

## **Diversity of Demonstration of the Russian Mentality in the Modern Russian Society**

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**Abstract:** The issue of the Russian mentality has been actively developed in different sciences including social studies. The attempts were made to identify its essence to describe its main features. The peculiar features of the modern Russian mentality were investigated to a lesser extent. This study investigates the specifics of manifestation of the Russian mentality in modern Russia. It has analyzed and summarized the sociological data concerning the mentality of a modern Russian man. As the result, the original definition of the Russian mentality was developed, its essential and specific properties were described. Such specific features of the Russian mentality of the post-Soviet Russian society as inconsistency, Eurasian orientation and sustainability have been analyzed in details. Some other specific features of the Russian mentality have also been identified: tending of a Russian man to support of primarily global projects, focus primarily not on the material-pragmatic but spiritual objectives, commitment to implementation of the projects that determine building up of the social justice and social equality in the Russian society. The validity of the results obtained is based on their correlation to the findings derived by other researchers of the Russian mentality. The necessity of taking into consideration these specific features of the Russian mentality by implementation of the socio-economic reforms in modern Russia was substantiated.

**Key words:** A Russian man, Russian mentality, diversity, manifestation, modern Russian society

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Russian mentality in modern Russia is an important subject of research in the sociological science. It has been and still is actively developed by many Russian and Foreign sociologists: Batalova (1996, 2015), Gorshkov (2005), Levada (2006a, b), Rodel (2000), Sergeyeva (2015), Shylundin (1999), Billington (1996), Dieter (1961), Geoffrey (1962), Clyde (1959) and Yoo (2006). They investigated the essential features of the Russian mentality (Levada, 2006a). The diversity of manifestation thereof within the specific-historical context of the social development (Batalova, 1996). The dynamics of its change in the long term (Likhachov, 1990a). Along with that in the studies of these researchers, the peculiarities of manifestation of mentality of a Russian man in the modern Russian society were underinvestigated. In this study, the attempt of solving the specified issue was undertaken.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The main research method used was the method of historical and logical consisting in the necessity of relating the historically changing object to representation

thereof in the theoretical learning. The historicism method was also used that allowed considering the mentality of a Russian man within the cultural-historic context of development of the modern Russian society.

**The Russian mentality:** The Russian mentality is the specific state of mind of a Russian man that is expressed in his specific unconscious, species and rational representation, stereotypes and attitudes and demonstrates his readiness to commit a particular action. It is determined by the specific-historical context of establishment and development of the Russian society. We are primarily interested in the Russian mentality of the post-Soviet Russian society.

The Russian mentality of the post-Soviet Russian society like the Russian mentality of the previous periods of development of Russia is characterized by the following basic features: commitment to the pragmatic attitude to natural resources; tending to steady and extensive labor; priority focus on spiritual aspects and not on material consumption; sense of the intrinsic involvement in the large communities of people; tending to collective, communal way of living; priority striving for equalizing, socially fair methods of distribution of material and spiritual resources; priority tending to authoritarian-

patriarchal attitude to the state and political leader; extraordinary belief in the supreme, special destination of Russia; belonging to the Orthodox church; primarily emotional-evaluative perception of the surrounding world; significant commitment to the equalizing-socialistic ideology; tending to philosophizing; often depreciative attitude to oneself. These features are combined and interrelated in a specific manner (for example, communalism, collectivism, collegiality, statehood imperia complex, sensuality spirituality, religiosity, tending to philosophizing, reflection are combined). Presence of these features of the Russian mentality is proved by numerous sociological studies, for example, surveying the Russians by the Levada-center in 1998-2003's, WCIOM polls in 2005- 2006, 2010-2014's. Thus on the basis of the polling data, Y.A. Levada confirmed that many of the above-mentioned properties are peculiar to a Russian man. He noted that today, a Russian man is not striving for deeds, does not appreciate them and this is why he does not want to see superman as his idols. He would rather see an idol in a humble officer holding a responsible position. In the post-Soviet conditions, he is guided not only by striving to survive, persist, being ready to adapt to the degraded level of existence. This is also a humbled man obsessed by the complexes of social, state, national inferiority. A man who tends to see behind all his failures the intrigues of foes, seek for those guilty in the broken idols. A person that feels hurt to see the state suffering, i.e., suffering the complex of the imperial self-consciousness in the absence of imperia. A person that is extremely tired of disorder and 'chaos'. At the level of statements, he appreciates freedoms, democracy and pluralism; however, he will hardly lift a finger to support them especially during a rough period. He much more appreciates order (at least quasi-order) and the own well-being that appeared to be so fragile during the crisis period (Levada, 2006b). The presence of these features of the Russian mentality was also proved by various WCIOM surveys. Thus in 2005, WCIOM polled the Russians as to the characteristic features of a Russian man. The Russians confirmed the presence of both positive (kindness, sincerity (41%) and warm-heartedness, honor, decency (26%) and negative (alcohol and drug addiction (43% as well as hoping for a miracle, laziness, lack of initiative, apathy (23%) traits (Anonymous, 2014). In 2006, WCIOM identified the opinion of the Russians of their political culture and commitment to democratic values. The Russians confirmed presence in themselves of the original political culture (67% of the Russians mentioned this feature), tending to passivity (68%), indifference and unwillingness of people to participate in the political life, inability and unwillingness to observe the

laws (56%), overall unbelief in ideals and principles (52%), collectivism, striving for solving any issues together (51%) (Anonymous, 2015). In 2010, WCIOM examined the opinion of the Russians of the environmental situation in Russia. This survey showed that in the modern Russian mentality commitment to the utilitarian-pragmatic attitude to the natural environment still persists (Anonymous, 2011). Later on this data was validated by the studies of Batalova (2015) and Gorshkov (2005).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The sociological studies identified the presence of the specific features in the Russian mentality of the post-Soviet Russian society. These may include the following:

Maintenance of the specific mental features established in the mentality of a Russian person in the Soviet society. Such features include primarily negative attitude to private property, commitment to collective orientation, striving for justice understood as equalization. As noted by Levada (2006a, b), it also features disappointment in the communism idea, lost illusions of the post-perestroika period, sensation of undeserved defeat and humiliation, tending to see the intrigues of the foes in everything, wish to uncrown the own idols, negative reception of any innovations, etc.

Appearance (or renewal) of certain mental properties that had been already formed in a Russian person during the capitalistic period of development of the Russian society or are being newly formed in the modern liberal-democratic Russian society. Such properties primarily include tending to enterprising, personal initiative, commitment to personal enrichment, individualism, focus on the hard competition). These trends have been proved by the sociological studies (Sergeyeva, 2015).

Increasing degree of inconsistency of mentality of a Russian man. It is primarily expressed in enhancement of antagonism of the positive and negative features peculiar to the Russian mentality. In the conditions of transition from one kind of society to another one the positive mental features of a Russian man (patriotism, great power statehood, tolerance, kindness, generous nature, vitality, pursuance of the ideal, spirituality, belief in the high designation of Russia, fairness) oppose the negative (imitativeness, submission, maximalism, lack of self-discipline, temptation to anarchy, tending to extremes, lack of developed economic interest, individual passivism, sensation of dependence on the state power, the complex of undeserved defeat and humiliation, hoping for a miracle, lack of initiative, tendency to heart searching, temptation to irrational riot, rudeness in the real life)

features. This was described by many foreign sociologists (Billington, 1996; Dieter, 1961; Geoffrey, 1962; Clyde, 1959; Yoo, 2006). Thus, Billington (1996) expressed the contradictory nature of a Russian man in two opposing metaphors; an icon and axe to which he refers alternatively depending on the historical context (Billington, 1996).

Demonstration of the Eurasian essence of mentality of a Russian man. The Eurasian nature of the Russian mentality consists in the fact that it combines the mental characteristics of a Western and Eastern man in a peculiar manner. This is determined by the fact that it has been formed under the influence of the Eurasian factor. In the mentality of a Russian man focus on conquest of the external world is combined with the focus on cognition of the inner world, activity with passivity, individualism with collectivism, rationalism with sensuality, pragmatism with non-pragmatism, focus on material consumption primarily with focus on spiritual development, etc. This was described by many sociologists including the Western ones (for example, Schubart and Huntington). Thus, Huntington pointed out directly that commitment to the Western-Slavophilism dualism is an integral mental feature of a Russian man (Samuel, 2015).

Increase in differences in the mental characteristics of a Russian man representing different social groups. In modern Russian the mental features of a Russian man, representative of business significantly differ from the mental features of a Russian man representing proletariat (peasantry and farmery; intellectuals; bureaucracy, etc.). A Russian man representing business (of the oligarchic and bureaucratic class) started feeling his elitism, tried to get rich quickly and gain impact on the power. Economic insecurity, sensation of the own irrelevance in the market society, wish to emigrate from Russia appeared in the mentality of a Russian intellectual. In the mentality of a Russian proletarian and peasant such features as dissatisfaction with the own work, temptation to demoralization, commitment to political passivity became more pronounced. Besides, certain commitment to the small bourgeois consciousness appeared in the mentality of a Russian proletarian. This was described in details by Trushkov (2002).

The mentality of a Russian man in the post-Soviet Russian society is, as noted by Rodel (2000), an evolving phenomenon (Batalova, 2015). Without seeming to exaggerate the changes in the modern Russian mentality, the following trends of its transformation and its peculiar features shall be specified. At the beginning of the liberal-market reforms certain belief in the possibilities of the market society arouse in the mentality of a Russian man. He started tending to

independence from the power, to entrepreneurial activity, wishing to get rich fast and increase his capital. He got interested in the public life. He attempted going into business, gaining private property, getting rich. His attitude to material welfare changed. It became prestigious to make money. They started taking money for the attribute of well-being, the criterion of successfulness in the society. He became more subject to personal enrichment, pressure on the power. He got such mental features as cruelty to a competitor, individualism, dominating drive to material and not spiritual gain, tendency to corruptness. These changes in the Russian mentality sparked the interest in the development of the scenarios of the Russian mentality development in the future. The most valid scenarios of development of the mindset (and mentality) of the Russian nation (and a Russian man) were presented by Shulyndin (1999). In an opinion by design of forecasts of changes in the Russian mentality one shall proceed from the assumption that many mental features are not subject to depreciation and rapid changes. Changes in the mentality of a Russian man may only proceed gradually, over a long period of time. It may be referred primarily to changes in the mental features of a Russian man relating not to the essence ('core') of the mentality but to the periphery (one may hope for decrease in the degree of inconsistency of mentality of a Russian man, for harmonization of the collective and individual, rational and sensual in it). The general strategy of changes in the mental features of a Russian man was most adequately represented by Likhachov (1990b). He wrote that 'striving of the Russians for freedom shall be forwarded towards overall development of the spiritual plurality, spiritual freedom. Tendency of the Russians to reach the extremes in everything should also be developed primarily within the spiritual area. Let us have the heroes of the spirit, hermits, saints, after all. Let the unconscious striving for devoting the whole self to any holy cause that distinguished the Russians at all times take its deserved place again and distract a Russian man from his destructive patterns of the like-mindedness, like-action and submission (Likhachov, 1990a, b). It is important to realize that positive feature prevail in the Russian mentality. This is recognized by many Russian and what's especially important for foreign sociologists. Thus for example, Spier (2005) noted that most of the Russians are well-educated and feature pretty perfect knowledge of the literature, history and politics. By designing the forecasts of changes in the Russian mentality. It is important to realize that the systemic crisis that covered both the economic and spiritual spheres of the modern Russian society is to a great extent determined by the fact that during the process of implementation of

the economic and social reforms the peculiar features of the Russian mentality had not been taken into account. As the result, the support of these reforms by them, the activity of participation in modernization of the Russian society decreased significantly. In order to make a Russian man support them such mental features of a Russian man shall be taken into account as: Firstly; tending to support primarily global projects, secondly; focus primarily not on the material-pragmatic but spiritual objectives, thirdly; commitment to implementation of the projects that determine building up of the social justice and social equality in the Russian society.

The results of the study validated the previously formulated hypothesis necessitating considering the peculiar features of mentality of a Russian man by implementation of the socio-economic reforms in modern Russia. Taking into account these peculiarities will allow implementing the entire set of reforms of the Russian society in the most successful and efficient way.

### CONCLUSION

In the course of the study a number of issues were identified that require further development: the necessity of the more detailed, comprehensive and continuous analysis of the specifics of the Russian mentality, trends of their gradual transformation, identification of the mechanisms of accounting within involvement of a Russian man in the more active public reformative activity.

As the result of the study, the following conclusion have been drawn: Firstly; the Russian mentality is the specific state of mind of a Russian man that is expressed in his specific unconscious, species and rational representation, stereotypes and attitudes and demonstrates his readiness to commit a particular action, secondly; it has the following features: Preservation of the mental features of a Russian man of previous historical periods, inconsistency, Eurasian nature, sustainability, thirdly; by implementation of reforms one shall be taken into account tending of a Russian man to support global projects primarily, his focus primarily not on the material-pragmatic but spiritual objectives, his commitment to implementation of the projects that determine building up of the social justice and social equality in the Russian society.

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