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Conference reflections

Размышления о конференции

Individualism and Collectivism as a Subject of Social-Philosophical Analysis

Reflections on the Eve of the Scientific Conference
“Individualization and Collectivism in Contemporary
Russian Society.”

Branch of Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences
(RAS), Institute of Sociology of the RAS Federal Center for
Theoretical and Applied Sociology, RAS Institute of Philosophy,
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Abstract

The Branch of Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), the Institute of Sociology of the Federal Center for Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the RAS, the RAS Institute of Philosophy, and the RAS Institute of Psychology are arranging “Individualization and Collectivism in Contemporary Russian Society” scientific conference, to be held in Moscow, April 2024. The event marks the 300th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the 95th birth anniversary of the Russian philosopher and social theorist A.S. Akhiezer. Its primary objective is to foster the development of criteria for analyzing intersubjective relations within the act of social development. The conference’s focus on the investigation of social development is grounded in the dominants of contemporary philosophical-sociological non-classics and proposes several topics for discussion. These include the transition from the absolutization of Kant’s categorical imperative, which mandates the consideration of humans solely as the ultimate end in the system of intersubjective communication and the knowledge process, to an alternative consideration of humans as means of self-improvement and a crucial resource for social development (V.S. Bibler). It encompasses the rejection of absolutizing the function of contrasting faith and knowledge, the Self and the Other, the “own” and the “foreign,” scientific and everyday consciousness (V.A. Lectorsky,

I.T. Kasavin, V.N. Porus). The interpretation of the meaning of personality shifts from concepts like *cogito ergo sum*, “pure Self,” “Self,” “Ego,” “Super-,” to the “ability of the Self to respond to the call of the Other,” thereby forming the smallest cell of the socio-individual as a synthesis of the social and the individual (M.M. Bakhtin, V.A. Lektorsky, R.S. Grinberg). Overcoming the established inequality of economic systems is addressed through the socio-individualism of small and medium-sized enterprises (A.S. Akhiezer, R.S. Grinberg). The conference also anticipates discussions on the following topics: How do the transfer and exchange of accumulated global knowledge from the individual to the other, and vice versa, contribute to the formation of small creative groups, serving as a communicative platform for nurturing socially oriented individuals – agents of social development? Moreover, how can dialogue be effectively constructed among participants of partnership relations who operate on differing premises (J.-P. Sartre)? The discussion is aimed at contemplating the contradictory, oxymoronic, yet dialogue and synthesis-oriented concepts of “individualization of the social,” “socially oriented individual,” and “socio-individualism.”

Keywords: social philosophy, sociology, sociocultural dynamics, socio-individualism, individualization of the social, socially oriented individual, socio-epistemological foundations, modernization, mediation.

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Индивидуализм и коллективизм как предмет социально-философского анализа

Размышления в преддверии научной конференции
«Индивидуализация и коллективизм в современном
русском обществе».

Отделение общественных наук РАН, Институт социологии
ФНИСЦ РАН, Институт философии РАН,
Институт психологии РАН. Москва, апрель 2024 года

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Аннотация

Отделение общественных наук РАН, Институт социологии ФНИСЦ РАН, Институт философии РАН и Институт психологии РАН готовят научную конференцию «Индивидуализация и коллективизм в современном российском обществе» (Москва, апрель 2024 года). Конференция приурочена к 300-летию Российской академии наук и 95-летию со дня рождения А.С. Ахиезера. Цель конференции – внести вклад в разработку критериев анализа межсубъектных отношений в акте *социального развития*. Установка конференции на исследование социального развития опирается на доминанты современной философско-социологической неклассики и предлагает некоторые темы для обсуждения. Переход от абсолютизации категорического императива И. Канта, предписывающего рассматривать человека только как высшую цель в системе межсубъектной коммуникации и процессе познания, к альтернативному рассмотрению человека как средства самосовершенствования и важнейшего ресурса социального развития (В.С. Библер). Отказ от абсолютизации функции противопоставления веры и знания, Я и Другого, «своего» и «чужого», научного и обыденного сознания (В.А. Лекторский, И.Т. Касавин, В.Н. Порус). Интерпретация смысла личности не столько через «*cogito ergo sum*», «чистое Я», «Self», «Эго», «Сверх-», сколько через «способность Я ответить на зов Другого», формируя таким образом мельчайшую клеточку социоиндивидуального как синтеза социального и индивидуального (М.М. Бахтин, В.А. Лекторский, Р.С. Гринберг). Преодоление сложившегося неравенства экономических укладов, решаемое через социоиндивидуализм малого и среднего бизнеса (А.С. Ахиезер, Р.С. Гринберг). Предполагается также обсуждение вопросов: Каким образом через транспортировки накопленного в мире знания от Я к Другому и обратно формируются малые творческие группы как коммуникативная площадка для формирования социально ориентированного индивида – субъекта социального развития? И как строить диалог между участниками партнерских отношений, если они стоят на различных основаниях (Ж.-П. Сартр)? Дискуссия нацелена на осмысление противоречивых, оксюморонных, но нацеленных на диалог и синтез понятий «индивидуализация социального», «социально ориентированный индивид», «социоиндивидуализм».

Ключевые слова: социальная философия, социология, социокультурная динамика, социоиндивидуализм, индивидуализация социального, социально ориентированный индивид, социально-эпистемологические основания, модернизация, медиация.

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In April 2024, the Branch of Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), the Institute of Sociology of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology (FCTAS) of the RAS, the RAS Institute of Philosophy, and the RAS Institute of Psychology will hold the scientific conference “Individualization and Collectivism in Contemporary Russian Society,” marking the 300th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the 95th birth anniversary of A.S. Akhiezer¹. The conference chairs include RAS Full Members A.A. Guseinov, M.K. Gorshkov, V.A. Lektorsky, A.V. Smirnov, D.S. Ushakov, and RAS Corresponding Member M.F. Chernysh. The conference program includes the following panel discussions: “Social-Epistemological Foundations of Individualization and Collectivism” (convened by V.A. Lektorsky and E.O. Troufanova); “Values of Collectivism: Individual, Community, Society” (convener: A.V. Pavlov); “Individualization of the Social Sphere and Collectivism as a Subject of Sociological Study” (conveners: M.F. Chernysh and Yu.B. Epikhina); “The Strategy of Individualization/Collectivism in the Context of Solidarity and Interaction between Center and Regions” (conveners: A.A. Merzlyakov and V.S. Bogdanov); “Socio-Psychological Mechanisms of Integration and Differentiation in Russian Society” (convener: T.A. Nestik); and “Culture, Society, and Intersubjective Relations from the Perspective of Mediation Thinking. Problems of Dialogue” (convener: A.P. Davydov).

1. The Purpose and Objectives of the Conference

The conference’s purpose is to discuss *the contemporary specifics of individualization and collectivism processes in Russian society*. **Individualization** is the formation in a person’s consciousness of the idea of the value of “*one’s own life*,” “*one’s own life world*,” “*one’s own way of thinking*” as the ultimate criterion for constructing the settings of knowledge, behavior, activities aimed at his survival and development as *a social and cultural subject*. V.A. Yadov wrote that “individualized methods, ways, forms of activities valuable for society or social groups and collectives” are the subject of sociology [Yadov 1998, 154]. **Collectivism**, in its social dimension, is the inclusion (the feeling of inclusion – in the psychological dimension)

¹ The conference continues the tradition of events dedicated to the memory of the outstanding Russian philosopher, sociologist, and culturologist Alexander Samoilovich Akhiezer (1929–2007). In 2010, a round table “Akhiezer Readings” was held, and in 2019 – an all-Russian scientific conference “Sociocultural Methodology of Macro-Research of the Dynamics of Russian Society.”

of an individual in a collective (family, group, community); something given to the individual inherently and simultaneously the result of his individual and collective activity. Collectivism helps an individual survive in his struggle against the forces of nature and competitors, satisfies the need for subsistence (in conditions of war, famine, impending poverty, disease, old age). At the same time, there is a danger of exaggerating the significance of the individual's inclusion in the collective: loss of critical ability by the individual, neglect of the logical side of thinking in favor of the emotional, loss of self-trust, exaggeration of fear of life.

Individualization of the collective (social). M.F. Chernysh, addressing the theme of the transition of Russian society from traditionalism to a state of modernity, notes that “with the disintegration of the community and the consequent individualization, the demand for collective actions significantly fell. This started quite a long time ago, in the 1960s or even earlier, as the education system developed, the educational ideology of social achievement was revived” [Chernysh 2022, 184]. Chernysh also points out that “the assessment of the Soviet period was one of the themes of the new ideology of the transformation of the mass collectivist society toward individualization, the growing value of human life... The modernization of public consciousness, the transition to individualism was accompanied by increased attention to the trajectory of the individual against the backdrop of historical events, the importance of the individual and his fate grew immensely” [Chernysh 2022, 178]. Z. Bauman wrote: “What the idea of ‘individualization’ carries is the emancipation of the individual from the ascribed, inherited and inborn determination of his or her social character: a departure rightly seen as a most conspicuous and seminal feature of the modern condition” [Bauman 2001, 144]. At the same time, Bauman warned of the risks and challenges of individualization processes.

Contemporary individualization in the broad sense as a subject of the social sciences and of our conference is a reaction to the deepening crisis of the integral self-personality as the highest value (Kant), which successfully fought for its autonomy from the historically established social (ancestral culture and imperial society) in the 17th–19th centuries, and it is the increasing individualization of one's own life, one's own lifeworld, one's own conception of interests and morality in the rapidly changing social conditions (crisis of historically established values, liquid modernity, risk society, multiple identities) in the second half of the 20th and 21st centuries as a result of the subject (individual) forming a new level of their social freedom. The main areas of individualization of this type

are lifestyle², values, interests, the sphere of property relations, responsibility and rights, ways of thinking, decision making, etc. Each of these areas of the social sphere is the subject of sociological knowledge and cognition.

The pivotal social role of the epistemological and sociological shift toward the individual in the 20th and 21st centuries lies in the capacity of the Self, through its interaction with the Other, to cultivate “liquid modernity” (a term coined by Z. Bauman), a society characterized by change. This entails a collective unity where there is ongoing virtual and actual diversification of the social fabric on one hand, and on the other, the emergence of a renewed social diversity through novel syntheses, acting as a manifestation of sociocultural solidarity and dynamic progression [Davydov 2021].

One of the topical issues of sociology is the relationship between the individual and nature/culture/society. Much research in the past three centuries has been devoted to the individualization of the individual's exit as a We-subject from nature through culture and through anthropological and societal analysis; individualization in the act of transferring dominance in decision-making from cultural centrism to the dialogue between culture and society through sociocultural analysis is finding increasing understanding in the scientific community; but the individualization of the “exit” of the individual as a Self-subject from society and his “transition” to civic organizations, although relying on some fundamental and emotional foundations, has not yet identified either the main problems or rational methods and goals and requires further research³.

² For example, M.F. Chernysh draws attention to the fact that “there is an updating need in consciousness for one's own unique ‘space’ and ‘own time,’ which, in turn, increases demands on the modern city – the size, design and layout of housing, infrastructure that helps an individual survive in a big city on their own. As a result, the number of divorces in society is increasing, as is the number of transitional states – premarital, marital, post-marital, extramarital, super-marital” [Chernysh 2017, 32].

³ M.K. Gorshkov, author of the conclusion in the book *Russian Society and the Challenges of Time*, explains: “For many years, there has been a collision in the system of ideological coordinates of Russians: on the one hand, the attitudes toward Russia's civilizational sovereignty, the values of community and collectivism, which are important to people from the point of view of the general vector of the country's development, and, on the other hand, the priority of personal interests over public ones when it comes to the everyday life of an ordinary person. However, in the context of the value mobilization of society in the spring of 2022, a certain adjustment of attitudes took place – an increasing number of Russians realize that the events are extraordinary and require a change in a person's attitude toward the country and society. The only group that falls out of this counter-trend, in which the attitudes toward the priority of personal interests, on the contrary, are strengthening, is part of the youth cohort under 25” [Gorshkov & Tikhonova (Eds.) 2022,

The scientific and practical significance of the conference goals. Objectives of the discussion:

1. Discuss possible new interpretations of the meanings of individualization and collectivism under contemporary conditions. Investigate the current measure of combining the individual and the social in scientific reflection amid the disintegration of historically established individual and collective forms of life world, the growing new individualization/dialogization of the style of contemporary life and thought.

2. In the analysis of contemporary social processes, refrain from absolutizing the conception of ego-individualization, “pure Self,” super-ego, the will that underlies the world, the absolute idea, the will to power, etc., in the social sciences – all these approaches, as a rule, tend toward either an ontological or a psychological unconscious. And as an alternative to them, by adopting a cognitive stance focused on the exploration of social development, it is suggested to introduce into scientific circulation some relatively new internally contradictory but dialogue- and synthesis-oriented concepts. Among them – “individualization of the social,” “socially oriented individual,” “socio-individualism.” This is a way of socializing the individual in conditions in which social development is carried out through scientific discoveries, new technologies, the search for talents, high professionalism, social dialogue, entrepreneurial dynamics, the purposeful formation of inequalities as a new normativism, the elimination of excessive inequalities as a way to combat the threat of a sociocultural split in society.

3. Understand the formation of prerequisites for dialogue between the social and the individual (old and new, statics and dynamics, tradition and innovation, historically established culture and developing society, conservatism and reformism) as the basis for focusing on socio-individual, socio-individualized dialogue and synthesis.

4. Attempt to raise the question as to whether the primary outcome of the dialogue between interests and values is the emergence of a new meaning created by the parties, one that embodies a new interest. This newly formed meaning progressively embodies a third subjectivity within the “I – the Other” system. It is verified through new social forms, is cognized through knowledge (for instance, V.A. Lektorsky’s “intermediary objects,”

266]. N.N. Sedova’s (FCTAS RAS) assessment in the same study can complement M.K. Gorshkov’s conclusion: “Among young people under 25... in an atmosphere of Russians “tightening their mental belts,” reducing the scope of subjectivity under the pressure of external circumstances, the significance of... the value of freedom is strengthening” [Gorshkov & Tikhonova (Eds.) 2022, 201].

T.M. Dridze's expert knowledge, and P.A. Sorokin's "symbolic conductors"), and eventually evolves into a new value, establishing a fresh foundation for social development.

5. Raise the question of whether it is possible, through the differentiation (fractionation) of cultural stereotypes (as reflections of the traditional collective whole, for example, ideas about family, community, empire, that "it has always been so") into smaller parts, each of which has relevance here and now, to understand this type of *differentiation-individualization* in general terms – as the "*individualization of the social*"⁴.

6. Pose the question of whether the term "individualization," understood by V.A. Yadov as "a personalized form of realization of social functions" [Yadov 1998, 154], can be interpreted as "individualization of the social" and "socio-individualism."

7. It appears that G.S. Batishchev, highlighting the duality of the individual, interprets contemporary individualization specifically as socio-individualism and socio-individualization: "In his interactions with the world, which concern either his virtual existence, not actualized for him, or an existence whose problematic nature he finds insurmountably challenging, the individual is objectively justified as an individual-accident, or a fragment, organically co-belonging to a certain Whole. However, this is not because the individual loses or denies their subjectivity, but rather because such connections exist beyond the realm of their individual subjectivity and objectively precede their actions, their freedom of choice and decisions, their initiative, and their ontological responsibility. These connections of co-belonging do not infringe upon the realm of their subjective actions, their freedom of choice and decisions, or their responsibility. They merely precede this realm, leaving it unencapsulated and open-ended"

⁴ The conference organizing committee decided, as the conference program is being formed, to provide an opportunity for scientists engaged in the study of individualization and collectivism to familiarize themselves with the provisions of its substantive part, by posting its project on the website of the RAS Institute of Sociology. For example, Dr.Sc. in Philosophy, Prof. I.G. Mikailova (Saint Petersburg), in a letter to the conference organizing committee dated August 10, 2023, having familiarized herself with the draft Program of our conference, defines individualization from the perspective of synergetic historism: "Synergetic historism views the individualization of the subject of sociocultural reproduction as a dynamic process that shapes in their consciousness a conception of the meaning of their existence. This conception is influenced either by an initially prescribed, dominant sociocultural (or religious) ideal prevalent in society, or by a counter-ideal that the individual themselves formulates, which then guides their development, self-improvement, and journey toward self-determination." The assessment of such presentations will be given at the conclusion of our conference.

[Batishchev 1997, 306]. From this arises the question: Does Batishchev not point to the organic co-belonging of an individual's subjectivity to both his actively autonomous Self and simultaneously to a given sociocultural Whole as a unified (albeit dual) foundation of his individualism? *Can this dual yet cohesive form of individualism be termed socially oriented individualism or socio-individualism?*

8. Bruno Latour advocates for a fundamental reevaluation of sociology, moving away from historically entrenched and increasingly outdated sociological frameworks, notably those of É. Durkheim [Latour 2005], to reexamine the social aspects of humanity from an individual perspective (for instance, through his Actor-Network Theory). He believes that this new direction in sociology will progress positively and successfully, underpinned by the premise that individuals are inherently social. This raises a logical inquiry: *Can the introduction and application of the term "socio-individualism" for the exploration and analysis of non-classical epistemology in the context of modern networked social dynamics (illustrated, for example, by the publication of The Order of Things (1966) and particularly Archaeology of Knowledge (1969) by M. Foucault) be considered one of the defining traits of the shift in epistemology and sociology toward the individual in the latter half of the 20th and into the 21st century?*⁵

9. Should social development be regarded as a dual process of mutual penetration between the socialization of the individual and the individualization of the social, and the development (or civilizational evolution) of humanity as a species – through establishing a balance of interaction between these opposites, each with its sociocultural uniqueness in every distinct cultural era? If this is the case, should we acknowledge that the essence of this process lies in the necessity and capability of both individuals and society/culture to engage in a sociocultural dialogue?

⁵ One of the founders of the concept of the noosociety, RAS Corresponding Member S.D. Bodrunov, an economist, writes: "Not only is a person socialized under the influence of society, but society is also socialized under the influence of the active work of a person who transforms established cultural and moral norms, values, motives, as well as corresponding social institutions... Being in society, an individual is 'encoded' by society, adopts in the process of socialization as a 'code' the moral-value core that currently constitutes the social essence of society and is determined by the criterion base of values inherent in it. It is in this sense that an individual is socialized. But the individual himself, influencing society, 'socializes' it by changing its moral-value core; the task is for this core to be modified *in the direction determined by the noocriteria base*. The discovery, expansion, development of such knowledge, its inclusion in the moral-value core is an important aspect of the problem of socializing society, of 'making' it more 'social,' less individualistic, more comfortable for the individual, more aligned with noocentric principles" [Bodrunov 2022, 27].

2. Social-epistemological foundations of contemporary individualization and collectivism

Introduction to the topic. The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a pivotal shift in the social sciences toward the individual, particularly within sociology. This shift moved the focus from primarily studying social structures, groups, and society at large to emphasizing the investigation of the individual as the subject of their own life and personal world. A new focus emerged in the “I – the Other” framework, transitioning from a classical study of knowledge acquisition and self-awareness to a non-classical understanding of the Self through the Other. This includes exploring avenues for mutual understanding and dialogue within the “I – the Other” system and a social interpretation of individualism. Such a shift indicates the potential emergence of a new dominant force – a third meaning or form of communication that arises between the I and the Other. This evolving dynamic increasingly influences, through its growing subjectivity, the overall state of the “I – the Other” system and its developmental trajectories. *Science faces new challenges:* (a) to identify and elucidate the social essence of life’s new individualization, including lifestyle, values, and decision-making processes; and (b) to recognize that shifts in sociological thought regarding the interplay between individualization and social collectivism are grounded in corresponding epistemological changes. The discussion on epistemological foundations invites the following questions and themes for debate:

2.1. Moving beyond the absolutization of Kant’s categorical imperative. The categorical imperative by I. Kant, which mandates viewing an individual solely as the supreme end within the realm of intersubjective communication and the knowledge process, is challenged. This leads to an alternative perspective where humans are considered as means. V.S. Bibler articulates this shift with the formula: “the purpose of the purpose is to be the means,” “a goal without a means is nothing” [Bibler 2002, 91–92]⁶. However, this perspective introduces several questions:

⁶ V.S. Bibler’s discussion on the concept of means as a mechanism defining the purpose’s significance resonates with a similar issue in Confucianism. This philosophy offered a *sociocultural formula for human self-development as the foundation of their ability to change themselves to change the world*: “Instead of exalting the heavens and pondering over them, would not it be better to multiply things ourselves and thus bring the heavens under our control?! Instead of serving and extolling the heavens, would not it be better to overcome celestial fate and use the heavens for our own ends? Instead of merely hoping for the seasons and awaiting what the heavens will bring, would not it be better to achieve this ourselves in harmony with the seasons?! Instead of waiting for things to multiply on their

(1) What is implied by “human as a means”? Means for what? How to determine the degree of ability to be a means?

(2) How can dialogue between the goal and the means facilitate social development?

(3) How do we find a sustainable balance between the goal (values) and the means (interests) to thrive in the contemporary world? Is the pursuit of such a balance and the methodologies to achieve it a basis for intersubjective dialogue?

2.2. Changing the perception of personality. V.A. Lektorsky wrote, “The non-classical understanding of the Self, developed in the 20th-century philosophy, rejects the conception of the Self as formulated by Descartes” [Lektorsky 2009, 176]. In Lektorsky’s epistemology, an alternative to Cartesianism has emerged: (a) the “I – the Other” system; (b) the ability of the Self to respond to the call of the Other, serving as a foundational premise for the possibility of intersubjective dialogue. This raises several pertinent questions:

(1) How does the ability of the Self to respond to the call of the Other in non-classical scientific thought give rise to a new social dominant – understanding the Self’s individualism through the individualism of the Other?

(2) Through which social mechanisms can the foundation for dialogue between them be constructed, and how can a measure of collaboration (a balance of mutual repulsion and interpenetration) be established in their joint activities?

2.3. Rejection of absolutizing the distinction between faith and knowledge (V.A. Lektorsky, W. Deppert (Germany), I.T. Kasavin, V.N. Porus). This brings to the forefront several issues:

(1) How can one interpret the “sliding” (a term by V.A. Lektorsky) or “flickering” (a term by M.N. Epstein) boundary between faith and knowledge?

(2) I.T. Kasavin and V.N. Porus raised a question: “Has the time arrived to move beyond traditional frameworks, in which either reason or morality

own, would not it be better, by leveraging human capabilities, to change things ourselves?! Instead of merely thinking about things and their utilization, would not it be better to organize what we have and ensure nothing is overlooked?! Instead of merely wishing for things to emerge as we desire, would not it be better to actively make them improve according to our wishes?!” [Xunzi 1973, 173]. Xunzi was a distinguished philosopher of early Confucianism (c. 313 – c. 238 BCE).

is assigned a kind of primordial fundamentality? Perhaps these ‘attributive properties of man’ should now be viewed as an indissoluble unity: reason devoid of morality is irrational, morality without reason is unethical... This unity is challenging to rationalize within non-contradictory conceptual systems but is palpably present at the level of existential issues” for both individual and collective existence [Kasavin & Porus 1999, 17].

(3) Does rejecting the absolutization of the distinction between faith and knowledge enable a more critical stance toward absolutizing the boundaries between the Self and the Other, toward absolutizing the “either-or” formula in intersubjective relations? How does the concept of a permeable boundary between opposites contribute to creating the prerequisites for dialogue among social subjects?

2.4. The foundational opposition in A.S. Akhiezer’s research on the sociocultural dynamics of society is as follows: *culture, represented as historically accumulated experiences and values, vs. society, seen as a means for individuals to transcend cultural stereotypes and interests*. Akhiezer’s entire body of work is devoted to exploring the mechanisms that cause a persistent divide in Russia between the old and new, static and dynamic, and between tradition and innovation, particularly within the context of culture (conservatism) versus society (reformism) [Akhiezer 2008]. His primary questions include:

(1) Through the binary opposition of “culture –. society,” how can we conceptualize the modernization subject situated in the “intermediate space” between culture and society? This subject navigates development risks, addresses and resolves sociocultural contradictions, and continually seeks a balanced critique and support of both sides.

(2) What constitutes the sociocultural agenda of the protesting subject who self-critically moves beyond the influence of the dominant symphonic-authoritarian absolutes in society and, on the basis of his own life, his own lifeworld, his way of thinking, through dialogue with opponents, forms foundations for social (socially oriented) individualism, i.e., a new form of individualism?

2.5. *Social individualization, communication and the search for a common measure in partnership as a methodological tool of sociology*. What are the modern epistemological mechanisms of sociocultural dialogue?

2.5.1. Dialogue of subjects on a common basis (“communication – for”). M.M. Bakhtin created a formula for partnership: “I am for You from your individual point of view / You are for Me from my individual

point of view” [Bakhtin 2000]. With regard to this foundation, questions arise:

(1) How does this foundation appear? Can I and the Other enter into an intellectual dialogue and create a community, partially abandoning their *cogito ergo sum*, “pure I,” “Super-” and “Ego,” in order to form something third, through which they will be able to more adequately, i.e., through their “lifeworld,” express personal individuality?

(2) Can Bakhtin’s formula be transferred to relations in Russia, “federal center – region”?

(3) If so, then how is the imperative of serving individualisms to each other on a common basis born, forming *social individualism* – one of the foundations of social individualization? How to look for a common point of view for them – an adequate common measure constructed by both? Can an enterprise (plant, farm) and territory (village, city, region) in comparison with the federal center be called the bearer of social individualism?

2.5.2. Dialogue of subjects on different bases (“communication – from”). Communication in the “I – Other” system also communicates (in the sense articulated by N. Luhmann), but signals something else. In the Bible we read: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). Jean-Paul Sartre wrote: “I am responsible for my being-for-others, but I am not the foundation of it” [Sartre 1978, 364]. Sartre’s formula outlines a complex structure of the possible basis for partnership, two levels, two measures: one for cooperation, the other possibly in doubt or opposition, seeking to establish strictly individualized boundaries of partnership [Davydov 2021]. Therefore, questions may arise:

(1) What (what third meaning) unites partners in Sartre’s formula, despite their different self-foundations? Common goal? Share in the common benefit? Established hierarchy in relationships? Morality? Social contract? What else?

(2) Can we assert that both types of communication, promoting the cooperation of the individualisms of I and the Other, preparing their dialogue and establishing its boundaries, are based on the methodology of “for / from,” where “for” and “from,” interpenetrating, form a methodological identity that represents the primary level of ontology of the problem of socially oriented individualism in the “between” sphere?

3. Individualization of the social and collectivism as subjects of sociology

Introduction to the topic. In the books *The Individualized Society* and *Liquid Modernity*, Zygmunt Bauman presents the concept of a “liquid,” “in-

dividualized” global society, “free of fences, barriers, fortified borders, and checkpoints. Any dense and tight network of social bonds, and particularly a territorially rooted tight network, is an obstacle to be cleared out of the way” [Bauman 2000, 14]. However, he also warns that individualization, when taken to the extreme, poses dangers: it may lead to desocialization, the breakdown of social forms, where the individual considers only itself as a subject, viewing society and culture as parts of a hostile world [Bauman 2000; Bauman 2001]. The Becks argue that the notion of individualization is central to understanding the sociocultural evolution of humanity: “One crucial difference from proletarian and bourgeois culture is that here it is no longer class categories but the very cultural and political dynamic of ‘one’s own life’ which puts its stamp on society. The lines of conflict are more diffuse but no less profound” [Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 42]. French sociologist Bruno Latour, in *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* [Latour 2005], advocates for a focus on the individual as a bearer of individuality, their inner world, and external connections through individualization. M.F. Chernysh highlights the objective and cultural character of individualization: “Individualization is a central tendency of modern life... For most societies, the truth lies somewhere in between recognizing the relevance of new sociology based on individualization and its complete denial. In any contemporary society, social groups coexist, living in different historical epochs, with varying degrees of engagement with modernity” [Chernysh 2017, 34–35]. Modern individualization as a sociocultural process, oriented toward the search for a new social fabric, and mediation (from Latin *mediana* – “middle”) – involves the individual’s creation of alternatives *based on their own lifeworld* in the “in-between” space between two value dominants, especially between authoritarian management stereotypes and the collective psychology of mass culture; it represents socio-individualization and dialogization in the search for sociocultural bases for alternative dynamics of culture/society/individual, unfolding in the “in-between” of historically established poles in thought and management: between preserving the ancestral, traditional, accumulated over centuries, on one hand, and the administrative-command constraints of ongoing social reforms, on the other [Davydov 2022, 4–5].

3.1. If the *subject forming the social measure of individualization is the individual and the social group*⁷, then the following questions arise:

⁷ In the act of individualization in the context of the intellectual turn to the human, “the individual acquires new qualities, the phenomenon of human capital

(1) Through what technologies do the individual and group create new norms and values that govern social processes, in particular individualization and group formation?

(2) What criteria, indicators, indices can be used to describe the measure of individualization of the social, the ability of a socially oriented individual to build their own lifeworld?

3.2. *Intersubjective individualization of the social in small groups.* Small groups, as autonomous subjects of social relations at the foundational level of sociality (or primary social structure), represent an individualized micro-environment for the personality. This micro-environment is constituted through the communicative function of P.A. Sorokin's "signal-conductors" [Sorokin 2021] and V.A. Lektorsky's "intermediary objects" in the interpersonal system "I – the Other" [Lektorsky 1980].

Lektorsky's "intermediary objects" are defined as "tools of labor, language, social institutions, sign-symbolic systems, and cultural artifacts, including science, through which a reality existing independently of humans is revealed, and a new level of reality – human reality – is created... This realm of 'intermediary objects' continuously evolves and changes, thus determining the transformation of both the subject and the object" (cited from: Davydov (Ed.) 2019, 61–62)].

However, 60 years before V.A. Lektorsky's seminal book *Subject, Object, Cognition* (1980), which disclosed the epistemological essence of "intermediary objects," P.A. Sorokin had already developed a social-psychological theory of "conductors." What do Sorokin's "symbolic conductors," "conductors-signs," and "conductors-signals" mean? Sorokin wrote: "An individual cannot perceive the Other's psyche directly, nor know it directly,

emerges" [Lapin 2006, 224]. In this regard, one cannot but agree with the conclusion of A.A. Merzlyakov that "the anthropological and societal approach in general sociology, substantiated by N.I. Lapin, has the greatest potential in studying social group formation, which proceeds from the fact that today a person appears on stage as a social subject whose activity is comparable to the actions of social institutions. This subject not only internalizes the norms and values of society, but also influences their components in accordance with new needs and interests with the continuous increase (due to scientific and technological progress) in the provision of resources for both group and personal activity. However, a social subject in our understanding is not only a person, an individual, but also a group of people whose subjectivity is established under different conditions and modes of group formation" [Tikhonov & Merzlyakov (Eds.) 2021, 69]. "In sociology, the term 'subjectness' also represents a property not of an individual person, but of entire communities and groups and even social institutions, which, under certain circumstances, turn into collective subjects" [Merzlyakov 2018, 98].

nor induce any psychic experiences in the Other without the mediation of certain conductors... Without conductors, any somewhat prolonged, intensive, and meaningful physical interaction, as well as psychic interaction, becomes impossible” [Sorokin 2021, 149]. He continued: “Before the psyche can transfer to the Other, it ‘materializes,’ is symbolized, and only then as an external stimulus is presented to other members of communication” [Sorokin 2021, 173]. Thus, according to Sorokin, conductors often emerge in various forms like signs, symbols, signals, architecture, fetishes across all spheres of activity [Sorokin 2021, 208]. Sorokin argued: “From this viewpoint, any library can be seen as an immensely complex telephone exchange, where through books, hundreds of people daily ‘connect’ with a multitude of authors, both living and deceased, and silently converse amongst themselves” [Sorokin 2021, 162].

This leads to the following questions:

(1) What are the similarities and differences between Lektorsky’s epistemological “intermediary objects” and Sorokin’s psychological “symbolic conductors”? Do these theories oppose or complement each other in the concept of a small creative group?

(2) Can it be proposed that scientific communication, as a subject (according to N. Luhmann) using Sorokin’s “conductors,” transmits the content of Lektorsky’s “intermediary objects” from the Self to the Other and back, fostering the socio-individualism of both within a small social group “I – the Other”?

(3) Is it cautiously conceivable that if intersubjective scientific communication, as theorized by Sorokin, Luhmann, and Lektorsky, acts as a third subjectivity in the dual opposition “I – the Other” and increasingly shapes the system’s overall dynamics, then the relevance and vitality of the reborn system depend on the degree of novelty and pertinence such communication carries and the societal demand for this degree? Or do other dependencies exist?

(4) The question can be reframed slightly differently. Does the socio-individualism of Sorokin–Luhmann–Lektorsky, countering both self-individualization and collective socialization as absolutes, offer a resolution in science: Does today’s social development primarily occur not through class stereotypes or the dynamics of individual creativity, but rather through *the socio-communicative and intellectual content inherent in the individualization of intersubjective relations within small social groups (the individualization of the social)*, thereby constituting the formation of a new agent of social development – namely, social (sociocultural) individualism?

3.3. *Inequalities as a structural economic problem solved through the socio-individualism of small and medium-sized businesses.* The main means of reducing inequality levels in the country, according to A.S. Akhiezer and R.S. Grinberg, is the struggle against the dominance of monopolies in the Russian economy through “creating a mass microstructure of sellers and buyers” [Akhiezer 1998, 287]. The power of pressure from monopolies “from above” is balanced in their schemes by counterposing it with the power of democratic economic pressure on them “from below.” Nevertheless, speaking figuratively, R.S. Grinberg argues that there are not so many small private enterprises in Russia because there are no large private enterprises [Grinberg 2019, 75–76]

In light of this, the following question arises. Do Russian state-owned giants, which manufacture finished products on government orders, not cooperate with small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that manufacture components and parts for them? And is this cooperation, based on the objective inequality of state structures and SMEs, not mutually beneficial for both parties; does it suppress the socio-individualism of SMEs? Or, perhaps, the task is only to expand the existing positive experience of the socially oriented individualism of Russian small business and increase the share of SMEs in GDP?

3.4. *Individualization as a sociocultural process.* Has it become common, following A.S. Akhiezer and V.A. Lektorsky, to view Russian culture as a storehouse of cultural wealth (historically established values) accumulated over centuries, and contemporary society as an experimental field where the most effective new norms, as well as old norms under new conditions (new interests not inscribed in culture), are tested and selected? If so, does the dichotomy of “culture – society” through concepts such as “individualization of the social,” “socio-individualism,” “socially oriented individual,” and “sociocultural dialogue” signify a development in understanding the inner world of both individuals and society, torn between the old and new, static and dynamic, tradition and innovation, between historically established culture and a society focused on innovative development? Do society and culture, aimed at the social development of the community, not create the necessary prerequisite (foundation) for a dialogue between them, aimed at obtaining sociocultural syntheses (an actual measure of coexistence in the terminology of V.A. Lektorsky), social partnership in the terminology of A. Touraine)? And if so, is not the dialogical “socio-individual” as such a concept that unveils one of the methodologies for exploring the measure of interaction between opposing vectors – both

“socialization of the individual” and “individualization of the social” – in the context of studying the social (sociocultural) development of humans and society?

Conclusion

The conference can potentially arrive at the following conclusions:

(1) The assessment of contemporary individualization of the social emerges from objectively evolving processes – the individualization of the everyday needs of individuals, social groups, and territories, perceived as subjects of social development, and from these needs being met by society and the state.

(2) Contemporary individualization of the social is simultaneously shaped along with a counter-tendency – the socialization of the individual. These two opposing vectors (individualization and socialization) can complement each other only through the dialogization of the semantic space of social development, within which these vectors exist and evolve.

(3) The socially oriented individual, as a subject of the individualization of the social process, in its formation and maturation stages, eschews absolutizing many historically established cultural stereotypes (M.M. Bakhtin, V.A. Lektorsky, A.S. Akhiezer), as well as certain aspects of the contemporary social modernity in favor of socio-individual interests and values, the development of their own lifeworld, their own way of understanding sociality, and decision-making.

(4) These sociocultural types – the socially oriented individual and the individually oriented social (collective) – may serve as an effective criterion for creating the groundwork for intersubjective dialogue, intersubjective solidarity, the capacity for agreement, and the formation of a varied and dynamic measure of social unity.

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