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Dedovshchina : From Military to Society

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***Dedovshchina* as an Element of the «Small Society» : Evidence From Russia and Other Countries.**

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***Dedovshchina* as an Element of the «Small Society» : Evidence From Russia and Other Countries.**

- 1 In modern western writings on the post-Soviet Russia the idea that market and political reforms have not led yet to the expected results, i.e. the emergence of democracy and free market, is not welcome. Few are those western scientists who admit the unintended or undesigned results of intentional human actions in the context of former socialist countries¹. They expect there the emergence of a «corrupted and partly mafia-type economic system»² instead of cherishing the illusions about perfect competition and open economy.
- 2 The refusal to accept the post-Soviet reality can be explained in different manners. Western advisors played during the 1990s an active role in blueprinting the programs of reforms for Russia as well as for most other former socialist countries. These programs have been based on the know-how accumulated in the West; they reflected an ideal type of the western political and economic systems. According to B. Badie's term, reforms in post-Soviet countries have got many features of the importation of western models. The act of importation is the «transfer to a given society of a model or a political, economic and social practice invented in the other historical context; this model or practice derives from a completely different social order»³. The longer the distance between the current and the original institutional contexts, the more there are chances that the importation will lead to unexpected results. A model, that has proved its efficiency in one society, can create a disorder in the other society⁴. The institutions promoting the exportation of western models (like the IMF or the World Bank) and their advisors are partly responsible for not taking seriously into consideration the limits and the possible perverse effects of such transfers.
- 3 Another explanation of the prolonged silence in respect of post-Soviet transformations consists in economic considerations. Russia is one of the largest producers of oil and gas in the world, and the leading industrialized countries, especially its neighbor the European Union, must take this fact into consideration while evaluating the current situation in this country. The price of telling the truth might be too high: the exclusion from taking opportunities on the emerged market, whatever corrupted and imperfect it is.
- 4 The next consideration concerns methodological issues. One can wonder whether the analytical tools available to western scholars fit well the problems observed in post-Soviet countries. The history of social sciences in Russia has been characterized by a long debate between the two camps: the «westernizers», those who believe in applicability of western theories in the Russian context, and the «slaviophiles» (or the «romanticists» called by analogy with the romantic school in Germany) arguing that western theories are of no help in understanding the Russian history⁵. The controversy between the advocates of the two camps is still going on. The «romanticists» argue that the Russian culture have a number of particular features which makes standard western theories irrelevant. For example, they emphasize that the assumption of the utility maximization does not correctly depict the sense of economic activity in the Russian culture. In Russian, the «*khozaistvo*» (a special term for business) «includes not only a business side, i.e. the search for profit; it has a social, public dimension as well. The economic activity has to satisfy public demands and social needs»⁶. Consequently, according to the «romanticists», the model of rational choice tells us very little about the Russian economy.
- 5 The opposition between universalistic and particularistic points of view prevents social scientists from speaking about the particular problems of post-Soviet transformations in a language comprehensible for both Russians and Westerners. There exist two extreme cases: either one applies a standard model and, consequently, misses particular aspects in

understanding the current situation, or the researcher puts a too heavy emphasis on particular features and, as a result, his or her voice is not heard by fellow colleagues in the West. The last case occurs even if the researcher speaks English or another western language: it is necessary but yet insufficient condition for being heard and correctly understood. Without finding a compromise between universalistic and particularistic models (formulated in whatever language) the correct comprehension of the problems arising in the post-Soviet Russia seems to be very problematic indeed.

6 One of the possible ways for searching the compromise implies that one perceives the particularities of the Russian (or any other) culture through the lens of the institutional analysis. Culture is then thought as a particular configuration of the institutions, both formal and informal, that can be found everywhere. The list of such omnipresent institutions includes family, the State, trust in different forms (generalized, personalized and institutional), authority relationships (including property rights as power over material objects), contracts, and so on.

7 Two approaches within the institutional theory should be particularly emphasized. The first is called «old institutional economics». All models and categories of the old institutional economics derive from the process of grounded theorizing, i.e. they are empirically constructed. «Direct application of the grounded theory methodology to economic realities produces context embedded theories»⁷. Otherwise stated, the old institutionalism allows rewording the arguments of the «romanticists» in the terms of the institutional analysis. The second approach, the new institutional economics⁸ lies more closely to the universalistic way of thinking. With the help of the new institutionalism the «westernizers» give an institutional meaning to their ideas.

8 Once the common language is found, there is a need for fining a solution of the following problem: how to put universal institutional categories (family, the State, and others) into a particular, country-specific context ? The methodology of «descending» from the abstract (universal models) to the concrete (particular phenomena), that has been developed in the Marxist philosophy, seems very promising in this respect⁹. The researcher takes a general category or model and then puts it in a context. To fit well the new context, the category needs modifying. For example, instead of studying the role of trust in structuring everyday interactions in general, one can compare a particular configuration of the trust in the different forms in Russia with that in a western country.

9 Let us consider a particular configuration of the universal institutions called «small» society¹⁰. It fits well the case of post-Soviet transformations and, more surprisingly, the situation in some spheres of everyday life in the West. In what follows we will briefly discuss the notion of «small» society (Part 1). Then it will be shown how the «small» society produces the phenomenon of «*dedovshchina*» (Part 2). Finally, we will discuss empirical evidence from Russia and other countries. Everywhere where the «small» society exists, it gives rise to *dedovshchina*: in Russian army, in prison, even in western universities (Part 3).

1 - «Small» society as an Institutional Construction

10 Constructing an ideal type of society that is characterized by the lack of differentiation of spheres, the personalization of relations, the imperfect mastery of violence, the duality of norms and the domination of imposed authority serves to qualify the situation in which the «small» society is found as a result of incomplete modernization. In other words, the transformation of the «small» society, which is both localized and personalized, into a «large» society, has not been completed. This observation bears no value judgement; it merely reflects a particular structural and functional organization of society. As a result, we need to avoid using adjectives such as primitive or less civilized to describe it.

Non differentiation of spheres

11 The structural definition of modernization implies the transformation of the simple society, without means for separating the various spheres of daily activity, into a complex society, including several normative sub-systems. Each sub-system has a degree of autonomy that is not negligible with respect to the others, and interference is reduced to nothing within the

framework of the ideal type of modernization. «The functional differentiation of sub-systems, particularly the separation of politics and religion or economics and politics, the formation of a universe devoted to science, art, private life, are all conditions of modernization»¹¹. The theory of conventions speaks of the following spheres of activity (les cités): merchant, industrial, civic, domestic, opinion, inspiration. The ecological city and the city by projects were added to this list more recently¹². In a similar manner, M. Walzer constructs seven spheres of justice (each of them has its own criteria of justice and «rules of the game»): money, kinship and love, political power, security and welfare, office, recognition, divine grace and education¹³.

Personalized relationships

12 One of the aspects of the interpenetration of fields of activity lies in the fact that the choice of a partner during the course of social interaction is not free. This choice depends on the membership of the potential partner in a chain of personal relationships. All interactions take place within this chain and it is not possible to have one partner for commercial activity, another for civic activity and so on. The need to have a personal knowledge in order to organize any social activity makes each member in a local community the universal partner. As a result, the local community, regardless of its form – family, traditional community, friendships, «friends of friends», the Mafia – closes in on itself. The family represents the ideal type of personalized relationships that are closed with respect to the outside world. The analysis of the domestic city described by the advocates of the theory of conventions illustrates the manner in which a «large» society is built without taking leave of the «small» society. In the domestic city, all social relations reproduce domestic relations. In this case, «the greatness of individuals depends on their hierarchical position in a chain of personal dependencies»¹⁴.

13 The domestic order allows for relationships of a different nature (merchant, civic, industrial, etc.) as long as they fit in with the logic of personalized relationships. Let us take a close look at the construction of merchant relationships within the domestic city. There are several examples of this anchoring in societies that are in the process of modernizing as well as in certain segments of modernized societies. An American anthropologist, Jane Ensminger, studied how the Orma, an African tribe, organized economic activity. It appeared that «The Orma still place an exceedingly high premium on having at least one close relative of the family in the cattle camp», making it easier to control the conditions for handling herds and reducing the opportunism of shepherds¹⁵. Also, the development of commerce in the regions in which the trader has no family or relatives often involves the marriage of his daughter with someone residing in the region in question. Domestic rooting also serves as a trade device in certain Latin-American countries where «the «extended family» has been transformed into a network of commercial or productive relationships»¹⁶. As in the case of the Orma, domestic anchoring helps to reduce transaction costs within a local community. In particular, the involvement of relatives in commercial activities reduces the costs incurred by the businessman to control and prevent the opportunistic behaviour of his agents. Personal dependence transforms into a guarantee that the contract will be fulfilled¹⁷. This same logic accounts for the willingness of bankers, diamond brokers and stock brokers to form relatively closed societies that support them in their commercial activities. The New York Stock Exchange, the London bankers, the international network of diamond merchants can all be considered as examples of business that is built on the basis of personalized relationships¹⁸.

Imperfect control of violence

14 The third marker on the path to modernization concerns the manner in which violence is controlled on a daily basis. There are several ways in which to manage the conflicts that arise in daily life. Institutionalized violence, which implies a State monopoly of violence, is only one method among others. Moreover, institutionalized violence is the only means for managing conflicts that is accepted in a modernized society. In order to provide a brief overview of the entire range of means, we will refer to an anthropological study made by René Girard. He looked at the steps involved in controlling violence that preceded the institutionalization

of violence. According to Girard, the first step involves the search for a replacement victim. «Unappeased violence strives and always manages to find a spare victim. In place of the creature that excited its fury, it will suddenly substitute another that has no specific reason for attracting the lightning of violence, other than the fact that it is both vulnerable and within reach»¹⁹.

- 15 It should be noted that, as a general rule, the replacement victim does not belong to the local community within which the violence was born. It is individuals from outside the domestic world who are transformed into the targets of violent acts – strangers as well as the King – if their actions do not fit in with the logic of the other members of the community. As the border between the «small» and the «large» societies starts to erode, the nature of violence changes. If there is no longer any difference between those who are in and those who are out (crisis of differences), such differences must be recreated through the mythic development of a scapegoat victim. «In place of widespread reciprocal violence, myth substitutes the formidable transgression of a unique individual»²⁰. According to Girard, the Oedipus myth can be explained by the logic of creating a scapegoat victim rather than through psychoanalytical reasoning. The third step that precedes the institutionalization of violence supposes the construction of a victim that can be sacrifice. Unlike the scapegoat victim, whose strangeness was artificially constructed, the sacrificial victim is not found either inside or outside the community. The sacrificial victim takes the form of monstrous doubles that are potentially incarnate in each member of the «small» society. «The [monstrous] doubles provide, between difference and identity, the equivocal median that is essential for sacrificial substitution, for the polarization of violence focussed on a unique victim»²¹. The community no longer needs to search for an external enemy or expel «scapegoats» in order to channel violence, they simply need to progressively unveil the doubles hidden behind the appearances of people who are personally well-known.

Duality of norms

- 16 The opposite behaviour, on the one hand, with respect to the members of the community who really are in and with those, on the other hand, who are others, strangers who are really out, raises the idea of the duality of standards as criteria that encompass incomplete modernization. This duality of standards goes against the movement modernization and the major consequence of modernization is to erase the differences between individuals belonging to various communities. «A certain dynamism draws first the West and then all of humanity towards a state of relative lack of differentiation never encountered previously»²². In other words, the degree of the duality of norms can serve to measure the progress made by a given society towards modernization. The greater the duality, the greater the distance from modernization and vice versa. The idea of degree is important to us since it helps to avoid simplistic, black and white judgements as to the nature of the society in question. Instead of qualifying a society as modern or not modern, it would be preferable to evaluate the degree of its proximity to the ideal type of modern society.
- 17 We would like to stress the fact that the situation of dependence, the imposition of norms on a society, creates conditions that are particularly favourable to the duality of norms. The norms imposed are associated with an external enemy that provokes hostility, hate, violence whereas the native norms are associated with the community itself and promote voluntary submission, solidarity and non-violence. «This is especially clear in the case of Goffman's «total institutions». These organizations manifest the principle of in-group solidarity and out-group hostility [as a consequence of generated ambivalence]»²³. As the dependence becomes increasingly obvious, the norms are increasingly dual in nature.
- 18 When speaking about the duality of norms, there is no term that is unequivocally imposed. The list of alternatives includes such couples of terms as us/them, actor/adversary, friend/enemy, insider/outsider. The constitutive principle of the Mafia, the opposition of «one's own people» to all the others merits being discussed in more details. The Mafia fits in with the logic of the network, with the exception of its openness to the outside world. The Mafia structure,

as a symbiosis of the clan, a traditional structure, and the network found in modern society, highlights the elements that constitute the ideal type of a «small» society valid for our study: the non-differentiation of fields of activity, personalized relationships, non-institutionalized violence, the duality of norms. In practice, each operating principle of the Mafia has a double nature: traditional and modern at the same time. For example, relationships of friendship are given a new meaning in the Mafia organization. «The friendship of the Mafioso is virtually deprived of the qualities usually associated with that term. It places a veil over what was simply a prosaic exchange»²⁴. It is not possible to either reduce the Mafia to the traditional society or associate it with modernization since it provides us with an image of incomplete modernization. Therefore, the qualification of Mafia proposed by Pino Arlacchi appears to be the most pertinent to us: it is «strange mixture of the traditional and the modern»²⁵.

19 In order to reduce the cultural connotations of the Mafia for the time being, we will attempt to expose its structure using the grammar of the institutional economics. From this point of view, the mafia organization presupposes an amalgamation between the domestic city and the city by projects. On the one hand, it is a world marked by a profound division between the interior and the exterior. «Composed of a series of personal dependencies, the world is ordered by the opposition of the interior and the exterior between which passages are either arranged or closed»²⁶. On the other hand, personalized relationships are mobilized to attain a goal, a project chosen to bypass a traditional constraint. Mobilization by projects is positioned in the heart of the city by projects. «The project temporarily brings very disparate individuals together and is presented as a very active segment of the network for a relatively short period of time, enabling the individuals to develop more lasting relationships that are then put on hold while remaining available»²⁷. In both cases, relationships are founded on a personal knowledge. In both cases, social interactions take place primarily within the chain of personal acquaintances. The only pertinent difference concerns the dynamic aspect of the personalized relationships. In the first case, the relationships are established in advance and not likely to change over time; in the second, they are «elective» and likely to take on a new structure as often as necessary in order to attain an objective. The relative homology of these two cities lead Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello to develop «the hypothesis of a substitution or rather an absorption of the domestic logic by the connectionist logic» in order to trace the main lines of the evolution of western societies²⁸. As for the «small» society, we would prefer to speak of an amalgamation of two cities: neither domestic logic nor logic «by projects» enjoys absolute domination over the other. Furthermore, there is no compromise, no reconciliation of the two logics: each action excludes neither the domestic interpretation nor its interpretation «by projects».

Imposed authority

20 There is a misleading similarity between the «small» society and the traditional society. The last one is usually described with the help of very similar terms: little, small, local, and so on. For example, the little community of the Mexican village Chan Kom has four distinctive qualities: distinctiveness (where the community begins and where it ends is apparent), smallness, homogeneity and self-sufficiency²⁹. However, traditional societies exist without any reference to the State. Even if the State's institutions like a school function within the traditional society, they play a marginal role. A theory of the traditional society can be developed without any special emphasis on the relations with the State and its representatives. By contrast, the study of the «small» society necessitates comprehension of the nature of authority relationships, both formal and informal. The «small» society derives from a particular type of the formal authority, i.e. the imposed authority.

21 In keeping with the usual definition, the authority of an individual (or an institution) over others translates into the possession of the right to control their actions. The concept of authority does not inevitably evoke the imposition of the will or the arbitrary power of the holder. Authority has a voluntary character «only if the individual holds the right of control over a particular class of his own actions and holds the right to transfer that right to another»³⁰. In other words, the individual voluntarily submits to the authority as long as he is not able to

fulfil his interests better by maintaining control of that authority and as long as the scope of the authority is limited. James Coleman refers to this type of authority as conjoined, as opposed to disjoined for which the sole purpose is the compensation that the individual receives for transferring the right to control his actions³¹. To this latter, we can add the authority that is imposed through coercion that denies the individual compensation. Imposed authority does not necessarily appear illegitimate. However, its legitimacy may be based on grounds other than rational considerations.

2 - *Dedovshchina* as a By-Product of the «Small» Society

- 22 Let us turn now to the phenomenon of *dedovshchina* and its assumed connection with the «small» society. According to our hypothesis, the institutional structure of the «small» society creates favorable conditions for social practices called by the Russian term non translatable into Western languages, *dedovshchina*. *Dedovshchina* consists in harassing young soldiers by the elders. Military service in Russia takes two years (in the Navy – three years). This two-year term is divided in four six-month periods. A soldier who just starts his military service (during first six months) is called «spirit» (*dukh*), or «young» (*molodoi*). The reference to a ghost is not accidental: the beginners have the minimal rights in a military city; they must simply obey to all others. The hardest and the least pleasant work (like cleaning public toilets) is in reserve for them. An initiation rite marks the passage from the lowest rank to the next, the status of «pheasant» (*fasan, sekach*). It usually consists in an act of symbolic and/or physical violence (like beating the rear as much times as the number of months that the soldier has spent in the army). Like the «spirits», the «pheasants» hardly have any rights, however they must fulfill many obligations. The principal one concerns learning obedience. The next informal rank, that of «salabon», or «scoop» (*cherpak*), for the first time gives an opportunity to direct youngest soldiers. The terminal rank, the status of «old» (*starik*), or «grandfather» (*ded*) allows the soldier to enjoy full rights in the military city. All others are compelled to respect and even serve them. The «olds» have disproportionately more rights than obligations. They are free to do virtually everything what they want.
- 23 First argument for looking at the military in Russian society from a perspective of the «small» society consists in a very particular type of authority relationships. The army lies very close to E. Goffman's ideal type of total institution. «A total institution – a link between residence and work, where a large number of individuals, placed in the same situation, cut off from the outside world for a relatively lengthy period of time, lead a cloistered life, for which the terms are explicitly and painstakingly regulated»³². The last part of the sentence merits being particularly emphasized. The formal authority tends to regulate all aspects of everyday life, despite the eventual resistance from the part of rank-an-file members. The army teaches to obey even if the individual does not see any rational reason for the transfer of rights to control his actions: sanctions against non obedient behavior might be very severe and sometimes even humiliating.
- 24 Compulsory character of the military service in Russia allows finding additional arguments about the imposed nature of authority. The projects of substituting the voluntary service for the compulsory service, actively debated in the end of the 1990s³, have recently been abandoned. The idea that every young man, including students at the universities, must get military experience becomes dominating in the political discourse. Probably the underlying argument is that the individual must learn obedience in everyday life (i.e. in the army) before accepting obedience as a key feature of the political system. Otherwise stated, the logic of a democratic system based on everyday democratic practices appears reversed: «the common individual must have experience of democratic self-government in his everyday life if he is to learn to participate meaningfully in the democratic governance of civil society»³³.
- 25 The army, like any other total institutions, excludes differentiation of the spheres of everyday life. The omnipresent control is one of the facets of this non differentiation: the superior has a legitimate right to control every aspect of the everyday life of his subordinates, by day and at night. Instead of a plurality of rules of the game, there is only one coordination mechanism, –

through fiats³⁴. The other aspect of non differentiation of the spheres of everyday life concerns the conditions of permanent co-presence: life in casernes and the exercises promoting team-spirit erase the border between the privacy and the public life. Soldiers live and do exercises together; they have no chance of getting separate partners for professional activities, leisure, intimate connections and so on.

26 The mixture of norms resulting from, on the one hand, the compulsory submission to the formal authority, and, on the other hand, non differentiation of the rules of the game corresponding to different spheres of everyday life varies from one local context to another. Its parameters depend on the particular persons, officers, sergeants and soldiers, involved in interactions. There are no universal and context-free norms structuring everyday life in the army. For example, the system of informal grades (ghosts, pheasants, grandfathers and others) is not the same in different regions and forces, the ranks and the initiation rites can take various forms. This fact confirms the thesis about the importance of personalized relationships in the military city. The lack of common normative frameworks becomes especially evident when one compares the Russian army with the other total institution, the post-Soviet prison. The people, who got experience of life in both total institutions, argue that informal norms in the army, if they do exist at all, are more contextual and personalized. A young man convicted of a crime shortly after his military service in the elite paratroops witnesses: «Everything is based on physical force. I was at Kursk, Briansk, Tver. It's easier to live here (in prison, – A.O.). There, there was *dedovshchina*... Pure physical force, humiliation... physical and moral pressure»³⁵.

27 Localized and personified relationships within the «small» society produce violence on everyday basis. Due to the lack of clear borders between different spheres of everyday life, conflicts arisen in one of them spread quickly to all the others. A quarrel among two mates damages their co-operation required in the course of exercises and, vice versa, a professional conflict inevitably acquires a personal dimension^{36 b}. It is important to note that the imposed character of authority relationships makes undesirable and even impossible the resolution of everyday conflicts through addressing to the superior. Whatever are the intentions of officers and other members of the formal hierarchy, the institutionalization of violence progresses very slowly in the context of the imposed authority.

28 In the «small» society control of violence implies other mechanisms than its institutionalization. In R. Girard's terms, the military city produces replacement victims: negative emotions and violence are channeled toward first-year soldiers (the «spirits» and the «pheasants») holding the lowest ranks in the informal hierarchy. Violence generated in everyday conflicts makes its path toward young soldiers: in the quality of replacement victims, they play an important role in ensuring a relative stability of the military city. The «roosters», these pariahs of the prisoners» community, perform a very similar role of «lighting-rod» for the violence generated in prison on a daily basis³⁷. The only difference consists in the fact that the «roosters» have no chance of changing their status: they were converted by force into passive homosexuals for major crimes against the prisoners» community, whereas first-year soldiers can hope to get a more respectable and safe rank. However, their promotion does not automatically depend on the length of the military service. The respect of the dual norms counts much more: one must agree that he, as a first-year soldier, has no rights but manifold duties, although his older fellows enjoy full rights without being bounded by any obligation.

29 Taking into consideration the functional role of *dedovshchina*, the fight against it has a very small chance of success without reforming the institutional organization of the army as a whole. As long as the «small» society continues to exist in the armed forced, the practices of *dedovshchina* will remain one of its inner vices.

3 - Phenomena Similar to *Dedovshchina* in Other Contexts

30 The «small» society gives rise to the phenomena similar to *dedovshchina* not only in the army, but everywhere. One can postulate the following heuristic regularity: the more similar an institutional context to the «small» society, the higher the probability that there exist

practices of harassment comparable with *dedovshchina*. Generally speaking, these practices of social harassment have in common several elements: sharp discrimination of newcomers and outsiders (*dedovshchina* itself implies age discrimination); channeling violence towards newcomers and outsiders; initiation through transforming the newcomer into an object of violence.

31 According to Yuri Levada and his fellow colleagues from the VTsIOM, the army has become one the basic mechanisms of socialization during the Soviet rule. At that time the absolute majority (45-60%) of young Russians passed through casernes. There young men get accustomed to the rules of the «small» society that they start to reproduce once the military service has finished. For young men, «dedovshchina is a system for re-socializing, transforming the individual. [...] The soldier, who has finished his military service, leaves the caserne with a double moral (one, universal, was learned at school, the second, «virile», in the army, – A.O). Physical violence and a hierarchical perception of the society are mixed up with the institutionalized violence of the army»³⁸. Due to the fact that girls are usually socialized by the young men that accomplished military service, *dedovshchina*, as Levada claims, became for the Soviets a kind of initiation rite. Thanks to *dedovshchina*, they learned the principle of «unconditional submission to an eldest person»³⁹. More recent studies show that the post-Soviet army continues to be the major institute of socialization. «The army and the police remain central institutions symbolically representing the terminal values of the «collective whole» and the priority of common interests over private ones»⁴⁰.

32 The explanatory model developed by Yuri Levada and his fellow colleagues has been criticized for reducing all problems of the «small» society in the (post-)Soviet Russia only to *dedovshchina*, i.e. socialization through the army⁴¹. However, it helps to shed light on two very important aspects: first, the congruency, or the «selective affinity», between the military city and the Russian society; second, the construction of an enemy as a result of the *dedovshchina*-type socialization. As far as the first aspect is concerned, the «selective affinity» can be explained by supposing that both societies, the military city and the post-Soviet Russia, lie more or less closely to the ideal type of the «small» society. *Dedovshchina* constitutes a «natural» link between these societies because imposed authority, non differentiation of spheres, personalized relationships, imperfect control of violence and duality of norms exist in both of them, although in a varying degree.

33 Who are the homologues of the newcomers and the olds in the framework of the post-Soviet Russia ? Violence generated on an everyday basis is channeled towards strangers (newcomers in the Russian culture) who transforms into enemies. Russia has a long history of constructing enemies in the popular mentality, i.e. searching for replacement victims and victims that can be sacrificed. Now Chechens in particular and the natives of Caucasus in general take the place of the «internal» enemies⁴². It seems that Chechens have much less rights than the «native» Russians even from an official point of view: at least, the selective checks of papers performed by the police (only the people who look like Chechens, the natives of Caucasus or Asiatics are checked) became a common practice. As far as the «external» enemies are concerned, the public hostility to the NATO (40% of Russians think that the recent enlargement of this organization represents a credible threat for Russia⁴³) proves that such category has not disappeared from the Russian mentality.

34 In order to verify whether the model of the «small» society can pass the test of universality, we need to apply it to some similar to *dedovshchina* phenomena that exist in the western context. In his analysis of the ambulance service at an hospital located in the Southern France, Jean Peneff argues that there is a «relative exploitation of the beginners (interns); the hospital and the medical staff as a whole profit from delegating the least prestigious tasks to the neophytes»⁴⁴. Some elements of the «small» society are easily recognizable in the everyday life of the hospital described on the basis of a participant observation. For example, the privacy can be hardly respected in the hospital, this concerns not only the patients⁴⁵, but the medical staff too⁴⁶. The professional efficiency in a non negligible degree depends on

the personalized relationships maintained within a team. There is an «obligation to cultivate intensive interpersonal relationships within a team because its members spent a great deal of time together»⁴⁷. One can wonder whether the type of authority relationships structuring the everyday life in hospital lies close to the imposed authority. Due to the asymmetry of information, the physician sometimes acquire power over the patient (i.e. he or she loses the right to revoke the authority once voluntarily transferred to the physician). However, the disjoint or even conjoint authority usually structures the relationships between the physicians. So, the «selective affinity» between hospital and the «small» society is far from being perfect, consequently, the local analog of «*dedovshchina*» (at least in the form observed by J. Peneff) seems much less violent and oriented to learning obedience.

35 The same considerations can be applied to the case of the French *bizutage* or the American ragging (the jokes addressed to the newcomers at the school and the series of initiation rites through which the newcomers receive citizenship in the city). Non differentiation of spheres and personalized relationships do exist at school. Nevertheless, the issue of the authority relationships at school merits being predominantly discussed. According to the advocates of the critical sociology, school has always been a place of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence means substitution of more subtle methods of imposition for brutal and explicit methods⁴⁸. The teacher has in this context power over the pupil, i.e. the imposed, although in a subtle manner, authority structures the relationships between them. School, like the army, teaches obedience. The imposed authority as a centerpiece of the «small» society produces *dedovshchina* in a form adapted to the context of school. It should be noted that the organization of science in schools of thought give rise to the elements of the imposed authority too. Consequently, violence in the university and academic milieu (sometimes it takes the most explicit forms) can be interpreted as a by-product of the «small» scientific society⁴⁹. It is the price to pay for incapacity of scientists to modernize their milieu, to transform the «small» society into a modern one.

36 Probably here one should find an explanation of the prolonged silence in respect of the post-Soviet transformations mentioned in the Introduction. The «smaller» the scientific community, both in the West and in Russia, the less chances of getting a critical assessment of post-Soviet transformations we have. So, the only way to go out of this situation consists in modernizing science as a source of the advices related to policy-making and, after this, in modernizing the post-Soviet Russia. Such reforms will lead to the disappearance of *dedovshchina*, whatever form it takes.

Footnotes

a 84% of Russians were in favor of the professional army in 2001 (see L. Gudkov, «Mass Identity and Institutional Violence. Article Two. Particularism and the «Enemy» factor: the Army and the Post-Soviet Russia», p. 44, *The Russian Public Opinion Herald: Data, Analysis, Discussions*, No. 2 (68), 2003, pp. 35-51 (in Russian).p. 49).

b This problem exists as long as the army remains the total institution. A solution found and applied in the Antique Greece can be emphasized: promotion of emotional, affective and even sexual bounds between soldiers was seen as a guarantee against spreading personal conflicts to the battlefield (see M. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, Paris : Gallimard, 1984).

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Abstract

Dedovshchina is considered as a by-product of a particular institutional organization, the «small» society. Non differentiation of the spheres of everyday life, personalized relationships, imperfect control of violence, duality of norms and the imposed authority characterize the «small» society. *Dedovshchina* consists in orienting the violence generated on everyday basis towards replacement victims or the victims that can be sacrificed. The «small» society produces phenomena similar to *dedovshchina* everywhere where it exists, in Russia as well as in the West. In the context of the Russian army, first-year soldiers transforms into replacement victims of the violence resulting from learning obedience as a centerpiece of the military service.

Keywords : *Dedovshchina*, Hazing, Small Society, Closed Institutions, Orphanages, Prisons, Russia

Countries : France