

## THE SUBJECTIVE MIDDLE CLASS OF THE INNOVATION REGION OF RUSSIA: CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POST-INDUSTRIAL APPROACH\*

Svetlana E. MARTYNOVA<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of State and Municipal Management, Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russian Federation

**Abstract:** *The paper presents the results of a sociological study of the middle class of the Russian region from the standpoint of the characteristics of a post-industrial actor, in which, among other attributes, social participation, self-description and self-reflection are inherent. A data collection method is a semi-formalized mass interview. The purpose of the study is to find the characteristics of the subjective middle class in innovative regions of Russia using the example of the Tomsk region. It was revealed that the subjective middle class of the Russian region quite confidently determines its class affiliation. Such actors are mostly independent in determining and achieving personal goals, sovereign in the meaning of recognition of their own life prospects as a priority, and economically active in ensuring their welfare. However, not all the features that are inherent in this post-industrial social stratum are fully revealed. The motives for self-identification with the middle class in the Russian region are still more in tune with the industrial era since they have a material nature. The awareness of the importance of social participation is insufficiently expressed, while participation itself is present in various forms, although not to the extent described in the world scientific literature. It was proved that such a feature of the post-industrial middle class as the ability to act as a driver of social progress is observed to a small extent.*

**Keywords:** post-industrial society, sociological research, class self-identification, social participation.

In science, it is noted that the criteria for distinguishing the middle class of the industrial and post-industrial society (knowledge society, information society, postmodern society) differ significantly. In industrial society, the main stratification criterion was a material attribute – the level of income and property<sup>1</sup>. In a post-industrial society with its postmodern

---

\*Acknowledgements: The study was financially supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research within the framework of the research project 18-410-700004 "Creative middle class as a driver of sustainable development of the region and improving the quality of life (as exemplified by Tomsk Oblast)" p. a.

<sup>1</sup> E. Giddens, "Stratification and class structure", in *Sociological Studies*, 1992, no. 10, p. 107-120; J.E. Foster, M.C. Wolfson, *Polarization and the Decline of the middle class: Canada and the US*, 1992. Available at: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:552c6769-0264-46d0-aacc->

[a50071f5bf76/download\\_file?safe\\_filename=Polarization%2Band%2Bthe%2Bdecline%2Bof%2Bthe%2Bmiddle%2Bclass%2BCanada%2Band%2Bthe%2BUS%2B31.pdf&file\\_format=application%2Fpdf&type\\_of\\_work=Working+paper](https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:552c6769-0264-46d0-aacc-a50071f5bf76/download_file?safe_filename=Polarization%2Band%2Bthe%2Bdecline%2Bof%2Bthe%2Bmiddle%2Bclass%2BCanada%2Band%2Bthe%2BUS%2B31.pdf&file_format=application%2Fpdf&type_of_work=Working+paper). Linar R. Yusupov, Dmitry N. Demyanov, „Technological process modeling for castings according to specified parameters of output production quality based on production-frame model of knowledge representation,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 410.

values, material factors do not play such a part<sup>2</sup>. According to some scholars, a wider shift in the analysis of classes in the 21st century negates the conventional matters of power, exploitation, and production<sup>3</sup>, and income indicators alone can no longer accurately determine the middle class<sup>4</sup>. Researchers note that class identity is currently based on other positions<sup>5</sup>. The dominant nature of life principles toward independence and autonomy<sup>6</sup>, the accumulation of human capital<sup>7</sup> comes to the fore. Having reached the desired level of personal well-being, the modern individual starts feeling the need to solve larger social issues<sup>8,9</sup>. Thus, from a set of common interests in collective consumption, such actors move on to a set of common interests in a wider social field<sup>10</sup>. These attitudes

---

<sup>2</sup> D. Ushakov, E. Rubinskaya, “Reforming of the state immigration policy in the context of globalization: On the example of Russia”, in: *Immigration and the Current Social, Political, and Economic Climate: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> K. Paton, V. McCall, G. Mooney, “Place revisited: class, stigma and urban restructuring in the case of Glasgow’s commonwealth games”, *The Sociological Review*, 2017, vol. 65, no. 4, p. 578-594.

<sup>4</sup> L.F. Lopez-Calva, E.A Ortiz-Juarez, Vulnerability approach to the definition of the middle class, 2011. Available at: <http://library1.nida.ac.th/worldbankf/fulltext/wps05902.pdf>; G. Solvay, “Global lifestyles under local conditions: the new Indonesian middle class”, in Ch. Beng-Huat (ed.), *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 152-175. Available at: [http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia\\_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152](http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152). I. A. Kabasheva, A.G. Khairullina, I. A. Rudaleva, „Analysis of scientific and technical activity resourcing in Russia,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 357.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. Haylett, “Illegitimate Subjects?: abject whites, neoliberal modernisation, and middle-class multiculturalism”, in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2001, vol. 19, no. 3, p. 351-370.

<sup>6</sup> P. Sztompka, “New perspectives on trust: review essay”, in *American Journal of Sociology*. – Chicago, 2006, vol. 112, no. 3, p. 905-919.; R.Kh. Simonyan, “Middle class: social mirage or reality?”, in *Sociological Research*, 2009, no. 1, p. 55-61; Yu.G. Volkov, “Creative class in Russian society: tendencies and prospects of humanistic ideology”, in *Vlast*, 2012, no. 1, p. 61-64. Cf. Anton Viorel Pop, „Human Rights as Reflected in the Document of Russian Orthodox Church from 2008,” *Astra Salvensis*, VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> A.V. Banerjee, E. Duflo, “What is middle class about the middle classes around the world?”, in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2008, vol. 22, no. 2, p. 3-28.

<sup>8</sup> R. Inglehart, *Culture shift*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1990.

<sup>9</sup> S.V. Mishchenko, V.I. Mishchenko, “Combining the functions of strategic development and crisis management in central banking”, in *Actual Problems of Economics*, 2016, vol. 176, no. 2, p. 266-272.

<sup>10</sup> G. Shatkin, “Middle class or propertied class? Class politics and urban redevelopment in contemporary Asia”, in J. Go (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, 2010, pp. 269-279. J. Kolesnikova, Anastasia V. Kamasheva,

determine patterns of individual behaviour not only in the economic, but also in the social sphere<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, the post-industrial middle class is described as a social group with an active life position, having socio-political maturity, defending its rights<sup>12</sup>, ensuring the stability of society, social and political stability<sup>13,14</sup>, which has authority and is able to lead the masses in order to modernize society<sup>15,16</sup>. Researchers from different countries identify social behaviour as specific examples in the descriptions of the middle class: “patriotic citizens” defend their interests in developing public policies, demand a more equitable distribution of income<sup>17,18</sup>, advocate for a clean environment<sup>19</sup>, are active in their community of

---

„The alienation of the rights to life and health: the institutional dimension,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 10, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> V.I. Mishchenko, S.V. Mishchenko, “Enhancing the effect of transmission channels in monetary policy of Ukraine under the transition to inflation targeting”, in *Actual Problems of Economics*, 2015, vol. 163, no. 1, p. 421-428.

<sup>12</sup> M.R. Safiullin, M.Yu. Eflova, A.M. Nagimova, “Social well-being and self-identification of the middle class in Tatarstan”, in *Sociological Research*, 2012, no. 10, p. 28-33.

<sup>13</sup> L.F. Lopez-Calva, E.A. Ortiz-Juarez, Vulnerability approach to the definition of the middle class, 2011. Available at: <http://library1.nida.ac.th/worldbankf/fulltext/wps05902.pdf>; M.R. Safiullin, M.Yu. Eflova, A.M. Nagimova, “Social well-being and self-identification of the middle class in Tatarstan”, in *Sociological Research*, 2012, no. 10, p. 28-33; E.M. Vlasova, “Status and development trends of the middle class in the regions of the Middle Volga”, in *Regionology*, 2010, vol. 4, no. 73, p. 167-176.

<sup>14</sup> O.V. Takhumova, M.A. Kadyrov, E.V. Titova, D.S. Ushakov, M.I. Ermilova, “Capital structure optimization in Russian companies: Problems and solutions”, in *Journal of Applied Economic Sciences*, 2018, vol. 13, no. 7, p. 1939-1944.

<sup>15</sup> Yu.G. Volkov, “Creative class in Russian society: tendencies and prospects of humanistic ideology”, in *Vlast*, 2012, no. 1, p. 61-64.

<sup>16</sup> E.I. Zatsarinnyi, N.I. Malykh, Y.N. Severina, A.L. Gendon, A.Y. Minnullina, K.A. Malyshenko, “Current trends in the financial market development”, in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2017, vol. 8, no. 8, p. 2629-2635.

<sup>17</sup> J. Unger, “China’s conservative middle class”, in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Australian National University, 2006, pp. 27-31. Available at: [http://psc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/PSC/CCC/publications/papers/JU\\_conservative\\_middle\\_class.pdf](http://psc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/PSC/CCC/publications/papers/JU_conservative_middle_class.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> V.V. Ivanov, N.A. Lvova, N.V. Pokrovskaya, R.K. Nurmukhametov, S.V. Naumenkova, “Increasing the financial depth of the Russian economy: Does it stimulate investment activity?” in *Proceedings of the 33rd International Business Information Management Association Conference, IBIMA 2019: Education Excellence and Innovation Management through Vision 2020*, 2019, p. 2747-2759.

<sup>19</sup> H. Kharas, G. Gertz, “The new global middle class: a cross-over from West to East”, in Ch. Li (ed.), *China’s Emerging Middle Class: Beyond Economic Transformation*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2010. Available at: [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/03\\_china\\_middle\\_class\\_kharas.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/03_china_middle_class_kharas.pdf).

residence, focusing on the problems of urban life<sup>20,21,22</sup>. Scientists note that patterns of behaviour, socialization and lifestyle are currently developing outside the workplace<sup>23</sup>, entering a wide public sphere, including decision-making on the principles of deliberative democracy<sup>24,25</sup>. In view of the importance of the “knowledge-based” component in the portrait of the middle class, it is characterized by several significant features. This is a class with innovative<sup>26</sup>, creative, and not routine activities, and not exclusively intellectual ones<sup>27</sup>. Such actors are distinguished by self-reference – the ability to self-description, reflection<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, this refers to the social self-description of the middle class<sup>29</sup>. And, finally, the

---

<sup>20</sup> C.M. Villegas, “Revolution “from the middle”: historical events, narrative, and the making of the middle class in the contemporary developing world”, in J. Go (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, 2010, pp. 299-312.

<sup>21</sup> A. Arkhipov, D. Ushakov, “*Functional effectiveness and modern mechanisms for national urban systems globalization: The case of Russia*”, in: *E-Planning and Collaboration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> D. Ushakov, S. Chich-Jen, “*Global economy urbanization and urban economy globalization: Forms, factors, results?*”, in: *E-Planning and Collaboration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> L. Tomba, *Creating an Urban Middle Class: Social Engineering in Beijing*, 2019. Available at: <http://courses.washington.edu/globfut/Tomba.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> J. Speer, “Participatory governance reform: a good strategy for increasing government responsiveness and improving public services?”, in *World Development*, 2012, vol. 40, no. 12, p. 2379-2398.

<sup>25</sup> R.A. Abramov, R.T. Mukhaev, M.S. Sokolov, “To a question about the criteria and parameters of the effectiveness of the government in democratic countries”, in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2016, vol. 7, no. 6, p. 1248-1262.

<sup>26</sup> A.Yu. Slepukhin, A.E. Chaplygin, “The level of self-identification as a subjective criterion for assigning an individual to the Russian middle class”, in *Bulletin of the Saratov State Technical University*, 2011, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 309-312.

<sup>27</sup> Yu.G. Volkov, “Creative class in Russian society: tendencies and prospects of humanistic ideology”, in *Vlast*, 2012, no. 1, p. 61-64.

<sup>28</sup> R. Flores, E. Pérez, “Modernity, reflexivity and postnormal science in risk society”, in *Acta Sociológica*, 2015, no. 67, p. 165-192; E.L. Espinosa, “Reflexive sociology? No, reflexive society. Three pre-conditions of sociological thought”, in *Acta Sociológica*, 2015, no. 67, p. 51-83.

<sup>29</sup> M. Barbehön, M. Geugjes, “Caught in the Middle? welfare state legitimisation and problematisation in German and Swedish middle-class discourse”, in *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 2019, vol. 32, no. 1, p. 1-20.

middle class is the “distributor” of new socio-economic and sociocultural practices<sup>30,31</sup>, a driver of social change<sup>32,33</sup>.

Thus, the criteria for isolating the middle class of modern society are the attitude towards independence and autonomy, activity in the economic and social sphere, creativity, self-identification. As a result, the modern middle class is called “meritocratic”, “creative”, “subjective”. We shall define the creativity of the middle class in the broad meaning as the ability to change and their active implementation both in relation to their position in society and in relation to social processes at large. In this regard, the criterion of self-identification is primary. In studies of the Russian middle class in the 21st century, it can be noted that a significant (if not prevailing) part of them, even in the second decade of the century, demonstrates the approach to isolating the middle class that is inherent in the industrial era, i.e. based on material features<sup>34,35</sup>. “Objective” criteria, which are established even in specific values (roubles, amount of property) or parameters (level of education, reflected in the diploma of a certain degree, etc.), are irrelevant not only because they still focus on material

---

<sup>30</sup> E.M. Vlasova, “Status and development trends of the middle class in the regions of the Middle Volga”, in *Regionology*, 2010, vol. 4, no. 73, p. 167-176.

<sup>31</sup> E.M. Akhmetshin, K.E. Kovalenko, J.E. Mueller, A.K. Khakimov, A.V. Yumashev, A.D. Khairullina, “Freelancing as a type of entrepreneurship: Advantages, disadvantages and development prospects”, in *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 2018, vol. 21, no. 2, 1528-2651-21-S2-262.

<sup>32</sup> D.S. Ushakov, “The problems of country's innovative capacity and investment attractiveness growth synchronization”, in *Research Journal of Business Management*, 2011, vol. 5, no. 4, p. 159-169.

<sup>33</sup> D.S. Ushakov, O.I. Khamzina, R.A. Karabassov, I.A. Zaiarnaia, V.A. Gnevasheva, Countries' competitiveness as a factor of MNCs' global expansion, in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2018, vol. 9, no. 6, p. 2169-2175.

<sup>34</sup> E.M. Vlasova, “Status and development trends of the middle class in the regions of the Middle Volga”, in *Regionology*, 2010, vol. 4, no. 73, p. 167-176; A.A. Alekseenok, “Identification criteria of the middle class in modern Russian society”, in *Theory and Practice of Social Development*, 2014a, no. 4, p. 61-63; A.A. Alekseenok, “The specifics of the identification of the structure of the middle class in modern Russian society”, in *Fundamental Research*, 2014b, no. 6, p. 180-185; M.R. Safullin, M.Yu. Eflova, A.M. Nagimova, “Social well-being and self-identification of the middle class in Tatarstan”, in *Sociological Research*, 2012, no. 10, p. 28-33; Yu.R. Khayrullina, “Urban middle class in modern Russia: selection criteria, structure, labor and consumer behavior (based on materials of the Republic of Tatarstan)”, in *Electronic Economic Bulletin of Tatarstan*, 2012, no. 2, p. 282-293.

<sup>35</sup> V. Dodonova, “Socialist aberrations of Donbas and conservative modernization of Russia”, in *Skhid*, 2015, vol. 2, no. 134, p. 151-155. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2015.2\(134\).40318](http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2015.2(134).40318)

features<sup>36,37,38,39</sup>. The quality of life, which can be standardized and measured by an external observer (researcher), is no longer consistent with the vital role of actors with an unprecedented range of individual life goals. In addition, the lack of the task of identifying self-identification in research or self-identification by parameters set by a sociologist, in fact, denies such an ability of a modern actor as self-description and self-reflection. A paradoxical situation arises: for all the intellectual merits of a representative of a “knowledge-based” society that are not doubted, they are at the same time recognized as incapable of “correctly” assessing their position in the structure of society. The purpose of our study is to find the characteristics of the subjective middle class in innovative regions of Russia using the example of the Tomsk Oblast.

### Methodology

In the research methodology, we rely on the provision on the shift of sociological methodology towards the “subjectively understood”, comprehended by qualitative methods<sup>40</sup> due to the central role of the individual actor in modern society. Accordingly, the interviewing method<sup>41</sup>, particularly a semi-formalized one, corresponds to the research objectives with a deeper and more adequate understanding of the positions of an unprecedented multitude of actors. This is also inherent in

---

<sup>36</sup> K.E. Kovalenko, E.A. Osadchy, L.V. Goloshchapova, A.O. Zekiy, V.V. Lvov, G.V. Meshkova, A.F. Bagautdinov, “Models of business education in Russia and their main competitive advantages”, in *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 2019, vol. 22, no. 3, 1528-2651-21-3-367.

<sup>37</sup> E.M. Akhmetshin, A.V. Pavlyuk, V.V. Ling, M.V. Mikhailova, R.A. Shichiyakh, A.V. Kozachek, “The use of private start-ups in higher education”, in *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 2019, vol. 22, no. 1, 1528-2651-22-S1-345.

<sup>38</sup> A.R. Aharonovich, “Socio-economic importance of state support for youth innovative entrepreneurship in the economic development of the state”, in *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 2019, vol. 25, no. 1, 1528-2686-25-S1-241.

<sup>39</sup> M.I. Vladimirovich, S.M. Nisonovich, S.M. Sergeevich, A.R. Aharonovich, “Regional differentiation of support of youth innovative entrepreneurship system in the union state”, in *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 2019, vol. 25, no. 1, 1528-2686-25-S1-246.

<sup>40</sup> P. Shtompka, “Daily life is in the focus of attention: a new turn in sociology”, in *Sociological Studies*, 2009, no. 8, p. 3-13; V.A. Yadov, “An insight into the future of sociology”, in *Darydov’s Readings: Historical Horizons of Theoretical Sociology: A Collection of Scientific Reports of the Symposium*, Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 2011, pp. 14-17.

<sup>41</sup> D. Arduini, A. Zanfei, “An overview of scholarly research on public e-services? A meta-analysis of the literature”, *Telecommunications Policy*, 2014, vol. 38, no. 5, p. 476-495.

quantitative surveys<sup>42</sup> and allows combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Furthermore, since self-identification is also unconscious, described indirectly, the analysis of individual discourse, which can be obtained only in the absence of formalization, is a crucial tool for the researcher<sup>43,44</sup>. Based on theoretical provisions on the characteristics of the middle class in the post-industrial era, the main aims of the study are defined as follows:

- to find, based on self-identification, the share of the middle class among the population in the territory of the Tomsk agglomeration;
- to find the signs by which citizens identify themselves with the middle class;
- to find out how significant social activity is in different fields for self-identification with the middle class and identify examples of such activity.

For our quantitative research, we shall accept citizens at large as the parent population. A group of middle-class representatives is singled out from this population during the survey for further detailed study. *The sample size* of the quantitative survey is set at 700 people. As the results of studies conducted in Russia in 2014-2015 indicate, 64%-78% of respondents identified themselves with the middle class<sup>45</sup>. We shall assume that in our sample at least 60% would identify themselves as representatives of this stratum. In this case, the size of the subsample of the middle class will be

---

<sup>42</sup> M.K. Gorshkov, N.E. Tikhonova, Yu.P. Lezhnina, S.V. Mareeva, E.I. Pakhomova, *Poverty and inequality in modern Russia: 10 years later: an analytical report*, Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 2013; E.M. Vlasova, "Status and development trends of the middle class in the regions of the Middle Volga", in *Regionology*, 2010, vol. 4, no. 73, p. 167-176; O.V. Shinyaeva, *Differentiation of the composition of the middle class in the Russian regions (as exemplified by the Volga regions). Regional differentiation and consolidation of the social space of Russia*, GKU RM "NCSÉM", Saransk, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> N.S. Plaskova, N.A. Prodanova, E.I. Zatsarinnaya, L.N. Korshunova, N.V. Chumakova, "Methodological support of organizations implementing innovative activities investment attractiveness estimation", in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2017, vol. 8, no. 8, p. 2533-2539.

<sup>44</sup> N.A. Prodanova, L.B. Trofimova, A.A. Adamenko, E.A. Erzinkyan, N.V. Savina, L.N. Korshunova, "Methodology for assessing control in the formation of financial statements of a consolidated business", in *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 2019, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 2696-2702.

<sup>45</sup> Wealth and the rich. Does wealth spoil a person? Does poverty spoil? How many Russians want to get rich? FOM: Values, 2015. Available at: <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/12055>; Russians about their financial situation and its prospects. The material situation of the Russians in March 2015 and forecasts for the year, 2015. FOM: Public Opinion Foundation. Available at: <http://fom.ru/Ekonomika/12091>.

400 people and more. This volume provides no more than 5% statistical error with a confidence coefficient of 0.95. *Quota arrangement* of the sample is carried out according to the parameters reflected in the statistical data: gender, age, place of residence/type of settlement. Since there are no other parameters in the regional statistical data, setting the corresponding quotas does not appear reasonable.

We set the *age of respondents* to be 18+ years old. Since the objectives of the study include assessing the social activity of citizens, we consider it inappropriate to reduce the age level because people from 14 to 18 years have limited civil rights. The age groups in our study are groups of individuals of 1) 18-34 years old; 2) 35-54 years old; 3) 55+ years old. This division is conditioned upon the socio-economic activity of representatives of a particular age. A group of youth is defined in the specified age framework, since in modern science, the extension of the age limits of social maturity to 35 years is associated with a longer period of study and material difficulties in providing for themselves and their families without the help of parents and the state<sup>46</sup>. *Data collection method* – mass semi-formalized interview.

*The survey locations* are municipalities included in the Tomsk agglomeration: Tomsk urban okrug, Seversk urban okrug, Tomsk municipal district<sup>47</sup>. Attention to the territories included in the agglomeration is conditioned upon the fact that 68% of citizens of the Tomsk region live here, and the population is growing; the agglomeration is concentrated around the regional centre; accordingly, the population is mainly urban, which is typical for the middle class. On the territory of the Tomsk municipal district, the survey is conducted in the settlements with the largest number of residents and/or found near the regional centre. It is in these settlements that citizens from the city actively move to permanent residence, buying land and building houses and cottages<sup>48</sup>. There are 11 of 19 such settlements, in which reside 72% of the total number of citizens of the Tomsk region aged 18 years and older. It is these municipalities, primarily the Tomsk urban okrug, that represent the region as an innovative territory: in 2016-2017, the Tomsk Oblast entered the top

---

<sup>46</sup> A. Zelenin, “Determination of the age framework of youth”, in *Public Service*, 2008, no. 3, p. 105-110.

<sup>47</sup> The concept of socio-economic and spatial-territorial development of the agglomeration “Tomsk-Seversk-Tomsk District”, 2018. The official Internet portal of the Administration of the Tomsk Oblast. Available at: <https://tomsk.gov.ru/tomskaja-aglomeratsija>.

<sup>48</sup> M.I. Ermilova, D. Ushakov, S.V. Laptev, “Financing the Russian housing market: Problems and the role of the state”, in *Opcion*, 2018, vol. 34, no. 17, p. 1074-1087.



ten regions of the country, ranking 4th according to the rating of innovative development of constituent entities of the Russian Federation<sup>49</sup>; even though its economic performance ranked 39th according to the metric free cash flow<sup>50</sup> it leads in the index of initiative of the population<sup>51</sup>. In 2014, the Tomsk Oblast for the 10th time became the best region of Russia for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises<sup>52</sup>. Such independence and activity of citizens suggests the presence of a high proportion of the middle class. *Terms* of the field phase of the study – October 2018.

*Question wording.* First, the direct question of class self-identification deserves attention. We consider it reasonable to precede this issue with the recognition of the concept of the “middle class”, since we share the opinion on the need for the presence of this concept in the mass consciousness for the formation of class stratification in society<sup>53</sup>. The proposed version of the question is “Do you know the concept of the “middle class”, have you heard such an expression?” The direct question of self-identification in the context of post-industrial sociality should not include material criteria. Therefore, we exclude issues with alternatives such as “rich, poor, middle class”. The problem in this regard is that the terms for the classes still reflect the criteria of the industrial era. Questions without alternatives, for example, “To which class do you relate to?” with the likelihood of a variety of understandings and interpretations also do not seem productive.

In such circumstances, we are inclined to choose the option that prompts the respondent to immediately identify themselves with the middle class, without presenting the entire class structure: “Can you identify yourself with the middle class?” In addition, this question logically continues the previous one: a person is familiar with the concept of the

---

<sup>49</sup> Rating of innovative regions of Russia, 2017. Association of Innovative Regions of Russia: official site. Available at: <http://i-regions.org/images/files/airr17.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup>V. Kolmakov, A. Polyakova, “Regional free cash flow dataset: An approach to regional performance evaluation”, in *Data in Brief*, 2019, vol. 25, Article number 104175.

<sup>51</sup> Public Opinion Foundation at the XIII Tomsk Innovation Forum INNOVUS-2010. FOM: Public Opinion Foundation. Available at: [http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/fomterri/fomterry\\_pressr/fomter250510\\_pressr](http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/fomterri/fomterry_pressr/fomter250510_pressr).

<sup>52</sup> For the tenth time, Tomsk Oblast has become the best region in Russia for the development of small and medium-sized businesses, 2014. Tomsk regional branch of the all-Russian political party “Edinaya Rossiya”: official site. Available at: <http://tomsk.er.ru/news/2014/5/21/tomskaya-oblast-v-desyatj-raz-stala-luchshim-regionom-rossii-po-razvitiyu-malogo-i-srednego-biznesa>.

<sup>53</sup> E.M. Avraamova, “The formation of the middle class in Russia: definition, methodology, quantitative estimates”, in *Social Sciences and Modernity*, 2002, no. 1, p. 17-24.

middle class and they relate themselves to this group. As for the question for characterization, in particular, about the attributes by which citizens identify themselves with the middle class, we propose the following wording: “Why, by what attributes did you manage to identify yourself with middle class?”. We consider it necessary to supplement this question with a question aimed at identifying the characteristics that are directly related to the “creative” in the broad meaning of the features of the post-industrial personality. Since respondents can explain their identification with the middle class proceeding from stereotypical attributes, an assessment of the significance of individual goals, their ability to achieve them, their readiness for changes, the activity of their life position will be determined using separate questions: “Which statement do you agree with to a greater extent: “Personal interests are the main thing for a person” and “Personal interests should be limited in the name of public interests”; “If you have problems achieving your goals, how do you primarily solve them?” (alternatives: on your own, with someone’s help (relatives, friends, employer, authorities, etc.), “Do you consider yourself a person with an active lifestyle, proactive, and opportunistic?”, “Is it important for you to be active in order to identify yourself with middle class?”, “Do you display economic activity to ensure your personal well-being?”, “Can you call yourself a socially active person?”.

The following issues will relate to citizen participation in the implementation of *particular strategic objectives* of the region: either through direct activity in any field, or through active discussion and adoption of decisions agreed with society. The respondents were offered a list of strategic goals outlined in the Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of the Tomsk Oblast until 2030 and the Concept for Socio-Economic and Spatial-Territorial Development of the “Tomsk-Seversk-Tomsk District” Agglomeration. To assess activity in the economic field, the question was formulated as follows: “In which of the economic areas are you ready to realize yourself or are you already doing this: development and production of high technology products, entrepreneurship, agriculture?”. To assess the activity in the non-economic field, the following question was asked: “By what means are you ready to show your social activity or you are already doing it: participation in social projects and campaigns, public discussions and electronic voting, evaluating the activities of authorities and formulating proposals on official websites of authorities, evaluating state and municipal services and the formulating of proposals on the websites of multifunctional centres and the public services portal?”. The study was conducted under the guidance of the author of this paper.

## Results

A total of 697 people were surveyed. The overwhelming majority of respondents (94.8%) are familiar with the concept of “middle class”. At the same time, 80.8% of the total number of respondents identify themselves with this social stratum (Table 1).

**Table 1: Distribution of answers to the question “Can you classify yourself as a middle class?” (% of the total number of respondents)**

Answer options	Number of persons	%
Yes	563	80.8
No	115	16.5
Do not know/No answer	19	2.7

In the gender groups, women mostly identified with the middle class (84.9% versus 75.8% for men of the total number of respondents in the group), in the age groups, young and middle-aged people were more likely (84.6% and 80.5%, respectively, compared to 76.6% in the older group). With that, deviations from the average value over the entire sample in different groups are insignificant. Further analysis shows the opinion of exclusively the middle-class representatives. Material features predominate in the motives of self-identification with this stratum. First of all, income (59.9%), the range of sufficient amount of which is unusually wide – from providing the most necessary needs to being able to make any purchases, save money, and aid relatives (Table 2). A specific amount of income (the amount in roubles) is referred to in individual cases only. More indicative are the judgments demonstrating the assessment of the sufficiency of welfare from the standpoint of personal goals of the actor: “I have an income that satisfies my material needs”. The second most important criterion for identifying with the middle class was considered to be the possession of property (14%). It is noteworthy that citizens identify themselves with representatives of the middle class, not exclusively because they own property: a house, a car, a summer residence, etc. (thereby differing them from the poor), but also because they fall short of the rich: “We live in the usual Khrushchyovka”. The third most prevalent criterion, this time intangible, was the level of education, higher and secondary special education in particular (9.6%). Employment is an important attribute of self-identification with this stratum. However, the perception of work in material terms – as a means of generating income

(8.5%) is ahead of its significance as a means of self-fulfilment at large (3.4%) and, in addition, in business (1.6%).

**Table 2: Distribution of answers to the question “Why, on what grounds did you manage to classify yourself as a middle class?” (several answers options are possible; % of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

<b>Answer options</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Material attributes, including:</b>		
<i>Income and current consumption:</i> normal prosperity, welfare, a decent standard of living, I provide for myself, a stable salary and pension, comfortably support my family; I can buy whatever I want – I have enough money; I don’t need anything, the children are shod and dressed, decent food, clothes; I am financially independent; I live without thinking about material welfare; I can help parents, children, and grandchildren, there is an opportunity to save money, there are savings; you don’t need to count pennies, I don’t have to feel like a beggar, I don’t work at several jobs, I don’t borrow money; neither rich nor poor; I do not stand out from the crowd; middle income; average salary, not above and not below average; between a beggar and an oligarch, my salary does not correspond to the upper class, I fall short of the rich, we are far from the rich, there is not much wealth; the lowest middle class, not chic, enough for the needs, but only the inexpensive ones; enough for food, parents financially aid me, all our pensioners are the middle class, not higher; average pension	337	59.9
<i>Property and expensive goods:</i> apartment, housing, estate, own commercial immovable property, cottage, garden, livestock, bathhouse, car, TV, computer, expensive telephone; I have everything, except for a helicopter and an airplane; no elite real estate and cars, we live in ordinary Khrushchyovka, a rented apartment	79	14
<i>Use of paid services:</i> rest, incl. at sea, abroad, at resorts; there is the possibility of paid education	44	7.8

for yourself and children, the ability to use paid medicine, cultural events and entertainment are affordable		
<i>Work as a source of income:</i> there is work, I work a lot to fall within the middle class	48	8.5
<b>Non-material attributes, including:</b>		
<i>Education:</i> with higher and secondary special education, there is a second higher education, I get higher education, I have or am getting an additional education	54	9.6
<i>Having a family:</i> I have a wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren	8	1.4
<i>Self-fulfilment in professional activity:</i> I have a favourite, interesting job, I allow myself to work with joy, to completely fulfil my potential, I work in my specialty, I have a profession	19	3.4
<i>Having your own business:</i> I can do business; I own my business	9	1.6
<i>Activity:</i> active lifestyle, socially active	4	0.7
<i>Self-sufficiency:</i> independence, I am self-sufficient in everything, I do not need assistance; I am walking the line; I see the prospect of my future	13	2.3
<i>Life satisfaction:</i> I am positive, I am satisfied with life, moral satisfaction, peace of mind, I am satisfied with the quality of life, I have an interesting life, there is an opportunity to feel alive, me and my children live a decent life, I live in a great comfort, we live normally, there are no problems, I'm not ashamed to live	18	3.2
<i>Social and professional status:</i> intellectuals, doctors, physician, worker, qualification, social status of the family, not ashamed to be a woman	17	3
<i>Job status:</i> head	2	0.4
<i>Social connections:</i> we welcome guests, we earn respect from others, happiness in the family	3	0.5
<i>Health condition:</i> working capacity, health, normal age	3	0.5
<i>Intellectual and sociocultural qualities:</i> upbringing, level of development, attitude, spiritual, cultural development, spiritual status, life position, creative hobby – drawing in nature	7	1.2

<b>General judgments:</b> all together, according to different criteria, I live like everyone else does	7	1.2
<b>Do not know/No answer</b>	86	15.3

Another significant (material) criterion is the ability to use paid services in the field of education, healthcare, culture, tourism (7.8%). The criterion of social activity was important for self-identification only for 0.7% of respondents. The remaining motives for self-identification demonstrate a wide range of intangible, but less common attributes: satisfaction with life; social, professional, official status; self-sufficiency, family, intellectual and sociocultural qualities, social connections and health condition (Table 2).

**Table 3: Distribution of answers to the question “Which statement do you agree with to a greater extent” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Personal interests are the main thing for a person	333	59.1
Personal interests should be limited in the name of public interests	145	25.8
Do not know/No answer	85	15.1

Regarding personal interests, the picture is as follows: in this social stratum, the majority of respondents (59.1%) recognize their priority over public ones (Table 3). These priorities are typical for representatives of all groups by gender and age: 58.8% of men and 59.4% of women, 65.9% and 62.6% of young and middle-aged people, respectively, think so. We shall note that although the attitude toward personal interests prevails among older people, the number of such respondents is not as great as in other groups: 46.7%. With that, representatives of the middle class (69.8%) are capable of independently achieving their goals (Table 4).

**Table 4: Distribution of answers to the question “If you have problems in achieving your goals, how do you mainly solve them?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
On my own	393	69.8

With someone's help (relatives, friends, employer, authorities, etc.)	170	30.2
---	-----	------

Independence in achieving personal goals is demonstrated by representatives of all groups by gender and age: 76.9% of men, 64.6% of women; 64%, 72.5% and 74.3% of young, middle and older people, respectively. Deviations of values in groups from the average for the entire sample are insignificant. A smaller number (57.9%) of the middle-class representatives identify themselves with people with an active life position (Table 5).

**Table 5: Distribution of answers to the question “Do you consider yourself a person with an active lifestyle, proactive, and opportunistic?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Yes	326	57.9
No	146	25.9
Do not know/No answer	91	16.2

In groups by gender and age, the positive values of this indicator do not significantly differ from the average value of the entire sample: 60.5% of men, 56% of women consider themselves active people; 57%, 61.5% and 55.1% of young, middle, and older people, respectively.

**Table 6: Distribution of answers to the question “Is it important for you to be active in order to identify yourself with middle class?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Yes	243	43.2
No	200	35.5
Do not know/No answer	120	21.3

Since the answers of respondents about the motives for identifying themselves with middle class really show the influence of stereotypical ideas, the question of such a criterion of social stratification as activity clarifies the severity of the post-industrial actor's attitudes. As a result, it was found that activity as an attribute of the middle class is of low importance: the number of respondents who recognized the importance

of this feature in the portrait of a representative of the middle class is only 7.7% higher than the number of respondents for whom activity is not a stratifying attribute (Table 6). In groups by gender and age, there are some significant deviations from the priority attitudes and their meanings for the sample at large. Thus, men to a greater extent deny the significance of this attribute for proving social stratification: 39.5% of negative answers versus 37% of positive answers. In groups of women and middle-aged people, activity gains the highest significance, and the difference between positive and negative answers increases: 47.7% of positive answers versus 32.6% of negative answers in women, 44.5% positive versus 30.8% negative responses in middle-aged people. Furthermore, when the concept of activity is specified, the economic and social position of a person have different importance for representatives of the middle class. Thus, in terms of economic activity and the ability to ensure their personal welfare, the middle class respondents more confidently (65.5%) consider themselves to be people with such a personal characteristic (Table 7).

**Table 7: Distribution of answers to the question “Do you display economic activity to ensure your personal well-being?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Yes	369	65.5
No	194	34.5

In the groups by gender and age, deviations from the average for the entire sample are insignificant for the most part: the number of positive answers is 71.4% and 61.2% for men and women, respectively; 60.3% and 61.1% in young and older people, respectively. A more significant gap in values is observed in the group of middle-aged people: already 10.3% more respondents than in the entire sample (75.8%) stated that they are able to ensure their own welfare. With that, a significantly smaller number (40.5% of the sample at large) of the middle-class representatives consider themselves socially active (Table 8).

**Table 8: Distribution of answers to the question “Can you call yourself a socially active person?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Yes	228	40.5



No	247	43.9
Do not know/No answer	88	15.6

It should be noted that the only group by gender and age, where the number of positive answers exceeds the number of negative ones, is a group of women: 44.6% of positive answers versus 39.1% of negative answers. In all other groups, negative answers prevail: 50.4% versus 34.9% positive in men, 44.9% versus 41.6% positive in young people, 43.4% versus 41.8% positive in middle-aged people, 43.1 % versus 37.7% positive in older people. The middle class can be characterized as a driver of social change by identifying areas of activity where respondents display economic activity. It was found that the largest number of respondents (cumulative percentage – 46.7%) fulfil themselves precisely in the areas of priority for the strategic development of the Tomsk Oblast: the development and production of high-tech products, entrepreneurship, and agriculture<sup>54</sup>. However, there is probably no realization that the middle class contributes to the achievement of the region’s strategic goals: 61.5% of respondents in this social stratum stated that they did not know the development goals of the Tomsk Oblast. The dominance of negative responses (57.1-70.6%) is inherent in the majority of groups by gender and age. Youth displays the greatest ignorance. The only group where the number of positive answers is slightly higher than negative is a group of older people: 50.3% of the respondents in the group know about the strategic goals of the region. It is noteworthy that, in the context of individual areas of activity, the largest number of respondents (38%) in no way associate their economic activity with the implementation of the official tasks of regional development that they learned about during the survey (Table 9).

**Table 9: Distribution of answers to the question “In which of the economic areas are you ready to realize yourself or are you already doing this?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
Development and production of high technology products	54	9.6
Entrepreneurship	160	28.4

<sup>54</sup> N. Batyrova, T. Fatih, R. Yermankulova, “Economic efficiency of means for mechanization in agricultural complex”, in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2018, vol. 9, no. 6, p. 1893-1902.

Agriculture	49	8.7
None of the above	214	38.0
Do not know/No answer	86	15.3

The answer “none of the above” dominates in the group of women (42.2%), middle-aged and older people (36.3% and 59.9%, respectively). However, the predominance of those who identified themselves as entrepreneurs is notable (as against employment in other areas) among men (33.2%) and youth (40.2%). Public activity, increasing citizens’ opportunities for self-fulfilment and influencing decisions of government bodies in the public interest, manifests itself to a greater extent in participation in social projects and campaigns (46.7%), public discussions and electronic voting (35.2%). Such priorities are typical for all groups by gender and age: 36.5-54.4% in separate groups participate in social projects and campaigns, 26.9-43.9% take part in public discussions and voting. Middle-aged people (54.4%) and men (52.5%) are most active in social projects, in voting – young people (43.9%) and men (36.1%). With that, the official websites of government bodies as a platform for social activity attract a small number of middle-class representatives (Table 10).

**Table 10: Distribution of answers to the question “By what means are you ready to show your social activity or you are already doing it?” (% of respondents who identify themselves with middle class)**

Answer options	Number of people	%
<b>Participation in social projects and campaigns</b>		
Ready / taking part	263	46.7
Not ready / not taking part	252	44.8
Do not know/No answer	48	8.5
<b>Participation in public discussions and electronic voting</b>		
Ready / taking part	198	35.2
Not ready / not taking part	298	52.9
Do not know/No answer	67	11.9

<b>Evaluation of the activities of authorities and formulation of proposals on the official websites of authorities</b>		
Ready / taking part	133	23. 6
Not ready / not taking part	313	55. 6
Do not know/No answer	117	20. 8
<b>Evaluation of state and municipal services and formulation of proposals on the websites of multifunctional centres and the portal of public services</b>		
Ready / taking part	160	28. 4
Not ready / not taking part	285	50. 6
Do not know/No answer	118	21. 0

## Discussion

The results of the study confirmed our assumption that in the innovation region the share of the middle class is expected to be high. Self-identification with the middle class is inherent in most citizens in all groups by gender and age. Such results are consistent with the findings of scholars that the modern middle class is ever less related to the “class” and ever more to civil society<sup>55</sup>. However, the motives for self-identification with the middle class in the Russian region still correspond to the industrial era since they have a material character. Professional activity is considered to a greater extent not as a means of self-fulfilment, but as an opportunity to earn money. Less than 1% of the representatives of this stratum named social activity as a criterion for classifying themselves as middle class. Furthermore, the attributes of post-industrial sociality are manifested in the fact that there is no standard amount of income that allows an individual to identify themselves with the middle class in the perception of a citizen. On the contrary, the evaluation of the sufficiency of income is carried out by the actor from the standpoint of personal life goals. A

---

<sup>55</sup> C.M. Villegas, “Revolution “from the middle”: historical events, narrative, and the making of the middle class in the contemporary developing world”, in J. Go (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, 2010, pp. 299-312.

prominent level of education and, so, the intellectual nature of labour also meet the characteristics of a knowledge society<sup>56</sup>. The accumulation of personal human capital, which is noted in the scientific literature as a characteristic of a modern actor, in the aggregate of manifestations is significant for over 20% of the representatives of this stratum. This refers to education, health, social relations, personal qualities (upbringing, cultural development, life attitude, etc.).

In the context of the attitudes of the middle class of the post-industrial society, it can also be noted that independence and autonomy are inherent on most representatives of the middle class of the Tomsk Oblast. This is shown by the recognition of personal interests as a priority, the ability to independently achieve goals and ensure personal welfare. Such attitudes are inherent in representatives of all groups by gender and age. Middle-aged people are the most self-sufficient in terms of achieving personal welfare. Regarding attitudes towards individualism-collectivism, we shall note that among older people collectivist sentiments inherent in the Soviet era are still strong. It is noteworthy that at least 30% of those who identified themselves with middle class (by and large in the sample) do not possess such key qualities as independence and autonomy. Consequently, it is precisely on post-industrial grounds that the number of representatives of the subjective middle class can be identified as smaller class. According to another key stratification criterion inherent in the modern middle class – the activity of a life attitude – there is also a smaller proportion of citizens who share this attitude compared to the total number of respondents who identify themselves with middle class. This position is inherent in representatives of all groups by gender and age. The greatest awareness of the importance of an active life attitude as a criterion of social stratification is showed among women and middle-aged people.

In the context of social behaviour, which is gaining great importance for social stratification in the post-industrial period, a low proportion of representatives of the subjective middle class who consider themselves active precisely in the social sphere is noteworthy. The number of respondents who identified themselves as socially active turned out to be even less than the number of people who deny these qualities. The only group by gender and age where representatives consider themselves more socially active is women. With that, there is a mismatch of value attitudes

---

<sup>56</sup> A.A. Sapfirova, V.V. Volkova, A.V. Petrushkina, “Information technologies and information compliance in labor relations: Legal regulation and prevention of violations of labor rights”, in *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing*, 2019, no. 726, p. 911-916.

to real behaviour. Thus, the importance of an active position as a criterion for identifying a citizen with the middle class turned out to be lower than the manifestation of activity itself. Therefore, in practice, citizens behave actively: both in the economic sphere, to ensure personal welfare, and in the public sphere, to influence decision-making in the public interest. Thus, 63% of the middle class choose at least one of the types of social participation: in social projects and campaigns, public discussions and electronic voting, evaluating the activities of authorities and formulating proposals. However, it is noteworthy that the use of the possibility of interaction with authorities through official channels is weak. The most active in social projects and voting were men, middle-aged people, and young people, although representatives of these groups did not identify themselves with socially active people to a greater extent and denied the criterion significance of such participation for social stratification. In general, it should be noted that active behaviour (both economic and social) is not inherent at least for 35% of those who identify with the middle class. If we consider the middle class as a driving force for the implementation of the overall development strategy, then this characteristic is expressed rather weakly. Most representatives of the subjective middle class are not aware of the strategic goals of the region. Youth turned out to be especially ignorant, which precisely should play a key role in achieving strategic goals. From the standpoint of correlating an individual's activities with efforts to achieve common goals, one can draw a rather negative conclusion: the most answers account for the alternative "I do not fulfil myself in any of the areas of strategic development of the Tomsk Oblast". Despite the innovative status of the region, only about 10% of the middle class associate their activities with the development and production of high-tech products. Priority is given to entrepreneurship, although the share of entrepreneurs is only 28%. The highest share of entrepreneurs was found in groups of men and youth. In this regard, it can be noted that researchers from other countries also find it difficult to consider the middle class as particularly entrepreneurial<sup>57</sup>, and its main body is not necessarily composed of entrepreneurs<sup>58</sup>. The point is that representatives of the public sector – teachers, doctors, scientists,

---

<sup>57</sup> A.V.Banerjee, E. Duflo, "What is middle class about the middle classes around the world?", in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2008, vol. 22, no. 2, p. 3-28.

<sup>58</sup> J. Unger, "China's conservative middle class", in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Australian National University, 2006, pp. 27-31. Available at: [http://psc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/PSC/CCC/publications/papers/JU\\_conservative\\_middle\\_class.pdf](http://psc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/PSC/CCC/publications/papers/JU_conservative_middle_class.pdf).

employees of state bodies – make up a large share in the structure of the middle class. This is condition upon the wide dissemination of knowledge<sup>59</sup>. In our opinion, the “knowledge-based” nature of such a middle-class group also meets the criteria of post-industrial social stratification. Since the city of Tomsk is a large university centre, it is likely that there is also many such middle-class representatives. From these positions, one can explain, at least in part, the low social activity of the middle class of the Tomsk Oblast. We can draw an analogy with the observations of researchers from other countries who found that middle-class representatives – employees of the public sector – are loyal to the government and are not critical of the political perspective, unlike the same representatives of business<sup>60</sup>. In addition, among the middle-class representatives in the Tomsk Oblast, a group of people employed in agriculture was identified (about 9%), who receive state support and may not be critical of the government. In this regard, again, one can trace similar sentiments of representatives of the agricultural sector in other countries, for example, India<sup>61</sup>. However, researchers note that such non-criticality holds the social progress back<sup>62</sup>. However, the motives for self-identification with the middle class in the Russian region still correspond more to the industrial era since they have a material nature. Professional activity is considered to a greater extent not as a means of self-fulfilment, but as an opportunity to make money. According to the criterion of social activity, this stratum in the Russian region does not fully correspond to the portrait of the post-industrial middle class, revealing recognition of the insignificance of such activity as the stratification criterion, a low degree of activity itself and avoiding contacts with authorities through official channels. However, there is a discrepancy between judgments and behaviour: while not considering themselves socially active, people still display this activity. Perhaps the reason for the discrepancy is conceptual:

---

<sup>59</sup> G. Solvay, “Global lifestyles under local conditions: the new indonesian middle class”, in Ch. Beng-Huat (ed.), *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 152-175. Available at: [http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia\\_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152](http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152).

<sup>60</sup> G. Solvay, “Global lifestyles under local conditions: the new indonesian middle class”, in Ch. Beng-Huat (ed.), *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 152-175. Available at: [http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia\\_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152](http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Beng-Huat-Chua-Consumption-in-Asia_Lifestyle-and-Identities-The-New-Rich-in-Asia-Routledge-2000.pdf#page=152).

<sup>61</sup> E. Sridharan, “The growth and sectoral composition of India’s middle class: its impact on the politics of economic liberalization”, in *India Review*, 2004, vol. 3, no. 4, p. 405-428.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, 2004.

by social activity, the actors mean greater and regular participation in public life, modestly assessing their efforts in this regard. Such a characteristic of the post-industrial middle class as the ability to act as a driver of social progress is traced to a small extent. Citizens do not show interest in the strategic goals of the development of the region and in a significant number of cases do not correlate their activities with the priority areas of general development.

Following the purpose of this study, we summarize the identified characteristics of the subjective middle class in the innovative regions of Russia on the example of the Tomsk Oblast. The middle class, to which the overwhelming majority of surveyed citizens belonged, is mostly independent in determining and achieving personal goals, sovereign in the meaning of recognizing their own life prospects as a priority, and economically active in ensuring personal welfare. Assessment of the adequacy of income is performed by the actor from the standpoint of personal life goals. Representatives of this stratum appreciate the prominent level of education and the intellectual nature of labour, strive for the accumulation of personal human capital in its diverse manifestations. According to these characteristics, the representatives of the Russian middle class meet the characteristics of the actor of the post-industrial society. From the point of view of the creativity of the middle class in a broad meaning – both the ability to change and their active implementation both in relation to their own situation and in relation to social processes in general – the Russian middle class is only partially creative. Creativity is most observed in strengthening personal position, without entry into the wide public sphere. Therefore, the identification of the middle class with civil society has not yet been observed.

If we consider the reflection of the attributes of precisely the innovative region in the portrait of the middle class, then they are not identified. First of all, we shall note that in the course of the mass interview one more question was asked: “Do you feel yourself a resident of the innovation region, which the Tomsk Oblast is considered to be?”, to which representatives of the subjective middle class mostly answered “probably not” (42.8% versus 37.8% who answered “probably yes”, and 19.4% who found it difficult to answer). Accordingly, citizens of the Tomsk Oblast do not display any kind of creativity and activity that goes with innovative thinking. Hence, a low degree of employment in the innovation sphere, and a low degree of social activity, which could affect the creation for the innovative person of the same modern conditions for self-realization by the authorities. As a result, the general conclusion of the

study can be formulated as follows: the subjective middle class of the Russian region quite confidently determines its class affiliation, but in its characteristics it does not fully possess all the features inherent in this social stratum in the post-industrial period. However, it can be argued that it is precisely the awareness of the importance of social participation that lags behind, while participation itself is present in very different forms, although not to the extent described in the world scientific literature.