

Norms and Their Violation: From Scientific to Lay Thinking. An Exploratory Study from a Sample of Young Russian Adults

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Problem. The problem of norms and norms violation has a long research history in scientific thinking. Lay thinking analysis rests in the shadow of this research line; although in the modern world people are actively involved in the construction of lay theories about various phenomena and they use this knowledge in daily life.

Aim. Following the ideas of the social representations theory, the aim of the exploratory study was to analyse the lay theories developed by young Russian adults about norms and norms violation.

Method. 134 young adults participated in the study, 26.12% males (aged 18 – 28 years, $M=21.01$ years, $SD=2.23$). 71.6% participants were students of social sciences from Moscow Universities. A free-association technique was used. The data were analysed by using prototypical analysis.

Results. The particularity of lay thinking about norms and norms violation was revealed.

Conclusion: It is possible to conclude that norms are not equated with laws, while norms violation is identified with crimes (laws' violation). The framework of the social representations theory allowed us to analyse the lay thinking about norms and norms violation as a matter of Russian cultural context.

Keywords: norms, norms violation, scientific thinking, lay thinking, social representations theory, Russian culture.

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Нормы и их нарушение: от научного мышления к обыденному (поисковое исследование на выборке российской молодежи)

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Проблема. Проблема норм и их нарушения находится в фокусе научного мышления в социальной психологии. «Ученые-любители» разрабатывают свои собственные непрофессиональные теории относительно норм и их нарушения. Данный аспект едва ли нашел отражение в литературе, хотя люди активно используют это обыденное знание в своей повседневной жизни.

Цель. Цель исследования заключалась в анализе наивных теорий о нормах и их нарушении на выборке российской молодежи. Поисковое исследование было основано на идеях теории социальных представлений.

Метод. В исследовании приняли участие 134 человека, 26,12% — мужчины (в возрасте 18–28 лет, $M=21,01$; $SD=2,23$). 71,6% участников были студентами, изучающими социальные науки в нескольких университетах г. Москвы (Россия). Основным инструментом изучения наивных теорий выступила методика свободных ассоциаций. Полученные данные были подвергнуты прототипическому анализу.

Результаты. Выявлена специфика обыденного мышления о нормах и их нарушении.

Вывод. Представляется возможным сделать вывод о том, что нормы не приравниваются к законам, нарушение норм отождествляется с преступлениями (нарушением законов). Рамки теории социальных представлений позволили нам проанализировать обыденное мышление о нормах и их нарушении в контексте российской культуры.

Ключевые слова: нормы, нарушение норм, научное мышление, обыденное мышление, теория социальных представлений, русская культура.

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Introduction

Norms are the most important mechanism of social interaction regulation. Being a social animal, an individual spends most of his/her life time interacting with others [33]. By following norms people get approval or avoid punishment. Numerous factors influence on compliance with norms, culture plays a crucial role among

them [33]. Respect towards the norms is a key component of the East Asian cultures, it allows an individual to maintain the harmony within the group and it corresponds to the collectivistic culture [16]. For the individualistic culture uniqueness and conformity are concepts that have an opposite connotation [16].

Norms violation endangers the group's unanimity, it may involve a variety of punishment (e.g. social exclusion,

verbal or physical abuse)[21]. According to the results of a cross-cultural research conducted in 57 societies, responses to norms violation depend on the cultural context [10].

Norms and norms violation have a long research history in social psychology, but these complex constructs still initiate scientific discussions [14; 33].

It is important to underline that there is another line of analysis that rests in the shadow of mainstream research. The so-called *amateur scientists* work out their explanations of group functioning and use this knowledge in everyday life. The literature review reveals a number of works aimed to study lay theories about groups [13; 18]. Our interest towards the lay thinking about norms and their violation is situated in this line of analysis. This research perspective is relevant to the problem of norms and norms violation for several reasons. The Internet plays a key role in everyday life. People are faced with a huge amount of extremely diverse and contradictory information, whether it is scientific or popular. An individual is involved in a variety of communications through the new social media. The annual survey of social media usage shows the exponential growth of social network activity [8]. This daily usage of social media has a number of qualitative consequences for social interaction: transformation of communication process and modification of its norms and power relations, the empowerment of communication actors etc.[20]. Thus, in the modern world an individual is actively involved in a process of lay theory construction about various phenomena. This knowledge is used in order to predict the world and to act in it. This explains the relevance and the novelty of the proposed research perspective on norms and norms violation.

Norms and their violation in scientific thinking

Sherif followed a broad understanding of norms, assuming that norms are rules, traditions, standards, values that are standardized as a result of the interaction of individuals [32]. The concepts that were exchangeable for Sherif are considered to be distinct ones for modern scientific knowledge [4; 9].

According to one definition of norms that is cited quite often by researchers, norms are: “rules or standards that are understood by members of a group, and that guide and/or constrain behavior without the force of laws” [7, p. 152]. These principles can be implicit and explicit. The key points of this definition proposed by Cialdini are: norms are shared, and that their implementation is regulated by the group members, and not by the representatives of the law.

Norms vary depending on whether they are injunctive (for example, prescribing or prohibiting some behaviors) or descriptive, which inform what actions are taken by other people in similar situations [7].

Classical experimental studies on norms go back to the Sherif's works [31; 32], in which he focused on the psychological foundations of social norms. Appealing to the ideas of Durkheim on collective representations and the ideas of Chicago School on the functioning of small groups [31; 32], Sherif emphasizes that norms are a kind of standards for orientation in the world. In a situation

of uncertainty (when a person faces with an objectively unstable, unstructured, new situation, when all the grounds for comparison are absent) people do not succumb to chaos, but on the contrary—they give meaning to the situation, structure it by developing a common norm, in the process of interaction there is a mutual influence [32]. Sherif tried to show how culture, society, and social structure determine a person's perception and understanding of the world [4].

Experimental evidence suggests that norms, these social products, once developed, were retained by respondents for a long time, be it a month or even a year later [28].

In the so-called Robbers Cave study Sherif demonstrated the adaptive nature of norms when in a scout camp 14-year-olds boys who did not know each other were placed in the same group and they developed norms that regulated behaviour in the group [28].

The experimental works of Asch and Milgram fit into the line of research on norms, but while for Sherif the primary questions were what norms are and how they formed and function, for Asch and Milgram the question was how people followed or resisted norms, rules or roles [29].

The research line on norms and group influence has taken a new turn due to the events of WW2 (the Holocaust). This historical aspect was in the center of interest of Milgram in his experimental studies).

Empirical evidence in favour of Sherif's ideas can also be seen in research carried out within another theoretical tradition – social identity approach that uses the concept of norms: in a situation of uncertainty, the importance of norms increases and they have a greater impact on behaviour than in a familiar situation [12]. Furthermore, Sherif's idea to find a structure, so-called frame of reference, in the development of new norms has also been demonstrated within the social identity approach, which once again emphasises the value of the classical work on norm formation for social psychology [4; 29].

Jetten and Hornsey [14] distinguish the two lines of group norms violation analysis: the traditional research line focuses attention on what makes people conform to norms, norms violation is seen as an exception and gets less attention. If following norms is seen as the positive side of group life, violation of group norms or disagreement with them are positioned as the negative side of group life, a kind of threat to group activity, an obstacle in the way of achieving group goals.

The norms violation threatens the group (appearance of deviants leads to lower identification with the group by other members, uncertainty caused by deviants endangers group cohesion, and in its extreme form the group risks a slide towards internecine conflict and even splits [14], etc.), members of the group will try to reject deviants or to punish them. Among the most frequent measures: social exclusion, gossip and verbal or physical abuse [21]. The expression of a negative reaction towards norm violators may force them to follow the norm [14; 33].

According to the alternative research line: norms violation along with dissent are almost ordinary aspects of group functioning that are not the dark side of group life [14]. This idea has some articulation with those proposed by Durkheim concerning the role of crimes in healthy so-

ciety [14]. In the eyes of others the norms violators could be seen as powerful [34]. From the alternative research line point of view, norms violation is not always a destructive aspect of group life [14;33], on the contrary, norms violation can lead to a positive outcome. The presence of deviants in a group enables the rest of the group members to reflect on the group norms [14]. Appealing to the ideas of the theory of minority influence proposed by Moscovici it seems possible to say that by creating a conflict, and violating norms a minority opens a way to social change [14]. Sommer traces this logic by taking an example from the world of fashion when an active minority violates norms, which eventually leads to aesthetic change [30].

The argument that positive aspects can be seen in group norms violation relates to situations where anti-social behaviour is normative. For example, aggressive norms in a classroom predict violent behaviour [15]. Similarly, competition and achievement norms adopted in some schools, as opposed to cooperative norms, correlate with the level of bullying [15]. Hence, the norms violation has positive consequences, because it prevents aggressive behaviour and acts of violence.

Having undertaken an analysis of the works published in the last 20 years on the problem of group norms violation and dissent, Jetten and Hornsey [14] reveal the following motives behind these phenomena: 1) disloyalty and disrespect (those who are less committed to the group are less likely to follow its norms); 2) loyalty, concern for the group (constructive deviance, the norms violation is driven by the concern for the group); 3) moral rebellions (personal moral principles contradict to the group norms); 4) desire to express their uniqueness; 5) instrumental benefits from norms violation.

Norms and their violation in lay thinking

However, the ideas that were discussed above reflect the key points of research on norms and norms violation within the framework of scientific knowledge. Along with this line, there is another one: the “amateur” scientist, so-called “naive scientist from the street”, also develops his/her own explanatory theories about norms and their violation. In the literature these theories that individuals develop to explain the phenomena of everyday life are referred to as lay, implicit, naive, common-sense theories [13; 18]. “Amateur” scientists try to understand the world in order to predict and to control it [13; 18]. The quality of naive theories is inferior to scientific ones in terms of rigor or rationality, but people actively use this knowledge in their everyday life. It affects the perception of the world and interaction with other people [13].

The research interest towards lay thinking is not new. These lay theories reflect a certain taxonomy of groups (e.g.: intimacy groups, task groups, social categories and loose associations), lay people represent how these groups function; this knowledge is used in order to interpret the judgements and behaviour of group members [18].

However, very little attention was paid to the lay explication of group norms and their violation. The research attention towards this problem is justified by the

fact that with the widespread use of the Internet an individual in modern society has access to a huge amount of different information, he/she takes part in various groups, participates in many different discussions by using social media. This daily usage of social media has a number of consequences for social interaction: transformation of communication process, modification of communication norms, as well as the power relations associated with it, and the empowerment of communication participants etc. [20]. Thus, in the modern world an individual is actively involved in a process of lay theory construction about various phenomena. This knowledge is used in order to predict the world and to act in it. The lay explanations are not only products of individual cognitive processes, they are based on cultural and social knowledge [11].

One of the most promising theoretical frameworks to study how naive theories are formed and functioned is the social representations theory. Following Moscovici ideas, the “amateur scientist” or the “notorious man from the street” cannot come up with naive explanations on his own; these explanations are generated in numerous communications [23; 27] in which he is actively involved, as we have underlined above. According to the one of numerous definitions of the social representations (SRs) done by Moscovici they are: “systems of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function...: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history” [25, p. xiii]. The SRs are socially produced and shared, they are organised and they possess social utility. An important point should be underlined here: the existence of a SR implies the existence of a group that shares it, that communicates about the object of the SR [26]. Being the form of common sense knowledge the SRs are worked out by people in everyday communications in order to give meaning to different objects, phenomena, events, etc. that are strange, unknown, threatening. So the SRs transform the strangeness of these objects or phenomena, by putting them into the existing frame. The other functions of the SRs are: regulation of social behaviour and practice, social identity construction and support, and justification of social relations [1; 22; 26; 27].

In the present study we followed the ideas of the structural approach. According to this approach, SR is a set of beliefs that are organized as a core and peripheral system [5;22]. The core of SR is a stable part, it is formed by a small number of elements [5; 22]. These elements are rooted in culture. The core performs the following functions: it gives meaning to SR, it organizes it, and it provides the stability of SR [22]. The core crystallizes in the value system shared by group members and is maintained through collective memory [6]. So the core part is “stable, coherent, consensual and historically marked” [6, p. 76].

The peripheral system of SR provides the concretization to the meaning of the core, it is a kind of mediator in between the core and the situation in which the SR is developed and operates. The peripheral system is characterized

by variability and changeability, it is formed by a significant number of elements [22]. Due to variability, the peripheral system allows SR to adapt to the changing context, so the peripheral system is kind of a “protective system” for the SR core, and for the whole SR as well, because the change of the core results in the change of SR. The peripheral system is “flexible, adaptive, and relatively heterogeneous” [6, p. 76].

The idea of SR structure facilitates a possibility to compare the SRs. Thus the potential of the theory of SRs lies in the fact that it allows us to analyze how individuals construct a naive explanation of group norms and their violation, and how this construction regulates individual's behavior and justifies their interaction with others. In everyday life an individual is constantly confronted with the question of norms and their violation in a wide variety of contexts, as far as he spends a large part of his life interacting with others. Hence, the question of coordination of interaction and cooperation becomes of considerable importance. Norms act as a mechanism for regulating this interaction, as Glenfeld underlines, they make effective interaction possible, they are the glue that keeps people together, coordinates their actions, and adapts to situations in which it is not otherwise possible to survive [33]. As it was underlined above, the scientific theories of norms and their violation are nicely outlined in the literature, whereas, the lay theories are missed. In the presented study we fill partly this gap. Even from a brief glance at the key ideas of the SRs theory it becomes clear that this theoretical framework is a very productive and fertile tool to analyse lay thinking.

The research questions in the presented study were concerned with the particularities of lay thinking developed by young Russian adults about norms and norms violation. The aim of the presented exploratory study was to reveal and to compare the SRs on norms and norms violation in a sample of young Russian adults.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total sample consisted of 134 young Russian adults, 26.12% males (aged 18 – 28 years, $M_{age} = 21.01$, $SD_{age} = 2.23$). 71.6% participants were students of social sciences from several Universities in Moscow, Russia. The convenience sampling was used to recruit participants, students were contacted in classrooms and proposed to participate in a study as a part of the larger project, if they agreed to participate a paper version of the questionnaire was distributed. 38% of young adults had employment experience in different domains.

Measures

The main tool to reveal the content of SR was free association technique [5; 19; 24]. The participants were asked to produce 5 words that came to their minds while they were thinking about each of the stimuli (group norms, group norms violation). They were asked to evaluate each answer on a scale from -3 to +3, in order to reveal the evaluative connotation of each answer.

The study was exploratory, there were no assumptions put forward, however, the output hypotheses based on the results of the study were expected.

Representational structure analysis

The hypothetical structure of the SRs was revealed by using a prototypical analysis [5; 24]. The free-associations data matrix was composed by words evoked by at least 5 % of respondents. The data matrix was analysed by using the IRaMuTeQ software [24].

Results

The prototypical analysis implies the idea that core elements are more salient in comparison with non-core elements [5; 24]. The operationalisation of this idea requires crossing of the two parameters, frequency (quantitative parameter) and appearance ranking (qualitative parameter) of an association [24]. The combination of these parameters could be considered as an indicator of centrality of elements, however, the prototypical analysis is seen in the literature as a measure to put forward a hypothesis about the SR structure [19].

The core zone (elements high in frequency and low appearance ranking, the potential core elements (“candidates to the central core” [19]) are situated here) is formed by the elements: *rules, morality, respect, cohesion, order* (see Table 1). The first element in this zone is synonymous with the object of SR, because “norm” means “pattern, rule”. The element *morality* refers to “a set of norms and principles of people's behavior” [2]. This element is also synonymous with the object of the SR, but it is associated with an evaluative dimension. It highlights the prescriptive aspect of norms and not the descriptive one. The presence of synonyms of the SR object is expected. If scientific thinking tries to differentiate concepts by drawing a watershed between norms, rules, values [4; 9], lay thinking is hardly sensitive to such nuances. Other components of the core zone – *respect, cohesion, and order* – attract special attention. If *respect* makes one think how an individual should react towards norms, when *cohesion* and *order* – these elements refer to the consequences of the norms functioning when they are complied with and not violated. Overall, the potential core elements reflect a kind of ideal vision of norms. All elements have a positive valence (from +1,5 to +2,8).

The contrasted elements zone (see Table 1) is composed of low frequency and low appearance ranking elements. As Abric underlines it: “There are themes stated by few people (low frequency), but who consider them very important. This configuration may reveal the existence of a minority subgroup with a different representation <...> But we can also find here <...> a complement of the first periphery” [5, p.63]. This zone in the case of the SR of norms unites: *behaviour, traditions, values*. All elements have a positive valence (See Table 1). The identification of norms with traditions and values has the same logic as it was discussed above. These elements are synonymous to the SR object; but these analogues of norms are less fluid and changeable in comparison with rules. The action of norms relates to behaviour, but not to cognitive sphere or attitudes.

The first peripheral zone unites high frequency and high appearance ranking elements, it is a kind of afterthought in relation towards the object of the SR. The only element (with a positive valence) is situated in

Table 1

Prototypical analysis of the SR of group norms and group norms violation among young Russian adults
 (hypothetical structure of SR)

	Group norms (16,38;2.69)	Group norms violation (11,33;2.62)
Core zone*	rules (63; 2,1; +1,5)** morality (33; 2,0; + 2,0) respect(23; 2,4; +2,7) cohesion (20; 2,6; + 2,8) order (18; 2,5; +1,8)	crime (24; 1,8; -2,5) deviation (18; 2,3; -1,1) disobedience (15; 2,3; -1,1) rules violation (12;2,3; -1,4)
Contrasted elements zone*	behaviour (14; 2,4; +1,4) traditions (11; 2,0; +1,6) values (9; 2,4; +2,8)	disrespect (8; 1,5; -1,9) riot (7; 2,3; -2,4) outcast (7; 2,0; -1,6)
First peripheral zone*	laws (30; 2,7; +1,5)	punishment (22; 2,9; -1,1) selfishness (14; 2,9; -2,1) immorality (12; 2,7; -2,4) conflict (12; 3,0; -1,1)
Second peripheral zone*	society (14; 3,4; +1,9) help (14; 4,1; +2,9) collective (13; 2,7; +1,7) responsibility(13; 3,2; +1,8) relationship (11; 3,3; +2,2) etiquette (10; 3,0; +2,4) leader (9; 3,2; +1,3) limits (9; 3,7; +0,7) regulation (8; 3,0; +1,6) violation (8; 4,0; -2,0) commitments (7; 3,9; +1,0)	aggression (11; 2,7; -2,3) exclusion (11; 2,9; -0,8) sanctions (11; 2,9; -0,8) responsibility (10; 3,0; +0,9) chaos (9; 2,8; -2,3) stand out (8; 3,4; 0,8) misbehaviour (7; 2,9; -1,9) freedom (7; 2,9; +2,0) rudeness (7; 3,1; -2,1) misunderstanding (7; 3,9; -2,3)

Note: «*» – four zones of SR hypothetical structure were revealed by the usage of rank-frequency method [6;24]; «**» – frequency, average rank of occurrence and average valence for each element are indicated in brackets [6;24]; Valence varies from – 3 to +3: negative [-3; -1], neutral (-1;+1), or positive connotations [+1;+ 3] of each element.

this zone: *laws*. The secondary role of *laws* in the understanding of norms coincides with the logic of Cialdini's definition [7] cited above, which emphasises that norms' implementation is regulated by the group members, and not by the representatives of the law. The special attention should be drawn to another point. According to Dahl's definition, it seems possible to distinguish three aspects of the concept of law: "a limit placed on the freedom of will or action; an imminent beginning, a basis; a rule, a decree of a higher authority" [3, p. 591]. The law as the limit – is the key aspect of the Russian mentality, which can be clearly traced through the etymology of the word "law"[3]. *Конь* from which comes the word *за-конь* (law), means "beginning" and "end". It is the boundary between "beginning" and "end", then the word *за-конь* (law) itself is a "limit", another sphere of life that lies beyond this limit, but it is not an absolute category, "it is a boundary within a wider sphere" [3, p. 592]. As a consequence, even in cases of legal or divine laws, there is a certain bifurcation: in the first case between the law of conscience and legal law; in the second, there is a "dualism", the confrontation between Christianity and Paganism [3]. This duality could be seen in our results where the norms are identified with morality and not with laws. All elements of this zone have a positive valence (from +1,4 to +2,8).

The second peripheral zone (low frequency, high appearance ranking elements) unites: *society, help, collective, responsibility, relationship, etiquette, leader, limits, regulation, violation, commitments*. The elements of this zone

vary in their meanings: synonyms of stimulus words with some concretisation (*etiquette*, on the one hand, and *society and collective* – on the other). The element of interaction (*help* and *relationship*); action of norms and reaction to them (*regulation, responsibility, limits* and *violation*); unconditional fulfilment of norms (*commitments*). Finally, the element related to the norms' personification – *leader*. All these themes correspond to the individual experience and serve to contextualise the core elements.

There is also a variation of elements in terms of their valence: from -2 to +2,9. The only element with a negative valence is *violation*, the element with the most positive valence – *help* (+2,9) are in this zone of the SR.

Overall, the content of the core zone and the peripheral system corresponds to the logic described by Moliner and Abrie [22] about the expressive properties of core and peripheral elements. The former ones are: general characteristics of the SR object, they are abstract, and almost unconditional beliefs. Whereas the latter ones are: specific, concrete and contextualised, conditional beliefs. The potential core elements refer to the normative reaction towards the object of the SR and to the results of the norms functioning. The peripheral system concretizes the meaning of the core elements in a variety of *frames of reference* that are used in order to function in a group, as well as the element of interaction; action of norms and reaction to them; unconditional fulfilment of norms, and their personification.

The core zone of the SR of norms violation (see Table 1) is composed of a few elements (with negative va-

lence from -2,5 to -1,1) that could be seen as the general characteristics of the object, namely: *crime, deviation, disobedience, rules violation*. At the first glance, all core zone elements (the potential core elements) are from the same semantic field, reflecting the process opposite to the normatively prescribed one. Rules violation is synonymous with the object of the SR itself.

However, from the more detailed observation of the components of the core zone an interesting conclusion could be proposed. The element *crime* draws our particular attention — the frequency and appearance ranking of this element allow us to think that the threshold of sensitivity in relation to the violation of group norms is identified with a crime, i.e. crossing the very limit indicated by the law [3]. It turns out that a violation is a violation only when the action crosses the level of the law, and everything else is not seen as a violation of norms. If we come back to the hypothetical structure of the SR of norms, it turns out that norms are only secondarily understood through reference to laws, while violation of norms is identified with violation of laws, thereby crossing the prescribed limit [3]. This interpretation relies on the cultural particularities of lay thinking. Crime is the element with the most negative connotation among all the components of the SR.

The contrasted elements zone includes (see Table1): *disrespect, riot, outcast*. The valence of these elements is negative (from -2,4 to -1,6).

The analysis of this part of the SR reveals some interesting points: 1) the concretisation of the norms violation by the element *riot* once again illustrates the idea of certain extremity in the lay thinking about the norms violation. The action should be really strong in order to be seen as a violation; 2) the personification of the individual who violates norms as an *outcast* and not as a violator is worth attention because *outcast* refers to the group reaction to the norms violation.

The first peripheral zone includes: *punishment, selfishness, immorality, conflict*. The valence of these elements is negative (from -2,4 to -1,1). The presence of the elements *selfishness, immorality* — makes us think about the articulation in between SRs theory and attribution theory [11]. The norms violation implies thinking about the motivation of these acts, the lay thinkers search for the dispositional constructs in order to explain why the norms are violated.

The second peripheral zone (see Table 1) is composed of elements with diverse meanings. These associations vary in their valence (from -2,3 to +2) could be grouped in the following manner: concretisation of norms violation actions: *aggression, rudeness, chaos, misbehaviour*, reaction towards norms violator: *exclusion, sanctions*, motivation of norms violation *stand out, freedom, misunderstanding*; and finally — *responsibility*.

The candidates to the central core elements refer to the mechanisms of norms violation. The lay thinking in contrast to the scientific thinking mixes up the norms violation with laws violation. In the peripheral system one can find the concretisation of the norms violation in a variety of actions, in a variety of contractions coming from group in order to punish the norms violator. Lay thinkers attribute the motivation of the norms violation behaviour.

Discussion

The aim of this exploratory study was to analyse the lay thinking about norms and norms violation in a sample of young Russian adults. Lay people work out naive explanations about groups, their classification as well as their functioning [13;18]. The “amateur” scientists use this knowledge in order to predict the behaviour of group members [18]. The structural approach of the theory of SRs was used as a framework to analyse the lay thinking.

The comparison of the hypothetical structure of SRs of norms and norms violation in the same group of young Russian adults reveals several points concerning the lay thinking: norms are seen as an idealized frame of reference. The candidates to the central core elements (associations with positive connotations) describe this idealized frame of reference, the mechanism of its functioning as well as the consequences of this action. The identification of norms with morality strengthens this ideal vision. At the same time this element implies prescriptive aspects of norms. The peripheral system consists of the concretisations of the SR object in a variety of *frames of reference* that are used in order to function in a group (traditions, values, laws and etiquette), the other elements refer to interaction; action of norms and reaction to them; unconditional fulfilment of norms, norms’ personification. As we have underlined in the theoretical overview, scientific thinking is directed towards the differentiation of the concepts norms, rules, values [4; 9], lay thinking is much less sensitive to such subtlety.

In lay thinking the norms violation has definitely negative meaning (the potential core elements have negative valence), and it is equated with crime. This fact gives us a reason to think that the so-called sensitivity threshold towards the norms violation is quite elevated and as a result a certain tolerance towards the norms violation should be expected. It is possible to think that this vision of norms violation is particular to Russian culture [3]. The other candidates to the central core elements *deviation, disobedience* — refer to the mechanism of norms violation. In the peripheral system the concretisation and the contextualisation of the core zone elements are situated, namely, in a variety of actions, in a variety of contractions coming from group in order to punish the norms violator. Lay thinkers attribute a certain motivation to the norms violation behaviour.

The analysis of the lay theories about norms and norms violation reveals certain particularities of these two explanations: on the one hand there is an idealised frame of reference together with the mechanism of its functioning and the consequences of this functioning, on the other — its opposition an extreme case laws’ violation together with the mechanism of violation. The detailed analysis of these SRs shows a certain asymmetry: if one takes a look at the core zone (candidates to the central core elements), it is possible to conclude that norms are not equated with laws, while norms violation is identified with crimes (laws’ violation).

Conclusion

The scientific thinking concerning norms and norms violation is very well presented in the literature starting from the Sherif's experimental studies in the mid-thirties [31;32]. However, along with the scientific thinking about norms and their violation there is another tradition of analysis: "amateur" scientist also develops his/her own explanatory theories about norms and their violation. These theories that individuals develop to explain the phenomena of everyday life could be referred to as lay, implicit, naive, common sense theories [13; 18]. The productive and appropriate theoretical framework to study how lay theories are formed and how they function was the SRs theory. The potential of this theory is explained by the fact that it allows us to analyze how individuals construct a naive explanation of group norms and their violation, and how this construction regulates individual's behavior and justifies their interaction with others. In everyday life an individual is constantly confronted with the question of norms and their violation in a wide variety of contexts, because he spends a large part of his life interacting with others. As it was underlined above, the scientific theories of norms and their violation are nicely outlined in the literature, whereas, the lay theories are almost missed. In the presented study this gap was partially filled.

The aim of the study was to analyse the lay thinking about norms and their violation developed by young Russian adults. Following the structural approach to SRs the hypothetical structure of the SRs on norms and norms violation was revealed. The content of these SRs shows

that in opposition to scientific thinking that is directed towards the differentiation of such concepts as norms, rules, values [4; 9], lay thinking is not sensitive to these nuances. The comparison of the lay theories about norms and norms violation reveals an interesting point: in case of norms there is an idealised frame of reference together with the mechanism of its functioning and the consequences of this functioning, in case of norms violation – its opposition an extreme case laws' violation together with the mechanism of violation. The detailed analysis of these SRs leads to a conclusion about a certain asymmetry in lay thinking: norms are not equated with laws, whereas norms violation is identified with crimes (laws' violation).

Although the hypothetical structure of the SRs of norms and norms violation needs further testing, the obtained results allow us to reveal lay theories about norms and their violation and to discuss them as a matter of Russian cultural context [3]. These results suit the perspective highlighted in the literature [14; 33].

The use of a single instrument to evoke the SRs of norms and their violation that reveals the hypothetical structure of the SRs is the possible limitation of the study.

However, the exploratory study does not have an input hypothesis, but it does have an output one. According to this hypothesis the core elements of the SR of norms are: rules, morality, respect, cohesion, order. The SR of norms violation are crystallized around the elements: crime, deviation, disobedience, rules violation. To conclude, a further study to verify the hypothetical structure of the SRs norms and norms violation on a bigger sample [17] is the aim of the next step.

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