementary school teacher want to teach grandchildren something. But my children find it too early. Why not? In this respect I have disagreements with my daughter. Not scandals, of course, but I do not really like it".

At the family level the intergenerational distance increases, when grandchildren are growing. As earlier mentioned, the modern Russian society is characterized by a prefigurative type of culture: older people find it difficult to adapt to a tremendous pace of technological and social progress. So, there appears a gap in intergenerational communication, as, according to young people, the elderly's knowledge and skills are losing their relevance:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "In any way my grandchildren do not feel the need to make use of my knowledge, my experience. Even when you give advice, they defend. And I talk not only about my grandchildren, but also my son and daughter-in-law. You start to tell them something, and they say, "You do not understand anything, nowadays life is completely different". Life is different, but the rules of life are the same".

Both the content part of communication and its form are changing. A changed style of language communication often becomes another barrier to intergenerational communication. There is a cognitive dissonance in the perception of the essence and content of everyday things:

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Surely, the language has changed. I know English, but I do not understand what they talk about. I see signs written in Latin letters, but it turns out that it is Russian words that are written, i.e. it is difficult for me, oddly enough. I experience this in the media, as well as in communication with young people. Language has changed".

Surely, this aspect can be considered as a barrier to older people's integration into public life. As a result, young people rarely enter the circle of their social relations. It is formed mainly from close relatives and people of retirement age (more often of the same age):

V.V., aged 72, woman, "With relatives in the first place, invite them somewhere. My son invites me. I communicate with peers. My friend and I meet quite often".

I.N., aged 70, woman, "These are people of my age. I communicate with them almost every day and travel with them".

G.P., aged 82, woman, "Today – with pensioners. We communicate every day. We meet less often nowadays, but speak on the phone a lot".

Thus, the communication circle becomes the key factor to form an "old age" subculture, where interiorization of this group's value system occurs. It is a serious barrier for some elderly people, it forces them to change their priorities in the communication sphere:

S.V., aged 66, woman, "To be honest, I like to communicate with young people more than with people of my age who are whining, talking about sores, bad things".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "It is more and more difficult to talk with people of my age, as old age affects psyche. Older people somehow shut themselves in. The older people, the more they limit themselves".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "Sometimes you stop at the entrance to talk with grandmothers. But I do not like to sit at the entrance. I do not like, "This one went here, that one went there". What do I care who went where?".

In fact, the values characteristic of this socio-demographic group are rejected. At the same time, the current communication circle is enough for all the respondents. However, the interview analysis suggests that direct communication is fragmented in most cases: for example, several times a week visiting relatives or talking to them on the phone, meeting with peers at joint activities, etc. As a result, life of an older person is often associated with loneliness:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "Though you can give birth to ten people, still old age is loneliness. Everyone will leave home and have their own problems".

Most older people feel the same. However, the attitude to the very fact of loneliness and ways to overcome it can be different:

G.P., aged 82, woman, "Sometimes I feel it, but very rarely. Well, it happens, I feel sad, but someone calls, I talk to someone and again everything...".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "No, I do not suffer from loneliness, I love loneliness. Communication with my son is enough for me. To be alone is good, I like it".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "I do not like to be alone at home... Usually I have to turn on TV, but I do not really like what is shown there".

V.V., aged 72, woman, "If I feel lonely, I do a crossword puzzle. I can go for a walk around the city. But I am always surrounded by people. People from work invite me sometimes. Now it is better to live separately from relatives".

Living alone and having a lot of free time require the search for compensatory mechanisms. This is mainly achieved due to increased intensity of communication, new hobbies, participation in social activities. It is worth pointing out that the problem of loneliness is less relevant for working pensioners of younger ages:

T.D., aged 59, woman, "Sometimes I even want to be alone. At work a few dozens of people pass by, everyone asks me about something. Sometimes I go to the country to have some rest. But there one or another neighbor goes by. There is a social circle again. Nobody lets me be alone".

One of the most significant observations should be noted: older people associate a "retirement" concept not with a statutory retirement age, but with a termination date of their employment. During this period the circle of social ties is narrowing, feelings of loneliness are emerging and social significance is declining. At this time people try to find ways to keep busy:

V.V., aged 72, woman, "It is hard to get used to sitting at home. I want to go somewhere not to be bored".

A number of interrelated factors (internal and external) influence the decision to continue or stop working in retirement. Internal factors include a health state, professional skills, motivation and values. The analysis of the conducted interviews confirms the fact that certain regularities are observed in the distribution of their significance:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "First, the state of health allowed me to work. Second, I liked my profession, I liked to communicate with students. Third, material interest. It gave me an opportunity to realize my dream – to travel".

Thus, although the need for additional income is a key motivation to continue working, it is the state of health ("can I do it

physically?") and professional skills ("do I have necessary skills for it?") that are the primary factors.

Poor health is one of the aspects that determine the emergence of internal barriers to the inclusion and realization of resource potential of older generation. During the interview, the respondents were asked to give a subjective assessment of their own health, abstracting from existing diagnoses. The study suggests that the overall picture of older population's health, based on their own estimates, looks much more optimistic than real:

V.V., aged 72, woman, "I had examination last year, so people thought I was 56, but not 70. If anything hurts, I apply immediately... You should believe first, and it helps. Probably, it is a three" (in addition to comments, the respondents were asked to assess their health by a five-point scale. Author's note).

V.F., aged 77, woman, "I am an optimist myself, I keep on, go everywhere: swimming, hobby clubs. I would rate my health as a four minus".

E.G., aged 80, man, "I was in hospital once and only because of medical examination of pensioners. The state of health was not a reason for it. Now health is beginning to deteriorate. I will rate it as a four minus. But, in general, I feel good".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "I would rate my health as a four. At least I do believe that everything is fine".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "I am a disabled person of Group 1. But I feel like very good. Why should I lie down? But I do not tell anyone about my problems".

When analyzing the respondents' answers we pay attention to a few points. In most cases it is an optimistic attitude to existing and progressive diseases that is the most important

element of maintaining physical health. In addition to the complacency effect it can help overcome stereotypes about older persons and their physical disabilities. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that the respondents do not consider it necessary to tell people about health problems.

The second aspect concerns relationship between termination of employment and changes in health status. The dichotomous component of the problem makes it impossible to identify a primary aspect with full confidence. Of course, the deterioration of health leads to a decrease in labor activity. However, according to the interview results, in some cases it was the labor activity that served as a factor in maintaining a satisfactory physical condition, and retirement triggered health deterioration.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "I used to work, I did not catch up with the disease, and now I support myself... When I worked, I did not go to hospitals. I went only in case of emergency..."

K.K., aged 75, woman, "I think, on the contrary, it supported. Now it is worse" (the answer to the question, if the state of health hindered employment. Author's note).

Surely, it is impossible to state unequivocally that the continuation of labor activity is an absolute guarantee of good health and active longevity. But this once again shows that the older generation should not be seen as a homogeneous group with a well-defined relationship between various factors of their life quality.

In retirement, as a rule, more attention (in particular attention, not time) is paid to disease prevention. Most often it is a regular exercise, long walking, swimming, and attendance of various physical education classes. It is worth saying that some cases reveal the importance of cognitive and educational functions in slowing down aging.

N.N., aged 72, woman, "To avoid aging, slow down a process of aging, be sure to head to work. Aging begins in the brain. We should learn something new constantly. Then a person will slow down his/her senile processes"

At the same time, all the respondents recognize that age-related changes are irreversible regardless of the intensity of preventive measures.

N.N., aged 72, woman, "Whatever a healthy lifestyle a person can lead, still his/her genetic program is going down. There are no absolutely healthy 71-year old people"

This is largely determined by the increased frequency of visits to doctors and hospitals. In general, the respondents evaluated the health care system measures as quite high, although we identified one alarming feature:

V.F., aged 77, woman, "I will tell you about medicine. So, I visit doctors. I ask them about diagnoses, what to do. They say, "It is because of our age! Machines also deteriorate!"

V.V., aged 72, woman, "I passed medical examination, but there was no sense. Injections were not prescribed, only painkillers. They say, "It is senile already, your body is wearing out". That is told to everybody. So you go somewhere, when you get an invitation, you buy something" (she talks about alternative medicine. Author's note).

It is not clear that this is a widespread practice. However, the very existence of such cases raises the question of extending gerontological specialization in the healthcare system. Of course, the aging process is irreversible, but "old age" is not a medical diagnosis. Physiological aging provokes diseases; however, their development can be slowed. Medical workers should change their perception of "old age" – not as a single incurable disease, but as a complex phenomenon with its own factors and features.

Actual skills and a professional qualification level are another aspect that affects continuation of employment in retirement. During the interview the respondents were asked to assess their professional skills and abilities in terms of meeting modern requirements. The analysis allows us to identify two main groups of the respondents who assess their skills as high and low, respectively.

Group 1:

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Considering how they teach now, how they teach my grandson ... I would still be useful".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "Naturally, it corresponds. I qualified for the highest category during my last year of employment. I am aware of all programs and the Unified State Exam. I monitor everything. I am interested, in principle".

G.P., aged 82, woman, "What to answer. My granddaughter also works as an economist... I will tell you that when she was studying, we worked it all out, as they say, it all came in handy. She said, "Grandmother, I would not have been able to study and maybe even work without you".

Group 2:

N.N., aged 72, woman, "No, they do not correspond. As I has gone to the medical college, the level of knowledge is getting worse and worse in terms of practical medical knowledge. Due to the change of the system, there have appeared so many imported drugs that I still do not understand them".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "Not now. Now there are computers everywhere, I do not understand them".

V.V., aged 72, woman, "Economists are becoming obsolete, something new should always be studied. In construction, too: I take some material and I already do not know it. I need to read about everything again".

There are several reasons for this discrepancy. First, people with higher education gave a higher assessment of the relevance of

their skills and abilities. Second, on average, the respondents of Group 1 were more intent on continued employment. Third, the respondents who highly assessed their qualification level were significantly more likely to take advanced training courses (including self-study), including in the pre-retirement age. Since continued employment in retirement allows for a wider range of communication, education and a high qualification level become important elements in overcoming mental barriers to integration into public life, at least in the labor sphere.

However, a satisfactory state of health, a high level of qualification and a desire to work can not be enough. An employer's position is an important limiting factor. According to the study, employers take into consideration an employee's age.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "I worked in retirement a little bit, but then I was asked to leave for someone who had been on maternity leave to come back".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "After retirement I changed my job. At that time it was very difficult. I was offered to retire because of old age. I wanted to work a little more, but I was relieved of my duties at my own request".

I.N., aged 70, woman, "I wanted to work, I loved to work. A new person came. My labor contract came to end, a new young specialist came. Unless these circumstances I would have continued to work until now".

G.P., aged 82, woman, "You can be fired because of old age. I can say that we had eight children in my family, there was no such a situation. But in conversations ... People worked, but since an entrepreneur needs young people..."

The problem of age discrimination remains relevant in many organizations. However, the interview analysis shows that it is caused, first of all, not by a negative attitude to a personified subject (an older person), but by limited

resources of an enterprise. Under other equal conditions a young specialist has an advantage over a more mature staff member due to the existence of a non-confirmed stereotype (especially in the sphere of intellectual labor) about a low level of productivity in old age. At the same time, in some cases an older staff member can be transferred to a less qualified position within the same organization.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "They usually offer something, give another job. A lower paid one. My sister was transferred like that".

The second option is to search for a job in a different place. The respondents confirm that it is extremely difficult to find a suitable job after retirement. Most often you have to agree to a less well-paid and popular work.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "I worked for 10 years in retirement. First in the house-museum, then as a street cleaner, a watchman".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "I went to work as a watchman in the boarding school".

This approach to the employment of older generation leads to a stereotype that older people offer low-skilled work that is not in demand in the economy. However, there is a lot of work occupations (primarily in the service sector), where skills, abilities and experience of older generation could play a positive role in socio-economic development of the state. The problem is not in the quality of supply, but in the lack of demand for older persons to work in some professional areas where age and poor health are not paramount.

The respondents were also asked to answer the question, when, in their opinion, an employer could dismiss a person who had already retired.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "If the person does not drink and make scandals, he/she will be never offered to resign. Now people continue education, there are plenty of courses".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "If he/she fulfils his/her duties, he/she probably should not be dismissed. It is a very difficult question. If I were an employer and a person worked well, I would not dismiss him/her".

T.D., aged 59, woman, "If a person works well, I can not fire him/her. I think so. If a person has taken up the job, he/she should meet his/her responsibilities. If you can not cope – you are fired, can cope – not fired".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "If I were a leader, I would fire. From a distance I watch such a situation: two men are standing, their hands are shaking because of old age. Would a student like to watch it? And not everyone tries to learn something new: he/she teaches students what was many years ago, but in fact we have something new. I do believe that we should work until retirement age. If you are to rest – do it".

According to the respondents, people can be dismissed because of old age if they do not meet work requirements. In our opinion, this parameter should be decisive. However, the question remains: to what extent employers are guided by this principle? The study suggests that the age factor often outweighs the need for skills and experience of older people.

In general, it should be noted that most respondents are quite loyal to the existing practice of "dismissal because of old age", noting the importance of providing opportunities to work for young generations.

S.V., aged 66, woman, "I am deeply convinced that young, healthy and energetic people should work".

At the same time, taking into account the heterogeneity of the studied socio-demographic group, we should consider the fact that in some cases the change in a lifestyle after the end of employment can become a serious psychological barrier.

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Everything changed greatly, as, besides various courses, my cognitive needs were not satisfied anywhere. Until I found my hobby, I had sensory impoverishment... Many of us are ready to help our state without payment. But in general: if we are not required, let it be so. We are trying to be useful ourselves".

Thus, adaptation to a changed lifestyle in retirement can occur in different projections. According to the study results, the perception of older people as a homogeneous group with a well-established set of social roles and functions is one of the most significant barriers to inclusion of older generation. Some representatives do not associate themselves with the elderly in the stereotypical perception, but are forced to change their lifestyle due to the influence of external factors (termination of employment and stereotyping). Life strategies of this category are built on different trajectories, so the existing socio-cultural paradigm of "old age" needs to be changed.

The problem of "fathers and children", described in detail in the eponymous work of Turgenev, remains relevant today. Older generation rejects younger generation's values, and vice versa; it provokes the break of intergenerational ties. The respondents were asked to characterize the modern youth and compare it with the generation of their youth. In general, the respondents did not give unambiguous estimates, noting the heterogeneity of the youth.

G.P., aged 82, woman, "I will not say that all young people are bad. There are young people who give place and ask for something. But their number is small, and I can say that years ago more than half of them did it. Before that there were impudent people too... But now there are more of them".

K.K., aged 72, woman, "I think it is different. There are also good young people. But sometimes

in the street you look at them and they are so bold. Even pupils. All are different".

T.D., aged 59, woman, "I consider my family. My son is 36 and his friends are of the same age. Young people are great. Maybe there are some exceptions to the rules, but I look at them and feel happy".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "No worse. Ordinary guys, healthy, energetic, cheerful".

In fact, such statements disprove the stereotype about older people's negative attitude to younger generation. However, there are also unambiguous estimates.

G.P., aged 82, woman, "It depends on education, depends on how the school teaches. Then, earlier if you correct anyone, you are listened to, even by those who are impudent... But now you can be offended and even threaten with fist".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "In Soviet times when the students finished medical school, there were so many tears at the prom. Now there would be no tears. Years ago people were more soulful. Now people are different. A knowledge level of school leavers is much lower. They can not speak at all, they can not connect two words".

In this case the difference between "that" youth and the modern one is determined by their upbringing and education. At the same time, according to many respondents, today's young people make a much greater emphasis on financial well-being and their own interests due to the changes in social and educational systems.

V.V., aged 72, woman, "The youth is now., by the way... It needs big money. So it should start as a master, but nobody wants to work with a shovel".

I.N., aged 70, woman, "We in our youth were not so focused on a financial component, and they look for occupation not to get some satisfaction, but money".

G.P., aged 82, woman, "They began to perceive life differently, unlike we did. We thought about the Motherland first, and only then about ourselves. Now it is vice versa. It is characteristic of almost everyone; it is a rare phenomenon, if not... A lot depends on parents, they taught us to be more united, help each other. And they themselves helped. Their example means a lot. My father said that we should help people first, and we were brought up like that".

This situation is caused by external factors that form differences in generations' values. However, deeper reasons were also identified.

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Today's young people have many attempts in different directions, but do not get involved. All my life, including in my youth, I was engaged in one activity. The rest was additional. And they (today's youth. Author's note) try and give up, try and give up".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "The modern youth is a seeker. They try themselves in different areas, they search for their style. They try themselves in different spheres of activity".

Thus, the differences in values and attitudes between older and younger generation are formed as a result of the changed approach to determining their place in the social structure. If earlier, according to the respondents, young people tried to focus on a narrow spectrum of actions and realize themselves in a particular area, then today's young people, taking into account a rapid pace of technological and social progress, have to change spheres of activities. Probably, it is a determining factor to form mental barriers to inclusion of older people, less ready for innovation and transformation, not only because of age, but also because of the attitudes and views formed in their youth.

It is important to note that most respondents admit a better attitude towards them on the part of the state and society.

G.P., aged 82, woman, "I would say it is better".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "Previously, the state did not have such opportunities. But now, I believe, more attention is drawn to older people. For example, veterans; immediately after the war there was not so much attention to them".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "I think it is better. More respectful, I think".

T.D., aged 59, woman, "Good attitude, if a person has a good reputation. A person should behave".

According to the study, the positive assessment is mainly determined by the increased number of leisure options (a rise in the number of public organizations, leisure centers, clubs, etc.), which allows older people to feel society's attention and involvement in public life. Against this background the state's policy towards older persons is positively assessed, although the financial component remains a matter of concern and discontent:

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Unfortunately, we begin to pay for everything. We have to save on something, but the state also saves on us, of course. Thank God, they do not limit us as in the old days. Restrictions are only monetary".

G.P., aged 82, woman, "See ... people live with a pension of 8,9,10 thousand rubles. Is it possible to live on such a pension? I would say, it is impossible. You only make ends meet and no money is left even on decent clothes. Only what remains from the past...".

T.D., aged 59, woman, "Policy is good. A pension, of course, might be larger".

V.V., aged 72, woman, "The fact that we get a pension and get it in time is good. Although it is not very big. We have benefits too, though they are small. I do not like the fact that, of course, there are a lot of homeless older people".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "In principle, we get pensions, everything is fine. If a person worked hard all his/her life, he/she already has a flat. I am concerned about the need to reduce pension, though how it is possible to reduce it. It is only enough for food".

Consequently, we can state that a low level of pensions is the main economic barrier to inclusion of older generation. It turns out that in Russia older people have a large range of opportunities to realize their needs and interests, which, however, has monetary restrictions. When asked what the state should do to change the situation of older persons, the vast majority of respondents mentioned a rise in pensions.

The interview results show that older people do not shift the responsibility for their situation to the state, noting only its role as a guarantor of pensions.

I.N., aged 70, woman, "Of course, on themselves. I have been saving up for my retirement, to be honest. I am ready to work part-time, but it is kind of weird to be a watchman. It is necessary to rely on your own abilities, disabled people is another question".

N.N., aged 72, woman, "People have to take care of themselves. By the way, many have dependent mood. Everyone blames the state. But what have you done yourself?".

E.G., aged 80, woman, "Why count on the state? The state has a lot of people. Our generation achieved everything itself. We worked, had part-time jobs sometimes. We studied for free".

K.K., aged 75, woman, "If the state has the opportunity to help, it would be nice. And if not, you need yourself. I think if a person has a long working experience, the pension should be good, he/she can live on it. And if for some reason he/she did not work, children should help. Children should support, not necessarily materially".

T.D., aged 59, woman, "A person should not rely on anyone, I rely only on myself".

S.V., aged 66, woman, "If the state does not give a pension, what are our opportunities? Diseases already appear, abilities are not the same. But every day, of course, you rely on yourself. You can not completely shift your maintenance to the state. If you are given a pension, live".

Thus, according to the study results, the modern older generation in Russia is not characterized by dependent mood. The state is not obliged to ensure a decent old age in terms of non-economic aspects of life quality. But, as in the case of forced reduction of consumption in old age, such a life position presupposes that the state guarantees only material security. Older people have a lot of free time and opportunities at their disposal, but due to a number of objective circumstances, including mental ones, they can not fully realize them.

Conclusion. The study suggests that the image of a pensioner as a representative of the unproductive part of population formed in public consciousness significantly limits the possibilities to realize older generation's potential. At the same time, the maintenance of this image is largely determined by intra-group processes. Life strategies of working and non-working pensioners are built on fundamentally different trajectories: in the first case – people consider themselves as the able-bodied (productive) part of population (the value structure demonstrates it clearly), and in the second – attitudes characteristic of the "old age" subculture are interiorized (the state of health is a key factor).

The revealed social barriers to the inclusion of older generation are largely determined by the specifics of older people's perception of their position in the social structure. As the

results of the in-depth interviews show, the “inertia” factor in continued employment allows people to maintain previous social ties, which structure includes representatives of different ages (including young people). The withdrawal from working life (due to personal or external reasons) leads to a gradually increased social distance between older people, a narrowed circle of communication, and a lost sense of “need” for society. According to the study results, the end of employment, rather than obtaining the status of a “pensioner”, determines the emergence of social distance between older generation and society. It is difficult to find employment in retirement age, including due to society’s perception of older people as a low-productive part of population.

The break of intergenerational communications is one of the fundamental aspects that prevent inclusion of older generation. According to the study, this process is determined by many factors: a loss of relevance of skills and experience of older generation

and their demand among younger population (including within the family). The problem was relevant in other epochs, but was determined mainly by conservative thinking and declined ability to adapt to innovations. Today the situation is complicated by a tremendous pace of technological progress. The solution to the problem of breaking intergenerational communications should be bilateral. It is necessary to change a socio-cultural paradigm of old age; young and older people should understand the importance of intergenerational interaction. The age factor should not determine a place, role and functions of a person in the social structure. It is important to form positive attitudes towards old age among young population on the basis of the fact that sooner or later each society member falls into the socio-demographic group of older people. Let us finish with a slightly paraphrased statement of one of the respondents: *society is aging, generations and technologies are changing, but the rules of life remain unchanged.*

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