

VALUES CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE RUSSIAN POPULACE AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Marina Gaskova

ABSTRACT This article analyzes the process of transformation of values of the Russian populace during the period of reform that started in 1987 with Mikhail Gorbachev's "Perestroika." In addition, an effort is made to find grounds to interpret empirical data on values within the theoretical frameworks of several modern integral research approaches, including Integral Theory and Spiral Dynamics. These approaches are discussed as a part of a broader post-nonclassical paradigm of knowledge. Methodologically, they serve as a unique source of research into different kinds of phenomena from a holistic standpoint. The article presents a comparative analysis of empirical data of international and Russian research on values, as well as local longitudinal research conducted in the Novosibirsk Oblast region.

KEY WORDS human development, integral approach, Russia, values

The deep transformation that is taking place in Russia has influenced all areas of human life, along with fundamental reforms in the sociopolitical and economic arenas. Are there connections between the changes in material areas on the one hand and spiritual on the other? How are these changes reflected in the conscience of specific social groups? What tendencies and patterns in the development of mass consciousness in a broader sense can be noted during the past 25 years?

Values of the Russian Populace

To formulate an answer for the questions above, I first address the main conclusions and hypotheses of the World Values Survey that was conducted by American sociologist Ronald Inglehart and his team in more than 60 countries. The survey, conducted in 1981, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010/2011, includes coverage of Russia. A subset of his conclusions and ideas will be referred to here.

The results of his research show that, inarguably, there is interdependency between the economic and political situation in a country and the values of its population. In his analysis, Inglehart pays much attention to materialistic/postmaterialistic values (i.e., values of survival and self-expression), aiming to prove that people living in countries that are less developed economically (including Russia) have a higher percentage of *materialistic values* than richer countries, the population of which are reorienting towards *postmaterialistic values*. Inglehart includes the following characteristics in his definition of materialistic values: preference toward physical and psychological safety and material well-being; tendency towards authoritarianism; and reverence toward officials. Postmaterialistic facets include belonging to a group; variability in self-expression in all areas of life; democratism; and a high level of tolerance for others (Inglehart, 1999).

Inglehart pays considerable attention to the values of materialism, analyzing them in the context of his socialization hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, dependence between socioeconomic conditions and

Correspondence: Marina Gaskova, IEIE SB RAS, Ac. Lavrentyev Ave., 17, Novosibirsk, Russia, 630090. E-mail: mgaskova@yahoo.com.

values is not formed instantly: it takes considerable time for values to change. His study of different generations of Americans shows a clear dependency of *age* on the dominance of materialistic/postmaterialistic values. At least one generation has to change before a fundamental change of values takes place. However, even after growing up, the younger generation does not become more materialistic.

Inglehart also formulates and proves a scarcity hypothesis, according to which individual priorities reflect the socioeconomic environment. In this model, people value those things that are lacking (*Ibid.*, p. 220). He also shows that the feeling of subjective well-being and satisfaction depend on the level of economic development in a country, and that this dependency is proportional, but only until a certain limit of material well-being is reached (which applies both to individuals and to the society). In 1998, Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe showed the lowest levels of these indicators in comparison with other countries. This means that the majority of inhabitants of these countries, which had the lowest levels of income per capita, felt quite unhappy and were dissatisfied with life in general. The last waves of the survey showed that at present there is an inverse perception of subjective well-being among Russians, although it still remains quite low.

Recent waves of the World Values Survey were developed to portray a comprehensive, complex picture of life (e.g., perceptions of economics, politics, religious and private life, etc.). As a result, statistically significant correlations between characteristics of societies and values of people were found, as in earlier research. The authors made one general conclusion on the basis of comparing indicators in different countries: there are two key directions in the development of consciousness, which are, firstly, *traditional/secular-rational values*, and, secondly, *survival/self-expression values*. The area of traditional/secular-rational values reflects the existing contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it does not play a significant role. And the second direction is connected with transformation from industrial to post-industrial stages of development (Inglehart & Welzel, n.d.).

It is worth noting that Inglehart and his colleagues' were able to cover a large portion of the world's population in a longitudinal study, which makes the survey quite representative; in fact, it is probably the largest empirical study of values ever done. In spite of the existing obvious differences between developing and developed countries, the researchers were able to find common ground for measuring the specific indicators of individual and social life of people from different nations and parts of the world. Results of the survey are published on the Internet and can be accessed for free, which gives everyone the opportunity to study the specific aspects of life in greater detail, especially since the researchers aimed to study human consciousness from many sides.

However, there is another side of the coin. When aiming to include a large number of respondents, researchers may not take into consideration the specific cultural, historical, and socioeconomic situations of a country, which can, among other things, influence peculiarities in interpreting values. For example, would a Tibetan Buddhist and a secular citizen from Western Europe understand the meaning of such notions as "well-being," "happiness," and "life satisfaction," similarly? Thinking of more specific examples connected with Russia, it is worth mentioning that the researchers note the need of the Russians to be perceived as a strong power. For Inglehart, this serves as sufficient grounds for making the conclusion that Russia remains an authoritarian country, and that nothing has truly changed in its political culture. However, there is the crucially important historical fact that in the 1990s there was a power vacuum in Russia, a situation that hinted at the collapse of the state, which can explain such opinions of the Russians.

Focusing mainly on a comparative empirical analysis at the macro level and not taking into consideration historical, political, or cultural features, Inglehart, probably, assumes that these elements do not play a decisive role in the formation of values. At the same time, it is quite understandable that it was necessary to set limitations to examining the characteristics of each country, given the purpose was to conduct encompassing cross-cultural comparative research. Nevertheless, there are cultural factors that are elicited by Inglehart

as decisive in the system of values of a person, and *religion* is one of them. Thus, he does not narrow down research to a reductionist analysis of only economic or political factors, which, in my opinion, is an important advantage to his work. However, I would also like to note a quite reasonable argument of Lev Gudkov that

the use of the methods of comparative research always leaves the question open as to what result a researcher gets in the end: a description of the structure of values of a certain country or *the degree of its correspondence to a normative pattern*, such as the social distance between Switzerland and Denmark, which have finished the processes of modernization, and, say, Russia ... or another developing country. (Gudkov, 1993, p. 12)

Also, in my opinion, Inglehart presents a materialist stance in assuming that social and economic factors determine human values, while for certain groups of people, for example, monks and nuns (the number of which are quite significant in Russia and the East), his logic proves to be ineffective.

Further, I would like to mention large value surveys, based to a large extent on the methods and theory of Inglehart and conducted also in Russia with the purpose of verifying his ideas, applied to the case of Russia. The study that is being done by the Institute of Comparative Social Research in Moscow also found high degrees of “materialism” among Russians (both when comparing different values with each other and with the corresponding value indicators in other countries). Values that can be considered postmaterialistic (such as care for the environment, concern about freedom of speech) are rare (Andreenkova, 1994). This research did not show a high preference toward authoritarianism in comparison with other countries; however, there were age differences, indicating that the older a person is, the more he or she is prone toward authoritarianism. On the contrary, it was found that *liberal values are becoming more widespread in the country*. That is why I consider the position of Flanagan to be quite justified: he argues that it would be more appropriate to *differentiate* between materialism/postmaterialism and authoritarianism/liberalism as different value categories in mass consciousness, but not relate them to one, as it is done in Inglehart’s research (*Ibid.*). In my opinion, the advantage of this research, which adds to the research of Inglehart, is that *values in relation to the indicators of the social-demographic structure* of Russian society were analyzed (including income, education, social status, age, etc.). Some findings did not concur with those of Inglehart. However, generally the mentioned hypotheses of Inglehart were found valid when applied to the Russian population. In this case, I would like to note a quite important feature concerning the applied methods: in the mentioned studies a respondent is asked not about the things important to him personally, but about what is important for a country; however, the results can be interpreted without taking this fact into consideration. The next study, analyzed below, uses a different method, which is more attenuated to individual and interpersonal values.

A large international empirical study, conducted from 2006 to 2007 in 25 European countries, including Russia, showed that, in comparison with other countries, the most peculiar feature concerning Russians is that they are notable in striving for *wealth, power, personal success, and recognition* rather than *altruism* (Magun & Rudnev, 2008). This is one of the main results that differentiates Russians from other nationalities, especially when manifested individual values show “less place for concern about equality and justice, about nature and environment, and even about those people, who are next to us” (*Ibid.*, p. 57). Also, it is worth noting that *security* is more highly valued in post-socialist countries than in other countries; this study also showed that materialistic values are dominant in the conscience of the majority of Russians. Moreover, I think it is also important to note the conclusion of researchers that the values of *traditionalism*, and also an inclination toward *submission* and *obedience*, are not widely spread among Russians in comparison with the residents of other countries. Among Russians, the *need for protection from a strong state* are *widespread*, while such values as a *disposition toward risk-taking* and *the need for novelty and independence* are shared more rarely.

The least typical values for Russians are *openness to change* (which includes the opportunity “to make one’s own decisions, not to depend on anyone; to do, what brings pleasure) and *altruism* (less than 10%–15% of sampled population).

Thus, the advantage of the mentioned studies is that they present a larger portrait of the Russian population and in a broader context than the study by Inglehart (in which only the average indicators of the populace are used, making each country a “dot” in a general scheme). In addition, Russian scientists based their assumptions on a quite reasonable hypothesis that *specific social groups within a certain society can have more differences between each other than between similar groups from other societies*. Thus, I favor differentiation between the value categories of materialism/postmaterialism and authoritarianism/liberalism, because the cumulative data in this realm do not prove Inglehart’s thesis about high levels of authoritarianism among the Russian population. Other empirical (and theoretical) studies, analyzed in the next part of this article, *do not* contradict the main tendencies in value formation.

National vs. Local Studies of Values in Russia

While doing research on the values of modern Russians, I analyzed theoretical and empirical publications at the local level, referring to studies of the day-to-day activity, adaptation, and values of a rural population in Novosibirsk Oblast, Siberia (based on the work of Z. Kalugina and colleagues); I also have conducted a secondary statistical analysis of data from the largest longitudinal research of the rural population of Siberia, directed by Dr. V. Artemov, covering the period from the beginning of reforms in Russia in 1985 until the present time. In addition, I have studied statistical data of the yearly polls (from 1985 to 2009) and analytical research by WCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) and Levada Center in relation to the main tendencies regarding the socioeconomic values of Russians. Important sources of information also included papers by Academician N.I. Lapin and his team.

It is worth noting that Russian studies on values give a fuller idea of the changes that have happened in the country, also showing essential differences in value consciousness among specific groups. For example, such factors as *age* (and the status of a retired person) as well as *the place of residence* (especially large city vs. village) are particularly significant. *Education*, presence/absence of *family*, *type of employment* (state or private sector), and some other factors are significant, too. Some scholars think that belonging to a specific social class and income levels do not show essential connection to value types. I will not repeat the main specifics of value consciousness of modern Russians, noted in the international studies above, but these values were confirmed in studies conducted by “local” researchers. However, I will touch upon several other aspects and the main general conclusions that important for the purposes of this article.

One of the marked characteristics of modern Russian values is that they “can be called *liberal* in the social sense of the word and *individualistic* in the personal.” A human being realizes their right to make a choice, considers initiative, freedom, and independence to be important qualities; they are not blindly submissive. “The Russians do not perceive themselves as subject to anyone anymore” (Lapin, 2000). The individualistic position continues to strengthen in the conscience of the Russians (42%, according to 1998 data, which is much higher than in 1990) (*Ibid.*). A characteristic feature of the value system of modern Russians (as well as of the ideological politics of the country in general) is *transformation* of an “ideologized-monolithic” structure into the pluralistic one, using the wording of Lapin. This conclusion was made on the basis of an empirical study of values of the Russian population during the period from the beginning of reform (“Perestroika”) in 1985 until present. The findings were confirmed by the cross-cultural studies mentioned above as well as other Russian research (see Byzov, 2008), even though Lapin does not use Inglehart’s methodology, considering it to be not applicable to Russia.

It is also worth noting that, according to several studies, during the period after Perestroika there have been values that remain important and quite widely spread among Russians that can probably be called

humanistic: these include the significance of close friendships and relations, interpersonal communication, care for children and the elderly, kindness, and truthfulness (Lapin, 2000; Artemov & Novokhatskaya, 2006; Kalugina, 2001). In the opinion of Lapin, it is these values that serve as an integrating “core” for the majority of the Russians, *irrespective of the difficulties and hardships* that the country had to overcome during the period of reforms (Lapin, 2000).

At the same time, according to statistical data, today another tendency is also noted among the Russians, which is a *desire to reach personal success at any price* (Andreenkova, 1994; Lapin, 2000), indifference toward the needs of others (even though this does not dominate in terms of percentage), raising the concern that individualism has the capacity to degenerate into exploitative egoism. Many scholars note that these characteristics (as well as individualistic tendencies in general) are especially developed among younger generations. In my opinion, this is a potential source of deepening anomy and disintegration.

Younger generations are also characterized by the strong desire and readiness to start their own business, take risks, and be independent at work. Also, young people are generally noted to have a more positive attitude toward Russia and reforms, and a lower degree of disposition towards authoritarianism in comparison with older age groups. In a study conducted by the Institute for Complex Strategic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ICSS RAS), only 20.3% of those 16 to 25 preferred living in Soviet Russia, while the percentage rose to 76.1% among those 56 to 65 (Gorshkov & Davydova, 2005, p. 24).

Another important finding shows a connection between the attitudes toward different aspects of socio-economic and political life in the country, material welfare of respondents, and their feeling of happiness and social well-being. Z.I. Kalugina, who has devoted most of her career to the study of the social life of rural populations in Siberia, states that *principles of collectivism and corporatism prevail in rural areas*, and, in her opinion, these factors were not taken into consideration by reformers in the 1990s. As a result, reforms have not been very successful (Kalugina, 2001). Many researchers note that in general there is more negative attitude toward the free-market economy and new conditions of life among those living in the countryside (Kalugina, 2001; Magun & Rudnev, 2008; Artemov & Novokhatskaya 2006; “Information...”, 1997; 1999; 2004). The same conclusion can be drawn about minority (small) nations in Siberia.

Results of my calculation of the data of Artemov’s research using Kendall’s correlation coefficient showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the attitude of rural citizens toward reforms on the one hand, and quality of life, sense of security, mood, and state of mind on the other. Material well-being also has a statistical correlation with the mood and state of mind, sense of security, and relationships between people (among other indicators of quality of life). The interdependence of some of the mentioned factors in the conscience of the Russian population was also found in the research conducted by ICSS RAS in Moscow (Gorshkov & Davydova, 2005).

I think it is reasonable to make the following conclusion on the basis of the information discussed above: *the material and socioeconomic positions of a “statistically average” individual and his family have direct correlation with his value consciousness and attitudes toward the social-political system*. There are no serious contradictions in the results of the regional, national (Russian), and international studies related to the main tendencies in transformation of value consciousness and the dominant needs of Russians. Also, I think that it is worth noting that the data on values of the populations of Eastern Europe show that there are similar tendencies taking place there and in the countries of the former Soviet Union. I think that it is possible to formulate a hypothesis that the former Soviet regime has influenced the consciousness of these nations to quite a great extent.

Touching upon the discussed issues from a methodological point of view, it is worth noting that most Russian sociological empirical studies imply *external*, mostly “material” circumstances (e.g., income, housing, etc.) determine the formation of values and attitudes. Moreover, this line of analysis continues the Marxist approach, which has dominated the Russian social sciences over the past century and disregarded phenom-

enological, existential, and humanistic theoretical frameworks. *Such an approach reduces a human being to socioeconomic determinants.* Also, sometimes studies have a quite narrowly specified, utilitarian, technical character; they are founded on the positivistic premise that empirical verification is the sole criterion for scientific truth. Also, research of this kind often leaves out crucially important factors in the formation of values, such as religious consciousness. That is why, for example, registering increased “materialism” of the Russians cannot answer the question that one naturally feels like raising—that is, how can this fact be reconciled with the unprecedented growth of religiosity in the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet regime, as registered by any study of this subject.¹ My purpose is not to provide complete answers, but rather to make an attempt to analyze the subject of value formation in a broader context, incorporating religious consciousness into the process, which will help to move away from materialistic reductionism to economic factors.² Also, in my opinion, a poly-theoretical or integral approach will be more fruitful, especially when applying it to the study of a multilayered phenomenon such as human values.³ Below, I make an attempt to move in this direction, building on the data presented above.

Using Integral Approaches to Study Values

During the past few decades, different conceptions of scientific approaches founded on similar principles have been formulated. These approaches to post-nonclassical science choose as their object “historically developing systems, which include a human being in their corpus” (Stepin, 2001, as quoted in Tarasevitch, 2004, p. 110). “A human being is integrated into such system not in a *fragmentary way, as, for example, homo economicus, but totally and continuously-infininitely...*” (*Ibid.*). A tendency toward a holistic vision by addressing different scientific disciplines is one of the main characteristics of the given direction of these studies.

In the area of social sciences, among the most well-known approaches it is worth mentioning Synergetics (which incorporates different directions of study and has gained some popularity in Russia) as well as research by Varela, Alexander and Yu, Habermas, Ritzer, Sorokin, and many others. I consider the strategy of *micro- and macro integration* (which is in the primary foci of these approaches) probably signifies a move toward a qualitatively new level of development of science. Among the modern Russian scientists working in this direction, it is especially worth noting publications by academician V. Stepin, and the scientific schools of V. Kabrin, I. Chernikova, and V. Vasilkova. There are certainly some differences between integral approaches. However, most of these researchers aim to study the human being holistically, taking into consideration their inner world, conscience, connection with physiology, as well as culture, social structure, and material-technical basis of their society.

In this article I consider it fruitful to use the work of Ken Wilber, who has truly made a special contribution to the development of integral methodology and research. In my opinion, Integral Theory offers a great opportunity to trace consistency and direction in the development of values; to broadly interpret empirical data, building it in the context of other evolutionary (psychological) theories; and Wilber’s approach is also novel and little-known in some parts of the world. Having synthesized a great number of empirical and theoretical studies, such as the ones by Clare Graves, Don Beck and Chris Cowan, Jean Gebser, and many others, he claims in many of his works that there is a certain pattern in the development of individual and collective consciousness, progressing from physical self-preservation through materialistic (individualistic) values to holistic and integral ones—and that this pattern is universal (Wilber, 2004).

I would also like to acknowledge the Spiral Dynamics model of Beck and Cowan, which is referenced by Wilber in his works. Stages of development of (self-)consciousness are called value memes (vMememes). Each vMeme is at the same time a psychological structure, a value system, a style, and an adaptation strategy, which can manifest in many ways—from worldviews to dress style to public administration (Wilber, 2004, p. 69). vMememes can be compared with a set of nesting dolls, in which every subsequent doll includes the previous, and this example reflects the main principle of holism embraced by this approach. Wilber defines *holon*

as something that is whole at one stage, and becomes a part of a comprehensive object at the next stage (e.g., a cell and an organism). Gradation of vMemos does not mean that some are better or worse than others: they are all necessary, and without formation and development of earlier vMemos there would not be subsequent values. Also, they cannot be viewed as an instrument for measuring intellect or moral development, because at each stage individuals are able to do good and evil (*Ibid.*). Thus, the concept of vMemos broadens understanding of values by the authors of empirical studies in the premise of an article (i.e., in that the premise is interpreted predominantly as the belief of an individual that certain objects or events are important to him or her personally) (Magun & Rudnev, 2008).

I would like to elicit the main vMemos that are most explicitly manifested (or have a tendency for developing in future) among Russians. The limited volume of work in this field does not allow one to examine each stage in detail or to view all of them, which is why I would like to touch only upon *the main* “landmarks” in the formation of value consciousness in Russians.

Beck calls the “basic” vMeme “archaic-instinctive.”⁴ It is responsible for satisfying a person’s main needs, including physiological requirements. As some of the studies discussed above show, quite a high percentage of Russians, especially in comparison with other countries, are concerned about issues of safety. Although the studies discussed in this article do not touch upon aspects related to the *magical* aspect of consciousness (purple vMeme), my previous research (Gaskova, 2012) and other data (e.g., works published by Furman & Kaariainen [2006]) show that in modern Russia beliefs in magic, witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, and other supernatural phenomena are widespread, which reflects the persistence presence of this vMeme. It is interesting to note that these beliefs are often combined with a person belonging to Orthodox faith. Most importantly, researchers note that Russian Orthodoxy itself (meaning its ritualistic aspects, which are very broadly developed) is often perceived magically: rituals and ceremonies are used by believers as ways to protect from “black magic,” “maleficence,” and so on, and as a means to gain good fortune, health, and other “earthly,” practical benefits.

The blue vMeme, which I would like to note, is referred to as the “conformist standard” by Beck and Cowan. People who reside at this vMeme feel life has meaning, direction, and purpose, as determined by an omnipotent Other or Order. Order is based on the absolutist and unchangeable concepts of “right” and “wrong”; literalism and fundamentalism are characteristic of this vMeme, and in social settings there is a strict social hierarchy, generally of paternalism. In the opinion of such people, there is only one correct way of thinking. Impulsivity is controlled by instilled feelings of guilt. This guilt is oftentimes “religious,” but can also be secular (Wilber, 2004, p. 72).⁵ I think that in a sociopolitical sense the characteristics of this stage of consciousness most likely correlate with the *traditional society* identified by social scientists (i.e., society with a tendency toward authoritarianism and collectivistic mindsets). However, it would not be absolutely correct to draw a dividing line between social systems in terms of dominating types of consciousness; rather, the difference lies between individuals and groups in a particular society.

Empirical studies, analyzed in the article above, demonstrate that “proper order” is a prevailing concern among Russians. There are also certain social groups (such as pensioners and rural residents) that feel nostalgic about the Soviet past to a greater degree than other groups; they are negative about the present model of the Russian sociopolitical system, and are inclined toward authoritarianism. I believe that modern communist and conservative-patriotic movements also reflect the values of this stage. Also, research on religious consciousness in Russia shows that these values are also characteristic of Russian Orthodox believers (most of whom are pensioners or villagers).⁶ Research done by Furman and Kaariainen touched upon the social-demographic characteristics of a group of Russian Orthodox believers who were mostly women (89%) 60 years or older, living in harsh material conditions. Their data showed the least educated and rural group of traditional believers live alone.⁷ Also, their health was significantly worse than average and they were more pessimistic about the future (Furman & Kaariainen, 2006). The study covered the end of the 1990s and first

years of the 21st century. Another study by Mchedlov and colleagues (2005) showed that Orthodox believers, more than any other group, felt they were in a disadvantageous situation as a result of changes that have occurred in the country.⁸ Almost all social-demographic characteristics of groups such as atheists and traditional believers were antipodal to this finding (with the exception of age). However, it is interesting that at the same time their views on the issues of morality and politics were quite similar (e.g., among the representatives of *both groups* there was a high percentage of persons supporting the Communist Party).

The most unexpected finding was that a high percentage (25%) of traditional believers (in comparison to other studied groups) felt that it would be better to return to Soviet rule. The fact that the Soviet era was a period when religious life, in fact, was almost non-existent and largely persecuted seemed either to be irrelevant or an already forgotten past for those interviewed. This can probably be explained by the fact that life in the Soviet Union, despite drawbacks, had some advantages, such as stability, absence of a large material disparity between classes, social security, and so on.

Most of the research studies of Russian Orthodox Christians and the Orthodox elite in Russia show an extreme anti-democratic (perceived as “anti-Western”) orientation (Kaariainen & Furman, 2000):

If one tries to determine the implicit ideal for the elite of the Russian Orthodox Church, it is obviously the ideal of an old autocratic and Orthodox Russia, or not so far from the ideal of Soviet Russia, in which traditionalist Orthodox-nationalist ideology takes the place of the communist ideology. (p. 114)

Analysis of the discourse on religion in the media made by Agadzhanyan (2000) shows that almost all debate in Russia believes the general state of mind in the post-communist Russia, in particular in the field of religion, to be close to “entropy”:

For many of them religious pluralism seems to be a manifestation of the disorder, and they are trying to find a more solid foundation in the law, confirming the predominance of one (Orthodox) religion. Then they go further, giving the State a function of regulation of the religious space and even control through the support of the dominant religion. The next step is to include elements of the dominant religion in a certain ideology or a new “national idea.” According to this logic, the only way to overcome entropy is to establish a consensual state ideology or, in other words, create an ideological state. (*Ibid.*)

The largest international studies of values and religion that also covered Eastern Europe and Russia as well as other research lead to the conclusion that in the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe there is a common general tendency toward a transformation of religious consciousness.⁹ The increased growth of “formal” religiosity in the region is much higher than in most other parts of the world, along with relatively low rates of real religious practice and guidance by religious principles in everyday life; there is a great degree of uncertainty and inconsistency among practitioners (probably connected with the fact that for 70 years religion was repressed); there is a positive correlation of religiosity (i.e., membership in the Russian Orthodox religion) with social integration and nationalism, and negative correlation with individualism and anti-authoritarianism; and there is a greater trust toward the (traditional, state) Church, in comparison with other social institutions (e.g., army, media, educational system, police, law enforcement). Common features also include a widespread opinion among respondents that the (Russian Orthodox) Church has insufficient authority. The above characteristics are almost diametrically opposite to those of Western Europe, according to the studies.

I consider the questions, raised by Polish sociologist Miklós Tomka, to be quite logical: is the current religious revival in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union a part of social rather than individual identity? Is this an indicator of social positioning, rather than the search for individual guidelines, and not a factor of individual freedom and development? Perhaps religiosity means mainly an appropriation of a cultural system rather than a new cognitive orientation? Or is it just an expression of sociocultural adaptation and assimilation (Tomka, 1999, p. 27)? In my opinion, these characteristics should be viewed as quite inseparable (and not contradictory) aspects of religiosity, especially in traditional religions. Accentuation of the social aspects of consciousness in some people is mostly connected with the formation of a new national identity after the collapse of the Soviet regime. However, in my opinion (and according to the data analyzed in the first part of this article), the *most significant change* that has taken place in the conscious of the Russian people from the beginning of reform is the tendency toward transformation to the next stage of strongly expressed individualism (even though it is not yet dominating among the majority of the population). This vMeme (orange), associated with “scientific progress,” is characterized by a focus on the development of rationality. A person with this vMeme dominating their conscience is oriented toward personal success and a career. In world history, it mostly manifested in the era of Enlightenment, in the formation of a middle class, the Cold War, fashion industry, materialism, and liberal individualism. According to the authors, it is dominant among 30% of the world population and 50% of those in power (Wilber, 2004, p. 72).

As has been discussed before, different empirical studies demonstrate the high importance of personal success, career opportunities, and widespread “materialistic” values among Russians. It is also significant that Russia is in a period of building a market economy, in which the characteristics of enterprise, energy, and readiness are needed. Presidents Medvedev and Putin have actively implemented a government policy of modernization and innovation, and at the moment President Putin is formulating innovation as the key goal of Russian economics. It cannot be stated that these values are dominant among the majority of Russians—rather, they are characteristic of the most socially “advanced,” and appear much more often among young successful persons from large cities versus elderly countrymen/women, according to statistical data. This group of people is success-driven and share liberal views, which stands in sharp contrast with those who belong to the previous vMeme.

I agree with Sharapov (2005) that “the core of the emerging new Russian life today is constituted by such traditional values of industrial civilization as civil society with its modern market economy, nation state, organized and functioning on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, actual implementation of modern human rights and freedoms of man.” Time will tell what will win—the policy of democratization and modernization carried out “from the top” (despite corruption and a large disparity between the rich and the poor) or the negative and reactionary sentiments against it that are shared by quite a large segment of the population, as demonstrated by various public opinion polls and information presented above.

The next vMeme, green (“Receptive Self”), is characterized by ideals of community, ties between people, and acknowledgment of ecological problems:

The human spirit at this stage of development is striving to become free from greed, dogmatism, separation; feelings and mutual interest dominate over cold rationality. It protects life and the Earth; it is against hierarchy and builds horizontal communication. Pluralistic relativism is for harmony and enrichment of every human being’s potential. (Wilber, 2004, p. 111)

Of particular interest for discussion in this case is a group, called by some researchers of religion *eclectic* (about 14% of the population in Russia) (Kaariainen & Furman, 2000, p. 44). I think it is possible to argue that in their consciousness certain features of postmodern values, as well as magical-animistic, pluralistic, and

integrative vMememes, are manifested. Eclectics are interested in a variety of religious and spiritual practices, including Orthodox, “para-religious,” and others. It is a group with quite a deep interest in religion (religion plays an “important” or “very important” role in the lives of 45% of this group); they more often than an “average Russian” think about the meaning of life (54% vs. 45% of the full population) (*Ibid.*). They are much more tolerant of other believers, especially in comparison with Russian Orthodox adherents. Although eclecticism is not yet a holism, I believe eclectics are ready to move to the next stage of development because, among other things, the teachings and philosophies (of Blavatsky, Roerikh, etc.) are holistic in nature.

With regard to sociodemographic characteristics, eclectics are the most educated. They are young (30.9% are 18–29 years; 19.9% are 30–39 years old) with relatively high household incomes (*Ibid.*).¹⁰ Regarding political orientation, there is a great liberal dominance over communist sympathies (the survey also clearly observed the relationship between age factors and support for current reforms). It is not that easy to study this group in-depth, as it is “extremely difficult to distinguish them because of their specific uncertainty,” as Kaariainen and Furman note (*Ibid.*).

The last two vMememes, integrative (yellow) and holistic (turquoise), are considered second-tier. At these stages a person is able to grasp the whole spectrum of inner development, understand the importance of every other vMeme, and make a step toward a holistic vision for human progress and the interdependence of people. Only 1% of the world population and 5% of those in power have reached this stage (Wilber, 2004). Empirical research, analyzed in the first part of this article, also demonstrates that these vMememes are poorly developed in the conscience of the Russian populace.

I think that it is these three last discussed vMememes that have the potential to solve many conflicts—from socialization at a “micro level” to problems at a global scale. In their essence, these values are altruistic and humanistic, creating the foundation for mutual cooperation—not on the basis of destructive ideologies that provide control, for example, through a search for a national enemy or instilling fear. Rather, they come from a realization of the deep interconnection of human beings in the modern world. Formal existence of freedoms today does not increase the level of culture by itself; it is matter of inner development as well.

I would also like to emphasize the idea that when a person/group has any vMeme as dominant, with the exception of integral and holistic ones (which are quite rare), other levels of consciousness generally are not accepted or are even perceived with hostility. “The war between paradigms” is a battle for possession of an exclusive right to how to view the world; each of these structures of consciousness has developed a different sense of space-time, laws and ethics, cognitive style, self-identity, methods of production, motivation, forms of social oppression and religious experience (Wilber, 2000). On the basis of the information presented above, I think that it is possible to conclude that today there is especially sharp tension between blue and orange vMememes in Russia: they manifest the painful process of change that has been taking place in Russia during the past few decades, in which the former is the “voice” of reactionary and conservative mentality and the latter is the main force of reform and transformation. The green vMeme also stands in contrast as a harbinger of transformation to a new, integral stage of consciousness, which, as some researchers argue, is the driving tendency in the developed world.

Ultimately, it is possible to elicit several main tendencies in the development of structures of consciousness in modern Russia. Firstly, there is a path of (egoistic) individualism/rationalism toward material well-being that is especially characteristic of a burgeoning middle class and is becoming more widespread (orange vMeme). Secondly, there is a reactionary fundamentalism embittered against those who are successful, “praising” the past, and not accepting the changes that are taking place in modern Russia; they find solution in the return to the nationalistic traditions of Russia (blue vMeme); it is often shared by those who were not able to adapt to new social conditions. In general, these two vMememes are shared by social groups that have dissimilar age, education, place of residence, and other social characteristics. Oftentimes today the basic vMeme (beige) also stays vital: there are quite low living standards in Russia and a high percentage of people

living in poverty. The importance of safety remains primary for a majority of Russians. The least widespread vMemos today in Russia, as well as in the rest of the world, are “non-material” ones. It is worth noting that today integrative approaches are also not dominant in the modern social and human sciences. However, I agree with the argument of some scholars (including Wilber) that in the past few decades there has nevertheless been a gradual shift toward integral cultural values.

The main advantage of integral approaches is that they attempt a comprehensive, holistic study of developing social systems, which is expressed, among other things, in finding a correlation between dichotomized aspects of human existence (individual and collective; spiritual and material, etc.). Consciousness is not located only in the organism, notes Wilber (Wilber, 2002). Worldviews are not immaterial structures: they are like cultural factors interconnected with other material components of a society. A technical-economic basis sets wide limits in which worldviews develop. Each stage in the progress of collective and individual consciousness corresponds to a certain technical-economic level of development (*Ibid.*).

Wilber argues that society does not have a single monolithic technological mode of production or a single monolithic worldview. There is always a diverse spectrum. In modern Russia, today it is possible to hash out several stages in the development of its technical and economic system, which correlates with the discussed vMemos. These strata include agrarian, industrial, and post-industrial communities, between which there rarely exists a dialogue and mutual understanding. In addition, Russian empirical research demonstrates an undoubted connection between the material conditions of a person’s life and their values.

I think that Wilber’s ideas have special significance for the sociology of knowledge, among other areas. The Russian sociologist Nemirovski once noted that the problem of classical sociology is that it cannot answer the question of how a society that goes through constant regressive and progressive change can at the same time be a stable, integrated system and have an effective mechanism of self-regulation (Nemirovski et al., 2003). Wilber’s model offers a solution to this problem because it comprises both a *systems* principle (expressed in the synthesis of individual, cultural, and social change) and a *developmental* principle (conveyed in the evolutionary stages of development in each arena of human life).

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to add that on the basis of the data presented in this article, one can to some extent agree with the existing point of view that, as classical psychological thinkers have demonstrated, unsatisfied needs constitute the main priority for a person. In all likelihood, this is why the Russian population (as well as other post-socialist countries) show high indicators of “materialism.”¹¹ Personal initiative and individualism were condemned during Soviet times, but now have increasing (though not dominating) importance. More positive attitudes of the younger generation toward a market economy is one indicator that it takes much longer for consciousness to change than for any other transformation in individual or social life.

In this article, I have attempted to build a bridge between theory and empirical knowledge, which oftentimes diverge in the narrow specialties of the social and human sciences. The approach, proposed in this article makes it possible to supplement the study of socioeconomic values with a broader analysis of mass consciousness, and thus to walk away from reductionism and the idea of economic determinism. I also aimed to correlate “local” and “global” perspectives of the studied issues. I assume that, without any doubt, empirically registered reality makes it possible to record certain tendencies in development, but nevertheless cannot provide a “mechanical mold” of the complex and even mysterious nature of human consciousness.

NOTES

¹¹ I have personally done research on religion (e.g., Gaskova, 2012) and have written a Ph.D. thesis on this subject.

² In this article, I do not plan to analyze a complex phenomenon such as religious consciousness in-depth, but rather use

it as an illustration of the main stages of the development of consciousness, which, in my opinion, varies among the Russian populace.

³ I do not view the terms *interdisciplinary* and *integral* as synonymous. While interdisciplinary approaches are more prone to be eclectic, integral ones find a common ground for integration (namely, the principles of integrity and development, or a model of dynamic holism as formulated by Chernikova). However, I consider it quite legitimate to view the terms *integral* and *holistic* as close in meaning, because they have a key concept of wholeness at their basis.

⁴ Beck and Cowan also use colors to describe stages of development, and this one has beige color.

⁵ The authors state that the blue vMeme is dominant among 40% of the world population.

⁶ I would like to argue that the fact of belonging to a specific formalized religion does not mean that every member shares the same vMeme. One can probably speak only of a certain tendency. Rather, world religions in particular attract followers with all stages of values, even though they nearly universally appeal to higher consciousness. In this aspect, my position differs from Wilber (2000), who, for example, states that all world religions were formed in the era of “mythic imperialism” and preserve the features of this epoch.

⁷ There are 47% of persons with less than a high school education, and 14% with incomplete or complete higher education (Furman & Kaariainen, 2006, p. 27). However, recent studies by Mchedlov et al. (2005) demonstrate that today’s young and educated generation is becoming more religious.

⁸ It should probably be noted that the studied period at the end of the 1990s was the hardest time of transformation in Russia in many senses; also, at that time Russian Orthodox religion had not yet become “popular” and openly practiced. As opposed to today, elderly countrywomen belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church constituted the main remaining group that was not destroyed by the Soviet anti-religious regime.

⁹ See the European Values Study (EVS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) as well as the Religious and Moral Pluralism Study (RAMP). Several stages of the EVS included the study of 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe; the WVS included 21 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Tomka, 1999).

¹⁰ These characteristics have also been noted among the members of new religious movements by Western scholars.

¹¹ At the same time, there takes place quite an intensive spiritual search in these countries as well, which is expressed differently among people with varying vMememes. Although younger generations manifest more success-driven and individualistic tendencies, it is among younger groups that people with an eclectic or ecumenist mentality are found.

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MARINA I. GASKOVA, Ph.D.(c), lives in Russia. She works as a Research Fellow at the Department of Social Problems at a research institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IEIE SB RAS). Marina holds a M.A. degree in Sociology from Central European/Lancaster University (Poland-Great Britain) and has studied as an exchange student and a visiting fellow in the United States. For the past nine years, she has devoted her research to the study and application of integral approaches to religious consciousness and values. She has defended a Ph.D. thesis and written two books and a number of articles in this area. Publications in English include *Application of an Integral Approach to the Study Of Religion within the Framework of a New Paradigm of Knowledge* (2012, Lambert Academic Publishing) and articles in *The Proceedings of the Twenty-Second World Congress of Philosophy* and *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*.