Therefore, there are no objective data upon which the programme could be based.

The existence of poverty was until recently denied for ideological reasons; unfortunately because this problem was never underwritten to any substantial magnitude. The very connotations of the programme negated the problem of poverty.

Under the present conditions, any other approach to the problem of poverty, connected with the administrative concept of poverty, would be much more vulnerable to the effects of other comparable factors. Because the former are much more inextricable to the latter.

The administrative concept of poverty means that the State itself determines the boundaries of the poor. The experience of the poor is higher than in any social group they belong to. Novosibirsk, the birthplace of the programme, is well.

The administrative concept of poverty means that they determine the categories of the poor, setting thresholds of expenditure the child or family must not fall below.

The programme, in its present form, will be given to those categories which will thus become the children and social aid will be given to those categories which will thus become the

The programme also contains a number of categories with low income and family with many

A number of interviews with representatives of official departments and directors of the

In September 1994, in keeping with the order of the President of Russia, the

Viktor Voronkov

Strategies of Survival and Subsistence of Research:
Poverty in Modern Russia.
Unfortunately, even now there are no thorough studies of poverty and of its causes and scale in Russia. Subjective approaches based on feelings rather than on scientific research are predominant today. Experts of different 'party' orientations very rarely show their concern for a true representation of reality. The most typical form of scientific craftiness is the exaggeration of one symptom and the underestimation of the other.

This is most vividly demonstrated by the estimates of poverty given by different specialists when they try to identify the proportion of those with the minimal income per capita. Their estimates vary from 8% to 80% for the whole population! Some experts maintain that real money income has dropped by one third this year, others cite quite different data that prove to the contrary that real income has grown considerably (by 10%) and that many other indicators of the living standards of the whole population also show an improvement.

Such discrepancies in the estimates of the present situation result not only from the different methods of research, but also from the vacuum in which the researchers studying public welfare work. Theoretical models and concepts like 'work in the public (state) economy is the only source of well-being', that have been in wide use until quite recently, are all gone now. The concept of the constant growth of the proportion of the goods provided to an individual by so-called public consumption funds (free medical assistance, free education and kindergartens, and free housing) has also lost all its meaning.

There is an assumption that along with the common external features of poverty such as low income as well as the absence of savings, and prevailing expenditures on food rather than on other goods, poverty in Russia has many essentially different social features than poverty in the countries with a developed market economy.

D. Berto has made a very shrewd observation in this connection, which should serve as a warning to those researchers and politicians who consider different phenomena to be the same judging by their apparent external resemblance. Analysing the biography of a worker's family, D. Berto arrives at the conclusion that "although Russian cities resemble clusters of multi-storied boxes so well-known by the people of Western Europe, they are essentially different from European cities from the point of view of the system of social relations concealed in them".

It is impossible to form an adequate understanding of poverty in Russia as a social phenomenon (which is something more than its external manifestation) without revealing the essence of those social relations. In this respect, it is very important to ascertain the role of major social institutions and norms that stipulated in the past permissible modes of securing certain living standards for every person in the former Soviet Union. In other words, we must determine which of the old mechanisms continue to indirectly affect Russian society through the socialisation of several generations of Soviet people.

Under the former social system, the majority of the population preferred to stick to one universal pattern of behaviour. Under that system, the living standard of a person did not depend on his or her efforts, but were determined by special measures taken by the State in order to improve those standards. Wages did not depend on the value of produced goods nor on economic profitability of production. Wage rates and salaries of certain categories of workers and in certain branches of economy were periodically reconsidered and changed by government decisions. The salary received by different categories of workers was decided by the authorities regardless of the value of the goods they produced, which naturally, varied between industries.

People could obtain goods and certain privileges only in the form of grants from the State, through which the State rewarded compliance with a system of formal rules (such as a long-term residence in one place and a long-term service at one place of employment and so forth). Generosity of those grants depended on the means of the State or of the enterprise at which a person worked. Personal efforts and aspirations did not practically affect an individual's level of material well-being.

In general, personal well-being that was above the average level was viewed with suspicion by society in general, as something almost indecent. Thus, for example, for the nomenklatura (officials of all levels in the former USSR) there was a system of sanctions punishing actions that qualified as 'indecent behaviour'. Any kind of well-being exceeding standards approved by society in general and often formally

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and juridically fixed standards (top salary limits, living space limits, restrictions on the norms of possession of land, norms regulating possession of a private car and immovables, a ban on private ownership means of production) aroused suspicions of so-called ‘uneared income’. The mere fact of possessing property exceeding publicly accepted limits provided sufficient grounds for taking up criminal proceedings against the owner. State policy in the sphere of regulation of the well-being of the population was characterised by frequent campaigns against ‘uneared incomes’.

As a result of such policy, households officially regarded as poor and those relatively well-to-do did not practically differ from each other according to a number of indicators of prosperity, as is shown in a survey conducted in 1991. The following indicators of living standards such as living space and possession of durable goods (refrigerators, washing machines, TV sets, vacuum cleaners and even cars) were practically equal in both categories of households. The same survey places the majority of the working population in the low income groups – a fact that is very characteristic of our conditions.

Naturally, a specific mode (strategy) of economic as well as socio-political and everyday behaviour emerged which became the most characteristic feature of the so-called ‘homo sovieticus’. This strategy as an optimal mode of behaviour under the given conditions, consists in minimising efforts made in order to obtain a predetermined amount and type of reward (generally speaking, totally unrelated to those efforts) for one’s participation in the activities of different public institutions.

The whole cluster of conditions stipulating rigid limits to the possible level of well-being, as well as the minimising of permissible means of achieving it, has created a specific ‘socialist way of life’ as an ideological standard. Modest income and personal poverty had been cultivated as a publicly approved moral merit. Transition from that general condition of society to other social and cultural patterns, which is now taking place under the pressure of the current social and economic reforms, gives us a unique opportunity for scientific research.

Today, we do not yet have all the necessary theoretical tools and methods to conduct this research. As is shown in some recent studies, traditional methods of studying poverty “are undergoing a crisis both with respect to theoretical tools and with respect to tools of a ‘general welfare state’”. A widely-known Norwegian researcher on poverty, Else Oyen, asserts that “there is not a single universal or at least a predominant theory of poverty today, and it is unlikely that such a theory will ever be created”.

The theoretical model that is most adequate and applicable to the phenomenon of poverty in Russia is, in our opinion, a synthesis of approaches being developed in the classical theories of disorganisation as well as in the theory of anomie and in that of the ‘culture of poverty’ and in socio-economics.

Thus, the theory of disorganisation describes precisely that condition of society that we can observe now in Russia, i.e., vagueness of norms regulating behaviour of the majority of the Russian population. In particular, disorganisation entails the loss of the usual and traditional patterns of behaviour. On the other hand, the present condition of anomie embracing Russian society reflects a discrepancy well-elaborated in the theory of anomie between the goals pursued by society and the means of achieving them. At the same time, poverty as such is not the central subject of research in those theories, so they should be complemented with specific concepts of a different level.

With regard to the subject of our research, the most adequate theory for describing and revealing the specific character of Russian poverty and the reasons for its preservation is that of the ‘culture of poverty’. However, in our opinion, this theory has one essential defect that narrows its application to Russia, namely its static character. Within the framework of this theory, poverty is regarded as a product of culture, as a certain subculture within the broader context of the predominant cultural dimension. That subculture represents a specific way of life

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7 Yarygina, T. “Poverty in Rich Russia.”: 30.
natural to certain strata of society that have their own cultural stereotypes and specific patterns of behaviour, both in production activities and in everyday life. Representatives of that subculture live in a cultural environment of their own.

This theory provides a researcher mainly with the means of describing that separate world and helps him identify the factors that should be used to discriminate that culture from the basic one that embraces the majority of population. It emphasises the alienated character of the subculture of poverty and its immunity to the values and norms of the general culture. The theory places emphasis on the conflictual nature of relations between the two cultures and underscores the most important differences between them.

However, interrelations between a subculture and its mother-culture cannot be simply reduced to rejection and conflict, being in fact much more complex. It is supposed that the two cultures nurture each other and are, in fact, dependent on each other.  

Research into the mechanisms of such mutual support and mutual reproduction of the two cultures now represents the main task of any study geared towards achieving practical results connected with the formation of an adequate social policy. Purely academic analyses of poverty without a distinct and a well-formulated practical orientation would today be ethically unjustified.

However, it is precisely those points of the above-mentioned theory that weaken it considerably. There is a necessity to find certain theoretical tools that could also help cover the dynamic aspect of poverty. They should provide a researcher and a politician with the proper knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms of reproduction and self-preservation of the main cultural parameters of the phenomenon of poverty.

It should be noted that along with an external resemblance between the 'culture of poverty' in Russia and the corresponding phenomenon in the market economy countries (mostly developing countries, but which did not have a socialist past), the differences between the character of Russian culture and that of those countries are considerable. In the first place, these differences are connected with the fact that the 'culture of poverty', large as it is in those countries, has never been anything more than a subculture, whereas in Russia this 'culture of poverty' originates from the

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basic behavioural patterns that had been characteristic and constituted the foundation of the predominant social system itself. So, strictly speaking, the 'culture of poverty' as it is found in Russia, does not fully conform with the concept of subculture, because a basic culture of well-being and its values is now just being born in Russia.

Precisely for this reason research into the transformation of society as a cultural transition is so very important. Also of special interest are those strategies connected with overcoming poverty. These strategies include restructuring of the most deep-rooted layer of cultural consciousness and transformation of its most conservative and stable components.

In order to achieve that scientific end, we must supplement the above-described theoretical concepts with a socio-economic approach. We agree with Etzioni, who considers that the policy that is being proposed to Russia and that falls within the framework of neo-classical economics, does not directly address problems connected with the transformation of social institutions and changes in culture. These problems can be resolved only by socio-economics, synthesising ideas and results obtained by different social sciences. Within the framework of socio-economics, the transitional period of society is described in terms of a slow and gradual process that can not be accelerated by any artificial incentives. This can be explained by the fact that the culture of the previous period still deeply saturates both the individual and relations within the population as a whole. "Resocialisation of the people can not be hastened".

This position appears to be true, first of all, because of the fact that in Russia mental and behavioural standards and strategies are being formed simultaneously, interacting with the emerging market structures and institutions. They are evolving together, and only those that fit each other the best survive. Without reciprocal support, neither of the components of the new market culture can become an organic part of the social organism.

We consider that the experience we acquired while studying modes of living of the urban population can serve as an extension of the socio-economic approach. This experience gives us grounds to assume that analysis of the problems of the formation of new behavioural strategies taking place in the new conditions, can be done most effectively within the framework of a specific 'production' paradigm.

15 This aspect of problem was pointed out by Herbert Gans more than 20 years ago in his work The Positive Functions of Poverty. In particular, he says that poverty makes people also.


17 Voino, M. "V. F. A. in a new, in a traditional. Tendencies and problems. Lenmental. Academy of
From that point of view, real peculiarities of such concepts as 'mode of life', 'style of life', 'culture of poverty' or 'prosperity' are dictated by the specific sphere of production in which a given social group is active. We shall call this sphere of production 'social production'. External relations of this production with the whole socio-economic system on the macro level on the one hand, and 'interproduction relations' of people with each other in the course of their everyday life on the other, help to reveal the inner logic of the processes (ideal types according to Weber) that ensure stability and reproduction of the corresponding social phenomena. Typical strategies of behaviour are made up from the whole complex of people's actions which allow them most satisfactorily, from their point of view, to preserve and improve their position in the system of those relations. The pursuit of such strategies ensures that degree of successful existence acknowledged by them as a norm. This means that the process of modification of the previously predominant mode of living represents the broadest context within the framework of which research into poverty in modern Russia should be carried out.

At the same time, the theoretical generalisation that any research must have as its basis consists in the fact that the above-mentioned strategy of minimising efforts and all private strategies derived from it cannot be realised today. They are not just ineffective, they simply cannot guarantee survival any more. They cannot guide the lives of the people any more because they are no longer supported by the corresponding paternalistic socialist institutions. This is the principal challenge that the people of Russia face today, and every person has to find his own ways of meeting this challenge. This does not, however, mean that every strategy of a socialist type has now completely ceased to exist. Having very slim chances of practical realisation, they still continue to dominate people's mentalities, and this will remain the case, unless old stereotypes of behaviour are replaced by new patterns that are more adequate in the changed reality. In our opinion, many types of poverty in Russia come from that innate propensity towards socialist values. Poverty today is not only a result of circumstances; it is no less a result of mental inertia and unpreparedness of the people with regard to other modes of life that they did not know before.

Therefore, in researching strategies that help to overcome poverty (strategies of survival) we reject on principle, just as A. Etzioni did, the behavioural concept according to which a desired and generally approved type of behaviour is an immediate consequence of targeted external stimuli and impacts. The actual process of socio-economic reforms has proved that the same external economic measures

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provoke different reactions among different social groups. Some of them overcome poverty quickly, whereas others wrestle with a constantly worsening situation.

It is very interesting to observe the process of formation of those strategies where the behaviour of a person is not directly guided by an external stimulus but is rather a result of an internal mental predisposition. In this case, consciousness plays the role of an internal stimulus unaided by any external influence. In any case, of special interest to us are the instances when a person's behaviour is not just a reaction to an adverse social challenge, but is the demonstration of his or her ability to find and make use of new possibilities. In that connection, it is extremely important to single out the two principal types of social challenge as the external stimuli which are a result of the overall transformation of the social situation in Russia.

- The 'negative' stimulus is connected with the disappearance and abolition of certain socialist institutions and habitual modes of everyday life. It does not offer any options; such a challenge demands an instant reaction, otherwise, survival is impossible.
- The 'positive' stimulus is connected with the fact that those modes of life which were either unknown or unacceptable and disapproved of in the recent past, have become possible now. In this case, one can either try and avail oneself of the new opportunities, taking the risks of doing so, or renounce them and take no risks at all.

It appears that the timely identification of mental transformations connected with challenges of this type and also identification of the conditions that favour, or, on the contrary, are adverse to those transformations, is of special importance today because it provides possibilities for more adequate social programmes aimed at encouraging active and future-oriented strategies of behavior. The encouragement of those strategies (and, accordingly, of mental transformations of that kind) is the most important prerequisite for a successful and fast re-forming of society as a whole.

The present epoch of transformation of mentalities and the search for new strategies of survival prompted by it, determines the choice of the object of research that could most vividly illustrate all the complexity and urgency of those transformations. It appears that the poorest strata of the population should serve as such an object, because these social groups are the most vulnerable to the risks connected with the new competitive market economy. One of our leading experts on social security has suggested the following structure of these groups:
• The deprived categories, i.e., persons stripped of their social status (alcoholics, mental patients, drug addicts and others) – about 5% of the whole population;
• People with fixed incomes (pensioners, families with many children, unmarried mothers and others) – 5-6%;
• The 'new poor', i.e., people who have a job but whose salaries are not sufficient for the upkeep of their families – 6-7%. 18

Research into the modes of life of the above-mentioned categories is, in our opinion, of great significance because the challenges of today are especially topical for these categories. The change of life strategy is the most vital question for them, and so, the strategies that they are working out now and that might eventually become a routine for them, could be called strategies of survival.

There is a supposition, supported by some of our preliminary observations, that behaviour of the representatives of these groups, being a reaction to the situation common to them all, is, nevertheless, considerably different in every group. Explanation of that difference should become an important component of the studies of the strategies aimed at overcoming poverty. There are several hypotheses regarding the possible patterns of behaviour from which the various (but not necessarily poor) strata of society may choose. These hypotheses are in the spirit of Parkinson's system of the correlation of goals and means in human activity. But under the present general transformational shift they can serve only as a starting point for analysis, and that is because models of that kind do not take into account and do not reveal the mental history of this or that choice.

Research into the motives of the 'new poor' when they try to choose the right strategy is naturally of great interest. Today, we have some data on the reaction of those whose social and property status has changed and who have found themselves in the category of the poor after the devaluation of the status of such important institutions as the defence sector and science. 19 Also research on the adaptation of former army officers to civilian life upon being discharged from the Armed Forces (currently undergoing mass reduction), is being finished now.

Such studies cannot yet give a complete and substantial picture of the formation of new strategies through mental shifts, because originally their objective was different. Yet the information obtained from them is, in our opinion, quite suitable for a secondary analysis, which could provide answers to the questions raised in the present analysis. In general, surveillance of this category of the poor shows two distinct strategies of their actual behaviour: the passive and the active one.

The passive strategy is connected primarily with reacting to the negative aspect of the general socio-economic challenge. It is the reaction to the disappearance of the former social institutions and possibilities connected with them. It is directed at the preservation of the well-being and position reached under the previous socio-economic conditions. This strategy has two variants, the first being a delayed response, leading to a further aggravation of poverty, and the second being a moderately adaptive reaction which can at best ensure preservation of the reached level. Both variants fit quite well, in our opinion, the concept of the 'culture of poverty'.

The active strategy is, strictly speaking, a group of strategies representing a reaction to the newly opened opportunities, and thus, they respond to the positive aspect of the general challenge. They fall into the following main categories:

• the positive career-oriented type: this is the strategy of upwardly mobile people aiming at entering a more prosperous social stratum. All legal means helping to climb the social ladder are accepted here. The most important consideration is promotion, and therefore all acceptable means are used to achieve it.

• the positive instrumental type: this is the strategy of using all newly opened opportunities in the most rational way possible. It is the position of those who want to serve the system using those means and aspiring to those goals that are preferable from the point of view of public interests. Promotion and well-being is a natural and expected (but not sole) motive of social activity in this case.

• the criminal career-oriented type: this is the strategy of improving one's living standards through resorting to the means offered by the disorganisation and anomic of contemporary Russian society. The system can be used to one's advantage and even cheated, this being the most effective and direct way to material well-being.

To find out how and under the influence of which factors representatives of the above-indicated risk groups choose their respective strategies is, in our opinion, a problem not only of theoretical but, undoubtedly, of much practical interest.

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18 "Say a word for the 'new poor' — Interview with Evgenii Gontmakher, Chairman of the Committee on Social Policy", Trud 11 June 1994.
We can say in this connection that today, for example, changes in the types of behaviour of deprived categories are not exactly predictable. Their position in society has changed profoundly.

On the one hand, society no longer submits them to repressive means of resocialisation and rehabilitation. Institutions for compulsory treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts have closed down. The articles of the criminal law envisaging different kinds of punishments for so-called ‘sponging’ (i.e., shirking from work in the public sector) have been abrogated. A person with certain mental disorders can be placed in a special mental institution only by court decision. The understanding that deprived people need first of all every possible kind of social support and social aid has now almost matured, although there are no special programmes, and corresponding institutions are not set up yet. On the other hand, the changed socio-economic situation has made it more difficult for these deprived people to do occasional jobs, and the risk of losing one’s permanent place of residence and minimal level of living conditions has also increased.

The most interesting category, from the point of view of mental shifts, is that of destitute people whose deprivation was the result of their personal choice as a specific form of protest against the existing state of things. It is this category of people that might most actively exploit new opportunities. They might even find new strategies that could attain the status of socially successful and socially accepted ones. Yet, at the same time, their choice might be in favour of strategies of a criminal career type.

Analysis of probable behaviour of the poor with fixed incomes (those who live on pensions or who are on welfare) will give a different picture. It can be presumed that a considerable proportion of them will adapt strategies of survival based on paternalistic values, considering that the corresponding state paternalistic institutions are not destroyed, and the principles of their relations with the population remain the same.

For a large part of that category (mostly retired pensioners) the desire to preserve a traditional way of life represents the only strategy of survival. That strategy is determined, in our opinion, by the fact that the new opportunities (positive challenges) offered by market economy do not concern those people.

Both in their own and in the public opinion, this category of people is considered to have fulfilled their social obligations. The advent of such radical social change surprised them at the stage of their life when the vector of their relations with society should have been reversed. Every one of them has fulfilled the demands of the State, now it is time to ‘cash the cheque’, as was promised by the main socialist principle that ‘every citizen receives from public funds his share’, which is in an exact proportion to his contribution to the public welfare’.

Poverty among of those people today is the result of the State's default on its payment. Strategies of their behaviour will be shaped through the conflict of two types of mentalities: that of a state employee (creditor) against that of the State (debtor). These are strategies of mutual compromises, and the final outcome will depend not on the mutual commitments regarding property issues but on the political situation of the moment. Such a conflict has no perspective with regard to its capacity to engender new market strategies. This type of poverty and stereotypes corresponding to it will disappear only with their bearers. They have no future outside traditional modes of life, and thus the struggle to return to the former conditions is in this case a struggle for survival.

Because of the lack of special studies, poverty in Russia today is a subject of political speculations of all kinds. Politicians are concerned in the first instance with social tension: as soon as poverty reaches the degree at which a social outbreak becomes possible, the State will inevitably have to change the present course of reforms in favour of more populist strategies.

We have sufficient grounds to state that poverty in Russia does not have a universal character, as is widely believed. Moreover, the probability of social outbreak in this connection is most unlikely. The market offers everybody immense opportunities, and the speed and scale of transformation of ‘Soviet’ mentalities should not be underestimated either.

The population of Russia is adapting fairly rapidly to the new conditions and is finding effective strategies of a new economic behaviour. Meanwhile, those who cannot for different reasons do anything to change their life, generally belong to the groups incapable of active social protest.

The answer 'yes' to a question typical in public surveys, namely "Will you take part in meetings or demonstrations of protest against growing prices and a fall in living standards?" (this number oscillates between 20-25%) cannot be interpreted monosemantically, just as the majority of answers in such surveys cannot be. In reality, it is practically impossible to observe any actions of protest in connection with poverty.

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Universal poverty in Russia has become a truism in the public consciousness, but is it so in reality? We would like to say some words in this connection.

1. The idea of poverty among the Russian people is formed by the mass media and differs considerably from the opinion held by the population itself, especially in those cases where people can compare their own experience with information given in the mass media. This is indirectly illustrated by the results of the surveys conducted by the Russian Centre of Public Opinion Studies, in which the economic situation in Russia is characterised as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ (65%) whereas the economic situation in the town or countryside district of a respondent is assessed as ‘bad’ by only 50% of the respondents. This discrepancy is even more pronounced in the case of assessment of the economic situation of the family of a respondent (40%). The majority of our interviews confirm the belief of respondents that almost the entire Russian population lives in absolute misery.

and here a respondent usually adds "my family is, thank God, an exception, we have managed to overcome our difficulties".

2. The ‘culture of poverty’, a prevailing one up to the present moment, has taught people to pretend to be poorer than they actually are. The majority of the respondents considered themselves to be poor, even if they had absolutely no reasons for saying so.

However, many of them were quite sincere in saying that they feel that they are poor despite the fact that their living standards have risen over these last years. This is connected with the fact that differences in living standards were inconspicuous in the past; theoretically, everyone could buy any object displayed in the shops (but because of the acute deficit the choice was very limited). Now, however, there are a great number of things, absolutely unaffordable to ordinary consumers, and their resentment is aggravated by an ostentatious display of the luxuriant lifestyles of the nouveaux riches. Under the present circumstances people compare their possibilities with possibilities of the categories with the highest incomes, and that makes them feel their own relative deprivation and poverty.

The high proportion of people claiming their impoverishment in public opinion polls is connected with a psychological aspect of poverty and is not confirmed by calculations of incomes of any kind.

3. No expert and no calculations can identify, even approximately, the actual income level in different social groups. It can be positively presumed that the better part of the incomes of the population is not registered in any way since it is obtained in the informal sector of the economy that is so extraordinarily developed in Russia today.22

We cannot rely on statistics, the credibility of which has always been questioned. Today, now that the social institution of statistics is crumbling, it cannot serve as a basis for the analysis of any process under the present period of rapid social changes.

Mass questionnaires, which are still being overestimated by Russian sociologists, only strengthen the myth of general poverty, as their results with regard to such a delicate theme as incomes, are highly doubtful. People conceal their informal incomes, fearing both tax collectors and racketeers and simply to be ‘on the safe side’, because of irrational and unspecified fears so characteristic of a Soviet person in the past.

Our own research was based on deep probe interviewing, in which we questioned people who trusted us and could speak frankly about their illegal activities and illegal incomes. The very possibility of research giving the real picture of income groups is seriously doubtful – the great majority of our respondents did have officially unregistered incomes, the size of which was considerably greater than that of their declared incomes (in some cases dozens of times bigger!).

Interviews demonstrated one more paradox in the consciousness of Russians, the effect of which is not taken into account in studies based on other methods. The great majority of people talking about income mean only regularly received money income (salary, pension, etc.), and do not even mention occasional earnings (especially earnings in hard currency), to say nothing of non-money incomes (in the form of agricultural products from their plots of land).

4. Under the current rapid economic and social changes, the economic status of a person changes frequently, the level of material well-being jumps and falls sharply. Under these conditions it is especially easy to note that the proportion of those who are constantly poor is relatively small. For the majority of people,

22 An indirect proof to this statement is an estimate of situation in Uzbekistan. In 1993 official money income amounted there to 308.8 mln roubles, whereas personal hidden income amounted to 2,179.6 mln roubles! Experts note that illegal incomes grow faster. (Ongov, U. "Majority of Population Lives on Unearned Income." Segodnya 7 April (1994).)
poverty is a temporary difficulty to be quickly overcome, and in every particular case we observe, what can be termed a ‘career of poverty’.

In this connection, an important psychological effect should be noted, namely a delayed realisation of one’s actual economic status and level of well-being, a realisation which follows changes with a certain lag. People who have essentially improved their material situation continue to feel emotions reflecting their previous poor conditions and say, as they did before, that they are poor.

5. It is clear that several percent of the population are constantly poor and have no chance of changing this situation on their own. It is, of course, a task of society to provide them with human living conditions. Nevertheless, in this category of respondents the percentage of those completely socialised in the ‘culture of poverty’, and for this reason content with their miserable situation, is especially high. This phenomenon was also noted in our studies conducted during the period of ‘developed socialism’.

6. Finally, neither researchers nor the people realise the peculiar feature of Russian society that makes it impossible to compare the scale and nature of poverty in Russia with that of other countries. This is the fact that as a result of the free privatisation of apartments almost everyone now possesses real and rather considerable assets. Taking into consideration that a very large part of population own small plots of land and a second dwelling (dacha), we begin to understand that we know very little about poverty in Russia. Future research promises a great number of unexpected discoveries.