

## THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE REFORMS IN RUSSIA AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES: NEW RESEARCH APPROACHES

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The relevance of the study of the problem is due to the processes of modernization and globalization, which today are largely determined by the socio-cultural dynamics, historical traditions and mentality of the people. The forms of cultural life affect the specificity of social processes, including reforms. This article is focused upon analysis of new approaches to the study of the history of reformation in Russia, including the transition to the identification of the social and genetic code, and also the definition of psychological, social and philosophical features of domestic reform. In these particular historical terms, the study of Russian socio-economic reform is quite active, making it possible to set similar tasks. The leading approach to the study of this problem is the shift in emphasis from analysis of the 'objective' causes of reforms, 'subjective', and the space of their formation, to the paradigms of thinking, the dynamics of social moods of society. Today, through examination of these reform periods, there is an ever more obvious recognition of the importance of studying culture as an essential factor in reformist activity. The article examines the socio-cultural features of domestic reform, and analyzes new research approaches. Attention is focused upon the formation of mechanisms for the transformation of general cultural stereotypes into a model of reform and socio-historical features of management in Russia. Such aspects as dilemmas, 'reform-revolution', and 'reformism-counter-reformism' are considered. The materials of the article can be useful in further developing the study of cultural and historical features of domestic reform.

**Keywords:** Reforms, cultural features, mentality, socio-cultural approach, national economy.

### INTRODUCTION

Specificity of reform activity is largely determined by culture as a set of behavioral patterns, stereotypes of social activity and the distribution of functions among the subjects of this activity (Gavrov, 2011). Contradictions of socio-economic reform of Russian society make it important to search for factors that ensure a successful market transformation. The experience of reforms in the second half of the 20th century showed that, where models do not take into account the affiliation to a certain type of civilization development - such as the peculiarities of the spiritual wellbeing of the population - the traditional value systems are not effective. In recent times, there are special cultural studies dealing with various aspects of the cultural context of social reform and economy. The role of the features of Russia as a cultural organism, by comparison with the West, is noted (Akhiezer, 2006). The problem of modernization of Russian society becomes a subject for consideration. The logic of modernism is correlated with another model of linear

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ascension, from traditional society to a modern society. The static nature of the consideration of cultural and economic types makes it possible to talk about the need for a synthesis of civilization and linear approaches to the study of the processes of society reform. Leo Tolstoy believed that spirituality and morality are the basis for a reform of society. However, without turning people's consciousness; External reforms can be useless, because the lack of a proper level of culture and morality will almost inevitably give rise to new forms of coercion of mankind.

The ideas of these authors broadly unite the idea that the study of domestic reforms should take into account their cultural context.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The specific mechanisms of transformation of cultural stereotypes existing in the public mind reform model, plus the prerequisites and factors of those changes, remain important methodology. Interesting, in this perspective, is the approach of the City of Char, which shows that the idea of mentality can be a convenient form for the quantitative analysis of culture using flow analysis and series information. With mentality, the culture is measured in terms of the number of publications on economic history and statistics (Goltz, 2002). This method allows the study of the importance of culture, the level of intellectualization of society through the fixation threads of the published information. The mismatch between perceptions and the actual course of events leads, in the author's opinion, to the possibility of discrepancies between the work of implementing the presentation of the subject on its ability to govern society and real existing possibilities of this control. That is why the logic of the reforms in Russia conflicts with the mass behavior (Kara-Murza, 1991). In recent years the problem of the interdependence of economic activities, economy, customs, norms of behavior, traditions (i.e. social institutions) are considered by institutionalism (T. Veblen, J. Commons, W. Mitchell) (Savka, 2012). The methodological approach to the transformation of society and the state, the theory of reforms, lends a positive meaning to the reforms as the engine of social progress, given that the semantics of the term is interpreted as a shape change in a positive direction. Reforms can be attributed to various factors, including the crisis. If the country concerned has achieved relative social stability, the transformation could also be initiated by political authorities with the aim of achieving higher levels of development. Historically, reform in Russia has tended to occur in response to a crisis. The perceived success of each of these reforms has largely depended upon how much we can agree on the value orientations of different population groups – particularly concerning goals and means of change – in order to reconcile the social-cultural contradictions. Any reform rooted in the relevant values is likely to lead to certain innovations, changes which may often lead to opposition, both in nature and in society. The problem of value justification of such reform - mandating

reforms in the culture of society when they do not contradict socio-cultural experience - is one of the new angles of research on reform issues. The interdisciplinary nature of this study allows drawing upon the unity of the philosophical and cultural methods: reflection and determination, historical and logical, analytical and comparative.

One of the representative sources for study of general cultural, psychological and value prerequisites in relation to large-scale social reforms are found in works of fiction from their particular period. For example, as a result of studying literary works taken as an informative source for studying the cultural basis of the reforms of the 19th century, E.V. Mironov (2013) comes to the conclusion that society has developed a set of ideas about effective ways of transforming a social situation, based upon, firstly, the image of the hero-reformer, and secondly, an image of society formed from a primary focus on negative aspects of social relations. The author notes that, during the decade from the beginning of the 1850s to the early 1860s, there was a gradual transition from understanding the reformation to be the actualization of the latent potential of the updates, to instead appreciating it as the representation of a radical break with the traditions and culture of the previous generation, as a necessary content of an effective reform (Mironov, 2013).

## RESULTS

This approach means the analysis of reforms from theoretical positions - in particular, cultural and historical psychology. The concept of the mentality of the people, which differs from social psychology in that it focuses its attention not on moods and subjective, easily variable states of the psyche, but rather upon constants, basic concepts of people embedded in their consciousness by culture, language and religion (Gurevich, 2005). The Eastern and Western ideologies began a system of coordinates of reforms. The sphere of each mentality is connected with the material life of society, with production and demography lying at the heart of the distinctive features of Russian reformism. Firstly, the idea of Slavophilism and Westernism is deeply rooted in our minds. These ideologies emerge through the whole history of domestic reform in one form or another, depending upon the historical period, socio-economic conditions, and political orientations. N.A. Berdyaev wrote that 'every national individuality, like the individuality of man, is a microcosm and therefore contains contradictions', but this occurs in different degrees. The inconsistency and complexity of the Russian soul may be due to the fact that Russia has both faced, and interacted with, these two major streams of world history - East and West. And always in the Russian soul is the fight between these two principles. With reference to the epochs of reform, this idea is refracted in the departure from its own history and a connection to Western civilization, or else in the return to its own

history, albeit through the clarification of its true essence and value. Particularly indicative in this context is the experience of Peter the Great's reforms, which are widely accepted as a 'Russian and European' coordinate system. Without dwelling on the contradictory assessments of the era of the reforms of Peter I, we note that, in Peter the Great time period, another tradition of Russian reformism emerged: ignoring, or paying insufficient attention to, the problem of social protection of the population within the framework of the ongoing reformist policy. Even today this trend has not lost its significance, with public statements made about the need for social content of reforms. It is interesting to note that, in this connection, the history of Russia's economic thought, beginning with I.G. Pososhkova, suggests that it was the social moment that came to the fore. This feature of Russian economic thought, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was pointed out by the German scientist H. Seraphim, who wrote: "It is characteristic of the Russian national character, that in the political economy, when and as it is independently developed by the Russians, the social moment is brought to the forefront" (Seraphim, 1925).

The next aspect of the Russian experience to consider is the 'reform-revolution' dilemma. Reforms and revolution are alternative ways of resolving urgent public and state problems. The most striking example in this sense is the reform of 1861, which was conducted under the threat of a social explosion. In the second half of the 20th century, several fresher approaches emerged. A peculiar interpretation of this dilemma is given by F.V. Shelov-Kovedyaev (1992) in a model of the cycle of transformations, which looks like this:

1. The initial impulse to transformations, deforming the natural process, usually comes from the outside.
2. The radical wing of the bureaucracy is usually the initiator of changes that are comparable in scale with the reforms of major revolutionary periods.
3. The combination of these factors makes it possible to 'anticipate' or localize the social explosion 'from below'. However, due to the initiative predominantly occurring 'overhead', solutions to overdue contradictions are not genuinely instigated. The new contradictions are, in part, layered into the 'allowed' old ones, ultimately leading to the formation of a bundle of deferred, often deep-rooted, conflicts.
4. Conflicts, when breaking out, can erupt into social explosions of enormous destructive power. The absence of genuine representative institutions for a long period of time leads to a lack of social energy, so the subsequent breakdown of bureaucratic obstacles shakes the whole of society to the ground.
5. Anarchic ruffles eventually create a craving for order, as a result of which a rigidly centralized hierarchical statehood is re-created (Shelov-Kovedyaev, 1992).

It should be noted that, by their nature, the reforms reflect certain historical stages in the development of the economy, different states of statehood. The noted features of Russian reformism therefore do not manifest themselves unequivocally at all its stages, but rather, the forms of manifestation depend upon a specific historical situation.

Russian changes are characterized by variations in the waves of reformism and counter-reformism. The political history of Russia is a long-standing choice between radical reform and equally radical counter-reform. Reform is always an attempt to modernize the country, to join modern civilization, whilst counter-reform is about strengthening the gap with modern civilization. The end of the reforms inevitably brings to life a new situation and a corresponding ideology. The counter-reform ideology focuses primarily upon the 'improvement' of morality and spirit, feelings apparently degraded during the era of reforms by a nihilistic and non-national outlook. In recent years, new studies have appeared in which certain counter-reforms of the late nineteenth century are viewed as the optimal program for a sustainable development of Russian statehood, calling for a rapprochement of traditional and innovative political and legal forms as a measure with which to eliminate the imbalance between the country's economic, social and cultural development (Litvin & Dolakova 2014). As an outlook specific to the culture of Russia, one can note its attraction appeals more to the collective than to the individualistic principle, the search for justice and truth, which received a direct expression and in a moderate (quiet) attitude to property. The experience of reforms that took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are very contradictory in this context. S. Witte's book, *National Economy and Friedrich List*, was published in Kiev in 1889. In it the reformer presented the fundamental ideas of his reform program and Witte criticized classical political economy for cosmopolitanism, for ignoring national interests, for "lifeless materialism" without regard for moral and political factors, and for particularism, abstracted from the role of the state, the nation. He was a strong supporter of the "national economy" (Dolakova & Akhmetova, 2015). According to Witte, one cannot demand the treatment of all the economic ailments of the country according to the recipes of the cosmopolitan economy. It is also likely to prove ineffective, for example, to require the construction of an engine according to formulas of analytical mechanics, without taking into account the quality of the materials, the conditions of resistance and surrounding atmospheric influences. "At the present time," says Witte, "the nation's main concern should be to preserve, develop and improve its nationality. In this there is nothing unjust and selfish: this striving is reasonable and perfectly in accordance with the interests of mankind, for it leads to a universal association that can be realized through confederation, insofar as the people achieve an equal degree of culture and power" (Golts, 2002). In the first Up-To-Date Report, Witte notes that in Russia, according to the special historical conditions of its composition

and development, the financial economy cannot be enclosed in a strictly defined framework “pre-established by the needs of the state” in the generally accepted meaning of the term. The perception of the Russian people is that the original conviction is rooted in the fact that “the tsarist government takes the initiative in everything, to the benefit and needs of the people concerned.”

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The problem touched upon in this study was considered in historiography mainly in terms of certain methodological approaches to studying the specifics of social reform. Western European traditions of the study of the connection between the economy, man and society, and culture, are represented by the words of supporters of historical political economy, namely A. Muller (2007) and F. Liszt (2005). In the 20th century this problem was touched upon by O. Spengler (2006), F. Hayek (2000), D. Gelbright (1976) and J. Schumpeter (1995). The ‘cultural-analytical’ approach to economy and economics is also traced in the historical school of “Annals” (F. Brodel, J. Goff). M. Büscher (1996) and A. Etzioni (2004) studied ethical aspects of modern management. The analysis, analyzed in this research, of new research approaches in the study of the socio-cultural context of reforms in Russia at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, is an actual trend in the thought process of contemporary research, and a constructive understanding of the problems related to the specifics of the Russian situation. It seems that the future of modern modernization and market reforms in modern Russia are largely determined by the synthesis of new ways of managing the cultural and historical traditions of Russia as a special type of civilization. The value system of Russian society is undergoing a serious transformation. The search for the socio-cultural context of the concept of modern reforms cannot be enclosed in the framework of identity, which is unlikely and impossible in the context of a single information space in the modern world. The need to take into account socio-cultural factors as an important prerequisite for development and economic modernization is the starting point for new research approaches to the problem of reforming Russian society.

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