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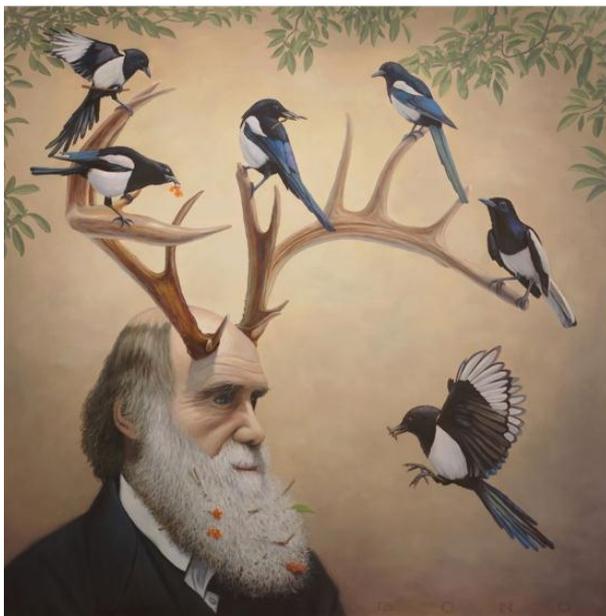
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Structural determinants of life strategies: Actualization of collectivist and individualistic values

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Abstract

The article deals with the idea that the life strategies of Russians involve the determinants and self-determinants of the choice of life goals, priorities and ways of its implementation via the study of collectivist and individualistic values is conceptualized at the level of structural, functional, institutional, social and cultural, and subject-activity approaches. As a result, the symbolism of collectivist values and instrumental values of individualistic values are important for Russian rich people. The authors conclude that the existing social inequalities affect the actualization of value self-determinants in correlation with the traditional understanding of values as an ideal model.

Keywords: Collectivist, Values, Individualistic, Life, Strategies.

Determinantes estructurales de las estrategias de vida: actualización de valores colectivistas e individualistas

Resumen

El artículo trata sobre la idea de que las estrategias de vida de los rusos implican los determinantes y autodeterminantes de la elección de los objetivos de vida, las prioridades y los modos de su

implementación a través del estudio de los valores colectivistas e individualistas se conceptualiza en el nivel estructural, funcional Enfoques institucionales, sociales y culturales, y sujeto a actividad. Como resultado, el simbolismo de los valores colectivistas y los valores instrumentales de los valores individualistas son importantes para los ricos rusos. Los autores concluyen que las desigualdades sociales existentes afectan la actualización de los valores autodeterminantes en correlación con la comprensión tradicional de los valores como un modelo ideal.

Palabras clave: colectivista, valores, individualistas, vida, estrategias.

1. INTRODUCTION

Russian society made a challenging and ambiguous way of value transition during the period of social transformations in public life. The result of transformations in values can be perceived as an accomplished fact of no return path. This is evidenced by the fact the growth of the social and nostalgic mood among Russians does not mean an attempt to go back to the Soviet period of Russian history. This conclusion proceeds from the analysis of the value set, value orientations and value motivations of Russians. A polemic about Russian society plays a dominant role in the public discourse, whether it is a society of forced individualism or social atomization. Much has been said about the public silence, the absence of dialogue on issues of social significance, the parallelism of social worlds, the social exclusion and social marginalization of low-status social groups, and the social arrogance of Russian elites. All these phenomena result in a value shift in Russian society, which became evident at the turn of the past and present centuries (BAYRAM, 2018).

On the one hand, the change in values is caused by the generation of Soviet people passing away and forced or voluntary adaptation of people of older generations to the changed social conditions. On the other hand, it is associated with new post-Soviet generations entering the active social life. These generations perceive the value set of the past as socially ineffective and hindering the social orientations in modern Russian society. A significant factor that affects the value perspective of the Russian society can also involve a conflict of pluralism of values, as well as the difficulties associated with the development of value consensus and the search for combinative basic values. As CHEREDNICHENKO (2004) noted, the social paradoxes of the Russian society lie in the reproduction of cognitive, social, and orientation dissonance and in contradictions between declaring adherence to fundamental values and the reality of neglecting and distancing in implementing real-life strategies. At that, the values are realized as the moment arises and do not contain long-term intentions. The values are divided into those suitable for relations with the state and those acting on a social micro-level: in a family and among relatives and friends (LOPES & OLIVEIRA, 2018).

It should also be considered that the value system of today's Russians includes eclecticism, which are the combination of obligatory and accepted ideas that are inseparable from social ritualism and ideas, such as self-assertion of the person and legitimization of life plans and aspirations. The analysis of the value trend in Russian society and, accordingly, Russians' set of values can immediately reveal significant differences between, on the one hand, collectivist

myths that affirm belief in traditions, spirituality, self-sacrifice in the name of the state and public interests, and on the other real practices based on updating the adaptive potential, relativism of values and their application to instrumental ends. Indeed, if the former Soviet period demonstrates the ideological and political unity of society formed as a result of the manipulation of public consciousness and purposeful indoctrinate activity, modern Russian society clearly illustrates the state of value diffusion, and the simultaneous coexistence of traditional, modern and post-modern social values. In this context, it is not necessary to identify social anomie and value transition. The clarification of the essence of the influence the values exert on the life-strategies of Russians should be focused on the transition from the value set to the choice of life-strategies, as the models of social action.

2. METHODS

The research methodology assumes a focus on the operationalization of the collectivist and individualistic values and life strategies concepts, that have conceptual and empirically applied meanings. Following this logic in the research, we see a multidimensional research construct in which values and strategies correlate structurally and subjectively. This explains why the life strategies in Russian society are subjective and defined by self-determinants as an assessment of chances and the corresponding choice made by an individual under the influence of a value set. Sociologists pay attention to this peculiarity when analyzing the state

of basic values in Russian society, their pictures in the life strategies of Russians.

In accordance with the multidimensional construct of the research, which implies the study of interrelated social phenomena as collectivist and individualistic values and social attitudes, a single conceptual context is the understanding of the analyzed values as socially significant meanings that motivate a person to develop a spread of goals and methods for their achievement. Life strategies are defined as behavioral patterns which include a corridor of opportunities built by an individual based on the assessment of his own life chances. Achievement of the goal allows to avoid an abstractly expressed idea of values and the need for their compliance with the ideal state of social being and include the actualization of social activity algorithms with regard to the specific social positions and institutional mechanisms (CECI & KUMAR, 2016).

Thus, this study addresses a set of tasks, including the structural and institutional determinants of life strategies transferred beyond the boundaries of the actualization of collectivist and individualistic values. The introduced research tool implies the methods to correlate the Russians' value set with the level of social self-perception. This means that the analysis of structural and institutional determinants involves the measurement of the degree of their influence on the formation of the value set and the actualization of specific values in the life strategies of Russians. Another fact underlines the need to obtain expressive results of sufficient sociological accuracy degree. Due to

the social and cultural nature, the social values are influenced by the decay of traditional relations, the individualization of social being and the formation of needs for integrative values.

The anticipated key result of the study is as follows: the actualization of collectivist and individualistic values is a consequence of the interaction of indicators of social self-perception (well-being), affiliation to social group, agreement with social stereotypes and standards accepted in the group, dependence on external circumstances and level of trust in specific social power institutions. Thus, the research methodology is dictated by the ratio of the determinants and the self-determinant of life strategies in Russian society.

3. KEY RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The key result of the study lies in the fact that social and structural conditions affect the choice of values, enhance the heterogeneity of value orientations of Russians, which is evidenced by the fact that the value aspect reveals the so-called post-Soviet and civilizational components. The post-Soviet component can be characterized as survival and then stabilization of the economic and social order. In the early post-Soviet stage, the Russians' life strategies were implemented in accordance with the adaptive potential of the individual. The forced or voluntary inclusion in the adaptation process played the priority role depending on social resources or the symbolic capital of an individual. The point is that changes in social conditions,

a radical change in the format of social relations lead to the fact that self-survival and self-development came to the fore.

Essentially, the acquisition of new stratification characteristics, the division of society according to social and property, social and professional, social and territorial criteria resulted in the formation of life strategies, driven by both individual's chances and the goals and values approved by the society. The social stratification is based on a change in the role of the institution of property, changes in the employment system, quality of life and the state of the value-normative system, so the stabilization of the social structure of Russian society can be observed in the present. According to the studies of Russian sociologists, despite the society comprise rich and poor minority (0.5: 12–15%) divided by social and property criteria and by income level, the core of the society is formed by the middle class and adjoining social underclasses.

The proposed scheme is not comprehensive and does not claim to be the key one, but it schematically demonstrates the social differences that led to the development of new social strata and groups and modifications of the old classes. Considering the structural conditions for the formation of Russians' life strategies, it can be stated that Russian society combines the Soviet and new post-Soviet social structures intertwined in a peculiar way. There are three ways to form a new social structure and its composition, the emergence of new social communities based on the pluralization of forms of ownership, changing due to the transformation of state ownership to the position

of traditional classes of group communities, the emergence of classes (strata) due to the interaction of various forms of ownership.

Assuming that the social strata and groups are at different levels of maturation, which requires the use of multidimensional stratification models to study the social structure using such criteria as property status, income, education, positions in the power structure, social status and prestige, self-identification, the value measurement as a supplementary tool is considered relevant. The structural constraints are manifested not only in the level of income, quality of life, social and professional criteria, employment opportunities but also in social self-esteem associated with different spheres of human activity (SHOGENOV, GUNYA, CHECHENOV & CHEMAEV, 2018). Russians assess the situation in the country and their own future from the perspective of understanding the features typical of a social group.

According to GORSHKOV (2016), this is confirmed by the fact that social situation considered as catastrophic, challenging or bearable is evaluated by social and demographic, social and economic indicators and the quality of the social and psychological state. The influence of values is assessed by how the representatives of groups evaluate their social perspectives, to what extent the collectivist or individualistic values correspond to the accumulated experience, models of success, increase in sense of security and prolongation of social attitudes. According to the results of sociological research, only family (88%) and work (55%) are considered very important by most people. It is the key basic indicator for understanding the social structure of Russian

society. The overwhelming majority believes that the desired model of life includes such important spheres as a good family, friends, work, free time. It should be noted that the focus on the family and work reveals two important factors of dependence.

Firstly, focus on the family is a concentrated expression of success (good family means that life was successful), to some extent this occurs due to the other spheres of social self-realization as work, social activities, leisure are not important in terms of structural constraints (HALL, WIKHAMN & CARDY, 2016). One can imagine that family and work appear to be two components due to the social configuration of Russian society, its inequality of opportunities, which are determined not only by the current social situation but also by family capital. In short, people put hopes on family, as the family is the most achievable goal, but, at the same time, it is the most vulnerable goal of life strategies. Having a family is the minimum criterion for life success, as evidenced by the fragility of family ties in Russia, which are crumbling under the pressure of difficult social and everyday circumstances, the crisis of family happiness and the mismatch of expectations of partners in the family.

In this context, it should also be emphasized that the family equalizes the Russians in their life strategies, but at the same time, the family includes work as an important component. Since most Russians depend on earnings and as they are not shareholders, investors or freelancers, it can be assumed that the established social structure of Russian society is focused on gradual life strategies characterized by

increasing success and consider material prosperity as a desirable but difficult-to-obtain living condition. On the one hand, the family is a tool to achieve a goal of life strategies, on the other hand, it reflects the tradition and collectivist values. At the same time, society has different models of family life, as well as success indicators like friends and free time (BEDRIK & ZARBALIEV, 2018). It is not about post-materialist values, but about the fact that under conditions of dominating adaptive strategies, the free time and friends are attributed with signs of dependence, withdrawal from reality or expansion of life success.

The social structure of Russian society is united by universal collective values which confirm the similarity to others since the majority of the Russian society is represented by the basic strata or groups adjacent to it. At the same time, individualistic values are limited; in particular, a study of socially deprived class in Russian shows that such everyday life aspects as material security, food, clothing, living conditions and health differ in rating among the poor and non-poor classes. This means that along with the trend of qualitative deterioration of different aspects of their lives, poor classes evaluate their life as pessimistic, assuming that the consumer strategies as an indicator of success cannot be fully implemented. (CHIGRIN & GORODETSKAYA, 2018).

Under the conditions of prominent social and property differentiation in society, the collectivist values cannot have a consolidation potential, as they affix their belonging to some abstract community, especially this concerns the civilizational component. In

real life, the social and structural constraints form a position of tolerance to wealth and silencing the poverty. Wealth is not condemned as opposed to modesty and thrift; wealth is excluded from the value range due to its inaccessibility. It is typical for Russians to achieve material success by applying traditional and customary methods and opportunities (education, retraining, improvement of PC skills) (FURNARI, 2016).

Collectivist and individualistic values are thus modal. The symbolism of collectivist values and instrumental values of individualistic values are important for Russian rich people. Structural constraints are expressed in the fact that collectivist values limit the area for initiative, efficiency and performance of profitable deals, but at the same time, they create a reputation without making a person to initiate a dialogue with society. The middle class of the Russian population is characterized by a moderately skeptical attitude towards collectivist values, since they consider these values ceremonial, loyal and relevant in the context of manifestations of patriotism, but not obligatory for civil values. The lack of civic values, as a mediator values acting between collectivist and individualistic ones, creates considerable difficulties, as the life strategies of the middle class are modal in relation to family, work and employment.

The Russian society does not currently include the reference model of success based on collectivist values, this is due to the values of possession, a set of signs of success in the form of household items and the model what it means to be a successful Russian developed in

Russian society. Excess social inequalities are determined by class signs that are not related to the promotion of individualistic values, which could be interpreted as achievable. Since the scale of achievement values is weakly manifested and can be conditionally associated with professional values, the individualistic values do not relate to the values of meaning, but legitimize the model of success.

Thus, the structural constraints that give rise to social imbalances and conflict of social interest's push collectivist values to the periphery, although they are symbolically proclaimed in the hierarchy of life meanings, while assessments of material security or professionalism are subjective parameters, not being consistent with the attitudes to public recognition. It can be said, that within the implementation of the research goal, the value parameters are inferior to the social and professional ones. In this regard, there are features that consist of the fact that careerist values do not affect the activity of the middle class. It can be assumed, that the motivation of 4.4% of the representatives of the middle class lies in mass self-expression, in equating to borrowed patterns, but this does not refer to the collectivist values, since it has no reference to the social and cultural tradition.

Noting that the middle class is most sensitive to any influences that infringe on its security and social status, it can be assumed that Russian middle class as a carrier of social, professional, educational and property qualities, does not have the resources to influence the higher social strata. Legal mechanisms are poorly regulated, and collectivist values which are divided as symbolic attitudes, do not

create a condition for social interaction, so that the higher social strata and the middle class adhere to a consolidated position not to make harm, but rather to maintain a team spirit to each other. For the poor class, the collectivist values legitimize the dominant treatment from the perspective of state care, since social activity in this group is rather low and it is united by the solidarity of despair.

Poor people in Russian do not associate the individualistic values, acting as a manifestation of the desire for normality, with the development of professional skills or movement towards the middle class, since they act according to parameters of a group seeking for help and sympathy. A certain agreement, that a person must have income that he earned honestly (72% of the middle-class core, 69% of the periphery of the core, 70% of the rest of the population) is typical for the Russian society. A person should strain after the easy conscience and mental harmony (79% of the middle-class core, 76% - the rest of the population).

More than half of Russians adhere to the principle of the indispensability of moral norms. Seems that there is a value consensus at the level of interpersonal interaction and individualistic values, which are the prerequisites for initiation of social consolidation processes and development of acceptable behavioral models. But the point is that the demonstration of these values is connected with a personal choice and does not involve consolidation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is obvious that the structural constraints associated with the achievement of a success model enshrined as a normative one, affect the subjective constraints as a value choice of life strategies. It is also noteworthy that the so-called unprincipled Russians, who demonstrate the values of enrichment and neglect morality, are found among all classes of the population, including the poor one. In this sense, there is an alignment with an image of rich people, a belief that wealth in Russia cannot be obtained in an honest way. It is indecent to be poor, the best ideal is to live in a model of self-sufficiency, possess consumer and material properties recognized as socially attractive. It can be stated that the described configuration of collectivist and individualistic values reveals the dominance of adaptive strategies. Most Russians are accustomed to welfare, but at the same time, they are ready to switch to survival mode.

The analysis of structural constraints shows the level of tolerance to anti-values, and in this sense homosexuality, enrichment at the expense of others, prostitution, rudeness (to a lesser extent) and unfaithfulness in business are subject to condemnation. But the intolerance level is lower with regard to abortion, appropriating the found things or money. These indicators are typical for most Russians, a correlation is observed between the deviation of anti-values, which are considered unacceptable in terms of traditions. More tolerant attitude is typical towards the values, which can also be perceived as a tradition, or those associated with a fact that a person is an architect of

his own fortune and has the right to use the found things and money as fortune. Structural constraints in Russian society are expressed in the fact that none of the groups demonstrates a classical Protestant ethic.

This could be associated with the focus on values that emphasize a civilizational feature, but not the acceptance of values that would indicate the process of Europeanization of the Russians. Probably, the fact is that the Russian rich class is detached from society by class, property and symbolic differences, which is a certain rich and others scheme. Social inequalities affect the values perceived as one of the many markers of social groups and are not values of mobilization purpose. Considering the structural constraints, the attention should be paid to the fact that groups in Russian society have not become groups for themselves. Reproduction of social positions is not associated with institutional resources to implement the value expectations through organizational and regulatory opportunities.

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