

# Mental Responses to Risks in Modern Society

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**Abstract**—Risk abundance of modern society is shown. Risk as systematic interaction of society with threats and dangers produced by the process of modernization is considered. As mental responses to risk appearance connected with scientific and technical process, social and ethical expertise of scientific programmes and projects, bioethics appearance, informed consent to research, responsibility imperative, ecological imperative, riskology and globalist mentality emergence are identified.

**Keywords**—*risk society; social and ethical expertise; bioethics; responsibility imperative; ecological imperative; riskology; globalist mentality*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society is often called risk society. Indeed, risks exist practically in all spheres of human life: professional activity, preservation of health, private and public matters, in leisure, entertainment, sport, business, military affairs. Social groups and society as a whole experience risks using equipment and technologies, medications and food, in diplomatic, economic, ecological and political decisions. Big risks arise from the use of new equipment, nuclear energy, research of human genotype and brain. In one of the previous works we explained the essence of risk, characteristics of risk situation and types of risk. Risk means action or omission of an individual or social group under conditions of uncertainty and potential danger and also knowledge that success will bring expected benefit and failure – expected harm [1]. Nowadays sphere of risk behaviour is growing because people's aspirations to learn actively increasing complexity and novelty of changing world and also use new forms of behavior and produce innovations. Implementation of any innovation produces risk which along with positive result can have negative consequences, even accidents and disasters. The purpose of this paper is to reveal mental responses to their appearance in modern society.

## II. RISK ABUNDANCE OF MODERN SOCIETY

Significant risks are especially result from scientific and technological progress. Scientific knowledge and also technologies and equipment based on it are known to be used not only for people's good but also for bad. Besides, the more developed the science is the more negative effects inhuman treatment of scientific knowledge and equipment can have. Unintentional negative effects of scientific and

technological progress and scientific knowledge or experiments continuously arise, e.g. experiments on human genotype and brain. Scientific and technical development constantly creates various types of risk. Implementation of modern equipment has positive as well as negative effects on society and carries technological, ecological and social risks. Risk as a result of technological and scientific progress redundancy and absence of predictive learning consequences is considered. The more fundamental discovery or technical innovation is the more fundamental risks related to them are becoming [2]. Risks created by scientific and technological threat no longer belong to the place of their occurrence, to enterprise. By their nature they threaten the life on this planet in all its forms [3]. Modern society has great risk abundance occurring in exponentially growing number of technological, ecological and other accidents and disasters caused by divide between power of technology on the one hand and lack of absolute control over environment influence consequences and human community on the other hand. As a result of interdependence of all processes on the planet qualitatively new situation with safety occurs because natural disasters lead to technological disasters and the latter ones to social disasters. Risk abundance of society is not only big but increasing. This is due to acceleration of all processes in society, growing competition, very short life cycle of the product replaced by a new one. As a consequence, in all areas of society fast innovations carrying risks are becoming necessary. Risks influence political system, public consciousness values, individual and collective actions, particularly prolonged crises and frequent disasters can stimulate the idea of strong governance necessity.

Due to all mentioned above U. Beck named the developing society as risk society [4]. O. Yanitsky who agrees with Beck in many aspects names the society as total risk society [5]. These scientists ground their conclusions thinking that risk can be identified as systematic interaction of society with threats and dangers caused by the process of modernization as such. Beck and Yanitsky thereby mark the impossibility of moving away from risks in modern world raise a problem of risk minimizing and control over them. Risk society is certain stage of socialization development characterized by risk generating, dangers and threats, instability, uncertainty, duality, clear behaviour criteria in society, decreasing value of regulatory norms and foundation of people's social solidarity is risk and safety. Risk society is society which carries disasters. State of emergency threatens

to become its normal. In risk society as V. Buyanov, K. Kirsanov and L. Mikhailov rightly notice global self-improved system of human activity risk security based on optimum development of technological and anthropogenic elements is necessary to create. This global purpose at present and in the near future has top priority and can be achieved through scientific thought development, improvement of continuing education system, implementation of innovations in industrial and non-industrial spheres [6].

### III. NECESSARY CONNECTION BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ETHICS

As reaction to arising risks during scientific and technological progress in mentality of modern scientists the idea to connect science with ethics, idea of search for truth synthesis with humanistic ideal is formed. The principle of classical and non-classical science "Discover the truth and increase the true knowledge" is accepted as insufficient. Principle of modern post-nonclassical science is "Seek the truth only for the good of men". Post-nonclassical science includes the requirement of environmental and ethical regulations of scientific projects and their practical implementation, its gnoseological foundations are probability nature of scientific knowledge, uncertainty of scientific knowledge always taking place (all scientific concepts, judgments and theories) [7]. In post-nonclassical science there are connections between scientific and unscientific social purposes and values. Social and ethical expertise of scientific programmes and projects is one of such connections. The given expertise should detect social consequences of proposed scientific projects and relevance of expected results of practical implementation of scientific results to the principles of humanity and universal human moral standards. Increase the ethical component of science resists inhuman applicability of scientific knowledge and unintentional negative consequences of scientific experiments.

Especially significant risks for mankind and biosphere in general (along with great positive prospects) are provided by studies which began in the second half of the twentieth century in medical and biological sciences. These studies are connected with organ transplantations, creation and use of artificial organs and mechanical devices in body, surrogate motherhood, genome function and influence on genetic structure, potential cloning of organisms, cryonisation, euthanasia, brain decoding of mental phenomena, electrical, magnetic, chemical and other effects on brain. This scientist awareness of risks led to considerable mental novations. Some of them, particularly the concept of Reverence for Life by A. Schweitzer even pre-empted medical and biological science development and environmental crisis. Reverence for Life (*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*) is basic concept of A. Schweitzer's ethical doctrine introduced in 1915 and developed in his book "Culture and Ethics". It is that to express equal reverence for life both towards my will to live and any other will. Good is something that serves preservation and development of life, evil is something that destroys life and hinders it [8].

Novations based on existing principles of medical ethics and deontology eventually occurred in such important mental phenomenon as bioethics. This science is realized as a form of socially distributed expertise of risk of scientific and technological progress in the fields of biology and medicine. While assessing modern biomedical technologies these technologies application distant consequences are focused. The term 'bioethics' was introduced in culture by American biologist and oncologist V. Potter in 1969. He noticed that mankind needs the connection between biology and humanities from which the science of survival will be made and with its help to create priority system [9]. Bioethics began the most dynamic part of ethical study. Bioethics is moral mentality response of mankind to risks of medical and biological knowledge development and environmental situation decline. This leading branch of ethical knowledge forms moral principles of biologist, doctor, teacher and all other people activity aimed not only at preservation, improvement and active health creation of people but biosphere preservation in coevolutionary process of social natural development. Within modern ethics new awareness responsibility occurs which H. Jonas formulated as specific "responsibility imperative". Act so that the results of your actions provide continuity of human life [10]. For ethical regulation of biomedical researches three main methods are developed. First, it is the procedure of informed consent which every test person signs before the study. Second, scientific biomedical journals in which articles with obtained results of studies are published should contain only papers authors of which prove that the study was carried out with the ethical norms written in Declaration of Helsinki of World Medical Association. Third, each study project can be carried out only after independent ethics committee approval. Such practice becomes applicable concerning studies on animals [11].

Regarding environment N. Moiseyev developed and brought into scientific use analogous to Jonas' "responsibility imperative" concept "environment imperative". This imperative means human activity border never allowed to be crossed [12]. Environment imperative is response of forming globalist mentality to entire planet environmental disaster. It aims to limit society aggressiveness towards environment.

### IV. RISKOLGY APPEARANCE

One more mental novation closely connected with bioethics is appearance and development of study about essence, types, methods examination, mitigation and prevention of risks caused by modern equipment development. First, in late 60s of the twentieth century debates on nuclear and chemical technologies provoked which most obviously negatively influenced environment and people. Increasing technological disasters connected with design errors and natural disasters as well as unplanned new equipment application brought this problem to interdisciplinary level. It is clear not only to scientists but also politicians and businessmen that old equipment operation and implementation of new one urgently require risk calculations and preventive measures which will be used

in dangerous situations. Therefore, technological risk problem nowadays became one of most important not only to scientists but also to modern society in general. A number of scientists reasonably raise a question of necessity of specific integrated science of risks – riskology. Its main functions are essence revealing, typology, reasons of risk appearance, their role in individual and social life and detection of dangers and development of measures to their decrease and elimination. It can be said that certain elements of this science have already emerged and this emergence is response of globalist mentality to threats and dangers in use of science and technology. Significant contribution to development of riskology made U. Beck, N. and O. Yanitsky. In their opinion, appearance of risk society means positive logic change of social development to negative. The first focuses on tendency to better state development and needs, the latter on tendency to protection from dangers and avoidance of worst and self-denial of needs.

According to O. Yanitsky, three conditions of his concept development of total risk society have political significance for Russia [13]. First condition is necessity to review basic regulatory paradigm of society. If in previous eras basic regulatory ideal of society was equality and justice, then dominant regulatory ideal is safety. Of course, aims to achieve social equality and justice aren't eliminated but social project of risk society gains highly expressive protective character. According to second condition in total risk society new social unity is formed such as risk victim unity. Solidarity of these unities based on fear and alienation can cause significant political power. The third condition of risk society concept postulates political instability of such society. Not only in Russia but in the whole world distrust of political organisations and institutions is growing. And these distrust and instability encourage mass of people to find anchor which could be a firm hand able to keep order. Therefore, occasional returns to stages of the past including autocratic and even totalitarian are possible.

#### V. GLOBALIST MENTALITY APPEARANCE

Besides mentioned mental novations aimed at modern anthropogenic crisis and its risks resolution tendency on the planet to previously unknown new type of mentality emerged. It will help to mitigate risks associated with global problems caused by human activity, especially military and environmental. So far the largest groups were ethnic (folk), native (state) and regional mentalities. In the second half of the twentieth century along with total risk society development *fundamentally new type of group mentality* begins to emerge. Previous mentalities had social psychological characteristics all members of given unities had and differed from other unities. In each group these mentalities had specific ways of thinking, understanding, activities, conduct. Their function was reproduction of groups and defence of their interests. Mental features of groups could contradict each other and this produces conflicts. New mentality type can provide *common ways of perception and conduct of different society members in necessary borders*. This mentality is able to include mental features which are necessary for all social unities (ethnic,

native, regional, religious, professional etc) for noble purpose – organisation of activities to solve global problems and preserve earth civilisation. It is contradiction of ethnic, native and regional mentalities and is formed on their basis. It has to our mind great role in human civilisation preservation.

New mentality has international character, its owners are advanced people of different ethnic groups and countries, it will include most important for progress components of ethnic, native and regional mentalities. Since this new mentality type arises from spiritual foundation integration of different societies we suggest calling it *globalist or civilised* [14]. This new mentality type works not only for separate nations, countries or regions but for the whole humanity. Native and regional mentalities solve problems of countries and regions and globalist mentality serves to solve problems of humanity and provide its survival. Mission of civilized mentality is spiritual foundation for present global problems. This new type of mentality is aimed at harmonization development in relations first, between nations, countries and regions, second, between society and environment. When sufficient part of world population become its members this will become problem solution condition of clash between civilisations and other global problems. Content of globalist mentality will be variety of constructive intensive similarities of members of different countries and civilisations. *Civilized mentality development is one of irreplaceable elements of spiritual part of human response to modern response of history of global problems and emerging risks*.

Original idea of globalist mentality and globalist culture apparently belongs to V. Vernadsky. He wrote that men really realise that they are residents of the Planet. They should and have to think not only as individual, family or kind, states or their allies but as a part of the planet [15]. The core of civilised mentality can be global sense or all human identity, *you* as integral part of whole humanity. Other components of globalist mentality become such personal qualities as intolerance of violence, love of justice not only between individuals but countries, commitment to reasonable norms of moderate use of material things, careful and sensible attitude to environment [16]. The example of such treatment is environmental imperative of N. Moiseyev.

Globalist mentality will be free from national and regional egoism. Such egoism nowadays to our deep regret demonstrate Western countries in times of war with Serbia, Iraq, Libya, Syria appointing puppet government and embezzling billions of dollars of overthrown dictators and people's riches. All that done to bring freedom and democracy to people who have not asked them about it [17]. Civilised mentality has nothing to do with policy pursued by Western countries in unfair economic and political globalization on the planet. On the contrary, it is intended to humanize their policy and globalisation processes, to limit, adapt and make them useful to all countries. Such components of western civilization as inclination to overconsumption and mad rush to change commodities (cars, household appliances, telephones etc) are extremely dangerous to earth civilization as well as violence by



powerful NATO military force done with impunity to benefit economically and politically.

Civilised mentality is opposed by native and regional mentalities which interact with it. Not fully developed but extremely important is question of values which should constitute globalist mentality content. This question solution will significantly influence the future of society. As a rule the set of civilized universal values includes the values which are necessary for prosperous life of all nations in world community [18]. As A. Berelekhis and S. Ilyinskaya say above all they are vital values: right to life and procreation, health preservation, personal security. Then environmental values come: clean earth, water, air, sufficiency of basic resources. Primary civil rights: protection from non-legal violence and coercion, access to education, freedom of movement, inviolability of residence, freedom of conscience, meetings, associations. Political and legal values: independence of court, freedom and independence of press, various forms of citizen participation in political life [19]. It is assumed that civilised mentality apart from existing and described above will include other value orientations which can emerge during society development. Particularly new value orientations are expected to emerge during the process of value synthesis of technological and traditional civilisations [20].

Nowadays there is number of organisations whose activity promotes development of globalist mentality. One of these organisations is club of Budapest initiated by Hungarian philosopher and public figure E. Laszlo. At its first conference in 1996 there were E. Laszlo, Dalai Lama, Vaclav Havel, Chinghiz Aitmatov, Yehudi Menuhin and other famous people. They adopted and released “Manifesto of planetary consciousness”. It states that energy and raw material problems, demographic and environmental problems, social and economic development problems cannot be solved only by economic and political instruments. New way of thinking is main instrument and necessary condition for further humanity development. Club’s mission is assistance with planetary culture development of unity in diversity. Purposeful coevolution by responsible people of different nations and communities will help to eliminate violence and develop ecocivilisation which could provide prosperity of humanity and life preservation on the Earth. Club members convey their messages in words in scientific speeches and images, sounds of music and movements on stage referring to support of new media technologies. Branches of club of Budapest function in many countries, such branch has begun its work in Russia since 2015.

There is one more organization fostering globalist mentality development serves World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilisations”. It was organized in 2002 on initiative of public figures of Russia, India and Greece. Forum links various non-governmental organisations and scientific associations, scientists, philosophers, different cultural and religious traditions – all who respect the principles of non-violence and mutual respect as foundations of intercultural dialogue. During Forum session in October 2015 on Rhodes necessity of specific innovative project development of solidarity of world development in particular

was marked and thought that only in objective commonality consciousness of all civilization diversity and their equality in the face of Time world can find alternative to destruction and catastrophe [21].

## VI. CONCLUSION

If national educational systems can solve the problem of triple identity formation – native, regional and universal human then we can use imagination and imagine dynamics of mentality in globalised world [22]. Civilised mentality is becoming dominant in the whole society owners of which are vast majority of planet population. This mentality unites humanity, provides stability, piece and succession of whole earth civilisation development. Apart from civilized mentality there are regional mentalities – European, American, Asian, Latin American, African and others. Within the borders of regions there are diverse religious, professional, ethnic and other group mentalities having constructive differences. Civilised mentality will include components of regional, native, ethnic and other group mentalities most necessary for progress. These components will become variety of constructive similarities which will provide earth civilization unity and globalist mentality will help mitigate risks connected with global problem appearance.

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