

The Educational Potential of Russian Employers: The Gender Aspect

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Abstract. The educational potential of prospective and current employers and gender-based differences in its accumulation and use are analyzed from the perspective of the generation of decent jobs based on the data obtained by the Russian Federal State Statistics Ser-

vice (Rosstat) as part of the "Population Survey on Employment Problems" and "Comprehensive Monitoring of Living Conditions" projects. The study reveals that Russian entrepreneurship is characterized by an expressed gender asymmetry. Professionally employed women have higher educational potential than men, yet less opportunity to play out this competitive advantage as entrepreneurs. The educational potential of Russian employers has been found to be pretty high, but their stratum is too thin yet to be a consistent generator of decent jobs and too difficult to expand.

Keywords: educational potential, employment status, employers, decent jobs, gender asymmetry, stereotypes.

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The level of education of the economically active Russian population, and the female half in particular, is quite high by international standards, and for the moment it remains one of the competitive advantages of the national economy. At the same time, there is the acute problem of a shortage in high-performance jobs that provide decent wages and opportunities for the implementation of the educational and qualification potential of the country's population. Today, in the formation of such jobs, a great deal of hope is placed on the development of innovative business, including small and medium-sized enterprises, capable of responding flexibly to changes in the structure of society's needs and economic conditions. The question is: how justified these expectations are and, in particular, whether the educational potential of the employers themselves is sufficient for conducting an innovative business demanding highly skilled workers, and if there is a gender

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asymmetry in implementing the educational potential of the economically active population in the sphere of non-wage labor. This article is devoted to the search for an answer to this question.

There is a huge amount of research devoted to the ways in which education enhances competitiveness in the labor market, promotes successful careers, increases income from working activities, and expands opportunities for self-fulfillment. A number of works discuss gender differences in strategies for obtaining education and its efficiency [Baskakova 2005; Shauman 2006; Charles, Bradley 2009; Barone 2011; Vuorinen-Lampila 2016; Zamyatnina 2017].

A lot of domestic and foreign research is devoted to the problem regarding business education. However, they focus primarily on assessing the quality of MBA programs, their compliance with the requirements of employers and, consequently, the competitiveness of graduates in the segment of the labor market for hired managers [Azevedo et al. 2008]. Studies of business education in the context of ensuring the sustainability of small businesses and improving the quality of self-employment had previously only been undertaken for developing countries. In particular, based on a survey conducted in Nigeria, the views of entrepreneurs and employees on the possible benefits of business education to working owners of small enterprises were analyzed, but did not address the issue of the extent to which the skills of competent business dealing, including those acquired in the system of business education, had spread among men and women who form this stratum of the population [Akanisi 2012]. Certain works, which address the gender aspects of obtaining a business education, are made based on the domestic data. Subsequently, in a series of articles, T. I. Zaslavskaya [2006] analyzes the differences in educational, social and professional and business resources for men and women studying MBA programs, and the gender specificity of motives for obtaining a business education.

At the same time, in the context of employment status, business education is rarely studied. One project, which covered 11 developing countries in various regions of the world, [UNESCO 2013] recorded a lower educational level in the self-employed compared to employees. Besides, the authors of the research consider the self-employed as a single category, without any distinction between employers and own-account workers. Meanwhile, from the point of view of the International Labor Organization, this distinction is of fundamental importance. The methodology developed by the ILO experts recommends that employees and employers should be united in a segment of sustainable employment that is distinguished from a segment of vulnerable employment that combines own-account workers and unpaid family workers [International Labor Office 2016: 61]. However, it is the segment of small businesses and micro-businesses that does not employ hired labor, which is the source of replenishment of the employers' pool.

In both national and foreign literature there are a number of studies on gender differences in the preferences for hired employment or

self-employment, in terms of business practices and success. According to the OECD, although in the countries of this organization, over the past 10 years, there has been a reduction in the gender gap in the status of employment, it still remains significant. Self-employment is preferred by 18% of all employed men and only by 10% of women. At the same time, men running their own business are 2.5 times more likely to have hired workers, and they work more than women, on average eight hours more per week. The income from doing business among men is also higher, and the gender gap varies from 13% in Sweden to 60% in Poland [OECD 2016: 122, 127].

In studies of gender aspects related to doing business, the focus is on the characteristics of the male and female approaches to the management of an enterprise [Chirikova 1998; Eagly, Karau 2002; Chirikova, Krichevskaya 2000; Brady et al. 2011; Haack 2014], while the issues of the level and quality of the education of employers are seldom addressed. Among the few works in which education is considered in the context of employment status is the recent study by R. Levine and J. Rubinstein [Levine, Rubinstein 2017]. Based on the data from a national labor force survey, they compare the socio-demographic profiles of working owners of enterprises who have the status of a legal entity in the United States as well as those who do not. Unfortunately, the methodology chosen by the authors does not make it possible to clearly identify whether the business owners in the sample have employees or not. In addition, the authors do not specifically investigate the gender aspect, but focus on factors such as education, family characteristics and law-abiding.

In Russia, the educational profile of men and women, depending on their employment status in the segment of non-wage labor, was analyzed on the basis of data from the National Survey of Household Welfare and Participation in Social Programs (NOBUS) conducted by Rosstat in 2003. [Mezentseva et al. 2009]. In a more recent article, I. V. Soboleva [2017] assesses the cash opportunities for full-fledged use and replenishment of the educational potential for skilled workers employed in small businesses, depending on the status of their employment. However, this study is limited to the data for one region and does not affect the gender features of this segment of education.

This article attempts to assess the extent to which the educational potential of real and potential employers, as well as the ways in which this potential is used by men and women, responds to the demands that form the task of economic modernization and ensuring decent employment for the population in this segment of the national labor force.

Research design The object of the study is three groups of non-wage workers: employers (this group includes owners / co-owners of their own enterprises and members of production cooperatives / artels that use wage labor), own-account workers (including owners / co-owners of their enter-

prises and members of production cooperatives / artels, not applying wage labor, as well as individual entrepreneurs who work with organizations on the basis of a civil law contract and unpaid family workers). As a comparison group in the research we used wage earners (employed for wages or remuneration in cash or in kind, or for monetary allowance), with students excluded.

The informational base of the study was data obtained from the Comprehensive Monitoring of Living Conditions (KNUZhN). Rosstat conducted three rounds of this survey (in 2011, 2014 and 2016), but at the time of the study only the results of the first two rounds were available. Meanwhile, the size of the sample in 2011 (10,000 people) is insufficient for a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the subgroups of the working population with different employment status. Therefore, we relied on data from the second round of the survey (2014) with sample size of 60,000 people. Data from the Survey of Population Employment Problems (ONPZ), regularly conducted by Rosstat, were also used.

The choice of KNUZhN as the main information source was determined by the fact that, in comparison with the Survey of Population Employment Problems, it encompasses a wider range of issues that allow assessing various aspects of the quality of working life in modern Russia, including the characteristics of vocational education and the employment conditions of the working population. KNUZhN is the most large-scale survey ever conducted in Russia, containing data on the entire period of educational attainment. Moreover it covers a wide range of factors regarding labor activity reflected in the Decent Work Concept developed under the auspices of the International Labor Organization and allows for assessing the human capital mismatch (discrepancy between the educational profile and the work performed), and the extent to which employees use their professional skills in their chosen occupation.

For the purposes of this study, of the total number of respondents, only employed people who responded to the question of their employment status (54,975 people) were selected. Respondents of both sexes are represented quite evenly: 48% men and 52% women. Among the selected respondents, 96.4% (52,983 people) were employees, 1.5% (798 people) were working employers, 1.6% (883 people) were own-account workers, and 0.6% (311 people) were unpaid family workers. Thus, with a low proportion of self-employed, the scope of the survey still allows for an analysis in terms of people's employment status.

Comparison of the data on the structure of the educational profile of the working population, obtained on the basis of the second round of KNUZhN and ONPZ, shows that the first source gives a somewhat larger shift towards higher education levels (Table 1). To a large extent, this is explained by the fact that in the sample of the ONPZ there is a significantly higher proportion of own-account workers (Table 2),

Table 1. The structure of the employed Russian population according to the level of education in 2014 (%)

Source of the data	Higher education	Secondary vocational education	Primary vocational education	Without professional education
ONPZ	32.2	25.8	19.0	22.9
KNUZhN	38.7	27.2	20.0	14.1

Table 2. The structure of the employed Russian population according to the status of employment in 2014 (%)

Source of the data	Hired workers	Employers	Own-account workers	Unpaid family workers
ONPZ	92.8	1.3	5.5	0.4
KNUZhN	96.4	1.5	1.6	0.6

whose level of education, as shown below, lags behind the indicators for the population as a whole.

Russia within international comparisons

Regarding international comparisons, the Russian structure of its employed population in terms of employment status looks quite decent. As can be seen in Table. 3, in various regions of the world the structure of the employed population is strikingly different. ILO specialists note that a significant proportion of wage earners in the economically active population tends to show a high level of economic development by global standards [International Labor Office 2016: 61]. According to this parameter, Russia meets the highest standards. The proportion of self-employed is usually very high in developing countries and indicates agrarian overpopulation and a shortage of jobs in the formal sector of the economy.

A special feature of the most developed countries is a relatively high (about 4%) share of independent employers among the working population (working enterprise-owners with hired workers). It is the demand from this pool of employers that provides a significant share of decent jobs in the economies of the most developed countries. In the countries of Eastern Europe, which compose the «second echelon» of the European economy, this indicator is half that of most developed countries, while in Russia it is even lower and is only about 1.5%. Thus, the layer of independent employers in our country is still too thin quantitatively to serve as a stable generator of decent employment.

As in most countries, the Russian entrepreneurial stratum is characterized by gender asymmetry in many respects. First of all, the gen-

Table 3. The structure of employed population by employment status in various regions of the world (%)

Region	Employees	Employers	Own-account workers	Unpaid family workers
The whole world	54.8	2.4	33.6	9.2
Low-income countries	19.1	2.0	52.7	26.2
Lower middle- income countries	34.4	1.9	49.8	13.8
Upper middle- income countries	66.8	2.4	25.8	5.0
High-income countries	86.1	3.9	9.1	0.9
USA	90.4	3.4	6.1	0.1
Western Europe	88.0	4.5	7.0	0.5
Eastern Europe	86.7	2.0	10.0	1.3
Russia	92.2	1.4	6.1	0.4

Compiled from: Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) 2015. <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/research-and-databases/kilm/lang--en/index.htm>

Table 4. Working men and women by employment status in 2014 r. (%)

	Hired workers		Employers		Own-account workers		Unpaid family workers	
	ONPZ	KNUZhN	ONPZ	KNUZhN	ONPZ	KNUZhN	ONPZ	KNUZhN
Men	91.9	95.1	1.8	2.1	5.9	2.1	0.4	0.7
Women	93.7	97.5	0.9	0.9	5.0	1.2	0.4	0.5

der bias of the community of entrepreneurs towards men should be noted. Data from both the ONPZ and the KNUZhN confirm that Russian women are relatively less frequently self-employed, and that they prefer more stable employment with less wage insecurity (Table 4). According to the data of the ONPZ, during the last 10 years the share of self-employed was about 6.0–6.9% among women and about 7.7–8.2% among men. Accordingly, the share of women among the self-employed is lower than among employees (in 2015, respectively, 42.3% and 49.1%).

The status of women in business is worse than for men. As can be seen in Table. 4, they are at least twice less likely than men to «break away and become employers». Accordingly, the proportion of women among employers is low and, according to the data of the ONPZ, has tended to decrease (in 2007 it was 39.0%, in 2015—only 32.7%). But in the most vulnerable category of self-employed, that is among unpaid family workers—this share has increased during the indicated period from 46.2% to 49.4%.

Since Russian legislation that regulates business is formally gender neutral (it does not limit female opportunities in this area, nor does it create preferences for female business), one can suppose with a huge level of certainty that the main obstacle to the successful development of female business remains the stability of traditional perceptions about «female» and «male» roles in the society, including social stereotypes, according to which the female nature is less prone to entrepreneurial activity [Baskakova 2013: 40–45].

**Gender
asymmetry in
education**

The main parameter according to which, based on statistical data, it is possible to judge the quality of the layer of entrepreneurs, is their educational potential, i. e. accumulated knowledge, skills and competences, initially acquired in the system of formal professional education and modified (increasing or forfeited) on the path of career progress.

Russia is among the countries with a high level of educational attainment and, above all, with a very high proportion of people with tertiary education (at least college or undergraduate level). Meanwhile, women have a higher educational potential than men. According to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2016, 63% of professional and technical workers are women, which is the highest rate among the 144 surveyed countries [World Economic Forum 2016: 302].

Feminization of the highest levels of professional education, even in the Soviet times, has become one of the features of the country's social development. It led to a significant gap in educational attainment in favour of women among the employed population [Steiner, Bagrov, Bonn 1976: 57–58]. The proportion of women among university students has been fluctuating within the range of 51–58% for many years, while among those with vocational education almost two thirds were young men [Baskakova 2005: 276–278]. Judging by the data from the ONPZ, employed women are consistently characterized by higher educational attainment than men. In 2015, among professionally employed Russians, 37.2% had a university diploma (28.9% among only men), 29.9% had tertiary type B education (among men—only 21.9%). At the same time, 23.6% of men and only 14.5% of women had a vocational education. The proportion of men whose education does not exceed general secondary school is also significantly higher as compared to women (25.5% and 18.3% respectively).

For the purposes of this study, two issues are crucial. Firstly, whether it is possible to consider the business community, and primarily employers, as one of the most educated segments of the working population of the country. Secondly, whether the competitive educational advantage of women as a whole still stands for women in the business community remains a question.

The data from the ONPZ, which makes any comparison of the educational potential of employees and self-employed possible, show that the self-employed have been inferior in terms of their education-

Table 5. **Educational attainment by employment status** (% , N = 54,975)

Level of education	Employees	Employers	Own-account workers	Unpaid family workers
University	33.4	47.9	26.7	33.8
Bachelor / incomplete university	5.1	8.3	5.5	6.4
Tertiary type B	27.3	22.8	28.0	19.9
Vocational	20.2	10.8	21.0	15.1
Without professional education	14.0	10.3	18.8	24.8
Average number of years spent on education	13.35	14.00	13.05	13.15

Calculated using data from KNUZhN.

al potential for many years. According to the data for 2015, among the self-employed the share of people with higher education was 22.5%, while among employees it was 33.8%, and the share of those with secondary vocational education was 21.9% and 26.1% respectively. One can, however, assume that within the community of the self-employed, the level of education is differentiated depending on their status. The ONPZ does not provide an opportunity to verify this assumption, but the data of the KNUZhN fully confirm it.

As can be seen from Table. 5, own-account workers significantly lag behind in terms of education when compared with employees. Employers, on the contrary, are, by a similar distance, substantially ahead of them. Among employers, 56.2% have a university or incomplete university education and only one in ten does not have any professional education at all, while among employees the share of those having university education is almost one and a half times lower, and the proportion of those with no professional education 1.5 times higher. According to the average number of years spent on education, employers also outstrip employees, while other categories of self-employed people lag behind them.

Thus, on the one hand, the layer of employers in Russia, although being slender compared with this segment of the population in developed countries, nevertheless has a good educational potential. On the other hand, reinforcements of this stratum due to the strengthening of the economic position of entrepreneurs who do not use hired labor in the current situation is likely to result in a decrease of this potential.

What contribution do women make to the formation of the business community's educational potential and is their competitive advantage based on a higher educational attainment preserved here? The data from the ONPZ answer this question in a negative way: among the self-employed, the educational attainment of women is somewhat lower than that of men (Figure 1). Among self-employed

Fig. 1. Level of education of men and women, who work as employed or non-recruited

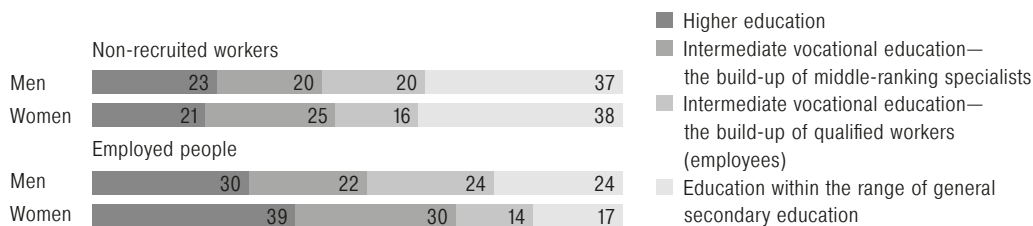


Table 6. Level of education of men and women with different employment status
(%, N = 54975)

Level of education	Hired workers		Employees		Own-account workers		Unpaid family workers	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
University	28.4	37.9	48.4	46.7	26.7	26.7	29.7	39.5
Bachelor / incomplete university	4.8	5.4	8.5	7.7	6.3	4.3	9.3	2.3
Tertiary type B	23.2	30.9	20.7	27.6	24.0	34.7	16.5	24.8
Vocational	27.3	13.8	11.4	9.3	22.6	18.2	18.7	10.1
Without professional education	16.3	12.0	11.1	8.5	20.4	16.1	25.8	23.3
Average number of years spent on education	13.03	13.65	14.02	13.97	13.03	13.09	13.01	13.36

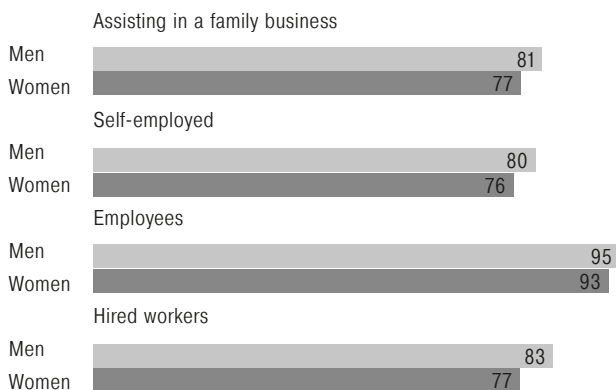
Calculated based on data from KNUZhN.

women, in 2015, 21.2% had a university education, while among women employees it was 38.3%; among men these figures were 23.4 and 29.4%, respectively. In addition, 24.6% of female entrepreneurs (and 30.3% of women employees) had a Tertiary type B education as did 19.9% of male entrepreneurs (and 22.1% of employed men). Among those with a vocational education, the corresponding shares were 15.7% (14.4%) and 19.2% (24%). The share of men and women without a professional education among the self-employed is approximately equal (37.5% and 38.7%), and significantly exceeds the same figures among employees.

The KNUZhN data make it possible to characterize in a more detailed way the gender asymmetry in education among those who are self-employed (Table 6).

Female employers, although they have higher educational attainment as compared to employees, unlike the latter, in their educational potential lag behind their male colleagues. We believe that one of the reasons for this gap is the horizontal (sectoral and professional) segregation of the Russian sphere of professional education and employment. Most of the professions and specialties of education in Russian

Fig. 2. The share of those who have skills in working with a personal computer, %



universities, as well as economic activities have been given the status of «male» or «female» in public opinion. At the same time, social and humanitarian specialties and economic activities (culture, health, education), which for various reasons have become deeply feminized, function more in the budget segment of the economy. «Male» professions and economic activities, represented mainly by engineering professions, on the contrary, demonstrate more demand in the market segment [Zamyatnina 2017]. Another likely reason for the backwardness of female employers in terms of education from male colleagues is the relatively high competitiveness of highly educated women in the wage labor market, which allows them to successfully build their professional careers, avoiding the risks associated with entrepreneurship. The evidence of a high proportion of women (40%) among those occupying top management positions supports this view. According to this indicator, today, the Russian Federation is the world leader [Grant Thornton International 2015].

Gender asymmetry of the level of education in the category of own-account workers is manifested only by the shares of men and women who have tertiary type B (in favor of women) and vocational (in favor of men) education. The low level of education of the self-employed reveals that the Russian version of self-employment is rather a survival strategy. Opportunities for business development in this segment are limited, and the potential for creating new jobs, especially innovative ones, is low.

In the segment of non-wage workers, a clear gender asymmetry in favor of women remains in the «unpaid family workers» category only. However, as shown below, in this case it is not a continuing competitive advantage, but rather an underutilization of the accumulated educational potential.

In the digital economy, the most important additional indicator of the quality of the educational potential is computer literacy. Judging by the results of the KNUZhN, for the working population as a whole its level is quite high. At the time of the survey, 80.6% of the economically active population possessed computer skills. As can be seen in Fig. 2, a share of those who have skills in working on a personal computer is the largest one among employers (94.0%), and the smallest among own-account workers (77.8%). Regardless of the status of employment in all categories, the proportion of women able to work on a computer exceeds that of men.

In general, for men, there is a more pronounced shift in the aggregate educational potential in favor of employers compared to women.

**Gender
asymmetry
in the use of
educational
potential**

The mismatch of educational and employment profiles, which impedes the effective implementation of the educational potential, is today one of the most acute and painful problems of the Russian economy. Judging by the data of the KNUZhN, in the sphere of non-wage labor it is much more crucial than among employees: four employees out of ten are employed according to their profession, while among the self-employed this share is more than half (Table 7). This is quite understandable: in the wage labor market, employers tend to consider the level and profile of an applicant's education, and the entrepreneur is freer in choosing the direction of his activity.

The mismatch is most acute for unpaid family workers: almost two-thirds of them work not according to the profile of the education obtained. Such a result is expected, since the very status of their employment implies that the workplace was chosen not by considering the maximum use of accumulated knowledge, skills and competencies, but based on the needs of the family. However, the flagship of the business community, that is highly educated employers, also lag behind employees in terms of the indicator of the match between education and work performed. Among them, only one in five works by profession (21.2%). At the same time, employers are significantly ahead of other categories of the economically active population, including wage earners, according to the share of employees in the related profession (23.9%). It can be assumed that, from other categories of the workforce, employers are more capable of adapting the acquired knowledge and skills to the changing demands of the workplace. As for own-account workers, although they are characterized by a relatively low level of education, the coincidence of work and acquired specialty coincide somewhat more often than employers.

An analysis of gender differences in the implementation of educational potential reveals conflicting trends (Table 8). On the one hand, women, as a rule, tend to experience less mismatch. And this tendency is most clearly manifested in women-employers: among them, the proportion of good matches with the profile of the education re-

Table 7. Match of educational and employment profiles by employment status
(%, N = 54975)

Degree of correspondence	Employees	Employers	Own-account workers	Unpaid family workers
Totally coincides	43.6	21.2	28.2	19.0
Work close to the profession	15.4	23.9	15.4	17.4
Work not related to the profession	41.1	54.9	56.4	63.7

Calculated based on data from KNUZhN.

Table 8. Match of educational and employment profiles by employment status and gender (%, N = 54975)

Degree of correspondence of work and obtained profession	Employers		Employees		Own-account workers		Unpaid family workers	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes, this work fully corresponds to the obtained profession	41.4	45.6	17.4	29.7	27.8	28.9	19.2	18.6
Yes, this work is close to the obtained profession	17.0	13.9	26.1	19.1	15.3	15.5	14.8	20.9
No, this work is not related to the profession obtained	41.7	40.5	56.5	51.2	56.9	55.6	65.9	60.5

Calculated based on data from KNUZhN.

ceived is almost twice the corresponding figure for male employers. Among the latter, only 17.4% work according to the profession obtained, which is the lowest among all categories of employees. Besides, they also have the highest proportion of those who work in a profession close to theirs; among women this share is somewhat lower. Nevertheless, this result indicates that the maintenance of a relatively high level of use of the accumulated educational potential in the employer community is achieved largely at the expense of women.

On the other hand, women who have the status of unpaid family workers, although they initially have one of the highest levels of education among the groups in question, use it even less than men with the same status, although the educational potential of the latter is much lower. In other words, a considerable part of the professional knowledge and skills of the business community is sacrificed to the interests of the family business.

Along with the objective characteristics of the accumulated educational potential and the degree of its actual use, the data from KNUZhN allow us to obtain a subjective assessment of its sufficiency for performing more complicated work for different categories of em-

Table 9. **Reflection of men and women on their skills or qualifications for performing more complicated work** (% , N = 54975)

	Employees	Employers	Own-account workers	Unpaid family workers
Men	59.3	61.4	61.2	60.4
Women	57.6	58.1	56.5	58.9

Calculated based on data from KNUZhN.

employees. This assessment is very important, although it can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, readiness for more complicated work, in essence, means the presence of extra skills, an «awning» of knowledge and skills that are unnecessary in the circumstances, the non-use of which is fraught with the risk of their loss. On the other hand, an additional stock of qualifications can be considered as a reserve, necessary for entrepreneurs to develop and improve the quality of business.

According to subjective assessments of employees, the «awning» (or reserve) available is very significant. At the same time, the share of those who are confident in their abilities to perform work more complicated than that which they are currently doing is practically independent of the status of employment (it ranges from 58.4% for employees to 60.4% for employers). Gender differences in this indicator are also low, but women in all groups have a lower self-esteem than men (Table 9).

In all of the categories considered, the share of women who believe that their skills and qualifications are sufficient to carry out more complicated work are less than the proportion of men who have the same opinion about their abilities. It is also true for employees—a group where women have a clear advantage in education, and for employers, where there is no such strength. It can be assumed that a relatively low self-esteem is one of the main obstacles both for the construction of women's professional careers in hired labor, and for the progress of women's businesses. It is noteworthy that women assess their skills and qualifications lower than men, yet have higher rates of computer literacy, which is a qualification, undoubtedly fundamental in the development of innovative business and digital economy.

Conclusion The analysis of data obtained from the Population Survey on Employment Problems and the Comprehensive Monitoring of Living Conditions projects showed that the educational potential of Russian individual entrepreneurs who use hired labor is high enough, but their layer is still too slender to serve as a sustainable generator of decent

employment. At the same time, the existing opportunities for increasing this layer are not vast. Firstly, the share of the self-employed which is the source of replenishment of the employers' pool in the Russian economy is low. Secondly, although employers outstrip employees on the basic parameters of education, other categories of self-employed lag behind them. Low educational attainment, insufficient computer literacy and high skill mismatch within the self-employed make their opportunities to develop into employers and create new jobs rather problematic. In the overwhelming majority of cases, self-employment in Russia is a classic form of precarious employment, and not a milieu for innovative entrepreneurship. Under such circumstances, the replenishment of the employer's stratum by strengthening the economic position of entrepreneurs who do not use wage labor is likely to result in a decline in its educational potential.

Russian entrepreneurship is characterized by a pronounced gender asymmetry in many respects. There are fewer women in the business community than men. Female business, as a rule, is less successful. Women entrepreneurs lag behind men in terms of their educational attainment, although women employees have a significantly higher educational potential than men, and in general, the educational attainment of women is higher than that of men. At the same time, successful women entrepreneurs apply their educational potential better. Among female working employers, the match between the profile of the education and job demands is almost twice as good as among males. Thus, the relatively high level of utilization of the accumulated educational potential in the employer community is largely due to women.

The main obstacles to the successful development of female businesses are the persistence of traditional beliefs that women are inherently less suited to doing business, and women's lower assessment of their own professional capabilities. Women often perceive themselves as second jobholders and second persons in family enterprises. Hence the colossal «canopy» of education for women—unpaid family workers. Simultaneously, the relatively high competitiveness of well-educated women in the wage labor market allows them to successfully build a professional career, avoiding the risks associated with entrepreneurship.

The future of innovative business will largely depend upon whether educated young people will opt for joining the ranks of entrepreneurs. Data from the Selective Observation of Graduate Employment held by Rosstat in 2016 ¹ show that their inflow into entrepreneurship is very modest. Among the working graduates surveyed, the share of self-employed is less than in the economically active population as a whole (2.3%). The employment preferences of young men and

¹ http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/trud/itog_trudoustr/index.html

women identified by the survey also do not trend towards diminishing gender asymmetry. Young women are almost twice less likely to opt for self-employment. Among youths, 3% were self-employed, while among girls only 1.6%.

In Russia, the risks of doing business are higher than in Europe, social safety nets in the sphere of non-wage labor are weak and there are practically no programs aimed at supporting female business that could help overcome psychological and other barriers to its development. Under these conditions, young people who have received a good professional education prefer a career as an employee. It means that new forces that could reorient the business community from survival business towards innovative entrepreneurship are rather scarce.

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