

THE PROBLEM OF LOSS OF THE DIALOGUE FORM OF INTERACTION BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY AS A THREAT TO SOCIAL STABILITY

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The aim of the article is to analyze the causes, factors and circumstances that influence the formation of estrangement between the Russian state and society. A detailed analysis is given, supported by the studies, conducted personally by the authors, as well as by the secondary studies of the character of confidence of the society in certain government authorities. The antinomies described in the article, first of all, make us to raise an issue of integrity of the Russian society and the presence in it of potential threats to social stability and, in a broad sense, to the national security. The issues of social stability and national security, when it comes to the interaction between state and society, are largely dependent on the category of trust. The article analyzes the trust between the Russian society and the specific government authorities. The reasons are revealed of the society's splitting into heterogeneous groups in terms of their perception of the basic social values and determination of the prospects of various directions of reforming the society. The discovered combination of antinomies in the perception of power is unacceptable from the point of view of the normal functioning of society, as they pose a potential threat to the preservation of social stability in the Russian society, and in the future, with the further disappearance of the dialogue form of interaction between the society and state, they pose a threat to the national security of Russia.

Keywords: state, authorities, society, dialogue, confidence, antinomy, social security.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the relationship between the modern Russian government authorities and society, we cannot ignore such a phenomenon of their communication as the more and more increasing distance of the dialogue. Indeed, a comfortable distance for communication between them is becoming larger and larger each year. The relationship between government and society is beginning to look like the contact between parents and their teenage children in a family of a conflict type. The former, seeing their children's craving for independence, try to further "tighten the screws", fearing that something may happen. The latter dream of living according to their own rules and getting rid of annoying parental care and their

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inclination to solve all the problems using punishment. As a result, there is less and less joint action, and more and more alienation and misunderstanding.

In the same fashion, the Russian government has decided that all the problems can be easily resolved by strengthening of control and total regulation. The assertion that the modern government authorities form a police-type state has become nearly an axiom which, as known, does not require proof. Yet science cannot function without proofs. Otherwise, it turns into apologetics. In addition, the very building of a society of the people who agree with everything and are satisfied with everything, where politics is being gradually “removed” from the system of social relations, requires a clear understanding of the mechanism of this process and forming the corresponding attitude to it, whether positive or negative, with very clear awareness of the problem.

METHODS

The present study is carried out relying on the general scientific principles of historicism, comparative historical analysis, comparative analysis, and the typology method. The empirical base of the study is constituted both by a secondary analysis of the mass surveys conducted by the relevant sociological centers and organizations and by our own research.

A secondary analysis is carried out for the following mass surveys:

- Levada-Center (the years 1999-2014);
- Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM; the years 1999-2015);
- a survey of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Germany), conducted in the year 2005 (N = 1750).

As far as the analysis of the primary material is concerned, we should turn our attention to such research as:

- an expert survey on the topic “Youth in the political processes of modern Russia”, conducted in four regions of the Russian Federation and supported by the grant within the framework of Inter-Regional Research in the Social Sciences (IRRSS): Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Voronezh, and Irkutsk (May-June 2011, N = 80).

Dialogue is a multifaceted term: both from the point of view of the factors providing it and from the position of distinguishing the elements characteristic for this concept (Maranhão, 2010). However, from the point of view of our understanding of the issue, the problems can be narrowed down to the following thesis: dialogue is possible when society possesses the characteristics of subjectness (Duverger, 2011). Let us give a brief explanation. We understand subjectness as the ability of society to self-organization (the presence of the elements of civil society; the presence of approximately universal ideas about the properties of power,

the ability to harmonize the basic positions on such social parameters as the attitude to law, property, government, labor, etc.) (Silanteva, 2013).

RESULTS

Within the framework of this study, we are hardly capable of considering all aspects. Therefore, we focus our attention only on the society's assessment of the properties of the government authorities. The main attention will be paid to the Russian specifics. In addition to this, we add a little material needed for the comparison of the similar processes in the USA and the countries of Eastern Europe.

Stereotypes of the perception of government authorities in the Russian society are formed in the period of changes, when social consciousness develops under the influence of the most diverse kinds of values, on an ideological field of enormous extent from the old-Russian archaic ideas to the Western liberalism. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the attitude to authorities is going to be controversial. Let us find out whether it is so by turning to the empirical data.

TABLE 1: MAIN STEREOTYPES OF MASS PERCEPTION OF THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES "TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT ..." (IN PERCENT) (DISTRIBUTION OF BASIC DATA OF THE RESEARCH "AUTHORITIES AND SOCIETY", 2008)

<i>Statements</i>	<i>I agree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	<i>Difficult to answer</i>
Government is necessary for the establishment of order in the society	78	18	4
Power and politics are a dirty business	57	28	15
Citizens must respect the government	84	12	4
There are countries where the government cares about the common people	77	8	15
Power corrupts people	81	12	7
People always have a government they deserve	36	51	13
The interests of authorities and common people always contradict each other	67	22	11
Whatever the government, the people must obey it	48	45	8
Historically, whatever the government in Russia, it is not liked	51	35	14

Analyzing the presented data, we need to pay attention to several antinomies which point to the contradictory nature of the Russian people's attitude toward government. The above statements reveal the stereotypes of the attitude towards government as a category. It is very important because it removes the need for us to make allowances for the people's discontent of modern Russian government and its policies. The identification of the values and stereotypes is performed, so to speak, in sterile conditions to the extent possible in the social science research.

The first antinomy is as follows: “Citizens must respect the government” (84%) vs. “Power corrupts people” (81%) (Table 1). What strikes here is an almost total and unanimous concurrence of two opposites. Summarizing them, we conclude that the citizens must respect the corrupt people. However, from the perspective of the normal logic of human relations, these statements are incompatible. The government can be respected only in a society where there are certain social barriers that hinder the negative nature of the influence of power on the person possessing it. Otherwise, the government is certainly not deserving respect.

The second antinomy is: “There are countries where the government cares about the common people” (77%) vs. “The interests of authorities and common people always contradict each other” (67%) (Table 1). When assessed superficially, these statements also contradict each other. Their reconciliation can only be achieved by temporarily assuming that the government, caring about ordinary people, does so under the pressure of public opinion or other factors. In this interpretation, any authority will be interpreted negatively by the Russians. However, this assumption is only hypothetical because it does not follow from the presented data. Therefore, we take the existence of this antinomy as reality.

The third antinomy is: “The interests of authorities and common people always contradict each other” (67%) vs. “Whatever the government, the people must obey it” (48%) (Table 1). This antinomy is indisputable, because it actually undermines the implementation of the social functions of the state. In fact, the theoretical assumption about the necessity to obey the authorities, on which a half of the respondents insist, will inevitably face difficulties in the practical realization, when the individual decides to obey the authorities, the interests of which are contrary to his/her own interests. To subordinate one’s interests against one’s own benefit is contrary to human nature. As a result, the person will look for the ways not to obey the authorities, while trying to avoid punishment. This leads to social destabilization.

The fourth antinomy is: “Government is necessary for the establishment of order in the society” (78%) vs. “Power and politics are a dirty business” (57%) (Table 1). This antinomy is also destructive. Its first part, as a statement, reflects the opinion of the people that the government should fulfill the social function of maintaining the public order. At the same time, the recognition of the fact that politics is “a dirty business” suggests that politicians are concerned primarily about their own interests, that the social functions are a burden to them, and that they realize these functions residually. In these conditions, it is very easy to assume that the state will not be able to maintain the public order. As a result, citizens will freely interpret such concepts as public order, laws, regulations, etc.

The presence of the antinomies identified in the article, first for all, make us to raise an issue of integrity of the Russian society and the presence in it of potential threats to social stability and, in a broad sense, to the national security.

National security is understood as the state of safety of the individual, society and state from internal and external threats, which allows providing the constitutional rights, freedoms, decent quality and standard of living of citizens, sovereignty, territorial integrity and sustainable development of the Russian Federation, the defense and security of the state (Decree of the President of Russian Federation, 2009).

The concept of “social stability” in science is a matter of dispute and dissimilar opinions. A. Dontsov and E. Perelygina in their work “Social stability: from psychology to politics” (Dontsov and Perelygina, 2011) distinguish three main approaches to outline the main range of scientific views on the formulated problems.

The first one is designated by scholars as a historical-diplomatic approach. It should be noted that its representatives are mostly specialists in political sociology, whereas its subject is focused on creating a system of international security and the world-wide stability. Among the authors, we can turn our attention to M. Trachtenberg (Trachtenberg, 2012), Ch. Doran (Doran, 2013), T. Schelling (Schelling, 1961), and others. We should also note the available works on national security in the context of inter-ethnic relations, where ideology is analyzed as a condition of ensuring the national security (Frolova *et al.*, 2015), the structural factors are considered that contribute to the national security (Chernous *et al.*, 2015). There are also studies where a theoretical understanding is developed of the destructive factors that act as the national security threats to Russian society (Kirik *et al.*, 2015).

We consider a systematic approach as a more important one. As its fundamental characteristic, A. Dontsov and E. Perelygina define such property as “the state of the system and the type of motion of the system”. Within the framework of this approach, social stability is considered as a state which primarily depends on the specificities of structuring of complex systems.

In the third approach in A. Dontsov and E. Perelygina’s classification scheme, stability is studied through the concept of “situatedness”. As a criterion for its distinguishing, a definition of the “situation” concept is taken, which is understood as a particular set of circumstances that affect the organization at a particular time.

The issues of social stability and national security, when it comes to the interaction between state and society, are largely dependent on the category of trust. Using the empirical data, we consider whether there is trust between the Russian society and the specific government authorities.

The relationships between government and society are not based on innate antagonism, and by their nature they should not give rise to any antinomy. A positive perception of government depends on the success of the policy that the government implements. And if this policy is not successful, then the society, trying somehow to put government in the coordinate system of socially important institutions, gives it a positive assessment, while simultaneously neutralizing it by the statements

that express a lack of confidence or just outright rejection. This situation can be resolved either by parallel existence of the state “by itself” and the society “by itself”, or the active intervention of the authorities into the social processes with the purpose of solving social problems, or revolution, when the contradictions reach such “boiling point” where the society can no longer remain in a state of indifferent antagonism with the authorities.

Proceeding to an analysis of not the attitude to government in general, but the attitude toward the specific Russian authorities, we also discover here a mismatch in the opinion of Russians. It is easily noticeable in the following data.

TABLE 2: ESTIMATION OF CONFIDENCE IN HIGHER GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES
(RUSSIAN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH CENTER, 2014)

<i>To which extent do you trust the following government bodies?</i>			
	<i>Legislative ones (The State Duma and the Federation Council, deputies of the Legislative Assemblies)</i>	<i>Executive ones (Government, heads of regions)</i>	<i>Judicial ones (The Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Supreme Arbitration Court, regional courts, district courts)</i>
I trust completely	9	15	11
I rather trust	36	49	32
I rather distrust	32	18	27
I absolutely distrust	9	7	13
Difficult to answer	14	11	17

In these figures, it is noteworthy that the Russians’ attitude to the two branches of power “legislative and judicial “ on the scale of “trust-distrust” is divided about equally. One half of the respondents trust in general or completely, whereas the other expresses distrust or is inclined to voice it to a greater extent than trust (Table 2). Such proportion is even more surprising in the society undergoing crisis, where the attitude to the authorities, it would seem, should be more distinctly negative. But here also we see a clearly expressed polarity of opinions, distributed in equal proportions.

The same antinomic attitude to authorities has been identified in the expert survey “Youth in the political processes of modern Russia”, which was conducted under the auspices of the Inter-Regional Research in the Social Sciences in May-June of 2011 in four cities of the Russian Federation: Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Voronezh, and Irkutsk. A certain sample was fixed for the survey, in which, with respect to each region, there were included two political observers, four leaders of youth political organizations, three officials from the regional committees on work with youth, one editor of youth media, two Vice-Rectors for the work with young people, five party leaders responsible for the work with the youth (the Communist Party, “United Russia”, SPS, LDPR, “Fair Russia”), two professors in political

science. In one of the questions, the experts were asked to assess the extent to which the young Russians support the existing in the country political institutions (Table 3).

TABLE 3: THE DEGREE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUPPORT OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN STATE (IN PERCENT)

<i>Political institutions</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Do not support</i>
1. Government of the Russian Federation	47.8	42.4
2. Federation Council	39.3	40.8
3. State Duma	42.1	38.3
4. Governor	64.2	32.1
5. Legislative Assembly of a subject of the Federation	31.7	35.4
6. Power structures	24.2	67.2
7. Political parties	39.7	41.3

We consider this combination of antinomies in the perception of authorities to be inadmissible from the point of view of the normal functioning of society. After all, it is clear that these contradictory statements, realized in the practical attitude to the government, are only able to generate confrontation between the authorities and society and within the society itself. They reveal chaos, uncertainty in the consciousness and, at the same time, indicate potential problems in building dialogue between the society and the authorities (Macagno, 2000).

All this creates potential threats to preservation of social stability in Russian society, and in the future, with the further disappearance of the dialogue form of interaction between society and state, they pose a threat to the national security of Russia (Zaitsev, 2013).

Discussion. Not all the researchers who have studied these problems tend to interpret the existing forms of perception of power exactly in the above manner. T. Maranhão defines the dialogue between the authorities and society as communication of equal partners. M. Duverger considers the success of the dialogue as dependent on the type of political regime, i.e. the totality of the methods of governing the society. M. Trachtenberg is convinced that dialogue is possible even in the conditions of instability, because supporting the dialogue can and should be carried out on the basis of flexible response of the authorities to the changing conditions of political reality. Ch. Doran emphasizes the permanent variability of the conditions of dialogue, and he considers its success possible provided the government policy responds flexibly to the ongoing transformations of the world.

E.M. Dolinsky and T.E. Yastrebova, who have studied this issue, note: "Such contradictory combination, however, is quite natural, because in real life, society has nowhere and never been unanimous about whatever an issue, much less about the government policy and bureaucracy. The evaluation of their certain specific

acts often very quickly changed the public opinion one way or another. Therefore, we are rather talking about a feeling of authorities, rather than a rational attitude toward them” (Dolinsky and Yastrebova, 2014).

Let us not agree with this opinion, and here is why. Firstly, so categorical a formulation as “society has nowhere and never been unanimous about whatever an issue” is surprising. Even in our society one can find many examples of collective consensus with the state policy: for example, during the time of mass repressions, the reluctance to hand over the Kuril Islands to Japan, unambiguous support of V.V. Putin’s policy of the Crimea joining Russia (Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 2014). Secondly, the pursuit of consensus is a desire, ontologically inherent to humans. The entire philosophical systems have been constructed on this (for example, John Locke) (Locke, 2015). A lack of consensus of opinions is often indicative of the inability to reach a compromise. Moreover, when the lack of consensus becomes chronic, this testifies to the existence of serious social diseases, some of which can be fatal for the society (Carley, 1991).

F. Fukuyama, who investigated this matter on the US example, described the dynamics of oscillation of the American society’s trust in the federal government. According to his data, in the year 1958, “73% of the Americans polled said they trust the federal government and characterize its actions as right either ‘in most cases’ or ‘almost always’. By the year 1994, this number dropped to 15% (according to the vote count), while by the years 1996-1997 the level of confidence increased again, so it caught up with the level of the mid to late 1920s” (Fukuyama, 2012).

Difficulties of a similar type are currently being experienced by the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe (Bedrik *et al.*, 2015).

The highest level of positive confidence is gained by the least democratic institution, the army (46%). Television and radio are trusted by 39%, the church by 43%, the President (Prime Minister) – by 35% of the respondents. The lowest level of confidence is in the political parties: 12% of respondents (Mishler and Rose, 2011). The low level of confidence in the new political institutions confirms the corresponding culturological hypothesis about a low initial trust in democratic institutions, explained by the distrust, specific for the post-socialist societies, in the former political regime, as well as the features of authoritarian cultures of the countries of that region.

The radius of trust (Fukuyama’s expression) in the post-socialist countries is limited to family ties and the contacts with the immediate circle, which complicates the formation of informal networks in civil society. The political trust, not being connected with the interpersonal one, depends on the positive assessment by the citizens of the activities of new regimes to promote social justice and liberty. For the civil societies of the countries of the post-socialist transition, the main problem remains that the assessment of the democratic regime is negative in connection

with the inevitable economic problems, which is a source of institutional skepticism (Lukin, 2005).

The conducted empirical analysis, both on the example of the expert and the mass surveys, demonstrates that there is present in the Russian society a certain level of the social instability potential, caused by the increase in the dialogue distance between the state and society. Analyzing this issue, N.I. Lapin highlights the principle of “anthropo-societal conformity”. This principle means the compatibility of the personal-behavioral characteristics of the person as a member of a society and the societal characteristics of this society. There are two basic ways to achieve such compatibility and, thus, two types of society: in a “traditional society”, the characteristics of the person must conform with the prevailing societal structures, which restrict or close the space for the individual initiatives which break the traditions (the principle of closedness); in the “liberal or modern society”, the priority is given to freedom and responsibility of people who seek to change the existing structures so that they match the growing needs and abilities of individuals and groups, open space for the goal-oriented and rational innovations (the principle of openness).

In accordance with these two ways of anthropo-societal conformity, we can identify two types of socio-cultural transformations: 1) traditionalization, which is the emergence and institutionalization of traditions and other elements of culture and social structure, which ensure the priority of the prescribed norms and rules of behavior of subjects (traditional activities) as compared with the possibilities of innovative actions; 2) liberalization (modernization), which is the expansion of the freedom of choice and responsibility of subjects, an increase in the opportunities for innovative goal-oriented and rational actions by differentiation of the structure of society, the emergence and inclusion into it of new integrative elements according to the sophistication of the individual, the growth of his/her needs and abilities (Lapin, 2000).

This diversification, about which N.I. Lapin wrote back in the year 2000, is easily detected in the surveys of the second decade of the new century. As an illustration, we present the data of the already mentioned expert survey (May-June 2011), carried out in the framework of IRRSS (Table 4).

TABLE 4: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF TODAY'S YOUTH

	<i>Choices</i>	<i>Frequency of choosing</i>
1.	Indifference, lack of expectations, political apathy of the majority of young people	17.9%
2.	Young people think of the state as a source of “top-down” rules that must be followed; fear of punishment or expectation of benefits	18.5%
3.	Young people are confident that they can play an active role in politics; pride for their country	35.3%

The first two choices reflect the prevalence of traditionalist values in the minds of young people; the third one presupposes the priority of modernist values in the young people's political culture. A simple juxtaposition of the obtained data shows that, in the views of experts, the youth is divided into two roughly equal groups, one of which is the carrier of the values of political culture of traditional society, whereas the latter has acquired the political values characteristic of modernist society.

CONCLUSION

The presented empirical data allow us making conclusion about the absence of the characteristics of subjectness of the Russian society. This conclusion is indicated by the ambiguity of the estimates of various properties of government, in which at least two properties of the Russian society are manifested: the orientation of one part of it toward the paternalistic values of traditionalist nature and the orientation of the second part of society toward the values of the Western world. Together with the absence in the Russian society of free media (almost all of them are controlled by the authorities), political parties of parliamentary type (in reality, they function as clubs serving the ambitions of individual politicians), developed civil society (a significant part of the population do not belong to any social organizations), the revealed by us value-related heterogeneity of the society in terms of its relationship to authorities eliminates any possibility of building an equal dialogue. The Russian government is acquiring the characteristic features of authoritarianism, suppressing the remnants of democratic structures. In this context, the Russian democracy could be called a façade democracy. The vector of communication between the society and the government has only one direction now: the government realizes interaction with the society by means of peremptory monologue, just as authoritarian parents do, suppressing any ability of their children to be independent.

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