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Diverse “Soft Power” of the Changing World: Mission and Evolution

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This paper analyzes the global challenges and possible responses to them. Explores New coping mechanisms to global change such as “flexible consciousness”, “soft skills”, “soft cooperation”, “soft competition”, “soft power” to resolve the existing global problems are considered. The nature of innovation process and the importance of “soft power”, promoting its creation are analyzed. The formation process of an innovative society as the basis for a new global soft power, preventing the negative effects of non-linear accelerated development of the world is investigated.

Keywords: picture of the world, global crises, flexible consciousness, innovative waves, soft skills, “soft power” in the economy and politics.

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Research area: culture studies, philosophy.

Introduction

Global changes taking place in last decades have drastically changed the world around us, shifting us step by step with our minds, stereotypes and common form of communication. The reality we live in is more like a “slipping reality” which is reflected in a mass of fast moving “blinking” worldviews [9, p. 7797-7798]. Reasonably there is an critical need in increasing of intellectual lability towards this changes or more flexible and “smart” behaviour and appropriate adaptation.

That brings us to say about the relevance of other perception of the reality, past, present and future time. There is a demand in a contemporary evaluation of events and creation of a new

language of communication with its images, key words and concepts which meet the age. They are important not only for understanding of causes and results of global problems but also for their solution performance. Unpredictable present and vague future are artificial, i.e. they are created by a man so their problems should be mastered.

In this case, an evident place of “soft mind” [6] of people living in the fast developing world has being slowly recognized, and it would take longer time to make it an intention of personal development [10]. Current paradigm of “hard mind” is explained historically within stable live environment. In the era of global changes it does

not serve to the success of peoples and countries. In practise, this paradigm provokes many crisis phenomena overcome by high-demand innovations and changes.

Apparently, there is no coincidence in development of concepts interconnected with each other by the value of “soft”, not “hard”, measures. As we see it, they are related to both the world wave of crisis phenomenon in different spheres of people’s activity (from geopolitics to “new economy”) and emerging role of “soft mind” technologies in actual innovations development. In this article the genesis and evolution of such concepts as “soft power”¹, “soft skills”, “soft competition”, “soft cooperation” are described exactly in this view. Special attention is paid to search for a positive result of mass (and not isolated, as it was before, within certain cases by a particular number of people) use for these concepts and actions associated with them to achieve a desired results.

Soft power of production and correction of innovation results

Basically, in traditional societies radical changes accompanying any innovation are rejected and even rare. Sets of “hard power” which control people’s behaviour politically and institutionally are recognized as dominant factors of living. As one of famous Russian philosopher Peter Kropotkin says, “soft power” of mutual assistance and solidarity has always existed in the Russian society. It is something of a drive for social progress of the mankind, but in theory it has never been a dominant force [8]. Nevertheless, many processes of globalization happens not only from the top-down but also down-top basing on mutual support and respect from participants of these processes.

According to the current statistics [7], for six millennia ago more than a half of the world popularity already had consistent relationship, the

level of globalization was not so high but it had been taking place through all the late millennia, gaining power for a quantum leap. As it follows from [21], a comprehensive World System appeared not less 5000 years ago and by many cycles of expansion and consolidation step by step has then spread all over the world. The end of the 20th century speeded this process up dramatically. An entirely new, incredibly increased level of globalization now has become a reality. The success of a new stage of unification of the world is based particularly on progress in science and technology resulting in an explosive-like quality renovation of information technologies and rapid cutting of transport costs within a matters of few decades in the past century. Surprisingly to many people, a new world has suddenly become a new reality.

The world renewal was made with rare but quite effective innovations. Innovation culture requires for another philosophy, another perception of “living space and time”. An important feature of innovations is a very high response level towards a long left need. In crisis times this need maximizes, the resistance to improvements slashes and then innovations get a chance to occur. Today there is a number traditional definitions of innovation. The most general one is suggested by a famous Russian psychologist A.I. Yuriev: “getting approved aims by unrecognized methods” [18]. This definition clearly reflects the role of communication, agreement between people on targets of promoted innovation and their acknowledgement to the right of creators to use unrecognized methods. For this purpose a developed communication is needed in order for people to be sure that there is no other way to achieve desired aims.

In accordance with the theory of innovation development by Joseph Shumpeter a mass articulation of the crisis sharpness in particular situation is needed to the demand of the society

is understood and accepted by the creator [16]. In these circumstances, as we see it is first time when not sounded but still really existed “soft power” of support and promotion of useful development – innovation – appears. It is growth in labour productivity and successful knowledge commercialization, compiling of innovation which has market demand. These definitions seems to be quite acceptable and, strictly speaking, an unconcerned person may not find any treats towards the society, economy and state from innovation implementation.

Basically, they can be found in the basic definition of innovation made by Joseph Shumpeter: “Innovation is a constructive destruction”. As it follows then, any innovation causes a wave of destruction and crises (railways replaced coachmen, social allowances and benefits undermined stable families, education caused low rate of birth, the Internet led to the Great Recession of 2008-2009 and etc.). Such waves permanently give rise to demands in other innovations able to manage these problems. So waves of destruction and construction follow one after another. The humanity becomes more like a squirrel running in a squirrel wheel. All problems of globalization so widely discussed recently are connected with this very feature of the process of innovation.

In this sense a common among scientists statement by Sir Christopher Ball: “Existing systems lead to existing results. If there is a need to get some other aims, then one should change root and branch of the system”, requires a more detailed analysis in each particular situation. Quite possibly, in many cases it can turn out to be a reason for “hard power” of a few executives not able to predicts results followed after their decisions which promote developments in any circumstances.

Obviously, it is a time to include in the process of innovation creation and

implementation an additional step – consideration of innovation implications – a kind of checking the “innovation track” in which agreement and mutual understanding between all participants are in effect. Otherwise, the result is unlikely to be positive. It is subject to not only some specific cases of innovation but also to the whole process of globalization as a great human innovation. Its further chaotic development will inevitably cause greater challenges up to the next real risk point of a global catastrophe.

The creation of any innovation now should include the stage of possible consequences prediction (i.e. ethical, social, ecological, economical and etc.). Since so, originally included in the definition of innovation formula **“crisis – its articulation – soft power of support for creators of innovations – construction of effective new things – unavoidable destruction of old things”** should be accompanied by **“permanent articulation of consequences of innovations – growth of soft power of support for creators of new innovations able to manage results of already implemented developments”**.

Soft power of constructive new creation requires participation and support from most people. Obviously, according to their evolution these processes invariably cause ground for new types of society (i.e. “knowledge society” [5] and “innovation society” [15]). Leading role in such societies is taken by people with specific professional and personal characteristics of a Man for a New Age, i.e. a person with a wide range of soft skills and with high level of self-organization, self-control and self-education which provide an opportunity to maintain a smart power.

The main task for these people is development of new strategy for people making their decisions which focuses on environmental depletion termination and prevention of social conflicts caused by unequal resource distribution between different groups of people and nations.

As it follows from the recent survey [12], maintaining current movement of the world development, consumption and distribution of benefits leads to the result that in short time the humanity may well follow the example of many other previous civilizations. Evidently, former technologies of unlimited development of the world become dominant factors of the global risk and since so they should be replaced by strategies of sustainable (to be more precise, supporting) development.

The list of today’s global problems is quite long, but following the statement suggested above the priority is given to problems of the Earth safety and creation of a new resource control system. To master them we should take following measures:

- increase the growth of effectiveness at least in five times in order to provide an adequate standard of living on the Earth [2];
- change governmental systems so that they would be able to provide people with sustainable development which supports living standards for all people;
- create humane basis for optimistic strategies of development under the conditions of escalating great recession.

Obviously, to achieve these aims we should increase the number of social, technical and technological innovations providing the improvement in economical effectiveness and social stability several times. This conclusion might seem to be a paradox: in order to save human lives in the chaotic world of constant changes there is a need for the same chaotic constantly speeding growth of technological, social and governmental innovations. This growth can be performed within ever increasing number of creators and providers of innovations, i.e. people with a specific perception of the world, belonging

to a specific type of culture of interpersonal cooperation and engagement.

Soft and smart cooperation instead of tough competition

The main consequence of the contemporary world’s move from industrial era of development to post-industrial one is appearance of a new, the fourth sector of economy, or “new economy” [1]. This sector as it follows from its basic component “research intensity” is usually called as “the economy based on knowledge”; and the society which includes dominant role of such economy is defined as the “knowledge society”.

The main reason for its formation is a need to come out of energy crisis of 1970s which demanded for a sensible rise in research and development production and also for invention of more new technical devices with minimum energy and expensive types of fuel consumption. This problem was resolved by invention and then mass use of a new type of creative workforce productivity or mutual “synergetic productivity”. The basis for this productivity is compiled by the effect of so called collective mind found in the middle of 1980s meaning that a group of specialists has an important ability to find a solution more effectively than any best personal solution suggested in this group.

The phenomenon of increasing effectiveness of creative work as a result of integration and ideas exchange leads to synergetic effect (Greek origin *συνεργός* – cooperation) of workforce productivity rise. The reason for increasing of general workforce productivity of specifically created group of experts is an increasing specialization of labour, since it has instantly been included into the “holiest of the whole” human nature – creative work. Besides, another important detail of the mutual success is psychological set on absence of tough competition between members of the group.

“Soft” and “encouraging” the search for a desired solution competition is accepted for sure since basically there is an agreement on fair distribution of common results.

As Alvin Toffler, a famous futurist, claims, it is these people who in short term will create that “revolutionary capital” which will change the world [19]. The front place now is taken by a “must” for education and science reflected in the quantity and quality of useful innovations. It is reputed, from this very moment post-industrial economy with its different cast and different rules of cooperation begins [11].

**“Soft power” of mutual trust
is the formula of success**

Psychological side of relationships inside creative groups within the cognitive theory become an important basis for a “new, non-competition economy” [4]. A creative worker’s personality gets the key position in the process of successful development of “economy based on knowledge, cooperation and trust”[20, 22]. Trust is considered to be an ideology of the modern economy. Personal characteristics of experts of a new age – creators and organizers as it seems to Peter Drucker [5] – are the basis for its benefit. It is quite enough to look at the results of recent surveys made by the World Bank on most demanded practical soft skills to get sure. A modern developer and scientist should obtain the following set of soft practical skill [17]:

1. Innovation competence (strategic vision, imagination, ability to see opportunities for a practice and insistence);
2. Creativity, multitasking, cross-disciplinary skills;
3. Ability to vaster problems, analytical skills, critical thinking;
4. Skills on business development;
5. Ability to work with people (command organization cooperation);

6. Cross-cultural tolerance and knowledge of languages;

7. Management skills (leadership, project management, changes management);

8. Social skills (ability to get on well with people, networking, empathy);

9. Personal effectiveness skills (planning, time-management, flexibility).

This set suggests that more than a half of desired skills and competences of a new age employee (from point 5 to 9) are an ability to work with people. Among them we should highlight communicability, flexibility and empathy (Green origin *empathia* – compassion), i.e. such personal characteristics that has cognitive (ability to understand and anticipate), affective (ability to react emotionally) and active (ability to participate) nature. Obviously, these personal characteristics were on the back. New demands for decision of constantly widening global challenges dramatically change the worldview of a successful new age employee. It becomes more complicated, multifactorial and turned not only and not so much towards knowledge but cooperation with a great amount of different people. Fascination by “soft climate” of cooperation, co-creativity and empathy step forward. New “soft power” of productive cooperation becomes a natural factor of changes in consciousness of people belonging to New Economy and modernizing education.

An important theoretical step in this movement is recent development of specific emotional human intelligence [3]. It is this kind of intelligence that helps person to interpret correctly the communication environment and influence it, to understand by intuition what other people want and need, to know their strengths and weaknesses, to resist stress situations, to be a fascinating person and to get mutual success. As we see it, all the above mentioned skills of a man with a high level of emotional intelligence development are the basis for a well-demand by the

new age “soft skills” of professional and personal behaviour, of an increasing domination of “soft power of a productive human communication”. Apparently, “hard and soft skills” are formed due to historical and social factors and their combination or balance may in particular situation lead to ideal tactics or strategy of behaviour. The new age requires “soft and wise personal and collective behaviour” where different forms of behaviour are combined and bring about both the success from creative, professional groups and of each member of the group. This is a requirement of a new psychological human safety in context of new innovation society development. Competition goes beyond creative groups and increase motivation on mutual success. Those communities which reject modernization will, apparently, be destroyed in the future.

The geography of intelligence in the country, the landscape of its innovation culture, the territory of its human force are considered as new factors and basis for system geopolitics.

Existence of the country in tough competition world of globalization is now defined not by its resources and geographical aspects but by the level and quality of acquisition of demanded education, skills and competences which are on the whole softer than before. So, in perspective, the country that gets ahead in mass “production” of such people will take the lead.

Undoubtedly, the existence of the whole world will be defined by the range of “soft skills” peculiar to a great number of people acquiring new methods of flexible beneficial cooperation. It is these people who will be able to create valuable, self-developing innovation society, capable of finding solutions on increasing waves of global problems. This society in itself can become a real “soft power” of the New World. This is a reason for education to have a new important humane strategic target to become an useful territory for guidance and development of such people – flexible employees and experts.

¹ The question of how the word soft should be translated is not the purpose of this article. According to the context both variants are used.

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Многоликая «гибкая сила» меняющегося мира: предназначение и эволюция

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В статье дается анализ глобальных вызовов и возможных ответов на них. Рассматриваются новые адаптационные механизмы к глобальным переменам, такие как «гибкое сознание», «гибкие навыки», «гибкое сотрудничество», «гибкая / мягкая сила» для разрешения имеющихся глобальных проблем. Исследуется природа инноваций и важность «гибкой силы», способствующей её созданию. Рассматривается процесс формирования инновационного общества как основы новой глобальной гибкой силы, предотвращающей негативные последствия нелинейного ускоренного развития мира.

Ключевые слова: картина мира, глобальные кризисы, гибкое сознание, гибкие навыки, инновационные волны, «мягкая сила» в экономике и политике.

Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология, 09.00.00 – философские науки.
