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RUSSIAN SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE REALITIES OF PRIVATE SPACE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyse and assess the achievements and approaches of the Russian sociologists studying the private space as a new social reality in Russia. In order to achieve the stated aims, the authors consider the established theoretical approaches, which are influenced both by the used sociological tools and by the existing patterns of perception of private space. The main conclusion drawn from the research is that the study of private space has its specifics in the Russian sociological thought, as the private space reflects the dynamic complexity of the Russian society, and the observed changes result in the rejection of sociological "one-dimensionality" and require analysing not only criteria for social stratification, but also the subjective activity-related parameters and subjective evaluative dimensions. On the basis of the comparative analysis of the approaches used in the Russian sociological thought, the authors formulate the definition of private space as a subjectively constructed phenomenon, which is also determined by social structural and institutional parameters. It is emphasized that the recourse to the issues related to private space actualizes

operationalization of the categories oriented to the activity-based approach and the research into social creativity and the creative class. An important generalization explored in the article is the legitimation of private space in the subject field of the Russian sociology and its cognitive apparatus. It is also obvious that the analysis of private space as a new social reality in the Russian society is important for "self-awareness" of sociology in the context of creating theoretical models of social action and interaction in the Russian society with a certain explanatory and predictive potential.

INTRODUCTION

The Russian sociological thought has considered the issues of private space, reducing them to relationship between the personal and the public, everyday life and public discourse. The Russian intellectual environment gave rise to the phenomenon of collectivism, which is fixed in the cultural and historical tradition and reproduced in the patterns of historical memory. At the same time, we can say that in the present conditions there is an interest in the realities of private space, which is related to the dynamics of the individualization of public sentiments and the multi-directional processes of neo-etacratism and atomization at the micro-level of the society.

In other words, in order to understand the realities of private space, it is necessary to consider how the images of privacy are changing in the Russian society and what methodological tools are the most effective for explaining the new social reality. The Soviet period was characterised by the policy of collectivization of everyday life and the integration of individuals into production and social environment. We can recall here the experiments of the 1920s aimed at socialization of the personal sphere, although the economic factor was also important, i.e. the involvement of women in labour activity. In the process of industrialization and the introduction of total administrative control, everyday life began to be regulated by official and unofficial ideological and legal canons. Everyone remembers how important the role of various social structures (the party, trade unions, veteran associations) was in controlling and correcting the personal life of citizens.

Taking into account the fact that private space in the Russian society has a tradition of negation (i.e. opposition between petty-bourgeois style of life and public life, narrow horizons of activity and public duty), it should be emphasized that several factors stand out in the analysis of the formation of private space in the Russian society. First, the category of private space retains the properties of political and legal definitions, which is determined by the categorization of individual rights and freedoms in the sphere of "big politics". The formation of private space as a sphere for a free man development has been closely related to the idea of transition to a new society. This is confirmed, in particular, by the phenomenon of "romanticism of perestroika", in which the development of the individual was considered in the context of the emergence of democratic institutions and the space of personal interests. Secondly, it should be emphasized that the dominating approach to the private space understanding is based on routinization and algorithmization of daily behaviours – private space is associated with routine and everyday life. The relationship between public space and private space is characterized by the

exploration of "new territories", including life styles, household culture and communication at the interpersonal level.

Thirdly, the concept of private space rehabilitates *poshlost' zhizni* ("banality of life"), i.e. the idea of good life is cultivated, as opposed to creative selectivity and a dream of spiritual superiority¹. So, private space is contrasted to the ideal of personal life dedicated to serving society. There is a certain "understatement" in this paradox: private space does not become a sphere of realizing the interests of individuals involved in social relations – on the contrary, it becomes a breeding ground for the permitted opposition.

Thus, our research into private space is of particular relevance due to the emergence of a new social reality in the Russian society, which outwardly reproduces the patterns of everyday life, but requires deeper understanding in the context of everyday activities, individual self-determination and individual claims for asserting socially expected behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

Analysing the history of the formation of the concept of private space in the Russian society, we can state that it is part of the rhetoric of interpersonal communication in the intellectual environment. One of the most telling examples is the epoch of the thaw in the 1960s, when dissidents, creating their own idols, ideals and social phantoms, concentrated their efforts on constructing a space that would be isolated from the public discourse.

That is why, perhaps, all those paragons of free-thinking, who were always dreaming of better life, did not actively participate in the process of social transformation during the *perestroika* period, and the reasons for that were attributable not only to losing to the new leaders of "street democracy". The private space of the Sixtiers was the corpuscular space for the few, localized at certain physical points. It is not accidental that "Arbat" of B. Okudzhava became a symbol of freethinking of the 1960s. However, we can say that the perception of private space reached its turning point in the 1980s, when the idea of personal autonomy, borrowed from the West, and the concept of private freedom, often treated uncritically, led to infatuation with alternative forms of social activity, such as youth subcultures, democratic movements or new parties.

The development of social and political forces in the post-Soviet period sorted everything out. Today the enthusiasm of the post-*perestroika* period is seen partly as a true desire of the masses for social renewal and partly as a dirty play on the events of that time by various political rascals. The situation of that time was described in detail by Zh.T. Toshchenko in his book "Phantoms of Russian Society", which described the phantom faces of narcissism and collaborationism that were formed during that period. Though we agree with the scholar in his impartial assessment of primitivism and immorality of social autism, we can say that it was the period of problematisation of private space. The fact is that private space cannot be interpreted in terms of constructing

¹ Boym S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Moscow, 2002, p. 82. [In Russian, transl. as *Obshhie mesta. Mifologija povsednevnoj zhizni*].

oppositions between society and an individual, as well as removing any restrictions on the activities of the individual by the state. It became obvious that private space should not be a sphere of concentration of such qualities as superficiality, complacency and narrow-mindedness.²

We cannot say that the Soviet man was completely manipulated; there were islands of free manoeuvre and free thinking (in the private kitchen), but the individual sphere "suffered", as the very notion of private space disappeared, which was connected not only with living in communal apartments and voluntary or non-alternative involvement of a person in official discourse, but also with changes in the stereotypes of everyday behaviours, with the private disappearing in the communal and private aspects of life subjected to public control.

Defining the dialectic of social or personal, a conclusion was drawn that social activity was the most important for a Soviet person. I.T. Kasavin and S.P. Shchhavelev in their book "The Analysis of Everyday Life" emphasize that the history of everyday life is a kind of quintessential social history³. They mean that everyday life is the field of development of various systems of symbols and, first of all, of a specific ideological language⁴, and can be considered as rewriting of the field of the real world with the means of the ideological language. This is very important for understanding that the personal was a product of sociocultural determination, so, analysing the social everyday life, we should state that privacy was not interpreted due to the fact that it was everyday life that determined relationships between individuality (irrationality) and publicity (rationality).

In Russia, as noted by L. Dubin, both the interpretation of everyday life and its assessment are predominantly negative, derived from other value projections of intelligentsia, i.e. the layer of educated *raznochintsy*, and later, in general, people with education and beliefs (culture)⁵. So, the scholar assumes that everyday life entered the realm of sociological discourse rather late, first of all, because the sphere of intellectual creativity was considered high, value-oriented and non-class, while everyday life was a symbolic focus of everything low, routine and petty-bourgeois. We can agree with this assumption, because the tradition of criticism of the West as a liberal petty-bourgeois civilization affected sociologists, who were reproached for narrow-mindedness and the scarcity of conclusions.

During the Soviet period, traditions of the negation of everyday life, understood as a sphere of profanity, was subjected to ideological indoctrination, with its transformation into a socialist way of life; the sociological thought strived to overcome the gap between social consciousness and social existence, and often the everyday life was considered in the context of fighting with the remnants of the past in the public consciousness.

² Toshchenko Zh.T. *Fantomy rossijskogo obshchestva (Phantoms of Russian Society)*. Moscow, 2015, p. 242.

³ Kasavin I., Shchhavelev S. *Analiz povsednevnosti (The Analysis of Daily Life)*. Moscow, 2004, p. 194.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵ *Sociologija i sovremennaja Rossija (Sociology and Modern Russia)*. Moscow, 2003, p. 128.

As for the theoretical construct of research into everyday life, it was not so much about empirical procedures as about fitting the concept of everyday life into the verified ideological constructs. Without denying the importance of the applied research aimed at identifying labour and ideological motivations and affirming the ideals of socialist collectivism, we can say that the sociology based on historical materialism considered the dialectics of personal and social rather than everyday life as such. That interest in the sphere of personal was understandable, as it was related to the project of shaping a new type of society and a new man – a builder of the new society. At the same time, we can state that everyday life was defined in terms of its ability to be transformed under the influence of public institutions, but it still could be preserved as an enclave of bourgeois individualism.

Without narrowing down our conclusions to the conflict between the coercive regime of general mobilization and the norms of brief periods of peace⁶, it is appropriate to say that the focus on the personal almost ousted the private into the sphere of everyday life. The private, as the space of self-determination of personality between private and public discourses, was not articulated; the personal aspect was revealed in the sphere of the socialization, social behaviour and mood of the personality rather than in the discourse of everyday life. Therefore, the development of the concept of private space was perceived as alien to the Russian sociological thought, because privacy was a "petty-bourgeois dogma", and no less significant was the fact that the private sphere was associated with the doubt in the formula "the personal is hypostasis of the public".

In this sense, we can say that the issues of personal space were reflected in the discourse of the Soviet period, but they were associated primarily with the problems of upbringing and tied to the ideological goal of forming a harmoniously developed person as a new type of personality, although the boundaries of the individual's autonomy and free choice were informally established. As noted by N. Kozlova, in the situation when each individual tried to "rewrite" own personality based on the dominant discourse, the issues of control and self-control and the possibility of forming their own identity and characteristics of subjectivity, without claiming to be self-willed, became important. According to N. Kozlova, the reality was conceived through ready-to-use dualistic oppositions of the ideological language.⁷ That was also stimulated by the openness of the processes of transformation from representatives of petty bourgeoisie into heroes of labour and socially active personalities.

We can say that the boundaries of cognition in sociology were set by the involvement into serving the interests of the state – sociology had official functions. At the same time, we can say that the research into the personal as part of the public discourse, in which individuals could find satisfaction of their needs and the process of individualization was related to the actualization of socially significant properties, had a positive impact in the sense that the absence of private space did not mean direct authoritarian control. The point

⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

⁷ Kozlova N. *Sovetskie ljudi: sceny iz istorii (Soviet People: Scenes of History)*. Moscow, 2005, p. 244.

was that any person, demonstrating external loyalty, could in that manner realize own talents, abilities and desires, defining oneself as a person retaining personal traits.

Meanwhile, personal initiative was growing, and it was considered a significant problem, which was related not only to the growth of inequality in the Soviet society – the increase in the level of education and professionalism of the urban population inevitably created the effect of a "club", i.e. social distancing associated with the division into "us" and "them". With the available sociological tools, the scholars could not adequately explain that phenomenon, because the official formula of the social unity, presupposing homogeneity of the society except for differences in ethnicity or professionalism, did not assume symbolization of privacy.

Describing privacy as a social relic, sociology was silent about the real processes of the formation of social worlds and group discourses, which came into conflict with each other on cultural and symbolic grounds. The Soviet period was the epoch of proclamation of the universal secondary education but it was still characterised by differences in cultural and family capital, chances to get education and access to educational resources, so that education became a mechanism for the formation of privacy, use of professional language for the cultivation of leisure culture, the volume and quality of information and other symbolic differences, which became conflicting during the crisis of the Soviet society and led to the erosion of Soviet identity.

B. Dubin believes that by the 1970-80s the population had already been accumulating symbolic capital (high level of education, separate apartments, amenities, technical equipment and home libraries). In general, the attitude of the new intelligentsia to private sphere, as compared with previous generations, was quite positive.

Thus, we can say that private space was emerging in the process of differentiation, but we should look deeper into its ability to help a person escape from the pressure of the society and the state.⁸ B. Dubin considers private space as a sphere opposed to the society and the state: the system of private life was built up to embody the dream of autonomy and possibility of self-realization and "individual freedom". This process was, of course, affected to varying degrees by the urbanizational, civilizational and educational patterns of group differentiation, but we cannot state that the formula of "Soviet man" practically ceased to exist by the end of the Soviet period.

As proved by the analysis of a paradoxical person carried out by Zh.T. Toshchenko, certain mental programs and attitudes toward solidarity and common moral norms have been preserved among the older and middle generations who assimilated the Soviet experience; the symbolic capital of the common political and cultural heritage is very important. It's not that Soviet people "all come out from under Gogol's overcoat": the problem is much deeper, and Zh.T. Toshchenko is right in this respect: a paradoxical person

⁸ Ibid., p. 130.

consistently reconciles the memory of the Soviet past and today's professional (market-oriented) status. Characterizing frustration reactions of the population, Zh.T. Toshchenko discovers a phenomenon of social nostalgia for the poor but guaranteed and sheltered Soviet past and of ideological frustrators related to the loss of high ideals. Of no less significance for Zh.T. Toshchenko is the fact that the majority of Russian people reject liberal values and strive to realize their social identity⁹.

Dubin's scheme is convenient because of its one-dimensionality, but it identifies multi-directional factors resulting in the deformation of private space under the current conditions and in awareness of new social groups of the need to establish social contacts and new forms of dialogue with the state. On the face of it, the scheme of opposing the total state and free private space has an explanatory power, but this analytical tool is not powerful enough to understand the level of social disintegration, with the formation of parallel social spaces that are associated with social and territorial polarization and have the following specific properties: manifestation of segmentation in public discourse, absence of a single language of social communication and basic (integrative) values.

The works by V.D. Fedotova raise the issue of the phenomenon of social anarchism in the Russian society, which is related to the fact that in the early post-Soviet period, characterised by de-industrialization and the destruction of socio-professional structures, most Russians had to apply adaptive strategies for their uncontrolled activities in the economic and social sphere. According V.D. Fedotova, millions of people have accumulated anarchic potential, acting under conditions of non-interference by the state in private matters, and abandoned any socially active position in relation to the state. V.G. Fedotova, exploring the phenomenon of social anarchism, emphasizes that private space has become a sphere of spontaneity, withdrawal into oneself and establishment of private arrangements.

Considering the patterns of anarchic behaviour, the scholar comes to the conclusion that the Russian society has become anarchistic, i.e. it is a society without a coordinating centre or authoritative state. She believes that the 1990s were characterised by the domination of the will instead of freedom¹⁰. In our opinion, the importance of the theory of anarchism is somewhat exaggerated, as the main device for building an anarchic society is insularity of the order against a background of many disordered phenomena. On the other hand, the Russian society actually follows the global trend of rejecting the excessive faith in possibility of rational resolution of all problems and the establishment of artificial order¹¹. In this case V.G. Fedotova absolutizes the influence of globalization processes in Russia, since the difficulties of the emerging new social order are connected with the effect of social inequalities and the phenomenon of a paradoxical person. What is most important is that modern research is characterized by contradictory research discourses, with decreasing

⁹ Toshchenko Zh.T. *Paradoksal'nyj chelovek (Paradoxical Person)*. Moscow, 2012, pp. 96–99.

¹⁰ Panarin A.S., Pokrovsky N.E., Utkin A.I., Fedotova V.G. *Na pereput'e. Novye veki (At the Crossroads: New Milestones)*. Moscow: Logos, 1999, p. 118.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

influence of social knowledge and social competence as both the landmark and means of social communication.

Nevertheless, we should recognize fruitfulness of Fedotova's ideas, as she raised the issue of individualized society and the emerging phenomenon of social anarchism; she also noted that private life in that situation did not become an alternative to social disintegration. Asserting that in Russia the need for a close interaction with "others" is a tradition fixed in the collective experience of people, the scholar analyses the process of the private space formation in the context of oppositely directed social anarchy and social solidarity. In her vision of an anarchic model of society, where private spaces are deformed and become a sphere of alienation and mistrust, V.G. Fedotova assumes that the contemporary Russian society is so slowly overcoming social isolationism because the institutional environment corresponding to private space has not been created.

There is a certain contradiction in the approach of the scholar: examining the personality problems, she reduces everything to the relationship between anarchism and order, failing to mention the fact that in the Russian society there is a shortage of symbolic capital that could represent the significance of one's own claims and interests and become a social attractor for different layers of the population. Certain group discourse has been developed, characterised by mutual claims and expectations without social responsibility.

Indicators of the state, trends and development of public consciousness and behaviour demonstrate a bizarre combination of assessments, combinations, blurriness, uncertainty, fragmentation and changeability of value orientations, attitudes of social sentiment and public and personal interests, which is indicative of the fact that public consciousness and behaviour are at a crossroads¹². The scholars emphasise that the very appearance of these phenomena confirm that the Russian society is objectively mature enough for profound changes; it is important that public consciousness focuses not only on politically approved goals and interests, but also on ideas reflecting the interests and orientations of social groups that have been infringed or rejected, despite the fact that their right to a decent social and personal life has a sound historical basis.

In general, we can state that the Russian sociological thought now focuses attention on private space, thus making a turn to the individual, which manifests itself both in the humanistic discourse and in the readiness to analyse new social realities in the context of overcoming the legacy of neo-etacratism and striving to organise private space as a set of positions characterizing the individual social autonomy and as a field for implementing life strategies. The humanistic approach is characterised by the emerging social demand for personal independence, liberation of the individual from external guardianship and self-assertion through negative identity and anarchic ways and options for achieving social autonomy. Structuralists emphasise that the formation of private space requires comprehension of processes of social

¹² Toshchenko Zh.T. *Fantomy rossijskogo obshhestva (Phantoms of Russian Society)*. Moscow, 2015, p.14.

differentiation, formation of new social groups and layers, and changes in the mental and behavioural practices of the basic strata of Russian society.

In compliance with P. Sztompka's concept of trauma as an inherent property of post-authoritarian public consciousness and behaviour, we can make a conclusion that private space is formed with aberrations and that socio-cultural traumas, which are present in the post-socialist society, result in constructing private spaces aimed at overcoming the socio-cultural trauma "on one's own" by building a happy and stable personal life.

In this context, personal interests are not only made the yardstick of public life, with abandoning the ideology of public duty. We can rather talk about the loss of institutional trust and the fact that, in the environment of growing positive social expectations, the accumulation of creative, transformative potential becomes a catalyst of private space.

Hence follows the conclusion that a binding factor for the created private spaces and for overcoming their deformations is the hope for a comfortable and stable life in their own country.¹³ Of course, we are not talking about a return to the former era of collectivism, but there is a demand for the revival of constructive attitudes toward social, labour and economic motivation and a dialectical attitude to previous experience, based on the ideas of humanism and tolerance. Proposing such research model, Zh.T. Toshchenko states that private space in Russian society is not associated with transition to a model of independent activities in poorer groups and claims to social exclusivity among the rich – the source of its development can be the adoption of a national idea, subject to the realization of the principle of equality understood as equality of opportunities. The scholar is sure that adopting the models of post-industrialization and the knowledge economy of the Western creative class is an unproductive approach to understanding private space in the Russian society.

Yu.G. Volkov, considering new trends in the development of Russian society, comes to the conclusion that it is important that the society and the state address the resources of competence, initiative and self-organization¹⁴. In his opinion, the new creative class, as an integral social group, is focused on social creativity and is associated with the formation of sufficient institutional trust at the systemic, functional, interpersonal levels; but the main point is that private space, as a sphere of social self-determination, includes interest in the individual, in personal creativity and social activity.

Further developing the concept of the creative class, Yu.G. Volkov states that the most important criteria of private space are, firstly, the level of interpersonal contacts and ability for social communication and openness; secondly, the willingness to implement joint creative practices; thirdly, the level of self-organization of the population for entering into a dialogue with the state.¹⁵ Private space, as a sphere of social self-determination and self-

¹³ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴ Volkov Yu.G. *Kreativnost'. Istoricheskij opyt Rossii* (Creativity: Historical Experience of Russia). Moscow, 2011, p. 17.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 36–37.

realization of the individual, is characterised by the emergence of symbolic differences within the framework of the individual's contribution to the social capital of entire society. At the same time, the scholar believes that both the ruling elites and the educated segments of the population should abandon their claims to a monopoly in the sphere of social creativity, and that we all should strive for the democratization of private space and the establishment of proportionality between claims and responsibilities, based on legal freedom.

The assumption that creativity is the main factor of social development leads to understanding that the Russian creative class falls under the general formula of "people who create the future", but, unlike the concept described by Richard Florida, the Russian creative class is not associated with socio-spatial and physical isolation and does not require creating special zones of social creativity. Another important thesis of the scholar is that the Russian creative class is not oriented to social distancing from inert segments of the society, as the formation of a field of general discussion and the common language of equal parties is much more fruitful. This demonstrates another approach to overcoming the paradoxical nature of public consciousness and behaviour, based on recognition of the role of the state as the coordinator of public life.

It is worth noting that, according to Yu.G. Volkov, the concept of private space is connected with the realisation of a macro-level indicator (creation of conditions for a decent life for every person, every citizen) and with launching – at the level of private space – mechanisms for reconciling interests and implementing principles of the common good as conditions for the development of each individual. In the described approach, private space may seem normativistic, but it is operational, as it is possible to form an identification construct of private space, which is related to the assessment of levels of institutional and interpersonal trust and classification of the conditions promoting social communication or stimulating social isolation, addressing not only highly professional segments but also basic strata of the Russian society in order to identify conditions for overcoming a complex of socio-cultural traumas.

RESULTS

The concept of the creative class places particular emphasis on the opportunities for integrating private spaces, but not to replace the public space; the public space is to be imbued with new social meanings, among which a dialogue between the society and the state is first priority. Private space can be also seen as a cell of the emerging civil society, but it should be noted that the private space in the Russian society has not taken shape of a space for self-organization of the middle class, but it inertially demonstrates signs of both creativity and imitation of foreign cultural and recreational patterns. Here lies the border of symbolic differences from the basic layers of population.

The division of Russian society into traditionalists and "high achievers" is rather vague, but still it more deeply reflects the reality of Russian life than differentiation between those adopting liberal values and those adhering to traditional values, which are understood as remnants of the authoritarian past. At the same time, an important element of the research into private space is

the identification of conditions, direction and impact of private space on social life. In Russia, according to M.K. Gorshkov, private space is not equivalent to the emerging civil society; "high achievers" focus on consumer patterns, i.e. the logic of their behaviour is based on improving the quality of their private life, and they look for independence in the sphere of consumption and leisure¹⁶.

It has become a "must" to state that private space has become a sphere of personal self-determination, since "private" in the mass perception is still equivalent to "personal". The loss of personal focus in the process of social self-realization leads to the fact that privacy has begun to express something dividing the society and the state. At the same time, as emphasized by M.K. Gorshkov, the specific features of the Russian middle class, focused on consumer values and declared independence and characterised by institutional distrust of authorities¹⁷, make it difficult to expect in the short term that private space, instead of developing in a negative direction by assuming public space functions, takes a more positive form as a sphere of implementing joint creative practices, which is possible through various forms of interaction and mechanisms for shortening social distance not only with the people of the same social and financial status but also with those who share the same ideological positions.

Private space, as a new social reality, has a number of characteristics, in which the orientation toward self-realization and independence is supported by dispositions to dividing the private and public aspects of life. The identified properties of private space define, first, its composition (including, primarily, representatives of highly professional urban population); secondly, expectations to play a more significant role in the public sphere and overcome the "doublethink" of the previous period, thirdly, the inherent risk of levelling and imitating in case the private space is not related to real intentions to achieve personal self-realization and the need for creative communications.

Exploring the phenomenon of private space, the scholars emphasize that in the Russian society privacy is mythologised and reduced to everyday needs and household improvements, because the new generations of Russians are oriented to consumption to compensate for adversities and deprivations of the previous period and are aimed at organising their personal life. Noting this paradox of combining the desire for self-realization and orientation to consumer unification, we can conclude that private space in Russian society is the sphere of personal, career and consumer strategies. This significantly reduces its creative potential, but at the same time, there is a tendency to understand that social distancing and differentiation by the criterion "us"/"they" increases social alienation.

DISCUSSION

The Russian middle class has not become a "civil" class, and it is too early to say that private space is the birthplace for a growing social self-organisation, but there is a trend to accommodate private interests through raising the status

¹⁶ Gorshkov M.K. *Rossijskoe obshchestvo kak ono est'* (The Russian Society as it Stands). Vol. 1. Moscow, 2016, pp. 340-341.

¹⁷ Gorshkov M.K. *Rossijskoe obshchestvo kak ono est'* (The Russian Society as it Stands). Vol. 2. Moscow, 2016, p. 94.

of private space in public discourse. In other words, mass sentiments demand that the authorities stop talking to the population only in the language of sublime categories but take into account real needs; there is a request for satisfying everyday needs, because what society is now looking for is not only social mega-projects, but also the policy of "small steps". This opens the way for a possible growth of openness of private space and loss of its corpuscularity. It is notable that the ghetto effect and the club effect described by Pierre Bourdieu have not been observed so far in the Russian society. Despite the growth of elite segments, the majority of Russians are still not segmented in physical space – different groups of population live close to each other. Hence, there is, on the one hand, the constant state of latent conflict and the erection of communicative and symbolic barriers, and, on the other – the awareness of common destiny based on the territorial (local) factor.

This is an important point in understanding why the Russian middle class, lost in the maze of consumer illusions, have not articulated, even on a rhetorical level, the daily demands of society for creating decent living conditions. A characteristic feature of this research model is determination of the middle class prospects. It is observed that the core of the middle class has already been formed and is relatively stable, despite the processes of social turbulence. Self-identification as a representative of the middle class stimulates interest in private space, to the totality of positions in which the individual expresses oneself as a personality through the formulation of private interests with certain social meanings.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that today the opposition between petty-bourgeois style of life and civil life disappears, which is important for understanding the "private" not only as "parochial", i.e. based on social differentiation. According to the above-described properties, private space in the Russian society has more to do with social comfort, social stability and a corridor of opportunities for implementing the idea of "life in harmony with oneself" in the private space. So, we are dealing with the problematisation of a new social reality, which is diversely evaluated, rather than merely with conceptualization of private space. Private space is obviously interpreted as a closed sphere isolated from control and interference by the state, where a negative identity is formed, determined by personal freedom from influence of authorities.

Such approach, which can be defined as a negative identity approach, is used by L. Gudkov, A. Levinson and B. Dubin, who believe that in the current conditions, when the trajectories of socialization that were operative in the Soviet period have lost their significance, new population groups have been formed – they aspire to a new "life style" and self-expression in the sphere of consumption and leisure and are characterised by critical assessment of what is happening and organized scepticism; for them, private space is a "natural" tool for separating themselves from inert and poorly educated mass of population with paternalistic mindset¹⁸.

¹⁸ Puti Rossii: sushhestvujushhie ogranichenija i vozmozhnye varianty (Ways for Russia: Existing Constraints and Possible Options). Moscow, 2004, p. 236.

This definition, of course, is quite arbitrary, but the main message is that private space is a consequence of the collapse of the previous system of compulsory mobilization of citizens and regulation of daily life. A structured activity-based approach (represented by M.K. Gorshkov) is based on emphasising changes in the social structure of Russian society, with the growth of highly professional segments of population, including socially mobile "high achievers". Private space is a space of consumption and communication, in which civil initiatives are born as requirements of one day. According to this concept, it is too early to say that prospects for the civil society self-organization can be traced through private space. Nevertheless, the proposed analytical construct reveals that private space is the sphere where innovative practices are born; it also allows observing symbolic differences that lead to the risks of stigmatization and indifference to the poor.

At the same time, private space has a tendency for translocality; it is not necessarily tied to a definite physical space and is a sphere of high expectations. In this sense, the scholars emphasise the need to develop institutions that would allow establish communication between private spaces and the public level. Considering that the degree of "public dumbness" is high in today's Russian society, we can state that the structural positions, ways of behaviour and the level of social distance between "us" and "them" can be considered criteria for the formation of private space.

Private space creates the prerequisites for identifying a person by the way of life and place of residence. However, private space is hardly an alternative to assigning social functions and impulses that contribute to the renewal of the public space of Russian society.

So, the Russian sociological thought articulates the concept of private space as the emergence of a new social reality, but its analysis and interpretation are characterised by different starting positions, focused, on the one hand, on defining the private space through the parameters of individualization, anarchism, social apathy and negative identity, on the other – through the disclosure of the positions of "high achiever", considering private space as a condition for social and professional self-realization and expression of social expectations "to be heard" by the state.

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