

## SOCIALLY TRANSFORMATIVE SUBJECTIVITY IN THE POST-SOVIET RUSSIAN SPACE: ANTHROPOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

### *SUBJETIVIDADE SOCIALMENTE TRANSFORMADORA NO ESPAÇO RUSSO PÓS-SOVIÉTICO: FUNDAMENTOS ANTROPOLÓGICOS*

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#### **Abstract**

To examine the anthropological foundations of socially transformative subjectivity in the post-Soviet Russian context, and to identify how this subjectivity can preserve and reinforce Russia's cultural and civilizational identity amid globalization and ideological confrontation. The study adopts a philosophical-anthropological perspective, grounded in historical-logical analysis and comparative methodology. It reflects on Russia's dual position as both a unique civilization and a part of global structures. The author analyzes ideological shifts since the Soviet collapse, incorporating cultural, political, and ethical dimensions of subject formation. This work addresses a rarely studied nexus between national identity, cultural continuity, and individual subjectivity within Russia's post-Soviet transformation. It emphasizes the need for

#### **Resumo**

*Examinar os fundamentos antropológicos da subjetividade socialmente transformadora no contexto pós-soviético russo e identificar como essa subjetividade pode preservar e reforçar a identidade cultural e civilizacional da Rússia em meio à globalização e ao confronto ideológico. O estudo adota uma perspectiva filosófico-antropológica, baseada na análise histórico-lógica e na metodologia comparativa. Ele reflete sobre a posição dual da Rússia como uma civilização única e parte das estruturas globais. O autor analisa as mudanças ideológicas desde o colapso soviético, incorporando dimensões culturais, políticas e éticas da formação do sujeito. Este trabalho aborda um nexo raramente estudado entre identidade nacional, continuidade cultural e subjetividade individual na transformação pós-soviética da Rússia. Ele*



an authentic, culturally-rooted subject capable of countering externally imposed models and resisting pseudo-subjectivity shaped by media and liberal globalization. The idealized post-Soviet “New Russian” subject proved incompatible with Russia’s civilizational code, based on community, solidarity, and cultural rootedness. The failure of liberal individualism led to social disorientation, asocial behavior, and ideological vacuum. The reassertion of patriotic subjectivity, supported by policy changes and cultural education reforms, is presented as essential to restoring national coherence and agency. The paper introduces the concept of “transformative subjectivity” as an anthropological and civilizational tool for navigating modern Russian identity. It contributes to political anthropology, national ideology studies, and cultural sociology by offering a multidimensional framework for understanding subject formation in transitional societies.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Anthropology. Anthropological Model. Cultural And Civilizational Identity. Russian World. Subjectivity.

*enfatiza a necessidade de um sujeito autêntico, culturalmente enraizado, capaz de contrariar modelos impostos externamente e resistir à pseudo-subjetividade moldada pela mídia e pela globalização liberal. O sujeito pós-soviético idealizado, o “novo russo”, revelou-se incompatível com o código civilizacional da Rússia, baseado na comunidade, na solidariedade e no enraizamento cultural. O fracasso do individualismo liberal levou à desorientação social, ao comportamento anti-social e ao vácuo ideológico. A reafirmação da subjetividade patriótica, apoiada por mudanças políticas e reformas na educação cultural, é apresentada como essencial para restaurar a coerência e a agência nacionais. O artigo introduz o conceito de “subjetividade transformadora” como uma ferramenta antropológica e civilizacional para navegar pela identidade russa moderna. Ele contribui para a antropologia política, os estudos de ideologia nacional e a sociologia cultural, oferecendo uma estrutura multidimensional para a compreensão da formação do sujeito em sociedades em transição.*

**Palavras-chave:** Antropologia Filosófica. Modelo Antropológico. Identidade Cultural E Civilizacional. Mundo Russo. Subjetividade.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of the socially transformative role of an individual, social group (subjectivity in the broad sense of the word) has always been understood (Navasardova et al., 2025). The famous maxim of the great Protagoras that man is the measure of all things should not be perceived as the first realization of this wisdom in the history of social thought. This is evidenced, for example, by the institution of initiation in ancient cultures: by dividing and uniting members of a clan or tribe on gender, functional and other grounds, and thus “assigning” certain types of identity to people, society declared the necessity of different types of subjectivity for its successful survival in the surrounding environment. At subsequent stages of history, this wisdom was confirmed and refined according to the epoch and reasoning of the thinker (Augustine, 1998; Camus, 1998; Engels, 1989; Nietzsche, 1990; Perevezentsev, 2001). The contribution of Russian

philosophers to this process is original and cannot be overemphasized (Berdyaev, 1939; Herzen, 1960; Lenin, 1990; Solovyov, 1989).

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative literature review and conceptual analysis. The primary research method is a systematic review of academic sources addressing philosophical anthropology, subjectivity, national identity, and post-Soviet social transformation.

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The selection of sources was guided by the following keywords and keyword combinations: subjectivity, philosophical anthropology, national identity, cultural and civilizational identity, post-Soviet space, social transformation, Russian society, and globalization. The analysis focuses on identifying dominant theoretical approaches, conceptual frameworks, and interpretative models of subjectivity in post-Soviet contexts.

In addition, a comparative analytical method was applied to examine different models of subjectivity across cultural and civilizational contexts, allowing the identification of specific features of subject formation within the post-Soviet Russian space. A historical-analytical approach was used to trace changes in anthropological and ideological interpretations of subjectivity from the late Soviet period to the present.

The combination of literature review, conceptual analysis, and comparative interpretation provides a methodological basis for examining socially transformative subjectivity as an anthropological and civilizational phenomenon.

## 3 RESULTS

Discrediting socialist theory and practice, declaring socialism a dead-end branch of human development, liquidation of the USSR and the socialist world - ideological, theoretical and political and organizational steps that led Russia to the post-Soviet stage of its development. The values enshrined in the new Constitution of the country said that the country abandoned its Soviet past and chose the so-called “pillar road of human

“civilization” - the implementation of Eurocentric (Western, Anglo-Saxon) vision of human history (Constitution of the Russian Federation, 2004) .

For its realization there was a need for a new man, because - as it was stated in the Presidential Address to the Federal Parliament in 1995 -“... the majority of Russian citizens grew up and were brought up in a different world, radically different from the one we are entering...”, we need to “... get rid of the burden of previous prejudices, ideological dogmas, standards of political action” (Yeltsin, 1995). And what should he be, the new man: how should he understand the world and his place in it? What is the meaning of life? What values should he bow down to and what values should he turn away from? The answers to these questions had to be sought first of all in those “social heights” that were to be conquered. Practice has shown that the radical, revolutionary transformation of Russia into new realities can only be realized by a person capable of:

- subordinate all his existence and relations with other people primarily to the achievement of material and financial well-being (nothing personal, only business; who rises early - to him God gives a dollar, etc. “beacons” that will have to illuminate his life path)

- to be individualistic and adhere to the principles of “After us the deluge”, “My house is my castle”, “Every miller draws water to his own mill”.

- extend the principle of private property not only to the means of production, but also to one's body (the expression “my body is my business” is not a metaphor, but a statement of a trend that is taking root in our realities, as evidenced by sex reassignment surgeries, same-sex marriages, attempts to spread LGBT values as universally recognized)

- to be guided by the fundamental position of the Western world: “what is not forbidden by law is allowed” (absolutization of the regulating and guiding role of legal norms to the detriment of moral and ethical norms, rooted customs and traditions leads to a gap and clashes between generations of fathers and children, strengthens immorality, which is why so-called ‘naked parties’, reading Russian classics through the prism of sexuality and, often, non-traditional sexual relations are not accidental)

- it is obligatory to be religious (an atheist is tacitly declared a defective being, an inferior subject of social relations; the religious renaissance in the post-Soviet Russia resembles a return to the “new” Middle Ages).

These are just some of the essential features of the ideal (not only imagined, but also real) man of the post-Soviet Russian world. As we can see, he is absolutely opposite to the Soviet man and not only in his ideal representation, but also in his real life (Zinoviev, 1991). It is such a man (in the language of everyday life he was called “New Russian”), according to the authors of such an anthropological model, who, according to the authors of this anthropological model, is able to display the proper subjectivity and ensure the prosperity of the country at the current stage of its development.

In fact, it turned out that the so-called “New Russian” is not only the antipode of the so-called “homo soveticus” (aka “sovok”, aka the embodiment of the “aggressively obedient majority” and, finally, according to the former prima donna of Soviet pop music A. Pugacheva (n.d.) - simply “kholop and slave”, but, as a type of person, is generally alien to the culture of the Russian world. The fact is that the market economy is the basis of capitalism, whose moral and religious foundation, as argued by M. Weber (2002), is primarily Protestantism with its special ideas about salvation. Note: not Orthodoxy or even Catholicism, much less Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism. And, according to another prominent theorist of market economy Robert von Hayek (1984), its effective functioning is possible only under one condition: people must be freed from some natural instincts, among which first of all the instinct of solidarity and compassion. As we see, the proposals of R. von Hayek are also incompatible with the cultural and civilizational code of the Russian world, the core of which is sobornost, compassion. And the realization of plans to build a new social world in Russia confirmed the fundamental correctness of such anthropological calculations. “Shock therapy” as a way of jumping from the realm of ‘necessity’ (Soviet reality) to the realm of ‘freedom’ (society on the basis of market economy) condemned more than forty million Russians, in fact, to poverty (Rambler, 2023). Months working without wages people continued to work at their workplaces and, having received it, did not demand indexation for the delay, but saw in the payment of their labor a simple embodiment of justice: ‘we live by labor and it must be paid’ - they believed. Meanwhile, there were also examples of other behavior, shocking most Russians: shameless appropriation of state and collective farm and cooperative property, business on blood, financial fraud, the growth of organized crime (Yeltsin, 1994). These and similar examples even more vividly demonstrated the model of a typical person and the nature of subjectivity in a market economy. Moreover, not

only at the stage of initial capital accumulation (90s of the twentieth century), but also decades later they have not changed their essence, as evidenced, in particular, by the unprecedented treasury theft by officials of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, staggering most Russians corruption scandals involving civil servants at all levels of government, from top to bottom: mayors, governors, law enforcement and judicial officials at all levels, ministers (Safiullin et al., 2025; Mokhov et al., 2025).

The country's short-lived movement along the "pillar path of human development" began to sober up step by step those who were deceived by ideological confrontation and enchanted by the bright lights of propaganda. Not so long ago, they identified the Soviet past with the destruction of everything worthy in and for man, while the post-Soviet future was associated with such natural values and concepts addressed to the entire nation and each individual as security, freedom, welfare, solidarity (Yeltsin, 1995). It turned out that: firstly, in our past (and not only in the Soviet past) only our "own barbarism", manifested in disorder, laziness, and culturelessness, was not satisfied with it; secondly, the values of the new "bright future" are not for everyone at all; and, thirdly, the enlightened West made it clear that no one is waiting for us there and we are interesting to them at best only as a raw material appendage.

The conclusion was unambiguous: we must find our own road to building a democratic, free and fair society and state (Putin, 2005). But the search for our own road begins with understanding our identity: who are we? As in ancient times, it was difficult to answer this question: either we declared our unique "Eurasian status" or self-identified as "the largest European nation" (Yeltsin, 1994). Obviously, such uncertainty affected the idea of man and his socially transformative subjectivity demanded by society. In the public consciousness gradually began to dominate the image of man as a citizen of the world, a kind of cosmopolitan. Hence the corresponding subjectivity: a person had only to be concerned about his own well-being, there was no need to worry and care about the country that had nurtured him, because he practically lost the ground under his feet and remained "without a motherland and a flag". It seems that such subjectivity could be defined as "asocial".

The situation began to improve only when it became clear that its Western partners were not interested in Russia defending its cultural and civilizational identity. And all the talk about the need for radical changes as a condition for our country's entry into the

community of so-called civilized countries turned out to be a pure water screen to cover up the West's ambitions to become the "lord" of the world. The special military operation launched in February 2024 was a forced response to these unsubstantiated claims. It revealed an unpleasant fact: with the beginning of the Special Military Operation (SMO - author), hundreds of thousands (according to some sources, several million) young Russians went abroad and, thus, demonstrated indifference to the fate of their country at a critical moment in its history, in other words, in a mild form of asocial subjectivity towards it. And part of the creative intelligentsia, accusing Russia of all conceivable and unthinkable sins, cursing it and wishing it unconditional defeat in a special military operation, showed a frankly anti-Russian subjectivity (In the 'SWO' - disappointed!, n.d.).

The country's leadership assessed the situation as extremely alarming and took a number of steps to remedy it. First of all, we should mention the decisions related to overcoming the ideological vacuum and conformism as the main causes of the above-mentioned manifestations of anti-Russian subjectivity: For example, the introduction of the "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood" as a compulsory subject in the training of higher education personnel, the declaration of Russian citizens waging an ideological war against their own country as agents of foreign states, the strengthening of the propaganda of the traditional values of the Russian world and the best examples of the culture of other nations, the prohibition of the values of the Russian Federation and the prohibition of the Russian Federation as a state at war with its own country. Such measures were, among other things, an indirect recognition of the short-sightedness of the Russian political leadership led by B. Yeltsin, which forbade the enshrinement of the dominant state ideology in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and declared the diversity of ideologies necessary under the banner of the fight against "... fruitless disputes about the merits of certain 'isms'", because, it was said, too often "... they become symbols of confrontation and hatred, signs of misfortune" (Yeltsin, 1994). Meanwhile, as is well known, since the beginning of its post-Soviet history, social relations in the Russian Federation have been regulated on anti-communist principles and based on the recognition of the advantages of the ideology and practice of liberalism. Thus, the recognition of the inevitability of ideological confrontation, based on the division of society into "own" and "foreign", "friends and enemies", and thus the need for an ideology

that ensures the originality of cultural and civilisational identity and sovereignty, prevailed once again. Consequently, the subjectivity of the patriot of the Russian world has become in demand.

The problem analysed in this paper, both theoretically and practically, has no clear solution, both because of its multifaceted nature and because of the professional backgrounds and socio-cultural preferences of the researchers. In the conditions of total "brainwashing" by the mass media, the very possibility of subjectivity in the modern world is debated (for the majority of society, at best a controlled, "herd" subjectivity, in other words pseudo-subjectivity, is allowed; true subjectivity is recognised as possible only for representatives of the "deep" state, the backstage of the world). The understanding of subjectivity that defends the cultural and civilisational identity of the Russian world is certainly controversial, and in connection with the ongoing processes of globalisation in the modern world, the necessity of such subjectivity is disputed.

The author recognises the problematic and difficult nature of having an authentic rather than an imaginary subjectivity. The entire written history of mankind - not only its modern stage with its unprecedented possibilities of media influence on public and individual consciousness - is proof of this. However, we believe that the use of the method of doubt in relation to everything that is declared to be true and truly good for all can contribute to the formation of genuine subjectivity. This allows us to acknowledge the need to defend the cultural and civilisational identity of the Russian world as a unity of the diversity of the cultures of its peoples - equal, by the will of historical destinies cemented around Russian culture, which does not exclude globalisation as an objective process of the unification of humanity.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Once again Russia finds itself in a situation where it is forced to solve a dilemma of a truly Shakespearean sounding. Today, as in the old days, we are convinced that we can and must help ourselves. As I. Kant (1980) rightly believed, it is inadmissible to hope for the help of supernatural forces, because there are no miracles beyond the objective laws of experience, there is no divine mystery that exceeds the possibilities of our spirit. But the category 'We' hides different layers of the people of the Russian Federation and,

often, with multidirectional ideas about its future. Therefore, the problem of understanding the genuine interests of the country and the search for a social subject capable of showing the appropriate subjectivity for their achievement are more relevant than ever.

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## **Authors' Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

## **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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