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The Socio-Cultural Space of a Capital Megalopolis in the Residents' Value Orientations



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Abstract. The aim of the study is to analyze the population's value system as an indicator of the socio-cultural space of a capital megalopolis – a space that reflects the dynamic, and often polarizing, vectors of global transformation. The principal research method is a survey of Moscow residents based on the standard methodology “The Sociocultural Evolution of Russia and Its Regions”. The scientific novelty lies in identifying the degree of fragmentation of Muscovites' moral bonds. This fragmentation manifests itself, above all, in the lack of a widely shared value base and in the blurred nature of any integrating axiological core. The paper traces both common and distinctive features in the value structures of the capital's residents across socio-demographic characteristics such as gender and age. The data obtained for Moscow are compared with the findings of analogous studies of value systems conducted in other Russian regions using the same methodology. Based on the dominant value attitudes that shape the vectors of social behavior – such as migration intentions, social well-being, job satisfaction, and interaction priorities – three groups of respondents are identified: “individualists”, “traditionalists”, and “voluntarists”. The empirical results are further distributed and analyzed across functionally orienting value clusters. An attempt is made to uncover the reasons behind the findings, which include the homogenizing impact of globalization and the rapid development of virtual, mediatized spaces – alternatives to the real world, replete with axiorhizomes, consumerism, and the cult of pleasure. The authors' own position on the issue is also articulated. Its essence is that the preservation of Moscow's role as a global city, a center of consumption and consumerism – a “Tower of Babel” – runs counter to the task of restoring the capital's role as the spiritual heart of the country. In the context of Russia's development as a civilization-state, the moral foundations of all Russian society, and especially of the capital's residents, need to be further strengthened.

Key words: socio-cultural space, values, megalopolis, capital, global transformation.

Introduction

The socio-cultural space is “a system of worldview attitudes, norms, values, symbols, and their objectifications within a given culture” (Mazhitova, 2011, p. 132). It makes it possible to disclose the ontological unity of society, culture, and the human being, along with the spiritual and material dimensions of human activity (Litvinenko, 2003). It is also “a permanent process of creating meanings and events” (Shakirova, 2013, p. 180) and “a constructed meaningful location of a society, in which its cultural specificity is reflected”¹, one that shapes the formation of both individual and collective (social) identity (Kolinko, 2007). As S.A. Khrapov notes, “in the hierarchy of societal spiritual phenomena, the socio-cultural

space is primary and the most capacious, encompassing such defining cultural phenomena as language, social memory, mentality, the social unconscious, public consciousness, socio-cultural identity, and habitus” (Khrapov, 2016, p. 834).

As urbanization processes intensify, the role of cities in shaping the socio-cultural space of modernity grows. Moreover, distinctly urban socio-cultural spaces emerge – dynamically developing organisms (Postnikov, 2008, p. 7), special types of social organization that “are most clearly manifested in social topography, distinguished by the specificity of intellectual and artistic activity, a particular way of life, and the worldview and perception of the world of various strata of the urban population” (Adamenko, 2011, p. 4).

Cities become centers and mirrors of social life, reproducing and developing social relations (Sayko, 2011, p. 8), and often serve as transmitters

¹ Shakirova E.Yu. (2015). Axiological Rhizomorphism of the Contemporary Socio-Cultural Space: Abstract of Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy) Dissertation. Specialty 09.00.11 – Social Philosophy. Ufa. 43 p. P. 11.

of meanings to non-urbanized territories. “Every city possesses a unique socio-cultural space, which acts not merely as a neutral backdrop but rather as a kind of construct – a space of meaning created by people in the course of communicative interaction and reflecting the cultural specificity of the social organization of the society under study...”. Thus, on the one hand, a city’s socio-cultural space is shaped by its inhabitants and determined by their creative energy, while on the other, serving as a kind of ‘context’ ... of everyday reality, it influences the worldview of urban residents and their self-determination” (Zakharova, 2017, p. 22).

At the same time, the space of the capital megalopolis generates meanings that extend far beyond its territorial boundaries – owing, first, to the dynamism of life in a large city and, second, to its central role within the national space. The significance of such megalopolises becomes especially pronounced in periods of systemic crisis, or, in the words of the President of the Russian Federation, during the “tectonic process of global transformation. This is a visible manifestation of the transition to a new cultural, economic, technological, and geopolitical era. The world is entering a zone of turbulence. And, undoubtedly, this period will be protracted and painful. There is no point in entertaining illusions here”².

Research methodology and methods

Values as an indicator of the state of the socio-cultural space

Studying the megalopolis through the lens of the spatial approach serves as a means of interpreting and forecasting urban life (Mohamed, 2026). Within the framework of the socio-cultural approach, “the space of the city, with the meanings embedded in it, sets the coordinates for the cultural existence of people within certain territorial boundaries” (Zakharova, 2017, p. 22). The foundation of the socio-cultural space is formed by a system of worldview universals, the most significant value-

symbolic orientations³ (Gavrilina, 2019, p. 26; Bernyukevich, 2022, p. 14) on which rests the system of “the individual’s relationship to the surrounding world and to other individuals” (Grigorieva, 2011, p. 97).

Let us examine the system of value orientations of Muscovites using the methodology developed by N.I. Lapin (Lapin, 2010), drawing on the findings of the initiative-based sociological study “Our City,” conducted in December 2023 by the research group of the Department of Political Analysis and Social-Psychological Processes at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics under the supervision of Doctor of Sciences (Sociology), Professor E.V. Kargapolova.

A survey of Moscow residents was conducted using the standard methodology tested since 2006 in 30 regions, developed under the All-Russian Research Program “Sociocultural Evolution of Russia and Its Regions” at the Center for the Study of Sociocultural Changes (CSCC) of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (federal-level supervisors: Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy), Professor N.I. Lapin, and Doctor of Sciences (Sociology), Leading Researcher, Head of the CSCC at the Institute of Philosophy RAS L.A. Belyaeva)⁴.

The aim of this study is to analyze the population’s value system as an indicator of the socio-cultural space of the capital megalopolis – a space that reflects the dynamic and often polarized vectors of global transformations.

The research method was an online questionnaire survey (N = 1,070). The sampling type was purposive. To this end, our research group has spent

² Putin V.V. (2012). Russia muscles up – the challenges we must rise to face. *Vestnik Rossiiskoi natsii*, 2-3 (22-23), 66–71.

³ Tuliganova I.V. (2009). The Socio-Cultural Space of the Contemporary City: Abstract of Candidate of Sciences (Philosophy) Dissertation. Specialty 09.00.01 – Social Philosophy. Saratov. 18 p. P. 8.

⁴ For more details on the Standard Methodology, see: (Lapin, Belyaeva, 2010). For some results using this methodology, see: (Sokolova, 2023; Kogai, 2023; Agafonova, Romashkina, 2024; Andrianova, 2024; Valiakhmetov, Turakaev, 2024; Gruzdeva, Zhdanova, 2024; Gruzdeva, Kogai, 2024a; Kogai, 2024b; Markova et al., 2025; Sokolova, Kalachikova, 2025).

several years developing an algorithm for conducting online surveys with pre-set quota parameters. Interviewers were assigned the task of surveying respondents from the target group according to these quotas. In this particular study, quotas were set for gender and age. Using a Google Form, respondents provided the interviewer's surname and their own contact information, which made it possible to monitor the interviewers' work. As a result, the gender-age structure of the surveyed sample matches that of the general population of Moscow: 43.2% of respondents were male and 56.8% female; 27.7% were young people (14 to 35

years inclusive), 46.7% were adults (36 to 59 years inclusive), and 25.6% were older adults (60 years and above)⁵.

The methods of mathematical data processing included the calculation of weighted mean scores on a 10-point scale, ranking, cluster distribution according to N.I. Lapin's methodology, as well as factor analysis and regression analysis.

Findings

An analysis of the value system drawing on the findings of an empirical study of Moscow residents reveals that not a single value entered the integrating core (*Tab. 1*). The same situation was identified

Table 1. Value preferences of the Moscow population, weighted mean score on a 10-point scale / rank

Value	Score	Rank	
1. INTEGRATING CLUSTER OF VALUES			
a) integrating core (above 8.8 points)			
b) integrating reserve (7.81–8.79 points)			
The most precious thing in the world is human life, and no one has the right to take a person's life under any circumstances	Human life	8.74	1
Personal safety should be ensured by law and law enforcement agencies	Order	8.61	2
The main focus in life should be on establishing good family and friendly relations	Sociability	8.19	3
I have become who I am mainly through my own efforts	Independence	8.14	4
The most important thing in life is taking care of one's health and well-being	Well-being	7.96	5
Freedom is something without which a person's life loses its meaning	Freedom	7.91	6
People and the state should care above all for children	Family	7.89	7
DIFFERENTIATING CLUSTER OF VALUES			
a) opposing differential (6.0–7.80 points)			
Only meaningful, interesting work deserves to be pursued as one's main life's work	Work	7.41	8
The most important thing is initiative, enterprise, and the search for something new in work and life, even if one finds oneself in the minority	Initiative	6.94	9
The most important thing is respect for established customs and traditions	Tradition	6.86	10
Under any circumstances, beauty makes a person better and purer	Morality	6.74	11
A moral, conscientious person should help the poor and the weak, even if it means going without something oneself	Self-sacrifice	6.01	12
b) conflictogenic periphery (5.99 points and below)			
A person should strive above all to have power and the ability to influence others	Power	3.94	13
There are circumstances when a person may, of their own free will, encroach upon another person's life	Willfulness	3.74	14
MEAN SUPPORT SCORE FOR BASIC VALUES 7.08			
MEAN SUPPORT SCORE FOR UNIVERSAL VALUES (order, well-being, work, sociability, morality, power) 7.14			
MEAN SUPPORT SCORE FOR MODERN VALUES (human life, freedom, independence, initiative) 7.93			
MEAN SUPPORT SCORE FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES (tradition, family, self-sacrifice, willfulness) 6.12			
MODERNITY/TRADITIONALITY COEFFICIENT OF THE VALUE STRUCTURE 1.29			
Source: own compilation.			

⁵ The distribution by age groups was carried out in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and the WHO classification. The oldest respondent among those we surveyed was 91 years old.

in the Kursk Region based on survey results from the same year, 2023 (Markova et al., 2025), and in the Astrakhan Region from a population survey conducted in 2016, which attested to the marginality of the population's consciousness in that border region – a condition shaped both by the historical specifics of the territory's settlement and by the global transformations of recent decades. The socio-cultural space of the capital region – present-day Moscow – likewise exhibits a certain fragmentation in the value consciousness of its population.

It should be noted that in other Russian regions that participated in empirical studies employing N.I. Lapin's methodology in 2023, the integrating core of values contained from two to six values, among them order, initiative, sociability, well-being, family, human life, and independence. Among the regions represented, the fewest values (two) in the integrating core were recorded in the Republic of Bashkortostan, and the greatest number were found in the Sverdlovsk Region and the Chechen Republic⁶ (Gruzdeva, Zhdanova, 2024; Markova et al., 2025). In Moscow, these values were recorded in the integrating reserve; the value of human life ranks first in terms of support (with a minimal margin of 0.06 points from the integrating core), followed by the values of order and sociability, independence, and family – the latter closing out the group of values in the integrating reserve.

The shift of the value of human life from the integrating core to the integrating reserve – that is, a decline in the degree of its endorsement – may signal a deepening dehumanization of human relations and a spiritual and moral crisis. The declining support for the value of family points to growing atomization, while lower support for the values of sociability and order – the formal

(order) and informal (sociability) rules that serve as the bonds underpinning interpersonal and social relations, compliance with legal norms, and the maintenance of moral foundations, all of which have traditionally been highly prized in society – reflects a disorganization of public life.

The majority of Moscow residents do not share the values of the opposing differential. These values have ceased to serve as integrators and have begun to perform the function of preserving and altering the structure of statuses and roles. It is noteworthy that, for Moscow residents, the opposing differential of values includes the values of work, initiative, tradition, morality, and self-sacrifice, while the conflictogenic periphery includes power and willfulness. According to the findings of long-term observations conducted in a number of Russian regions and across the country as a whole using N.I. Lapin's methodology, the functional layer of the conflictogenic periphery has exhibited a high degree of stability; it is typically formed by the categories of “willfulness” and “power,” which “overall attests to the population's ambivalent attitude toward traditionalist willfulness and universal power” (Lapin, 2010, p. 31).

The mean support score across all values stands at 7.08, with universal human values at 7.14. Support for modern values substantially exceeds support for traditional ones. As in other Russian regions, the integrating reserve is composed predominantly of universal human values. Thus, consistent with the findings of long-term studies conducted across Russia's regions since 2006, the structure of basic values among Muscovites reflects “a dynamic coexistence of three culturally distinct types of values – universal, traditional, and modern”⁷.

⁶ Sociocultural Portrait of Russia's Regions – 2023: Database. Contributors: A.A. Shabunova, L.A. Belyaeva, G.F. Romashkina, E.A. Kogai, A.N. Tarasova, O.N. Kalachikova, R.M. Valiakhmetov, M.M. Yusupov, Yu.S. Markova, E.V. Andrianova, Yu.M. Pasovets, M.A. Gruzdeva, A.N. Gordievskaya, M.S. Turakaev. Database Registration Certificate RU 2024623834, 30.08.2024. Application No. 2024623498 dated August 15, 2024.

⁷ Sociocultural Portrait of Russia's Regions – 2023: Database. Contributors: A.A. Shabunova, L.A. Belyaeva, G.F. Romashkina, E.A. Kogai, A.N. Tarasova, O.N. Kalachikova, R.M. Valiakhmetov, M.M. Yusupov, Yu.S. Markova, E.V. Andrianova, Yu.M. Pasovets, M.A. Gruzdeva, A.N. Gordievskaya, M.S. Turakaev. Database Registration Certificate RU 2024623834, 30.08.2024. Application No. 2024623498 dated August 15, 2024. P. 670.

Distribution of values by gender and age groups

When the survey results are examined by age group, only among older adults did a single value – human life – enter the integrating core (Tab. 2). Among young people, this value ranks second, yielding to the value of order. The latter receives the highest level of support in this age group compared to adults and older adults. Sociability is rated highest by older adults, whereas young people show a preference for well-being, and adults – for independence. Freedom is the least important for older adults, while family is rated by them more highly than by youth and adults alike. Among young people, family falls entirely into the opposing differential of values – that is, it is not endorsed by a substantial share of respondents.

Work falls into the opposing differential for all age groups, though it receives the highest support from young people, as do initiative and morality. The values of tradition and self-sacrifice are most strongly shared by older adults. Among youth and adults, self-sacrifice falls into the conflictogenic periphery of values. Young people also endorse the values of power and willfulness to a significantly greater degree than do adults and older adults. The mean support score for basic values is highest among older adults and lowest among adults. Universal human values receive greater support from young people, while traditional values are more strongly endorsed by older adults.

A comparative analysis of the value hierarchy of women and men in Moscow offers further valuable

Table 2. Distribution of value orientations by cluster (weighted mean scores on a 10-point scale)

Cluster	Youth		Adults		Older adults		Men		Women	
	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score
Integrating core	–	–	–	–	Human life	8.86	–	–	Human life	9.07
Integrating reserve	Order	8.64	Human life	8.77	Order	8.60	Order	8.42	Order	8.74
	Human life	8.59	Order	8.58	Sociability	8.52	Human life	8.31	Sociability	8.36
	Well-being	8.22	Indepen- dence	8.25	Family	8.36	Sociability	7.96	Indepen- dence	8.30
	Indepen- dence	7.95	Sociability	8.24	Well-being	8.18	Independence	7.93	Well-being	8.06
	Freedom	7.95	Family	7.99	Indepen- dence	8.15	Well-being	7.82	Family	8.04
	Sociability	7.81	Freedom	7.94	Freedom	7.85	–	–	Freedom	8.04
Opposing differential	Work	7.71	Well-being	7.70	Tradition	7.79	Freedom	7.77	Work	7.40
	Family	7.29	Work	7.37	Work	7.19	Family	7.70	Tradition	7.06
	Initiative	7.26	Tradition	6.81	Self- sacrifice	6.85	Work	7.43	Morality	6.86
	Morality	6.86	Initiative	6.80	Initiative	6.84	Initiative	7.15	Initiative	6.76
	Tradition	6.12	Morality	6.72	Morality	6.60	Tradition	6.61	–	–
	–	–	–	–	–	–	Morality	6.56	–	–
	–	–	–	–	–	–	Self-sacrifice	6.11	–	–
Conflictogenic periphery	Self- sacrifice	5.37	Self-sacrifice	5.94	Power	3.58	Willfulness	4.42	Self- sacrifice	5.93
	Power	4.71	Power	3.69	Willfulness	3.11	Power	4.22	Power	3.73
	Willfulness	4.70	Willfulness	3.53	–	–	–	–	Willfulness	3.22
Mean support score for values										
basic	7.08		7.02		7.18		7.03		7.11	
universal	7.32		7.05		7.11		7.07		7.19	
modern	7.94		7.94		7.92		7.79		8.04	
traditional	5.87		6.07		6.53		6.21		6.06	
Coefficient of modernity / traditionality of the value structure										
	1.35		1.31		1.21		1.25		1.33	
Source: own compilation.										

insights. Among women, one value (human life) enters the integrating core. Among men, no value at all falls into this cluster. For men, the value of order occupies the top position in the hierarchy; for women, it ranks second, though women endorse it far more strongly than men do. It is also noteworthy that women give preference to what are, in essence, “non-feminine” values – independence, well-being, family, and freedom (for men, the latter two values land entirely in the opposing differential).

For men, the value of initiative is (predictably) more important, whereas for women, morality and tradition carry greater weight. Men attach greater importance to self-sacrifice, whereas for women this value falls into the conflictogenic periphery. Moreover, men endorse the values of the conflictogenic

periphery – power and willfulness – far more strongly than women do.

Overall, the mean support score for basic, universal, and modern values is higher among women, while the score for traditional values is higher among men.

Factor analysis of the value system of Muscovites

In order to examine the structure of respondents' values, a factor analysis was also conducted using the principal component method with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. The rotation of the factor matrix converged in five iterations. Each extracted factor, selected and presented in the matrix, has a positive loading of ≥ 0.35 (Tab. 3). A three-factor solution was identified for the value scale, which together accounts for 47.145% of the

Table 3. Factor matrix of the population's values

Survey question	Component		
	1	2	3
	Individualism	Traditionalism	Voluntarism
19.4. Freedom is something without which a person's life loses its meaning ($M \pm SD = 7.92 \pm 2.431$)	.679		
19.6. Personal safety should be ensured by law and law enforcement agencies ($M \pm SD = 8.61 \pm 1.93$)	.624		
19.2. The most important thing in life is taking care of one's health and well-being ($M \pm SD = 7.96 \pm 2.24$)	.620		
19.5. Only meaningful, interesting work deserves to be pursued as one's main life's work ($M \pm SD = 7.42 \pm 2.49$)	.602		
19.9. I have become who I am mainly through my own efforts ($M \pm SD = 8.14 \pm 1.99$)	.601		
19.13. The most precious thing in the world is human life, and no one has the right to take a person's life under any circumstances ($M \pm SD = 8.74 \pm 2.24$)	.448	.397	
19.14. The most important thing is respect for established customs and traditions ($M \pm SD = 6.87 \pm 2.69$)		.743	
19.11. A moral, conscientious person should help the poor and the weak, even if it means going without something oneself ($M \pm SD = 6.01 \pm 2.94$)		.712	
19.8. People and the state should care above all for children ($M \pm SD = 7.89 \pm 2.24$)		.710	
19.7. The main focus in life should be on establishing good family and friendly relations ($M \pm SD = 8.19 \pm 2.07$)	.454	.542	
19.10. A person should strive above all to have power and the ability to influence others ($M \pm SD = 3.94 \pm 3.02$)			.774
19.3. There are circumstances when a person may, of their own free will, encroach upon another person's life ($M \pm SD = 3.74 \pm 3.50$)			.687
19.12. The most important thing is initiative, enterprise, and the search for something new in work and life, even if one finds oneself in the minority ($M \pm SD = 6.93 \pm 2.49$)			.465
19.1. Under any circumstances, beauty makes a person better and purer ($M \pm SD = 6.73 \pm 2.90$)			.390
Cronbach's Alpha	.728	.703	.591
% of variance explained	18.941	15.991	12.213
Mean of items	8.140	7.542	5.336
Range of items	1.327	2.735	3.185
Variance	.198	1.197	2.988
Source: own compilation.			

variance. The Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the presented solution was 0.817 with $p < 0.001$.

The first factor (18.94% of variance) can be interpreted as reflecting an orientation toward individualistic values. The second factor (15.99% of variance) is associated with traditional values. The third factor (12.21% of variance) corresponds to respondents' orientation toward values of power, dominance, and enterprise.

Next, we assessed the variables that may influence respondents' particular value orientations. For this purpose, linear regression analysis was performed using the ordinary least squares method with stepwise variable selection. The dependent variables in the models were the previously extracted factors, which characterize the value-reflexive attitudes of the surveyed citizens.

The indicators of the linear model linking the orientation toward individualistic values with the independent variables are presented in *Table 4*. This

model has an extremely low coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.058$). At the same time, the model exhibits no multicollinearity among the variables ($VIF < 4$), and the absence of heteroscedasticity is confirmed by the lack of autocorrelation in the model's residuals (Durbin – Watson = 1.935). Overall, the model possesses a high degree of significance ($p < 0.001$), which attests to the reliability of the obtained result.

Let us note the characteristics of several independent variables included in the model.

1. The respondents would not want their children to move to smaller Russian cities. They hold an extremely positive view of their children moving abroad for permanent residence.

2. This group believes that their life is highly dependent on the actions of the Russian authorities and is, on the whole, characterized by more oppositional attitudes. At the same time, they lack strong ties with their close friends and those around them, believing that the improvement of their

Table 4. Regression model for assessing the relationship between “individualistic” value orientations and social behavior

Model 1	Unstandardized coefficients		T	Significance	Collinearity statistics	
	B	Standard error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.394	.137	2.885	.004		
8.3. I would like my children to move to a smaller town/village and live there	-.144	.027	-5.365	.000	.884	1.132
14. Are you satisfied with your job?	.104	.029	3.584	.000	.992	1.008
9.3. In your opinion, to what extent does the improvement of your life today depend... (on friends, fellow countrymen)?	-.096	.026	-3.705	.000	.888	1.126
8.4. I would like my children to move abroad, to another country	.059	.022	2.643	.008	.912	1.097
9.6. In your opinion, to what extent does the improvement of your life today depend... (on the federal authorities)?	.068	.026	2.591	.010	.948	1.055
<i>R</i>	.240					
<i>R square</i>	.058					
Standard error of the estimate	.976					
Durbin – Watson	1.935					
<i>F</i>	12.964					
<i>p</i>	.000					

Source: own calculations.

daily life does not depend in any way on building interpersonal relationships.

3. At the same time, a significant positive correlation was found between high satisfaction with all aspects of one's job and individualistic values.

The indicators of the linear model linking the population's traditional values with the independent variables are presented in *Table 5*. This model has a substantially higher coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.251$) and also a high level of significance ($p < 0.001$).

Let us note the characteristics of several independent variables included in the model.

1. Respondents with traditional value orientations would like their children to continue living in their hometown. They hold a negative attitude toward the idea of their children and relatives moving abroad.

2. This group is characterized by a high level of religiosity, which substantially reinforces their orientation toward traditional Russian values. They are also characterized by a higher average age than all other groups.

3. They believe that the improvement of their life today depends directly on their interpersonal relationships with friends and fellow countrymen.

Table 5. Regression model for assessing the relationship between "traditional" value orientations and social behavior

Model 2	Unstandardized coefficients		T	Significance	Collinearity statistics	
	B	Standard error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.645	.176	-3.670	.000		
8.1. I would like my children to build their lives in their hometown – right here, where we live	.197	.027	7.258	.000	.875	1.143
33. What can you say about your religiosity?	.216	.027	8.078	.000	.925	1.082
8.4. I would like my children to move abroad, to another country	-.132	.021	-6.416	.000	.846	1.182
Age groups (youth, adults, older adults)	.224	.038	5.947	.000	.919	1.088
9.3. In your opinion, to what extent does the improvement of your life today depend... (on friends, fellow countrymen)?	.069	.022	3.098	.002	.948	1.054
<i>R</i>	.501					
<i>R square</i>	.251					
Standard error of the estimate	.862					
Durbin – Watson	2.044					
<i>F</i>	70.928					
<i>p</i>	.000					
Source: own calculations.						

The indicators of the linear model linking voluntarism and the orientation toward dominance with the independent variables are presented in *Table 6*. This model has a fairly low coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.126$) and also a high level of significance ($p < 0.001$).

Let us note the characteristics of several independent variables included in the model.

1. This group is characterized by high confidence in their future. They also tend to be relatively young people.

2. These respondents believe that the improvement of their life depends primarily on their immediate social circle, which unites them with the representatives of the “traditionalists”.

3. The main distinguishing feature of these respondents was the desire to improve their own situation and that of their family by any means

possible, including through the potential relocation of their children to another large Russian city or, even better, to any foreign country.

Thus, based on the findings of the factor analysis, we distinguish three groups of respondents whose dominant values determine important orientations in their social behavior: migration attitudes, priorities for interacting with social actors, social well-being, job satisfaction, and so forth.

Functionally orienting clusters of values

N.I. Lapin distinguishes between terminal values-goals and instrumental values-means. The traditional terminal values-goals include tradition and family; the universal ones include order, well-being, and work; the modern ones include life and freedom. Among the instrumental values, traditional (self-sacrifice and willfulness), universal (sociability, morality, and power), and modern (independence

Table 6. Regression model for assessing the relationship between “voluntarist” value orientations and social behavior

Model 3	Unstandardized coefficients		T	Significance	Collinearity statistics	
	B	Standard error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.329	.147	-2.235	.026		
8.4. I would like my children to move abroad, to another country	.137	.022	6.102	.000	.842	1.187
11. To what extent are you confident or not confident about your future today?	.122	.026	4.769	.000	.977	1.024
9.3. In your opinion, to what extent does the improvement of your life today depend... (on friends, fellow countrymen)?	.107	.024	4.363	.000	.921	1.086
Age groups (youth, adults, older adults)	-.122	.040	-3.040	.002	.955	1.047
8.2. I would like my children to move to other large cities in our country and live there	.066	.026	2.559	.011	.837	1.194
<i>R</i>	.354					
<i>R square</i>	.126					
Standard error of the estimate	.935					
Durbin – Watson	1.856					
<i>F</i>	30.499					
<i>p</i>	.000					

Source: own calculations.

and initiative) are also identified. Thus, according to N.I. Lapin's methodology, three functionally orienting clusters are theoretically constructed from the fourteen values studied – five values in each cluster (with the value of “freedom” being included in two clusters) (Lapin, 2010, p. 28). Let us examine the system of value preferences of the Moscow population in the spheres of life sustenance, the regulation of people's behavior, and communication between the individual and the social and cultural structures of society (*Tab. 7*).

Table 7. Functionally orienting clusters of basic values of the Moscow population

Value	Score
1. Life-sustaining cluster	
Independence	8.14
Well-being	7.96
Family	7.89
Work	7.41
Initiative	6.94
2. Institutional-regulatory cluster	
Order	8.61
Freedom	7.91
Tradition	6.86
Power	3.94
Willfulness	3.74
3. Anthropic-communicative cluster	
Human life	8.74
Sociability	8.19
Freedom	7.91
Morality	6.74
Self-sacrifice	6.01
Source: own compilation.	

The life-sustaining cluster encompasses values closely related to the life-sustaining functions of individuals and households, organizations and settlements, regions and society. Paradoxically, the dominant value in this cluster among Muscovites is the value of independence. Well-being and family follow. It is also paradoxical that in a dynamic city that offers numerous opportunities for professional fulfillment and initiative, the values of work and initiative are not dominant within the life-sustaining cluster.

The value system of the institutional-regulatory cluster of the Moscow population is similar to that of Russia as a whole. “This uniformity attests to the high stability of the hierarchy within this value cluster, a result of Russia's long historical development that also takes into account the transformational processes of recent decades. Indeed, the value of order has long been fused in the consciousness of Russians (as it is among the peoples of many countries) with adherence to traditions, while rebellious-revolutionary events are perceived either as short-lived outbursts or as a new order that will soon become traditional. Power and willfulness have also become components of political life and everyday behavior in Russia – partly in conflict with each other, partly coexisting; yet the majority of the population rejects them”⁸.

In the capital, as in other Russian regions, the anthropo-communicative cluster places the value of “human life” at the apex of the hierarchy, followed “as its immediate, closest prerequisite by the value of sociability, which is exercised primarily in accordance with the norms of freedom, as well as self-sacrifice... and morality...”⁹.

Discussion of findings

What, then, are the reasons behind the findings that characterize the value orientations of Muscovites? While making no claim to an exhaustive list, since the question requires further observation and study, these reasons can be tentatively divided into three groups: changes in the socio-cultural space of humanity, of Russia as a whole, and of the capital itself.

⁸ Regions in Russia: Sociocultural Portraits of Regions in the All-Russian Context. Institute of Philosophy. Center for the Study of Sociocultural Changes. Scientific-Coordination Council of the Section of the FSPP UN RAS “Problems of Sociocultural Evolution of Russia and Its Regions”; comp. and gen. ed.: N.I. Lapin, L.A. Belyaeva. Moscow: Academia, 2009. 807 p. P. 679.

⁹ Ibidem. P. 681.

It should be noted that Moscow's socio-cultural space is being transformed under the influence of globalization, internationalization, and cultural assimilation in the context of the integration of the economic, political, cultural, and spiritual-informational spheres of life in most countries of the world, growing intercultural ties, the rapid proliferation of various technologies and means of communication, and the formation of a unified information space for all (Grigorieva, 2011, p. 97).

This space is characterized by the presence of axiorhizomes – “value formations that constitute a degenerated system and contain within their structure several equipollent value vectors-directions”¹⁰. Axiorhizomes are marked by non-equilibrium wholeness, organizational disorder, continuous fluidity, value relativism, traumatic potential, nonlinear development, paradoxicality, extreme-crisis social riskogenicity, temporal ruptures of meaning, and the destruction of meanings. “In such a society, owing to the multiplicity of value ‘roots’-foundations of the rhizomatic axiosphere, value relativism reaches its highest degree, and uncertainty attains its maximum value. The crisis is characterized by the loss of supporting components and the departure of the socio-cultural space beyond boundary points ... The Russian socio-cultural space of today is a space of permanent confrontation between disorganizing and self-organizing forces”¹¹. As L.A. Tsyganova emphasizes, the modern world is becoming a world “of relatively simple socio-cultural identifiers, whose original meaning is frequently lost” (Tsyganova, 2022, p. 174).

The population's value orientations are changing not only under the unifying influence of globalization but also under the impact of the emerging information society, accompanied by

the rapid spread of electronic communications, particularly the internet. The internet environment aspires to become “a new socio-cultural space for the life and development of the modern individual, a sphere of self-realization, agency, and self-fulfillment” (Kramarenko, 2016, p. 39). Yet the manipulative nature and anonymity of online communication, along with the absence of system-forming factors within the avalanche-like flows of information, leave users unprepared to filter that information or to undergo resocialization. This amplifies the tendency toward the spread of various forms of deviant behavior and addictions prompted by the situation of anomie in traditional culture¹². Such a situation often manifests itself in the ambivalence and vagueness of moral attitudes. It should be noted that this situation may also activate certain forms of traditional culture, since electronic culture – which, like culture in general, sets the vectors and meanings of human activity – is still in its formative stage and, within its framework, stable models of personal identification have yet to be offered. At the same time, however, the electronic screen environment is scaling up, and its embeddedness in the everyday practices of the majority of people is intensifying the process of information-communication globalization (Berleva, 2022). The electronic screen environment directs the individual's cognitive activity outward, toward visual (virtual) screen images, thereby distracting from self-knowledge, the exploration of the inner world, and the building of the deep interpersonal relationships that constitute the foundation of spiritual experience.

This leads, on the one hand, to a deficit of productive pursuits and interests, and on the other, to contradictions “between the values of society, dictated by the current pace of economic development, and the insufficient internalization

¹⁰ Shakirova E.Yu. (2015). *Axiological Rhizomorphism of the Contemporary Socio-Cultural Space: Abstract of Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy) Dissertation. Specialty 09.00.11 – Social Philosophy. Ufa. 43 p. P. 11.*

¹¹ Ibidem. Pp. 11–13.

¹² Shamykina V.M. (2012). *Managerial Interactions in the Socio-Informational Blogosphere: Abstract of Candidate of Sciences (Sociology) Dissertation. Specialty 22.00.08 – Sociology of Management. Moscow. 22 p.*

of universally significant values”¹³, as well as between goals and the strategies for achieving them, and between an adherence to the values of pleasure and passively entertaining activities and the values of effort and achievement¹⁴. This adherence to such goals is one reason why, according to research findings not only in Moscow but also in other regions of Russia, the category of “morality” occupies an unstable position within the population’s system of value orientations, hovering on the lower boundary between the opposing differential and the conflictogenic periphery.

The findings of the empirical study of Moscow’s value orientations also reflect the characteristics of Russia’s socio-cultural space, whose principal mechanisms of change are “fixation, conflict, integration, de-actualization, and actualization” (Khrapov, 2016, p. 834). The population’s value orientations are shifting under the influence of the institutional transformations that have taken place in Russia in recent decades, engendering a situation of anomie in the life of virtually an entire generation. The vector of these institutional transformations pointed away from collectivism toward individualism, replacing traditional values with Western, individualistic ones, and moving from service to society and the state toward a focus on achievement and the intrinsic value of the individual person¹⁵ (Davydova, 2012; Gulyaikhin, 2013; Ilyin,

Morev, 2022). At the same time, the difficulties of institutional reform “resulted in the activation of reverse social mechanisms that push society back toward its past. In essence, an impulse was given within the country to the development of a process of demodernization and archaization. Large masses of people began, spontaneously and unconsciously, to turn back to archaic cultural meanings and the corresponding social practices” (Kogai, 2023, pp. 3–4).

Empirical studies of the value orientations of various social groups in contemporary Russia – young people in particular – have begun to record a contradictory combination of modern and traditional values¹⁶ (Dulina et al., 2015; Kogai, 2023). The eclecticism and internal contradictoriness of the value-orientation system are reflected in the findings of the Moscow survey. It should also be noted that, according to the findings of our study, the shift of the value of self-sacrifice into the conflictogenic periphery among young people and adults – especially among women – may signal a dangerous symptom, since self-sacrifice constitutes a system-forming component of collectivism and forms part of the national socio-cultural code.

The socio-cultural space of the contemporary city is characterized by “fluidity, transitivity, porosity, rhythmicity, and an unsystematic nature” (Kostko, 2021, p. 54). Within the contemporary city as a complex system, “processes of generation, concentration, development, decay, and innovation of material-physical and non-material elements of the reproduction of human life activity are taking place simultaneously, under conditions of permanent risk, conflicts, clashes of interests, and transformational changes in society – all of which cannot but influence the value orientations of city

¹³ Makhyanova A.V. (2013). *Personality Socialization in Modern Conditions: Internalization Imbalance and Ways to Overcome It* (Based on Materials from the Republic of Tatarstan): Abstract of Doctor of Sciences (Sociology) Dissertation. Specialty 22.00.04 – Social Structure, Social Institutions and Processes. Saransk. 43 p.

¹⁴ Pshishok A.A. (2012). *Norm and Deviation in Youth Subculture: Problems of Socialization in Contemporary Russia: Abstract of Candidate of Sciences (Sociology) Dissertation. Specialty 22.00.06 – Sociology of Culture. Maikop. 25 p. Available at: <http://www.dslib.net/sociologia-kultury/norma-i-deviaciya-v-molodezhnoj-subkulture-problemy-socializacii-v-sovremennoj.html>*

¹⁵ Zakharkin R.A. (2013). *Communication Activity in the Structure of the Social Process of Forming the Life Values of Youth: The Case of the Primorye Territory: Candidate of Sciences (Sociology) Dissertation. Specialty 22.00.04 – Social Structure, Social Institutions and Processes. Khabarovsk. 170 p.*

¹⁶ Davydova M.A. (2012). *The Influence of Electronic Media on the Formation of Individualism in the Youth Environment: Abstract of Candidate of Science (Sociology) Dissertation. Specialty 22.00.06 – Sociology of Culture. Maikop. 22 p. Available at: <http://edu.of.ru/attach/17/199451.doc>*

dwellers” (Kostko, 2021, p. 54). In this regard, continuing our analysis of the reasons behind a certain weakness in the value bonds of Muscovites, we note that Moscow is not merely a large city but a megalopolis.

Contemporary megalopolises are characterized by their own specific socio-cultural space. According to researchers, megalopolises serve as microcosms of globalization, in which personal interaction between citizens with cosmopolitan and multicultural identities takes place within localized spaces. This gives rise to a host of urban problems, including the privatization of public space, intensive management aimed at maximizing financial gain, consumerism, environmental issues, population segregation, and economic inequality (Ghahremani et al., 2021; Houshmand et al., 2026). The changes occurring in the space of the contemporary megalopolis are so dynamic, diverse, complex, and spatially extended that scholars regard it as an entirely new phenomenon (Ford, 1965; Barnes, 2002; Bourdeau-Lepage, Huriot, 2005; Akubue, 2019; Hussaini, Hussaini, 2023; Garau, Frankhauser, 2026). Randomness becomes an everyday mode of existence, while touristification and post-digital transformations turn the city into a space of phantasmagoria and a striving for a more meaningful existence (Han, 2026; Jansson et al., 2026).

Megalopolises are being transformed into specialized mechanisms for extracting profit – profit that is overwhelmingly concentrated in the service sector (Brenner et al., 2009). This is a city of consumption and consumers, not of production and producers. As A.G. Golova observes, income and consumption become the meaning of life for the inhabitant of a megalopolis, insofar as the city relinquishes its creative mission and turns into a center for the disposal of masses of products manufactured beyond its boundaries: “This destructive function is reflected in its residents: a distinctive personality type takes shape, one actively

engaged in the consumption of goods or services. Consumption becomes a form of self-realization, a form of identity construction, a form of leisure, and a form of communication... The format of retailtainment stores has emerged (from the English words retail and entertainment)... As a result, sales volumes in shopping-and-entertainment centers substantially exceed those in facilities that lack a leisure zone. Entertainment enters education (edutainment), sports (sportainment), information services (infotainment), and so on. In the city, frequency of interaction replaces depth of relationship. Consequently, human relations are formalized and depersonalized, and traditional social ties are destroyed. This trend is profitable for the consumer market. According to various data, single people spend 20–30% more on food, clothing, personal care products, and medicine than those with families. People unencumbered by family ties are more socially active, they have no deferred demand, and they spend heavily on entertainment” (Golova, 2013).

The contemporary megalopolis is losing the features of the polis as a space of common endeavor. The environment of the second nature predominates over the first (for instance, natural zones are destroyed and replaced with parks, and parks with flowerbeds, etc.). The dominance of the artificial, technogenic environment leads to a shift in the focus of personal existence – from “to be” to “to appear”, that is, toward performativity, image-making, and the formation of new (often extreme) types of corporeality as an attempt to find the meaning of life in the urban jungle. The researcher E.A. Ivanenko interprets this phenomenon as follows: “If the polis is an environment of order, then the megalopolis is an environment of excess. In this sense, the megalopolis is indeed akin to a Leviathan – chaotic, elemental ... True, this Leviathan is a monster equipped with a ‘user-friendly interface’, and the Jonahs it has swallowed are in no hurry to leave its quite comfortable innards, submitting to

its pull and adapting themselves to this habitat” (Ivanenko et al., 2009, pp. 37–38).

The model of the hypermarket or fast-food restaurant, in the view of Yu.A. Lankinen, is becoming a model of new social relations – one that reduces the time and effort required to satisfy any given need, is oriented toward the calculation of money, time, and effort, toward predictability, and toward “control over people by means of humanized technologies: signs, indicators, barriers designed to organize queues, fixed menus that limit choice, and the like” (Lankinen, 2009, pp. 161–162). This may explain why, for Moscow’s youth, the value of order is somewhat more important than it is for adults and older adults.

The socio-cultural space of Moscow can also be considered from two perspectives: as the space of the capital, the reference point for the country’s space, and as a space in its own right. As the space of the capital, Moscow was regarded as the coeval of the nation-state, the national spiritual center (Vershina, Polyakova, 2014, p. 123); “in the image of a primordial, pious, heartfelt city, a home for every Russian person,... a knot in which all the living nerves of the country are intertwined, where the thoughts, aspirations, and hopes of all working humanity converge, where the brain of the Party lives and works, as the newspapers used to write”. The researcher goes on to emphasize the city’s special mission: “‘The Watchtower of World History’ – Moscow became the symbol of a new world, the battle cry of the proletariat fighting under the leadership of the great Stalin for the victory of socialism. The capital of the USSR personified the city of the future, a city of happiness and abundance, fertility and joyous vitality. The monumentality of Stalinist architecture and the ritualism of the Soviet song – everything was dedicated to ‘Mother Moscow’” (Bayandina, 2009, pp. 51, 53).

As its own distinct space, Moscow can be viewed as a natural monopoly: “in terms of the size of its budget and its significance in Russia’s politics and

economy, Moscow resembles Gazprom... a privileged region and one of the many elements of the power vertical” (Bayandina, 2009, p. 53). A number of scholars characterize the Russian capital as a global city – one of those cities that will eventually supersede the capitals of nation-states (Isolde, Rudolph, 2004). “The current stage of Moscow’s development is a process of further, virtually uncontrolled population growth, the ‘migrantization’ of the population, and the emergence of attendant social problems that demand specialized study. These include the structure of contemporary Moscow immigration, the changing social differentiation of the population, the growth of the middle class and the expansion of the lower stratum (at the expense of migrants and pensioners), the complexities of social welfare provision, transportation problems, public utilities issues, and problems within the education and cultural systems. And this is far from an exhaustive list of the challenges facing such an ancient yet thoroughly modern megalopolis as Moscow” (Vershina, Polyakova, 2014, p. 129).

M.G. Anokhin and D.S. Chumakov argue that the era and ideology of postmodernism presuppose the emergence of new actors and subjects of public life, including political life, among which they count globally interconnected cities that are linked politically, economically, and organizationally: “Among them, a prominent place is occupied primarily by the capital megalopolises of the so-called Group of Twenty (G20) countries, which serve as the key centers of globalization processes and form a worldwide network of international cooperation in the economic, political, social, and spiritual spheres. At the same time, contemporary megalopolises are also centers of international rivalry and even confrontation” (Anokhin, Chumakov, 2014, p. 8). These researchers compare Moscow – which, according to various estimates, concentrates more than 75% of the country’s financial flows in its hands – to a large transnational

corporation (TNC), as they do other global cities: “The socio-political activity of the Moscow megalopolis on the Russian and international stage is precisely subordinated to solving the problems it faces. As a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, a territorial interest group, and a political actor all at once, Moscow strives to increase its significance in the adoption and implementation of political decisions at all levels, both within the country and beyond its borders. In this regard, Russia’s capital is now actively working to enhance its political weight and authority, create a positive international image, and attract and accumulate political and financial capital. All of this must be largely subordinated to a single goal – improving the lives of the people residing within the Moscow megalopolis” (Anokhin, Chumakov, 2014, pp. 6, 10).

Conclusion

Thus, the findings of the study of Muscovites’ value orientations reveal a certain degree of fragmentation of moral bonds along lines of gender, age, and dominant value attitudes – attitudes that, in turn, determine the orientations of social behavior. To a certain extent, these findings are shaped by the homogenizing pressure of globalization and by the rapid development of virtual, mediatized spaces that stand as an alternative to the real world – spaces

filled with axiorhizomes, consumerism, and the cult of momentary whims and pleasures.

The condition of the capital megalopolis’s socio-cultural space, differentiated along value lines, also reflects the broader process of differentiation within Russian society as a national idea is being forged and as the country searches for the ideological foundations and developmental goals of Russia as a state-civilization. Values are gradually ceasing to be infused with deep meaning: they turn into simulacra, or are interpreted in markedly different ways by various groups. For a segment of the population, survival becomes life’s priority – and if not survival, then consumption – while the notion of an interconnection between collectivism, morality, and a harmonious existence remains only weakly articulated.

The moral and ethical foundations of Russian society as a whole – and especially of its capital, Moscow – require further strengthening, so that a citizen rather than a mere consumer may be cultivated. Amid a situation of acute geopolitical confrontation, the capital must return to its role as the spiritual center that draws together the Russian land, rather than serving as the embodiment of a Tower of Babel in which people not only fail to understand one another but are even mutually hostile.

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