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**ONTOLOGICAL MARGINALITY AS DOMINANT IDEA OF
CIVILIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUS' / RUSSIA**

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Abstract

The paper presents and interprets an original approach that suggests, first, considering the passionary events in the development of Rus'/Russia as the determinant of its ontological marginality; second, referencing the modi of the marginal values contained in the social reality and formalized by topological marginality, confessional marginality, and political marginality. The paper provides the authors' interpretations of the semantic and ontological connection between the ontological marginality of Rus'/Russia and its civilizational trajectory. The authors have established that the existential and strategic activity/passivity of the state of Rus'/Russia is significantly determined by its ontological marginality. The paper substantiates the meaning of ontological marginality as a factor of shaping the scenario of social subsistence strategy aimed at the intermediate-contradictory positioning in the mentality of the Russian society. The original conceptualization of marginality as a dominant idea in the development of Russian statehood allows to use its content possibilities to comprehend the barriers of the civilizational growth of Russian social reality. The conclusions obtained during this research supplement the socio-ontological theory, facilitate the comprehension of the meaning of ontological marginality from the perspectives of forming the civic identity of the citizens of Russia and Russia's civilizational self-determination, and can serve as a theoretical foundation for developing a state development strategy in accordance with the requirements of modernization of social subsistence. The research contains original terminology in the context of the declared subject ("passionary event", "ontological marginality", "marginality modi").

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1. Introduction

Discussions about the "special status" or "special way" of Russian civilization often do not contain any explanation of the origins of and reasons for this "specialness" and are stereotypical assertions. Besides, the significance of theoretical comprehension of the factors of social subsistence influencing the effectiveness of the Russian state's modernization efforts does not allow not to take into account that, traditionally, social and humanitarian self-reflection excluded the notion of a society's marginality as a natural determinant of its low efficiency and lacked the understanding of why preserving the habitual asserting formula of the "specialness" of Russian social subsistence provokes the "dry run" of innovative economic, political, and sociocultural intentions. Study of the phenomenon of "ontological marginality" is relevant because, as we see it, it allows understand: 1) why and how the original passionary events determined the state of ontological marginality of Russian society; 2) why and how the efficiency of modernization of the aspects of public life depends on the comprehension of the role of passionary events and the state of ontological marginality in implementing the strategy of social subsistence.

2. Problem Statement

The existing theoretical notions of the specifics of Rus'/Russia's civilizational trajectory are frequently specifically asserting in their nature; socio-ontological analysis of the implicative relation between the ontological marginality of Rus'/Russia and its civilizational trajectory is not presented in social and humanitarian knowledge; the issue of the relation between ontological marginality and passionary events in the historical process of Rus'/Russia is left outside the scope of scientific interest.

3. Research Questions

The degree of influence of the ontological marginality of Rus'/Russia on the civilizational fate of the state.

4. Purpose of the Study

Prove that the ontological marginality of Rus'/Russia naturally and predominantly determines the civilizational uniqueness/"specialness" of the state, both driving development and impeding it.

5. Research Methods

The chosen theoretical and methodological guidelines were the theory of passionarity (Gumilyov, 2001); the concept of environmental determinism (Montesquieu, 2010); marginality theory (Park, 2011); the principle of determinism; the principle of systematicity; the rational deductive method (Descartes, 1989).

6. Findings

In social and humanitarian knowledge, marginality is most frequently interpreted as a borderline position of a personality in relation to some community or culture that reflects in its mentality and way of life. It is universally acknowledged that the tradition of such definition was started by R. Park and the

Chicago school, who studied the "marginal individual". Our cognitive interest is related to the "marginal society". From the popular definition, we need its semantic overtones: duality, indefiniteness, being "on the threshold" of two phenomena or processes. Ontologically not fully being part of any of the sides, a marginal society remains in the permanent "pendulum" state. Together with that, a relatively solid and prolonged suspension in one of the positions is possible.

In L. Gumilyov's concept of the "passionary tension of an ethnic group" (Gumilyov, 2011) this meant that the process of an ethnic group's historical development with its accommodating landscape, mentality, and way of life is immediately dependent on its overall level of passionarity. Basing upon the conceptual content by L. Gumilyov, we suggest considering the notion of "passionary event" as something significant that actually happened and became an exceeding impulse that gave a start to a state's development at a certain stage. We suppose that the historical trajectory of Rus'/Russia contains several passionary events that determined the state's ontological marginality.

The modus of "topological marginality". The 4th-8th centuries in world history are concerned with the Migration Period. In 6th-8th centuries, Slavs entered the world migration process in three main directions: south - to the Balkan Peninsula (South Slavs); west - to the Middle Danube Basin and the interfluvium of the Oder and Elbe (West Slavs); east and northeast - across the East European Plain (East Slavs). The "passionary tension" of the East Slavs formalized into a passionary event: their choice of the East European Plain as the "place of development"/settlement topos. Under the influence of objective factors of world history, Rus'/Russia became spatially located between Europe/the West and Asia/the East. Geography became the ontological nuance that determined the historical role of Rus'/Russia as a topologically marginal "intermediary civilization". P. Chaadayev wrote in this regard that "one of the saddest traits of our idiosyncratic civilization is that we are only uncovering the truths that have long since become threadbare in other places and even among the peoples that are way behind us. This happens because we have never been walking hand-in-hand with other peoples; we do not belong to any of the great families of mankind; we belong to neither the West nor the East and lack the traditions of both." The prominent Russian philosopher meant the Russian state in its post-passionary event development, because initially the East Slavs together with the West and South ones were located in the confines of Central and Eastern Europe. This topos became the factor that "divorced" Rus'/Russia from Europe and brought it closer to Asia. The process of strengthening the Asian element is the result of the starting choice of location, which is now an undoubted good: the southern southeastern edges of the Russian state were exposed to polemological communication with the Pechenegs, Cumans, Hazaras, and the Golden Horde, which resulted into a permanent flashpoint, was economically and politically devastating, and produced an inorganic cultural mix: "We live in the east of Europe, that is true, however, we have never belonged to the East. The East has its own history that has nothing in common with ours" (Chaadayev, 2006). In the first half of the 16th century, Russia had a real opportunity to return to the course of European development. But this opportunity was ignored by Ivan the Terrible, who in the late '50s "turned at the Germans". i.e. started pursuing an anti-European strategy. According to G. Fedotov, since that time "the whole process of historical development in Rus' became contrary to the Western European one: it was a development from freedom to slavery" (Fedotov, 1989).

It is believed that the Europeanization of the 18th century undertaken by Peter the Great brought Russia closer to European civilization. Indeed, formally many things were changed according to European example (N. Danilevsky: "Trying to look European is the sickness of Russian life" (Danilevsky, 1991)) but content-wise, Russia did not reject its fundamental anti-European trend. Asian tradition (the then so-called "Asiatic backwardness") was showing in the priority of agrarian feudal economic relations with serfdom; in the communal form of labor management; in the establishment of absolutism with elements of oriental despotism; in patriarchy, collectivism, and conservatism: the social subsistence of the Russian state remained non-European. The ontological marginalization was facilitated by another process, which V. Klyuchevsky wrote about: "History of Russia is a history of a country that is being colonized. The area of colonization inside it has been broadening along with its sovereign territory" (Klyuchevsky, 1993). Colonization is always associated with trying to assimilate something alien. If the feeling of the impossibility of becoming welcome among strangers frequently accompanied the failures of external colonization, the Russians' feeling of being alien at home formalized into discontent and popular nationalism related to internal colonization: "Russia was only distinguished by its geographical extent and underpopulation that complicated the traffic of people and symbols, as well as a special configuration of cultural attributes subject to intermingling. The primary factor was the cultural distance between the higher and lower classes... Two worlds were separated by an abyss" (Etkind, 2013).

The fate of a topologically marginal civilization is complicated and dramatic because the state does not have a solid homogeneous foundation and develops "from one extreme to another": "Two courses of world history collide and interact in Russia: the East and the West. Russian people are neither purely European nor purely Asian people. Russia is a whole part of the world by itself, a vast East-West, connecting two worlds. And at all times, two elements have been fighting inside the Russian soul: the eastern and the western" (Berdyayev, 2006).

The modus of "confessional marginality". In the late 10th century, a passionary event occurred that was related to "choosing faith". In its decision of which confession to adopt as a model, Rus' could look up both to the Muslim East and the Christian West (choosing between Rome ("the western West"/Catholicism) and Byzantium ("the eastern West"/Orthodoxy)). Preference was granted to Byzantium while there are indirect facts of wavering towards the Roman Church. The Chronicles state that Olga of Kiev converted to Christianity during her travel to Byzantium. However, the surviving Byzantine documents say that Olga arrived to the Empire already a Christian. Sometime before the Byzantine voyage, the Russian Princess addressed German Emperor Otto with a request to send Catholic priests to Rus'. It is known that the Emperor responded to the Princess's appeal with good grace. A monk named Adalbert was ordained to be the Russian bishop. He spent a year in Rus' but its baptism to Catholicism never happened. Some historians believe that Adalbert could not come to terms with Olga concerning the Russian church being subordinated to the German eparchy: she advocated the complete independence of Russian Catholic parishes. The Catholic project did not succeed in Rus' and Olga addressed Byzantium. Olga's grandson, Vladimir, baptized Rus' in the Orthodox rite: "What were we doing at that time when in the fight of the energetic barbarism of the northern peoples with Christianity's high thought the structure was laid of the modern civilization? Obeying our unkind fate, we addressed the pitiful Byzantium deeply despised by these

peoples for the moral code that was supposed to lie in the foundation of our upbringing" (Chaadayev, 2006). The Russian Church became a new metropolis of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

In 12-13th centuries, Western Europe noticeably surpassed Byzantium in all regards and has not lost the achieved priority ever since. The dogmatic conflict between the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church appeared right after the breakup of the Western and Eastern Christian churches in 1054. In the 15th century, Byzantium ceased to exist and the idea of Moscow being the third Rome emerged in Russia (Timoshina, 2005): Moscow started considering itself the last Orthodox kingdom and a symbol of purity of faith by refusing the union with the Catholic Church. In the 18-19th centuries, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church had no direct contacts. At the same time, after three divisions of Poland, large areas with Catholic population became parts of Russia in the late 18th century. As a result, the first concordat was signed by the Russian government and the Holy See in 1818 that regulated the legal status of Catholics. In 1847, the second concordat was signed regarding the funding of the activity of the Catholic Church in Russia by the Russian authorities. However, it was terminated in 1866 due to the Vatican's support of the Polish rebellion of 1863. The breakup of relations was accompanied with the confiscation of the property of Catholic clergy and disbanding of Uniate eparchies. After the October Manifesto of 1905, the Roman Catholic Church was granted the right to freely engage in religious activities.

Altogether, Orthodoxy in Rus was victorious over Catholicism, facilitating the country's distancing from the increasingly developing Europe and having long-term consequences for it: "We shut ourselves in our religious separation and nothing that happened in Europe reached us. We had absolutely no concern about the great work of the world. ... At the time when Christendom was majestically marching the way predetermined by its celestial founder, carrying away generations with it, we, though we bore the name of Christians, were standing still. The entire world was being built anew while we were creating nothing; we were still languishing, hiding in our hovels made of logs and straw. ... Even though we bore the name of Christians, we were deprived of the ripening of the fruit of Christianity" (Chaadayev, 2006).

The modus of "political marginality". Russian history contains two social patterns that represent political marginality: the monarchist, authoritarian one (Moscow) and the republican, democratic one ("Lord Veliky Novgorod"): "...either serfdom together with autocratic super-centralization, or the "lightweight" feudalism with increasing bourgeoisness together with absolute monarchies with certain elements of popular representation and court freedom" (Eidelman, 1989). These patterns were produced by the passionate event that can be called "choosing the form of governance".

Moscow (East Asian model) embodied the monarchist form of government and authoritarian regime. Moscow was striving for centralization of the state and merging of specific "specialnesses", and became a bearer of the oriental component of Russian culture, which was the result of its multiple contacts with the Golden Horde and its prolonged influence: "...ferocious and humiliating foreign domination, whose spirit was later inherited by our national authorities. Such is the sad story of our youth" (Chaadayev, 2006). Among the known consequences of the Tatar-Mongol yoke, the most unpleasantly impressive are the lord-vassal relations of the Golden Horde Khans and Russian Princes, the breakup of traditional relations with Western Europe and falling behind Europe in terms of economy (development of elements of bourgeoisness), total coarsening and primitivization of manners, and monarchization and militarization of

Russian statehood. "The Moscow state appeared thanks to the Tatar yoke" (Trubetskoy, 1906-1912). Russian tsars appeared after the toppling of Tatar Khans but not without their influence. Social science experts believe that these were the Tatar-Mongols who gave the Moscow state the centralization of power, authoritarianism, and serfdom: "...When finally we overthrew the foreign yoke and only our separation from the common family prevented us from using the ideas that our western brothers had developed at that time, we fell to even more cruel slavery, hallowed at that by the fact of our liberation" (Chaadayev, 2006). A paradoxical social and ontological composition was formed: Moscow greatly surpassed Europe in the level of political centralization, but the economic and social retardation of Moscow Rus' as compared to European nations was so significant that it was virtually insurmountable.

The phenomenon of "Lord Veliky Novgorod" (Western European model) represents the republican form of government. By the 12th century, Novgorod in northwestern Rus' had already become a substantially European city in terms of human capital quality, public amenities, production and trade volume, and rational organization of government. Having an advantageous physical, economic, and geographical position (proximity of the Baltic Sea, position on the trade route from the Varangians to the Greeks), Novgorod profited seriously in terms of its development, becoming a platform for the enrichment of hard-working and enterprising Novgorodians. Novgorod's geography determined its massive involvement in various trade exchanges: in 12-15th centuries only Venice could rival Novgorod in the remoteness and volume of trade relations. Novgorod's prosperity relied on crafts and trade, but its main distinction was that it incorporated the practice of *veche*, a popular council based on a combination of the right of blood with personal freedom that executed the principle of local autonomy and federative relations with other territories. V.G. Belinskii called Novgorod "the prototype of Russian civilization and forms of public life in general" (Belinskii, 1948). Unfortunately, not only this prototype failed to spread all over Russia but also the fate of Novgorod itself was tragic because the competition was violently resolved in favor of Moscow: in 15-16th centuries "Lord Veliky Novgorod" was crushed by Moscow.

This way, political marginality is the state that determined the permanent balancing of the country's political life between the western/European (Peter the Great's Europeanization, Westernizer ideology, "European exodus"/emigration, etc.) and the eastern/Asian (archaic practices, Slavophilia/return to the soil ideology, "turn to the East", etc.) models. The fall of Novgorod statehood can rightfully be considered a historical choice of Russia and its loss of the political chance for deep democratization of its social subsistence.

7. Conclusion

The actualization of the cognitive interest the phenomenon of ontological marginality necessarily implies a systematic summarization of the empirical factual knowledge:

- it is valid to consider the positioning of a marginal society in two ontological patterns to be its distinguishing feature;
- there are several variants of a society's attitude towards its marginal state: first, the society tries to get rid of its state of marginality as unacceptable, then one of the adjacent patterns is completely bracketed out, including through the use of directive methods, by means of propagandistic counteraction to the process of marginalization and argumentation of the preferability of one ontological problem or another; second,

the society legitimizes marginalization, which is comprehended in taken into account in political activity and the functioning of economic and other social institutions, and marginality is acknowledged as the legacy of this society. In this case, there is a possible threat of negative identification based on ignoring own institutional system of values and replacing it with axiological constructions borrowed from adjacent cultures; third, the society ignores its marginality and works out a habituation to this condition that is accepted as given;

- in the historical evolution of the society, marginality can be caused by a passionary event that can act as a trigger of a permanent ontological intermediacy, which can be observed in Russian history;

- marginality of a society can be a result of an ontological crisis of "freezing" at the border between states or, as is the case with Russia, "sagging" towards one of the states, which happens as a result of one pattern dominating over another;

- a characteristic feature of marginality is that while being inside two systems of values simultaneously, the society experiences an ontological rift/duality. Practically, this manifests in the use of political double standards, axiological eclectics (incompatible traditions), and leads to instability or inertness of social consciousness.

Thus, the ontological marginality of a society is a consequence and result of the passionary events when the society in its borderline cultural and semantic and space and time localization becomes a social medium characterized by intermediacy, loss of objective attribution to the original sociocultural conditions, blurring of cultural contours, and submersion into the intercultural space. Vectors of development of a marginal society can have different directions: negative: marginality generates uncertainty and facilitates the loss of "solid ground"; positive: marginality prevents the society from developing along a repetitive scenario and ensures the self-producing diversity. Speaking of the marginal Russian society, while being between two adjacent topoi (Europe and Asia), it identified itself with each of them and at the same time established its own system of values. Russian society is characterized by external and internal ontological inconsistency and, as a result, uncertainty of development: on the one hand, we are doomed to formulate our "own way" as a protective mechanism, on the other hand, we possess the potential of creative activity to create sociocultural diversity, even if an emergency and unstable way. The question of "how to improve Russia" considering its ontological marginality is permanently topical and remains open.

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