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**CIVILIZATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM AS  
A BASIS FOR MODERNIZING EDUCATION IN RUSSIA**

**Dr. Sergey N. Lukash**

Armavir State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Russia  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1557-6777  
lukash.serg@yandex.ru

**Ph. D. (c) Irina V. Gerlakh**

Armavir State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Russia  
ORCID: 0000-0002-9541-4008  
irina\_gerlah@mail.ru

**Ph. D. (c) Angela A. Tersakova**

Armavir State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Russia  
ORCID: 0000-0002-6709-326X  
kaf\_tipiop@mail.ru

**Ph. D. (c) Knara V. Epoeva**

Armavir State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Russia  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4128-3508  
knaraarm@mail.ru

**Ph. D. (c) Marina V. Zhivoglyad**

Armavir State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Russia  
ORCID: 0000-0001-9786-7660  
kaf\_tipiop@mail.ru

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**Abstract**

Nowadays, it is possible to set target guidelines for education in Russia. The amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation adopted in 2020 and the additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" have created a methodological basis for a broad discussion of a new educational paradigm. The Constitution of Russia and the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" set a number of new imperatives based on traditional Russian values, which constitute a mental value core of the Russian civilization. The article substantiates the need for the transition of Russian education from the previous West oriented model of modernization, which was set by the Bologna process, to a new paradigm of education based on the values of the Russian civilization. To overcome the permanent crisis in modernizing Russian education, it is necessary to use the socio-cultural phenomena of the millennial Russian civilization, to create on this basis pedagogical concepts, which would allow achieving a particular optimum of combining national educational traditions and innovations that have been brought forth by information technologies.

**Keywords**

Educational paradigm – Russian civilization – Modernization of education – Globalization



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## Introduction

In 2020, Russian society has faced dynamic social modernization challenges such as the national fight against Covid-19, which caused the move to online education in Russia, voting on the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which resulted in the adoption of a new Constitution of Russia, the additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education", which significantly strengthened its upbringing function. Such humanitarian shifts have created a fundamentally new situation in the Russian educational system. In fact, new conditions for the advanced development of education have been created. At the same time, education is considered the most important social institution that determines the image of Russia's future. In this regard, let us analyze the current situation and the resulting new content of the Russian educational paradigm that is a set of key concepts and ideas recognized by the pedagogical community.

Despite the permanent modernization that has been under way for a quarter of a century, modern Russian education is experiencing a structural crisis reproducing mainly westernized samples of educational assessment, technologies and content<sup>1</sup>. This fact has led to growing contradictions between the modern geostrategic course of Russia towards multipolarity, the Eurasian vector of development and the strategy of modernizing Russian education according to the Western (European) model. Contradictions and ambiguity in the educational sphere have affected the level of upbringing of Russian youth. According to teachers, psychologists and sociologists, patriotism, civic consciousness, service to one's own country, respect for historical memory among today's youth "are still to be developed"<sup>2</sup>. Uncertainty associated with the strategy of state institutions in Russia, education in particular, has led to a number of unresolved humanitarian problems accumulated in Russian society, thus, hindering the progressive development of the country. Until recently, the tactical crisis manifested in the ideological, material and financial impoverishment of the educational sphere was overlapped with the strategic crisis caused by the absence of state goal-setting and contradictory content. The choice of the civilizational vector of modernizing Russian education, which was mainly West oriented and set by the Bologna process, became the main catalyst for the crisis.

## Methodological basis

The amendments to the Constitution of Russia (June 2020) and the additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" (July 2020) have dramatically changed the educational situation and given impetus to the discussion of a new paradigm of national education. The imperatives adopted in these documents have formed target guidelines supported by the main law of the country, the Constitution of the Russian Federation. These guidelines affect traditional family values (marriage as a union between a man and a woman), children as the most important priority of the state policy of Russia, patriotism and civic consciousness fostered in children on the basis of socio-cultural, spiritual and moral values accepted in Russian society, the protection of the historical truth and the memory of the defenders of one's country.

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<sup>1</sup> E. V. Bondarevskaya, The concept and leading strategy of systemic modernization of pedagogical education at a federal university (Rostov-on-Don: 2015).

<sup>2</sup> The systemic crisis of domestic education as a threat to the national security of Russia and ways to overcome it. 2017. Available at: [https://ruskline.ru/analitika/2017/03/17/sistemnyj\\_krizis\\_otechestvennogo\\_obrazovaniya\\_kak\\_ugroza\\_nacionalnoj\\_bezopasnosti\\_rossii\\_i\\_puti\\_ego\\_preodoleniya/](https://ruskline.ru/analitika/2017/03/17/sistemnyj_krizis_otechestvennogo_obrazovaniya_kak_ugroza_nacionalnoj_bezopasnosti_rossii_i_puti_ego_preodoleniya/)

Moreover, the amendments to the Constitution that reflect the mental value foundations of the Russian multinational people are united by a civilizational paradigm. In our opinion, this is precisely the meaning laid down in paragraph 2 of Article 67-1 of the Constitution, "The Russian Federation united by a thousand-year history preserves the memory of ancestors who passed on ideals and faith in God to us as well as continuity in the development of the Russian state and recognizes the historically established state unity". This article of the Constitution is important due to the fact that it determines the millennial historical and cultural boundaries of the Russian civilization from the specific Russian principalities, Kievan Rus, the Moscow State, the Russian Empire and the USSR to the current Russian Federation.

The adoption of the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation was followed by another logical step that specifies actions to reform education. Almost simultaneously, the additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" were made, which strengthen the upbringing function of education in Russia. For the first time, in the post-Soviet period, the Russian educational community have received target guidelines on a state basis that determine the content foundations of upbringing as well as particular technologization of the upbringing component of the Russian educational practice. Consequently, by introducing the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" a methodological basis for revising the existing vector of modernizing Russian education has been created. The educational community has a unique opportunity to come to a common denominator in determining a paradigm of reforming national education.

## Research results

What is this new paradigm like? Its outlines are defined in the amendments to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Education". In particular, defining upbringing there is an appeal to professional activity "on the basis of socio-cultural, spiritual moral values, the rules and norms of behavior accepted in Russian society." Upbringing in the Law "On Education" is the formation among young generations of "respect for the memory of the defenders of one's country and the deeds of the heroes of the country", "a careful attitude to the cultural heritage and traditions of the multinational people of the Russian Federation." Although the definition of upbringing in the Law is more voluminous, in our opinion, the given provisions reveal the key concepts that most fully characterize the new educational paradigm: "values", "memory", "cultural heritage", "traditions". It is evident that these keywords constitute the essence of the term "civilization" in one of its definitions as a synonym for culture – a certain system of values, traditions, symbols, mentality and way of life of a given society within a certain geographical and historical framework<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, education acts as a subsystem of a larger systemic civilizational unit due to which it has an impact on civilization itself recreating civilizational images through its civilizational model. However, civilization itself, as a unit of a higher systemic level, can affect its subsystems influencing the national educational system, which contradicts the mental value core of a given civilization giving rise to controversies and crises of the social system<sup>4</sup>. Recently, the growing contradictions and crisis phenomena in Russian education have become the essence of the incorrectly adopted model of its modernization.

<sup>3</sup> A. Toynbee, Civilization before the judgment of history (Moscow: 1995).

<sup>4</sup> V. E. Baghdasaryan, The global education crisis: the need to return to the origins. 2018. Available at: <http://rusrand.ru/analytics/mirovojkrizis-obrazovaniya-neobhodimost-vozvrasheniya-k-istokam>

The Constitution and the Law "On Education" in their new form indirectly aim at the cultural and civilizational paradigm of Russian education. After a quarter of a century of educational reforms, we finally have the opportunity to bring our education in line with the civilizational model of our society focusing on the upbringing of a personality type corresponding to the Russian civilization. Figuratively speaking the correct diagnosis has been made and the correct prescription has been written. It remains to eliminate the contradictions between the civilizational model of our society and Russian education, the strategy of which was formed in the late 1990s and still carries on.

## Discussion

The Bologna Declaration adopted by Russia in 2003 is one of the methodological foundations of reforming modern Russian education. Taking the universalization of education as a reference point, as a leading educational function this system singles out the acquisition of a certain set of competencies that are in demand in the realities of the modern labor market. There is a natural question about the correctness of such a reference point, in accordance with the mental value foundations of the Russian civilization.

First of all, we should note that the Bologna system is a vivid exponent of the European and Western civilization, which is based on rationalism, functionality, individualism and monetarism<sup>5</sup>. The values of the Russian civilization are fundamentally different. A Professor of Harvard University (USA) Jeffrey Sachs, one of the "fathers" of shock therapy (economic reforms in the early 1990s in Russia), figuratively told about this. The odious curator of reforms, called by the Yeltsin-Gaidar team from the United States to "lead Russia on the path of world progress", ultimately sadly stated that the wrong methods of work had been chosen with regard to Russia, "We put the patient on the operating table, opened his chest but he had a different anatomy"<sup>6</sup>.

This different anatomy, which J. Sachs mentions, is the civilizational basis of Russia that is founded on the civilizational paradigm of national education. The basis for such a paradigm is made up of the values of the Russian civilization, collectivism, conciliarity, spirituality, which form mental image constants based on the archetypal roots of Russian culture and making "the phenomenon of Russian education integral". A research carried out by Professor E.P. Belozertsev showed that the civilizational paradigm of national education fully possesses the following constants: spirituality, which constitutes a deep moral, spiritual basis of the life of Russian society and personality and allows building harmonious relations with God, the world and people; openness to external perception of other cultures through the use of selection mechanisms and adaptation of external borrowings while maintaining cultural uniqueness; traditionalism as a feature of the content of education in Russian pedagogy, which requires constant reference to one's own history and culture, to the values of the Russian civilization<sup>7</sup>.

The disappointment of Jeffrey Sachs is quite understandable; he was trying to drag Russia into Western civilization with a cavalry sloop as its raw material appendage: the "anatomy" was different. However, ironically, J. Sachs's mission persists in the modern process of modernizing Russian education.

<sup>5</sup> S. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations* (Moscow: 2003).

<sup>6</sup> J. D. Sachs, "What went wrong in Russia", *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol: 16 num 1 (1999): 31–32.

<sup>7</sup> E. P. Belozertsev, *Education as a historical and cultural Phenomenon* (Saint-Petersburg: 2004).

Reforming the national educational system in accordance with the Bologna system, like a foreign object in a patient's body, meets a natural obstacle at the level of Russian mentality, which has taken shape in the form of the Russian (Soviet) educational tradition<sup>8</sup>. In Russian historical retrospective, this paradigm is manifested in the well-known opposition of Westernism and Pochvenism and, presently, the opposition of Westernism (unipolarity) and Eurasianism (multipolarity).

"The Bologna trend" in the educational space of European states leads to the unification and internationalization of the national educational systems of the European Union sovereign states. However, the issue is rather controversial. The situation with Brexit has clearly shown the consequences of ignoring national specifics and the side-effects of experiments with the sovereignty of EU countries, including their social institutions such as education. B.L. Wolfson warns, "Ignoring national identity can lead to the creation of artificial "universal" structures for the sake of which the material is selected and everything that contradicts the a priori created scheme is cut off"<sup>9</sup>. In this regard, the leading subjects of the EU, Germany, France, Great Britain, despite the European integration process, defend the fundamental differences of their educational models, which take into account, first of all, the mental, national characteristics of their peoples<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, the general strategy for modernizing national educational systems determined by the Bologna Convention proceeds from the principle of universalization of education for the countries that ratified it (including Russia). At the same time, this paradigm leads to contradictions between the requirements of the convention and national educational systems that are based on the socio-cultural and civilizational traditions of these countries' peoples. These contradictions will only grow greater. The fact is that the process of the world's economic, political and cultural integration and unification, which gave rise, among other things, to the Bologna system, is now subject to serious changes. Let us explain this thesis.

The global trends of modern social development have exposed an acute crisis of globalization itself and the strengthening of alternative processes such as de-globalization and glocalization. Paradoxically, the vector of de-globalization was headed by the main beneficiaries, the United States (more precisely, the current US administration) that had realized that globalization, apart from its obvious advantages (for example, the establishment of American mass culture), in economic and political terms leads to the emergence of new "centers of power", new world leaders such as China, India and Russia. The course towards purely national interests and new industrialization proclaimed by President Trump is nothing more than a turn from the principles of globalization to national roots, to national institutions and meanings that are to reformat society and the state. In fact, this is a turn towards a new social alternative to globalization, towards the vector of glocalization caused by the dialectical interaction of the local and the global, the shift from local processes to global ones and a trend to preserve and enhance regional differences and diversity.

<sup>8</sup> S. N. Lukash; N. K. Andrienko; A. A. Tersakova y E. A. Pluzhnikova, "Modernization of the Russian Education Under the Geopolitical Realities of Modernity: the Problem of Formation of the Russian Identity", *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, Vol: 8 num 3 (2019): 179 - 188.

<sup>9</sup> B. L. Wolfson, *The strategy for the development of education in the West at the turn of the XXI century* (Moscow: 1999), 43.

<sup>10</sup> N. Maurer, *Germany: the crisis in the educational system*. 2019. Available at: <https://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/127510>

Glocalization processes have been gaining momentum since the end of the 20th century as the globalist tendency to unify national cultures intensified and the desire to replace them with a single mass culture and the values of a society of unlimited consumption increased<sup>11</sup>.

For Russian society, glocalization makes it possible to turn to the meanings and values of the Russian civilization combining a philosophical, epistemological basis with the idea of world multipolarity, where Russia acts as one of the centers of world development. Thus, glocalization is a new challenge for Russia that provides an opportunity to work out adequate goals and prospects for the national development of public institutions, primarily education, without mechanical copying of Western models but taking into account the uniqueness of the Russian civilization.

The ideas of glocalization are just beginning to establish themselves in the reforms of Russian education. As one of the significant features of social development opposing cultural unification and detraditionalization trends it is possible to mention the turning to the past, a characteristic feature of postmodern society. Rethinking the accumulated experience in the process of returning to the achievements of past eras gives humanity a chance for true progress. The industrial world of the 20th century regarded the past as a lower, already worked-out stage; these delusions led to emptiness, destruction, a global spiritual and economic crisis. A Russian philosopher, A. Gulyga concludes, "Nowadays, the balance of losses and gains threatens to turn into a deficiency of the latter: humanity is losing more than it gains. The losses are so great that the idea of superiority over the past loses its meaning; there is a desire to go back, without losing the positive gains of our time, of course"<sup>12</sup>. The understanding of this problem is especially acute today in Russian society.

An appeal to the past, meanings and values inherent in traditions cannot be regarded as some kind of abstract evil hindering the progress of humanity. In many terms, for society that is experiencing the difficulties of reforming this is a way to rely on its socio-cultural roots in order to work out prospective development goals. This position can be deduced from the thesaurus approach, which is being developed by the scientists of the Moscow State University; such an approach considers the most significant representations of culture in the context of interpretations of "ours", "alien", "foreign"<sup>13</sup>. The thesaurus approach allows understanding and appreciating the revival of archaic meanings in later historical times. According to it, the modern reason for turning to the past is caused by the inconsistency between the models inherent in the content of modernizing Russian society and the cultural tradition existing in it.

The previous model of modernization of non-Western countries, which was aimed at catching up with the West, based on the ideas of globalization and a unipolar world taking into account modern geopolitical processes has come to its end<sup>14</sup>. It initially demanded too much: a change in national identity, re-culturization, general unification, a change in social structures in favor of the creation of westernized social institutions, etc. Nowadays, the modernization of the leading countries of the world uses all the acceptable positive models

<sup>11</sup> S. Benkhabib, *The claims of culture. Equality and diversity in a global era* (Moscow: 2003).

<sup>12</sup> A. Gulyga, *The Russian idea and its creators* (Moscow: 2003), 30.

<sup>13</sup> V. A. Lukov, "The concept of thesaurus spheres. Knowledge. Understanding", *Skill num 1* (2014): 307–326.

<sup>14</sup> V. G. Fedotova, *The crisis of modernization and archaization of society. Book review: LamazhaaCh.K. Archaization of society. Tuvan phenomenon* (Moscow: 2013), 309–313.



found both in the West and in the East. These models are implemented taking into account national roots, a national character and this is currently a global trend of our time. Chinese and Indian modernization is carried out within the framework of the social, cultural and human capital of these countries based on the values of their millennial civilizations<sup>15</sup>. Samuel Huntington wrote about this process in his book "The Clash of Civilizations" at the end of the last century. The philosopher pointed out that after the collapse of the bipolar geopolitical system, people having lost their social orientations, not knowing how to live and what to believe will return to their origins, to their civilizations, cultures and religions<sup>16</sup>. Thus, archaization, a turn to one's civilizational roots, is an integral part of modernization at present, the return of the past in forms that develop modern communities and states.

## Conclusion

From our point of view, the strategy of reforming Russian education should take into account the trends of modern geopolitical development determined by the vectors of multipolarity, glocalization, and the creation of their own civilizational development project. A new educational paradigm should proceed from the parameters of the model of the general reform of Russian society and the state based on the ideas of a multipolar world, the implementation of a large Eurasian socio-economic project, the achievement of the benchmarks indicated in the strategy of scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation. It goes without saying that the model of reforming Russian education should be founded on the civilizational specifics of Russian culture given that "Russia", as the President of the Russian Federation, V.V. Putin said, "is not just a country, it is really a separate civilization: it is a multinational country with a large number of traditions, cultures, religions"<sup>17</sup>. Multipolarity and a broad socio-economic Eurasian vector of the modern geopolitical strategy of our state based on the civilizational characteristics of Russia composes the methodological basis that should be taken into account while modernizing of Russian education.

We should note that no one calls for breaking those progressive trends that have already taken shape over decades of reforms in education and that meet such challenges of our time as informational, environmental, spiritual crisis of spirituality, crisis of identity, etc. In accordance with the geostrategic course towards multipolarity chosen by Russia, it is necessary to supplement the existing paradigm of national education with a new vector, in which Russia is viewed as a Eurasian civilization; to determine the meaningful content of education with the paradigms of the Russian civilization as quintessence of ethno-social, cultural and religious traditions; to identify socio-cultural phenomena that have been contributing for centuries to the unity and identity of Russian society and to single out the educational possibilities of these phenomena; to develop pedagogical models and technologies of teaching and upbringing based on the meanings and values of the Russian civilization.

## Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

<sup>15</sup> V. G. Fedotova, The crisis of modernization and archaization of society. Book review: LamazhaaCh.K. Archaization of society. Tuvan phenomenon. (Moscow: 2013), 309–313.

<sup>16</sup> S. Huntington. The clash of civilizations. (Moscow: 2003).

<sup>17</sup> V.V. Putin, Russia is not just a country, but a separate civilization. 2020. Available at: <https://newizv.ru/news/society/17-05-2020/putin-rossiya-ne-prosto-strana-a-otdelnaya-tsvilizatsiya>

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