

# Spiritual and mental foundations of personality self-determination against the background of the importance of environmental problems

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**Abstract.** Rigorous transformations taken place in Russian society owing to information influence had drastically altered moral behavior patterns of an individual by designing different patterns of social reality. Transformation of reflexive structures of mental programs came into contradiction with normative (traditional, basic) behavior patterns of Russians that can be characterized as non-reflexive, conveying successive values and meanings, as well as mechanisms of development and self-determination of an individual. Hence, the article addresses features of self-determination of an individual in modern society determined by spiritual and mental sources of development. Trans-disciplinary approach is the theoretical and methodological basis of the scientific research. Analysis of mental programs and mental traditional matrixes of Russians, as well as spiritual meanings and values that define the process of self-determination corroborate the effectiveness of the research. Analysis of research papers suggests that self-determination relates to: self-actualization of potential, self-realization, spiritual self-comprehension, destination and integrity achievement, as well as to supreme values and meanings of culture of each civilization.

## 1 Introduction

Social-economic and political situation in Russia predetermines self-determination of an individual. In the context of modern society guidelines and values change and traditional spiritual potential of Russians deforms subject to essential features. A person lives with deep-rooted contradictions. Traditional mental spiritual and moral norms that sporadically reveal themselves in the society, but all the while kept within mental unconscious of an individual enter into contest with toxic, non-traditional values instilled to the society. Internal conflicts and contradictions appear. Internal mental conditions of development being the major and essential criterion of mental and spiritual health of a person and the baseline of his/her individuality and talent do not correlate with conditions of external social reality.

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Development parameters imposed by society do not promote self-determination of Russians and hereinafter the implementation of their potential.

On the one hand, Russian society suffers from absence of successful specialists leaving for effective professional self-actualization abroad; on the other hand, the society does not create conditions for practical self-determination and professional formation of young people within the system of workforce capacity forming. In spite of requirements of society in development and as the result in specialists, in each field there is no actual demand for professionals and as the result demand for self-determination of Russian youth.

Mentality of Russians is associated with spiritual and moral self-organization of self-determining personality. Since childhood, this spiritual-moral-ness coming from inner mental civilized fundamentals of traditional development directs towards comprehending of supreme spiritual values and essential meanings. This is the basis of self-determination process in early and late teens, and in the future – the basis of professional formation.

A person is always a bearer of mental programs and behavioral matrixes of the culture in the frameworks of which the person was educated. Accordingly the self-determination of Russian youth shall be regarded in the frameworks of mental matrix and normative (traditional, basis) behavior pattern of the nation that can be described as stable, unconscious and non-reflexive. Mentality defines the system of ideals, major spiritual meanings and values as the basis of self-determination and self-actualization of an individual.

Nowadays the increase of number of information streams, alteration of values in modal behavior patterns having lively and varying character present a challenge to youth thus perplexing the process of self-determination. There appear the necessity to combine scientific and technological progress constructing new patterns of social reality with self-determination of youth having in its grounds complete coupling with spiritual and traditionally mental. Progress is only the vector of development that needs fundamental premise.

## **2 Materials and methods**

Trans-disciplinary approach is the underlying methodology of the research. The approach allows tracing synchronization of internal and external existence of a person as well as regularity of their development, features of values and supreme meanings interaction. The approach also helps to integrate different aspects of reality into a single entity, combine scientific knowledge with practical solutions to social problems. The method proved to be effective for explaining nation behavior as it deals with its traditions and culture. Quite effective was the method of correlation of mental matrix of normative (traditional, basic) behavior pattern with alterations in modal behavior patterns via introduction of new, toxic set of values interacting with spiritual, moral and traditional values. Historically formed Russian character predetermines the importance of the method for the research.

Neo-classical approach helped to tie together values and traditions, internal and external conditions of the nation existing within multidimensional modern social reality. Psychological and historic-comparative methods were also helpful. Psychological method helped to study behavioral mechanisms of individual, his/her features of self-determination. The method was effective for studying major behavioral patterns of an individual and their modern manifestation. Historic-comparative method including historical description and comparison helped to collate modern phenomena with analogues in the history of the cultural community. The method also helped to study modern condition of self-determination of youth together with traditional context in which it appeared.

## **3 Results**

Analysis of research papers suggests that scientists have analogous views on features of youth self-determination. Russian and foreign studies by leading philosophers and psychologists spotlight the fact that self-determination relates to: self-actualization of potential, self-realization, spiritual self-comprehension, destination and integrity achievement, as well as to supreme values and meanings of culture of each civilization.

This idea can be traced in studies of: Abraham Maslow on potentials development; A.A. Rean on self-development need; Viktor Frankl on spiritual self-comprehension; S.F. Frank on self-actualization and destination, integrity achievement. As well as in studies of: R.H. Lauer & J.C. Lauer on necessity to resolve life crises concealing resources of personal growth; E. Atwater, K.G. Duffy on necessary means of self-understanding and personal self-construction and development; S. Shwartz on human values.

Studies carried out by L.I. Bozhovich, N.A. Golovko, L.A. Zelenov, D.B. Kazantseva, L.N. Kogan, I.S. Kon, and V.A. Yadov address self-determination of an individual from the perspective of attitudes, course of life and self-actualization. Studies of V.F. Safin and G.P. Nikov address self-determination from the perspective of a person who during the process of socialization creates goals, ideals, life's meaning, disposition and talents. Study of M.R. Ginsburg addresses personal self-determination as self-determination of values and meanings that is initial genetically and determines development of all other types of self-determination.

Generalized studies help to make a conclusion that personal self-determination is the basis for self-development. It is also associated with values and meanings, namely the need to appropriate and form the values and meanings, and with active determination of oneself in the real life with respect to social system of values. There is also a connection between self-actualization, self-fulfillment and self-determination both social and professional.

According to K.A. Abul'khanova-Slavskaya [1] personal self-determination is the choice made by a person of a behavior line and perception of own position inside reference system of relations as well as self-determination of own place in the society and life. According to L.I. Bozhovich [2] during the above-mentioned process, the motivation of an individual happens inside a person with formation of "motivated conceptions" that influence specific behavioral manifestations implemented in the processes of external determination as well as self-determination. A child initially perceives him/her-self as subject of action and only then as the social subject.

Analysis made by K.S. Burov [3] of multiple studies on the issue also showed that self-determination is developed by acquiring attitudes, personal and professional experience after mastering certain norms, values and purposes and is associated with search for meanings. It happens under the influence of inner choice and external factors (parents, friends, conceptions, and etc.). Self-determination by accepting different subject-matters defines new formations, conceptions, awareness and correlation of personal and social needs. Self-determination is consciously achieved compliance of individual features with external manifestations; of dominants defining choice of an individual with their implementation in society.

The need of self-determination is the need to form the system of meanings that has nature of values and meanings, deliberate system of goal-setting, motivation for activity, strong-willed self-organization and individual self, manifested through social reality. N.A. Berdyaev [4] addresses self-determination as: achievement of abundant life, setting of deliberate goals, self-knowledge of personal features and ability to control own behavior. Self-actualization of own knowledge, skills, disposition and potential is developed by means of breakthrough into spiritual world. Motivation and strong-willed activities at that have an essential role.

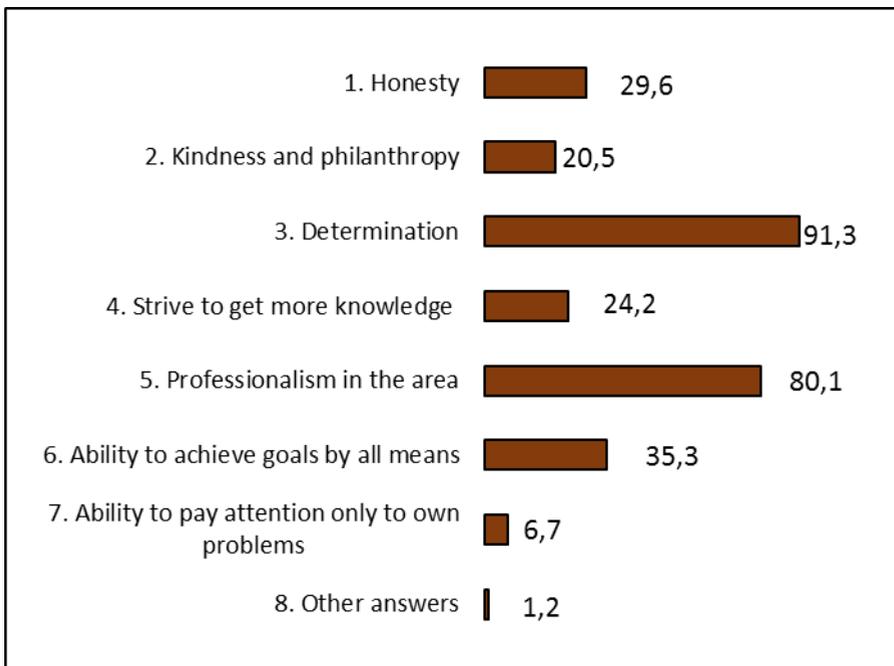
According to V.V. Afanasev, S.M. Kunitsyna and M.P. Nechaev [5] effectiveness of self-determination forming depends on specific conditions providing correlation of processes of formation and self-development of an individual. It is necessary during the process to include the individual into various activities aimed at acquisition of social experience. Systems of

social role and experience in self-organization and self-regulation are also helpful. Alterations of social environment stipulate the quality of external and internal factors of self-determination.

According to E.G. Belyakova and I.G. Zakharova [6] self-determination is also an intelligent entrance into profession, owing to: matured personal plan, deliberate activities and self-image, self-actualization, understanding of own vocation, experience of identity and self-identification with profession, acceptance of values of chosen path and positive emotional perception of it.

But on the way of self-determination there are also contradictions. The study of D.B. Kazantseva [7] shows that self-determination is associated with processes of self-actualization, adaptation and socialization. The factor that unites the processes is system of inner, motivating values. For Russia – it is spiritual and moral values. Self-determination stands in one row with traditional values such as health, life, kindness, honor, love and etc. Social expectance of modern society in relation to effective individual behavior requires new means of manifestation that sometimes hamper self-determination and come into conflict with traditional values. Studies of spiritual and moral fundamentals of individual development carried out in 2007-2008 in Penza involved 693 participants aged 15-29 years (women – 63.9%, men – 36.1%). The participants asked questions like: “Shall we write what we really think?” and then added “Our results will surprise you, as we are outdated”.

Though among the participants spiritual and moral values prevailed they doubted the possibility to implement them. They noted that life is united with spiritual values, but modern society introduces another values of self-determination. However during the process of implementation 67% continued to have honesty, kindness, philanthropy, determination, professionalism and acquiring of knowledge as their guidelines (Fig. 1). At that, 16.4% of participants believed that the implementation of spiritual values is accessible (Fig. 2). The key factor to achieve the goal is to “work hard” and therefore “make a decent living” (45.8%). The second factor was to have sustainable employment (37.6%) (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 1.** What does an individual need to achieve success?

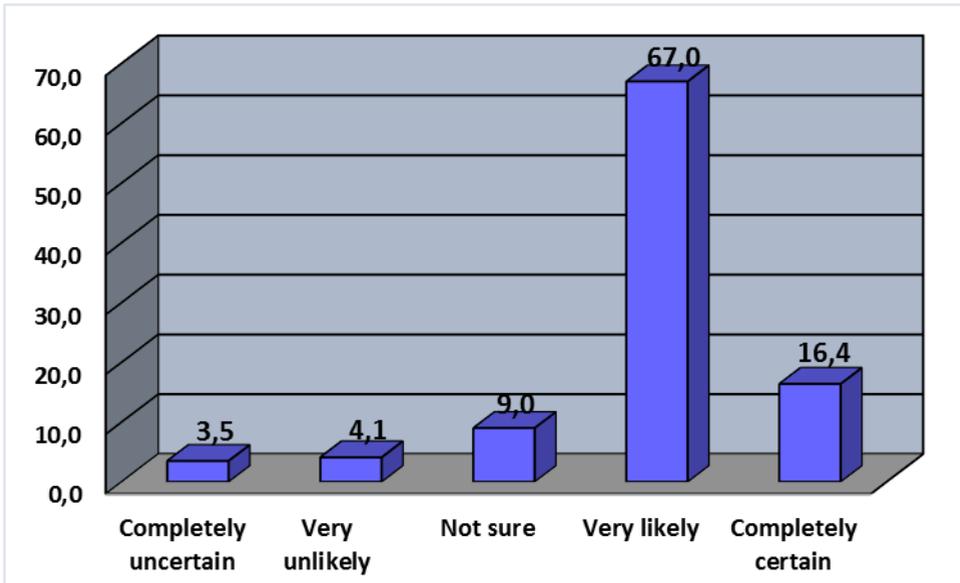


Fig. 2. Certainty in ability to implement own plans for life.

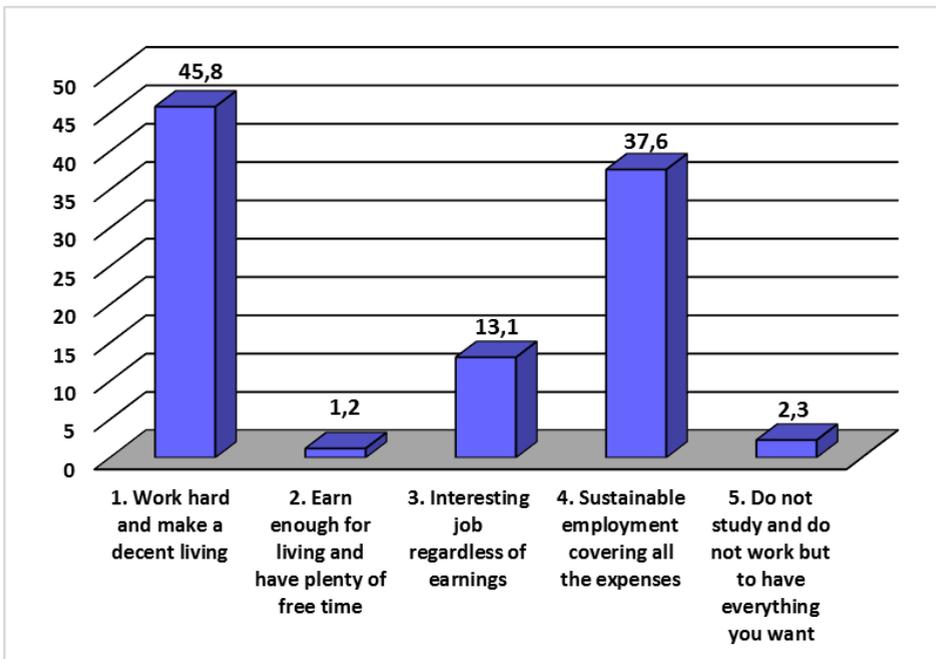


Fig. 3. Psychological patterns of self-actualization.

Summarizing all the above mentioned we can make a conclusion that regardless the multiplicity of studies the issue of influence of traditional spiritual and moral values on self-determination is still not enough scientifically elaborated. It is quite accessible that momentum for an individual during the process of self-determination will be the introduction of new, non-traditional values into the space of Russian society, but only provided synchronization with traditional values determining the process. Interaction of external –

non-traditional and inner – traditional spiritual and moral values will entail organizational changes: regulation of social norms, social patterns and social institutions.

D.B. Kazantseva [8] in her studies continues to search basis of personal self-determination. She notes that sources of self-determination are geographical, cultural and social conditions that society transmits during particular historic period of its development as well as individual peculiarities of a person. Cultural space framed by definite mental programs with set of cultural and in particular spiritual and moral ideals and values is the reflexive and value-based space of self-determination. Favourable conditions of specific social and cultural situation induce an individual to master deliberate ways of self-replication and interiorization of values. Owing to historical reasons the mentality of Russians as pivot in any system took self-determination to the next brand-new level that requires application of universal, spiritual approach. Owing to this the process of self-determination was addresses spiritually and morally. The spiritual self-determination being lodestar and axiological dominant of development emphasized understanding the integrity of being, awareness of supreme forces and the way of appropriate existence of individual and society. Self-determination of an individual has started from creation of mindset to comply with the spiritual ideal, and integration of the compliance into educational process. Traditional culture proved its stability during different historical periods of development continues to reveal itself in modern Russian society.

## 4 Discussion

Problems of self-determination, its social, cultural and psychological matter are among challenging issues of modern philosophy and psychology due to specific features of social development, high mobility and variability of social systems exceeding the limits of traditional sound formations.

There is a lively discussion of mental patterns based on deliberate social and cultural interaction. The patterns influence a person and involve a complex of correlated major schemes used as instruments (DiMaggio [9]). Thinking based on mental patterns influences person's perceptions as well as interpretation of the perceived. We can conclude that people react not to objective experience, but to how they conceive it by shifting it into the field of moral certainty and perceiving it as undisputable social fact. The formed stereotype being a mental pattern of social group is perceived as necessary for decision-making and its implementation does influence the abilities of people [10].

It has been also observed that basic mental patterns of one's world considered as objective and peculiarities of patterns functioning are often defined by economic relations, religious affiliation (P. Bourdieu [11]) and characteristics of social group (A. Kleinman [12]). Mental patterns predetermine comprehension of what is right, natural and accessible in life. We can conclude that exactly the changing of mental pattern helps to alter both perceptions of a person and interpretation of received information, and to break the vicious circle for the purposes of further development. Social alterations regardless deep rootedness of mental patterns are possible through impact on deliberate decision-making, social practice and social institutions.

However studies carried out by A.B. Lubskiy [13] show that mental matrix of modal behavior pattern actually exists and has deliberate and that is why changeable, unstable and reflexive character. According to the pattern new experience can be obtained, just as behavior dependent on existing conditions can be adjusted. Modal patterns of social behavior are defined by both hybrid and alternative mental programs creating social and cultural cleavage and antinomic collective consciousness. Different social actors influencing the program through informational impact transform reflexive structures by perceiving certain separate

and value judgment. This is how different images of social reality are designed within frameworks of which social situation are defined.

The author notes that there is also mental matrix of normative (traditional, basic) behavior pattern unconsciously carrying social and cultural traditions and thus is stable and non-reflexive. The matrix defines meanings and values, mindset and norms, psycho-protective mechanism and mechanisms of development. Normative behavior pattern contains deep mental peculiarities kept in the unconscious and can only be changed with a lot of effort.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned facts we may suggest that the process of self-determination is deeply correlated with mental matrix of normative pattern having nature of values and meanings. Normative matrix is genetically initial for development of an individual and his/her capabilities, dispositions, abilities, features, talent, ideals, goals, values and life's meaning. Based on the matrix the individual path of development is formed and then it transforms into the system of social relations. A person is the subject of natural and social objective history. The subject is defined by social existence of a person and by restricted norms. Upon replacement of external norms the subject keeps self-determination or adjusts it.

Unity of normative and modal patterns of mental programs of personal behavior in Russia is combination of unconsciousness and consciousness based on social and cultural immunity of the society – stable foundation of traditional behavior revealing spiritual behavioral specificity of Russians. When addressing the process of self-determination it is necessary to take into consideration the binary character of correlation between normative and modal patterns of mental programs of personal behavior.

Self-determination implies coordinated functioning of all levels of personal existence: inner and external; conscious and unconscious processes; normative and modal patterns of mental programs of personal behavior; mentality of nation and its cultural and spiritual values. Owing to synchronization, a person is able to achieve self-determination and elaborates own guidelines on the way from knowledge, skills and norms mastering to self-actualization of a potential.

Self-determination is achieved owing to mentality of nation imbued with spirit of national culture, its values and meanings. Mental unconscious matrixes determine behavioral patterns and form mental mechanisms. Moral and spiritual mindsets and values of an individual kept by Russian mentality define social traits typical for the society, preset mode of existence and meaning of the whole process of development. These matrixes and patterns are the key factor defining self-determination and implementation of potential. Spiritual values provoke development of a personality, guiding it towards effective self-realization.

On one hand, self-determination is stipulated by personal potential, meanings and mindsets necessary for successful activities. Self-determination independently and autonomously create conditions for self-actualization. On the other hand, self-determination is associated with objective reality, and combines personal qualities and defined field of action where personal potential is actualized. Within the chosen social space, a person meets own needs for development.

Reflexive and value-based space of a Russian historically is spiritually charged, and this is key element for development and personal self-determination. During the process of self-determination, people identify themselves with spirituality through the mastering of spiritual and moral values. Owing to this, a person becomes the subject of self-transformations. Acceptance of self as part of spiritual nature starts the process of subject forming as well as the process of correlation and integrity of fundamental mental mechanisms development. Through cognitive constituent happens the perception of spiritual and moral norms; through sensual dynamics happens acceptance of norms; through behavioral element a person starts to live in compliance with the norms.

The process of self-determination through the mechanism of identification takes place in three levels of psyche. According to D.B. Kazantseva, E.K. Klimova and T.E. Chernysheva [14] the three levels of identification are: emotional (inner experiences and creation of positive, emotionally attractive image), cognitive (perception of what is going on, saturation with information and knowledge acquisition) and behavioral (formation of mindsets relative to behavior). A person interiorizes value-based roots of identity by conveying cultural values across the generations with the help of: informational method (cognitive mechanism); emotional contagion and identification with behavior patterns of reference groups as the result of participation in socially useful and social and cultural activities (emotional and behavioral mechanisms). Cognitive, emotional and behavioral self-identification of an individual with norms and values of definite social and cultural environment and its cultural and spiritual values creates common line of development of country and people.

Mental origin as basis of essential development of a person and his/her vitality during the process of identification contributes to expanding of personal development. Identification starts from association with spirituality of outer environment. When self-determination in relation to outer environment is finished, starts the process of self-determination related to spirituality of inner environment, actuating the processes of self-determination and self-identification. Self-determination as real freedom - "existence in accordance with self" – becomes the condition when according to S.L. Frank [15] a personality refuses him/her-self by penetrating into something more spiritual. The spirituality of a person becomes according to F.E. Frankl [16] deep basis of his/her existence, spiritual core, source of the best qualities and values around which all the levels of existence are located.

The analysis of self-determination in the studies of I.E. Sokolovskaya [17, 18] showed that there is a differentiation of students by value orientations, there are differences between moral and morally unstable ones. The most common phenomenon in the student environment – individualism of the pragmatic type-is more inherent in morally unstable students, which also affects the further choice of life path and self-determination in general.

Thus the process of self-determination of an individual in Russia is defined by spirituality of its people, combining: self-determination with life's meaning; biological nature with social; natural and psychological influence with social. During the process of self-determination there appeared ability of "Self" to self-actualize. This helps a person to independently form own culture identity keeping basic traditional values of national culture and self-determine the process of self-determination.

## 5 Conclusion

Modern social and cultural context of life and level of informational saturation impedes replication of norms and values traditional for Russians. New sets of toxic values and meanings have interacted with spiritual and moral as well as traditional sets of values and meanings that historically determined individual self-determination in Russia. Personality is forced to accept new ways of information perceiving that are followed by problems of adaptive character. This had an influence on all mechanisms of mental development of a personality inclusive of self-determination thus limiting abilities of self-defining personality.

Essential basis of social improvements lies in distortion of spiritual and moral nature of an individual. This leads to absence of self-determination in relation to spiritual and accordingly actualization of potential. However basic essential mental matrixes of modal, deliberate, normative, unconscious, stable and traditional behavior patterns of Russians continue with consideration of spirituality traditional for Russian mentality to activate self-identification and as the result self-determination. Spirituality becomes the foundation for development of both personality of a Russian and its society.

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