Social Subject of Transitive Post-Soviet Society (Conceptual Model)

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Abstract: The article presents conceptual model of social subject of transitive post-Soviet society. Ontological status of this subject is determined by special topological state – “marginality in transition” (crossing the boundary). This is a dynamical state, essence of which is fixed by the category "formation", which means finishing, the end of one way of existence and potentiality, possibility of the other. Ontological context of the notion "marginality in transition" points out to complexity, non-triviality of structural and topological organization of "transition" space characterized by multi-dimensionness and openness and because of that containing the competitive alternatives of the future.

Key words: Marginal in transition • New Russian • Emergency • Social synergy • Civil society • Non-linear cause-effect relationship

INTRODUCTION

In transitive post-Soviet society which is characterized by heterogeneity, fragmentation, stochastic character a man is in eternal quest for sustainability of world-view milestones. Social system in this period manifests new patterns of his behaviour, which sufficiently differ from the patterns of stable society. Instability of society which is manifested in rapid flow of social changes is reflected in new, still forming marginal type of personality.

In transition period the previous social structures disintegrate - though they were stable in the past. Ruin of socio-cultural, political, economic, foundations of life will create fruitful soil for emerging of mass marginalization. Marginality becomes one of the key characteristics of transitive Post-Soviet period. It is worth mentioning that in modern science "marginality" acquaints new contents.

Traditionally marginality is understood in negative terms. It is interpreted as something ontologically secondary and usually is opposed to norm. However there are opinions which accentuate social, ontological value of marginality. Thus, V. Turner writes that new social structures and relationship can originate only on the boundary of old structures, their formation takes place on the periphery, in revolution, while transiting through chaotic state when norms and values change, hierarchies turn upside down and new, more stable systems form. [1].

Gurin S.P., a creator of marginal anthropology introduces a notion "marginal figures", by which he describes people having specific features and marginal position in society. They possess their own tactics and life strategies and often they are marginal even in regard to human existence itself. The researcher constructs his approach on the base of the V. Turner concept about liminal persons. They are characterized by ambivalence, inability to correspond to classifications, which define positions and states in cultural space. Such figures can be called singularity figures, their existence breaks the continuum of social body, makes social structures unstable and open to new: destruction or creation of the Something [2].

Very precise characteristic of marginality was formulated by E. Starikov who points out to its objective neutrality in regard to estimates (negative or positive) and in the same time its multi-vector character. The essence of marginality is a process of re-combining of social mosaics, “growth pains of social organism” [3, 4].

Main Part: Modern humanitarian sciences interpret the notion "marginality" in 2 ways: 1) transitive marginality (marginality on the boundary) and 2) peripheral marginality (marginality on the outskirts of sociality). In our case we shall consider the 1st type, which is most characteristic for transitive society, try to find out philosophic matters of the notion “marginality in...
transition” as exemplified by post-Soviet Russia. It contains in itself not only social connotations, but is loaded ontologically because it reflects special topological state of a subject - state of transition, crossing the boundary. This is dynamic state, essence of which is caught by the category "formation". Here specific ontology originates which fixes the finishing, the end of one way of existence and potentiality, opportunity of the other. This is non-linear ontology, in which specific character and certainty of human existence are broken, as well as its locality and temporality. Ontological context of the notion “marginality in transition” points out to complexity, non-triviality of structural and topological organization of individual’s existence. The space of transition in which he finds himself is characterized by many-dimensionness and openness.

Social changes, taken place in post-Soviet society inevitable produce effects of marginality. In the process of transition an individual finds himself in boundary situation between old and new. Delay in transition (in this state you can stay for long, even forever) throws a man to the outskirts of human existence - transitional marginality transforms into peripheral. We can talk about the reference of “marginality in transition” to evolutionary phases, or boundary between alive and dead etc. It is important that interface creates qualitatively new states. Nowotny extends the idea of interface to the phenomenon of overlapping, collision of different types (spheres) of knowledge.

American sociologist R. Park connects the notion “marginal man” with "such subject which appears in that place and in that time where, because of the cultural and racial conflict, new societies start to appear. These people are doomed to exist in two worlds simultaneously. Such man inevitably becomes an individual with broader horizon, more independent and rational views" [5].

In conditions of transforming society followed by the disintegration of social links chaotic change of social identifications takes place which manifests itself in the state of transitional marginality which becomes a norm. Disintegration of stable strats (people's self-organization forms) deprives a man of his habitual measuring scale with the aid of which he identifies himself. In the situation of transition period a man can not be the bearer of the prescribed social roles, ready “life philosophy”. In his disposal there are only debris of former self-identifications. In conditions of social chaos these debris are not adequate to status quo and social positions of a man.

New Russian (not a man from anecdotes) in these terms is certainly marginal type. He is on the boundary between two worlds (Soviet and post-Soviet) but is not included completely into any of them. Opposing himself to other Soviet people new Russian starts to isolate himself, building his own new life.

“Marginal man in transition” is an emergent subject, existence of which is free from social-cultural imperatives and symbolic markers and is characterized by synergy of oppositions old-new, regress and progress. Emergency of social subject of post-Soviet society is one of the key effects of transitivity as formation. It expresses singularity (syncretism) of disappearance and appearance, non-completeness of new existential structure. In world view of emergent subject mentioned oppositions are synthesized forming something new (resulted), extending the boundaries of former experience, unlocking the limits of former existence. Here “resulted” as new qualitative certainty, is intrinsically antinomic, contains in itself the set of oppositions often exchanging their places.

Emergency points out to unexpectedness, unplanned character of appearance of attributes, phenomena of transition an individual finds himself in boundary which act like transitional, without distinct boundary. As a result they can not be distinctly categorized. Philosopher and sociologist Ch. Nowotny introduces notion of emergent interface [6,7]. In original physical sense interface is a surface dividing two substance phases, or boundary between alive and dead etc. It is important that interface creates qualitatively new states. Nowotny connects the notion of emergent interface to the phenomenon of overlapping, collision of different types (spheres) of knowledge.

In our case extrapolation of the idea of emergent interface will matter if this is applied to “marginal man in transition”, in consciousness of which two worlds collide, two types of sociality which can not correlate with each other. Emergent interface increases the complexity of communication because of difficulties with interpretation, incompliance of languages. However, Nowotny points out, the same boundary hybrid objects can be heralds of future communication breakthroughs.

Survival in new conditions and achievement of the goals demand internal changes. Psychological problem of “transition into the other world” in always connected with inner fight between transition into new quality - otherness, wish to became different, performing renovation of one's own identity. Trying to fit to new image “marginal man in transition” wants to correspond to new circumstances. The only way to keep integrity in new conditions is to change the self-image, because it is dictated by new socio-cultural conditions.

In transitive society in conditions of utter instability the adaptation can occur in 2 ways: a man can act using already tested, traditional models of behaviour, or try to actuate what was latent before -new - variant of
behaviour. In the first case he correlate his actions with elements of earlier formed personal experience and in this case there is strong probability to get into zone of peripheral marginality. Here a man is led by the principle of simplicity in self-determination, which is a heritage of the Soviet past. "The Soviet man" had to follow simplified patterns, strategies in his self-determination and accept them as alternative-free (little but for everybody). He passively follows transitive metamorphoses and reacts to them in pursuit mode.

In the second case - search for solution takes place beyond the framework of the formed stereotype of behaviour, thanks to which the restrictedness can be overcome, exit to new cultural and behaviour space can be found. A man is looking actively for the ways to “build himself” in the changes which go on, to master the situation and in this way he extends his adaptive potential. Ability to form new adaptive strategies facilitates survival of specific subject in transition situation and supports its living activity and stability, hinders disorganization.

Said above explains opposition of the notions “sovok” and “new Russian”. Attitude of new Russians to the Soviet man is reflected in the notion “sovok”. “Sovok” is former Soviet citizen who can not adapt himself to new reality. He knows very well who he was before but can not find himself in a new world. Without external signals which will show the way and not knowing what to do “sovok” finds himself out of social relations, he is a personality who is longing for his former identity, but without success.

Appearance of new Russians by itself means some new quality, new skills, behaviour patterns, values, interests etc. He is submerged into new environment (contemporary activities) where he gets new impressions and more freedom in the conditions of market relations in comparison with life in socialist society. So called mental modernization takes place which is associated with striving for achievements, progress, readiness to adapt to changes. New Russians as marginal phenomena are able to fulfill structure-forming function for social formations of the future.

“New Russian” is a social subject of transition which demonstrates general trend of modern, unstructured society-“through transitivity”. The key effect of this trend is a phenomenon of “universal marginalization” mentioned by V. Nikolaev.

"Universal marginalization refers to modern social reality. The higher differentiation of society is, the more number of poorly isolated from each other groups create and fix their private “life worlds” and their own social logics which have no clearly marked boundaries of their application, the more isolated from each other individuals are, which create in direct interactions with each other “life worlds”, the less possible congruency of their concepts, norms, values etc. is [8].

But we also have to note that “new Russian” can be natural resource element for creation of structures of civil society and accordingly, to initiate movement in direction of constitutional attractor. The concept of social synergy proposed by R. Benedict and developed by A. Maslow is worth mentioning.

In his concept R. Benedict who performed cross-cultural studies speaks about cultures with low synergy where social structure initiates actions directed by people to each other and about cultures with high synergy where actions mutually support each other [9, 10]. Idea of social synergism has high heuristic potential in understanding crisis problems of transitive society evolution. Attribute of synergism is invariant pre-condition of formation of civil society, society with high social synergy, institutions of which provide mutual benefit from actions" and on the contrary, low level of social synergism results in society with low social synergy where benefit for one is a victory over the others and defeated majority has to twist on its own fear and risk [9]. Perspectives of development of modern Russia into direction of civil society formation (in other words - in direction of constitutional attractor) is directly determined by refusal from opposition between social system and a man. This will allow to increase the level of social synergy, linking society and the man by relations of circular (non-linear) cause-effect dependency. Here strict differentiation between cause and effect is absent, the principle “all in all” based on recursive relationship is applied. In conditions of high social synergy depth co-determination appears, recursion which gives birth to a special type of personality - citizen (his attributes are openness, ability for dialogue, sovereignty). Citizen through feedback facilitates birth and reproduction of what produces him - civil society.

Inference:

- Social subject of transitive post-Soviet society has special topological state - transition state, crossing of the boundary ("marginality in transition"). This is a dynamic state, essence of which is caught by the category "formation". Here specific ontology originates which fixes the finishing, the end of one way of existence and potentiality, opportunity of the other. This ontology breaks specific character and
certainty of human existence, making it non-linear. The space of “transition” in which the subject finds himself is characterized by multi-dimensionness and openness.

- Delay in transition (in this state you can stay for long, even forever) throws out a man to the outskirts of human existence - transitional marginality transforms into peripheral.
- One of the key effects of transitivity as formation is emergency of post-Soviet social subject. “Marginal man in transition” - is an emergent subject consciousness of which is characterized by synergy of oppositions “old-new”, “regress” and “progress”. Mentioned above oppositions in world view of emergent subject are synthesized forming something new (resulted), extending the boundaries of former experience, unlocking the limits of former existence. Here the “resulted”, as new qualitative certainty, is intrinsically antinomic, unexpected, has no easily identified boundaries, contains in itself the set of oppositions often exchanging their places.
- In transitive society, in situation of utter instability we can observe two ways of adaptation: a man can act relying on already tested traditional behaviour models or he will form new solution, trying to actuate new variant of stationary state which was latent before. In the first case he correlates his actions with elements of earlier formed personal experience and in this case there is strong probability to get into zone of peripheral marginality Here a man passively follows transitive metamorphoses and reacts to them in pursuit mode.

In the second case-search for solution takes place beyond the framework of the formed stereotype of behaviour, thanks to which the restrictedness can be overcome, exit to new cultural and behaviour space can be found. A man is in active search for the ways to build himself into the changes, to master the situation and in this way he extends his adaptive potential. Ability to form new adaptive strategies facilitates survival of specific subject in transition situation and supports his living activity and stability, hinders disorganization.

- “New Russian” which is “marginal man in transition” can be natural resource element for creation of civil society structures and accordingly, to initiate movement in direction of constitutional attractor.

This type of personality can play the part of microstructure which on cultural and societal level accumulates and passes the changes onto macro-level of evolutionary socio-cultural changes. Necessary condition for advancing in the direction of the mentioned attractor is high level of social synergy, connecting the society and a man by relations of circular (non-linear) cause-effect relationship. In this conditions depth co-determination appears which gives birth to a new type of personality - citizen. Citizen in feedback mode facilitates birth and reproduction of civil society.

REFERENCES