



Moscow
Department
of Culture



Moscow Institute
for Social and
Cultural Programmes



Nekrasov
Central Library

Age Is Just a Number. The Leisure Time Activities of Moscow's Senior Citizens

Research into those age groups that
are less engaged in the cultural life
of Moscow.

Part III

Moscow. 2018

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Foreword

Moscow's cultural life is changing. Cultural institutions and parks are being upgraded around the city and the modernization of many public areas is well under way. City cultural events have grown to be much more varied and grander in scope. The variety of themes for city events has also improved. For the first time in many years the city is thinking about its vast infrastructure and beginning to renovate its libraries and culture centers. Finally, the citizens and the media have once again started to notice these changes.

Throughout this period of change, the Moscow Institute of Social and Cultural programs has been carrying out a study to research the cultural activities and attitudes of Moscovites. The 2012-2015 monitoring of Moscow's cultural life revealed a significant growth in attendance of flagship cultural institutions as well as at citywide cultural events. However, sociological research also showed that this growth was mostly among young, economically active citizens. It turned out that the younger teenagers, middle-aged people and senior citizens of Moscow weren't as involved in attending cultural institutions and city celebrations.

Having identified the people that are least involved in the cultural life of Moscow, we categorized them as 'hard to reach', a reference to their distance from the cultural life and politics of the city. This study is focused on these 'hard to reach' citizens.

The 'hard to reach' age groups turned out to include practically everyone. Our research has revealed that cultural institutions are only in high demand among young adults who have started University or begun to work and are actively growing their social network. The general pattern appears to be that as these young adults get older, the frequency of their attendance at cultural centers and events declines. There is then resurgence in their cultural activities when they have children of their own to take. However, as soon as the children become independent or enter adolescence, both the parents and the children disappear from museums and cultural centers.

The results of our research are split into three parts, each one dedicated to a specific age group of Moscow citizens:

- teenagers 13 to 18 years of age;
- middle aged people 35 to 54 years of age;
- senior citizens 55 years and older.

We have used various sociological methods in our research. At the stage of methodology development the authors analyzed the available history of research into each of the age groups in Russia as well as internationally. Then a survey of a thousand respondents out of the quoted representative sample was made for each age group. Quantitative data was expanded with data collected during interviews with experts, in-depth one to one and group interviews, and focus groups. *For more information on methodology please see Appendix 1 in each of the three parts.*

The research that MISCPC undertakes is driven by the understanding that culture is one of the most important elements in the quality of life and development of human capital. Moscow already offers a large variety of leisure

activities for its citizens and a number of interesting choices for spending free time. However, the competition for citizens' free time is often won by shopping malls' food courts, aimless strolls around the city and the biggest competitor at the moment — staying at home on the sofa with the TV and Internet close at hand.

Creating a stable demand for cultural life is a question of habit formation. The earlier a person learns to navigate his way through the complicated web of cultural activities the city has to offer, mastering various forms of leisure and learning how to choose between them, the easier it will be to incorporate cultural activities into their life and take pleasure in them.

Most of the time, citizens' engagement in the cultural sphere is blocked by barriers such as the absence of time, money and sufficient information about the cultural projects. In addition, other problems in a big city are infrastructural: transport availability and a subjective view of the safety of specific areas can greatly affect cultural involvement.

However, making a general assessment of the barriers that keep people from being more active isn't sufficient when it comes to improving the situation. It's important to understand the decision making process that citizens go through when it comes to choosing how to spend their leisure time, and thereby find the threads that cultural institutions can pull at to interest people in visiting them.

While conducting this study we aimed to find out how Moscovites of different ages organize their free time, what they take into account when choosing an activity, which cultural sphere they prefer and what options and limitations are important in their decision.

We hope that our research will help cultural institutions and independent professionals in the cultural sphere to work more effectively with different age groups. This is why we focused on collecting data that can have a practical implementation in the development of cultural programs and communication between cultural institutions and event planners. The results of the research can be useful not just for the culture professionals, but also to everyone who works with teenagers and people over 35. Having said that, our hope is that it is the managers of cultural projects and programs who will find it most useful.

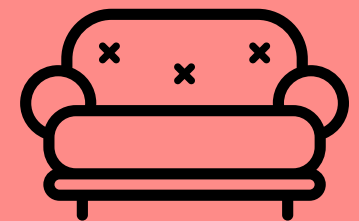
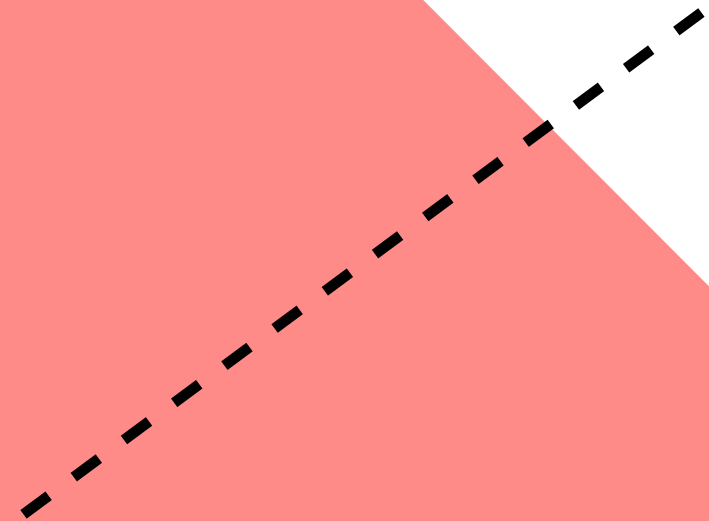
Obviously this text should not be considered as an exhaustive analysis. We ourselves have been left with a lot of questions, such as which specific YouTube channels can best promote libraries' activities? What do older Moscovites see as "contemporary art" ? When does 'I don't have time' become code for 'I don't know how to spend my time' and how can we help Moscovites distinguish the difference between these two states of mind.

But as long as Moscow has a thriving public cultural life (which we hope is a very long time), we will be searching for answers to these and many more questions and hope that you will enjoy each new project.

We will be happy to discuss the results of our research and help others to use them practically.
Get in touch at: info@miscp.ru.

Maria Privalova,
Research curator

Potential Gains for Cultural Institutions from Working with Senior Citizens



This study is dedicated to research into the cultural activities of Moscow's senior citizens. The questions that we have before us are: What cultural events and activities do senior citizens take part in? Where do they find information about them? What factors come into play when elderly citizens make the decision to attend a cultural institutions? What difficulties do they encounter? What's their opinion on contemporary art?

Only 20 % of senior citizens are actively engaged in visiting cultural institutions. Yet clearly they represent one of the biggest potential audiences for such institutions and events.

The objective of this research is to analyze and outline the way senior citizens participate in the cultural life of the city and also make suggestions to cultural institutions of practical recommendations for working with this age group.

There are a wide variety of reasons why cultural institutions might be interested in targeting their attractions at senior citizens.

Only 20 % of senior citizens are actively* engaged in visiting cultural institutions. Yet clearly they represent one of the biggest potential audiences for such institutions and events. Based on data from The Russian Federal State Statistics Service the number of pensioners in Moscow has grown in recent years from 2.8 million to 3.2 million people¹. Russia as a whole and its capital in particular is

* 'Actively engaged citizens' in this research are ones who attend theaters, exhibitions and museums quarterly and go to the movie theater at least once a month.

caught up in a demographic aging process, which means that the proportion of pensioners will only grow larger over time. Based on Federal State Statistics Service data the beginning of 2010 saw the share of Russians over 65 at 12.9 % and according to the official prognosis it will grow to be 18-19 %² by the year 2030. Thus the senior citizen population can be considered as 'an expanding group', which will increase with time, and their interests in the activities of cultural institutions clearly should be taken into consideration.

The elder generation helps to promote engagement in the cultural activities of other age groups. A large proportion of people over 55 take their children and grandchildren to various cultural events, thus forming a childhood habit of attending cultural institutions, which then encourages further involvement and cultural activity. This is based on the research we have done on the middle-aged and teenagers³.

Senior citizens have an acute need to confirm their social relevance and value. This is mostly realized by passing their life wisdom to the younger generation.

Due to lack of mobility, elder people are forced to spend time closer to where they live. This opens up various possibilities for local cultural institutions , particularly libraries. Libraries can form their own local audience, which in turn will contribute to the decentralization of cultural life — a tendency that is widely popular in the biggest cities in the world⁴.

More than other age groups, senior citizens have large amounts of free time at their disposal, which can be used in having a more active social and cultural life. At the

1. Moscow City Statistics Service
// Official Statistics / Population



2. Evgeny Gontmakher. The problem of the aging population in Russia // World Economy and International Relations. 2012. No 1. C. 22–29.

same time, senior citizens have an acute need to confirm their social relevance and value. This is mostly realized by passing their life wisdom to the younger generation⁵. So senior citizens can be involved in various volunteer activities at cultural institutions, by giving tours and excursions for example.

On the other hand, cultural institutions can actively work with the older generation by improving social inclusivity, i.e. by elevating the level of engagement of senior citizens in the cultural life of Moscow. This type of work will have an ethical significance as well. As our research will show, active involvement in the cultural life of the city raises the levels of subjective satisfaction with life amongst senior citizens.

To sum up, the increased attracting of senior citizens to cultural institutions will help the latter to:

- a) Widen their audience
- b) Attract into the cultural life of the city a relatively excluded social group
- c) Raise interest among other age groups that are closely connected to them (children, grandchildren)
- d) Decentralize cultural life
- e) Realize various mutually beneficial cooperations, such as volunteer initiatives.

3. See: Research into those age groups that are less engaged in the cultural life of Moscow. The Leisure Time Activities of Moscow's Middle-Aged Citizens. MISCP. 2017 and The Leisure Time Activities of Moscow's Teenagers. MISCP. 2016.

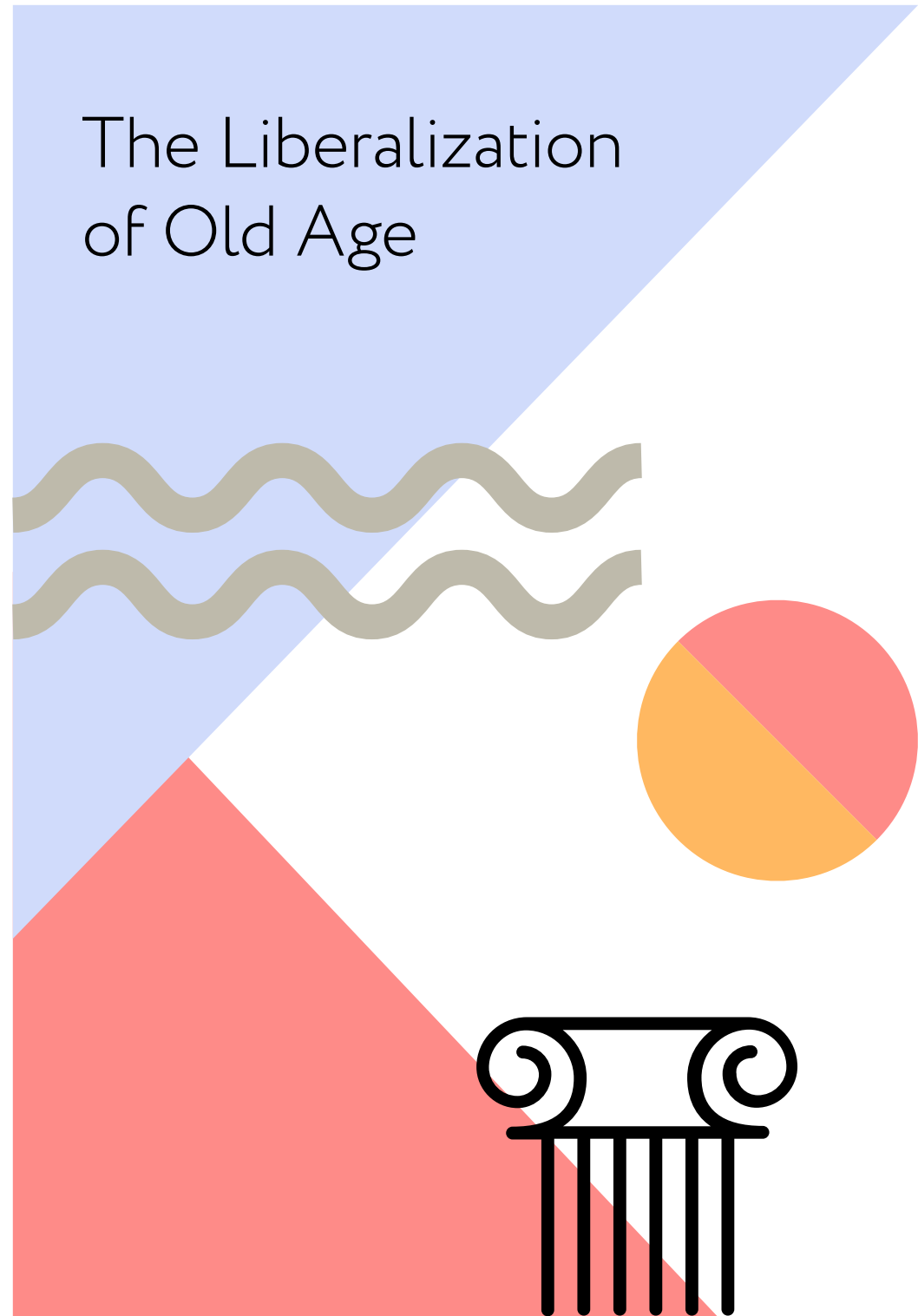


4. Cultural decentralization: strategy and types. MISCP 2014.



5. See example of the French concept of the 'Generational Contract', which implies a transfer of experience from senior employees to the younger ones.

The Liberalization of Old Age



Before we move on to describing cultural activities that are typical for this group of Moscovites, we need to define the age boundaries for this group: the lower limit was the pension age, which is 55 years for women and 60 for men.

At this point, it's worth noting that age isn't always used to define the status of a person. As the head of the "Dobroe Delo" ("Good deed")* Foundation Edward Karuhin puts it, gerontology sees senior age 'functionally'. This means that the common sense gradations of 'old age' aren't determined simply by chronological age, but in relation to the functional abilities of a person. For instance, if a 65 year old lives as active a life as a 30 year old, then he can very well be attributed to the '30 year old' group. The decline in functionality is usually connected with health reasons — the official retirement age isn't inevitably connected with a decline in health.

*"Dobroe Delo" — is a regional social foundation for helping the elderly.

Retirement in Russia is often seen as 'social death'.

On the other hand, the importance of retirement in Russia cannot be underestimated. As experts point out, retirement in Russia is often seen as 'social death': leaving work behind basically excludes a person from the social life of the city (as we'll see further in the text, the feeling of relevance and importance is very important to senior citizens)¹. Furthermore, a quarter of Moscovites who are continuing to work past retirement age see keeping their social connections alive as motivation for continuing to work.

Nearly a third of elderly people lose the benefit of active social contacts, spend more time at home and don't feel the

need to change anything. (For more information on the various groups of senior citizens see the chapter "Senior Citizens as Consumers of Culture: The Different Groups Features".)

Another issue with retirement is the devaluing of experience. Very often teenagers and middle-aged people see the experience of the elderly as something outdated and inapplicable in the modern world, regardless of their age and previous accomplishments. At the same time this experience and wisdom is a key characteristic of senior citizens, which in many ways determines their behavior and outlook on life. It's derived from the relative length of their lifespan, and is chiefly what distinguishes older people from the younger age groups.

Life experience and wisdom is very important for a number of reasons:

- Experience and wisdom demands expression and respect.
- Older people feel they have things to say to the world and the relevance of their knowledge and skills is important to them.
- Experience is subject to external (often negative) evaluation, which in turn has an effect on the sense of self. This is especially true in terms of the knowledge and skills that they have acquired over the years, which they then feel isn't always applicable in the modern world.

– Experience influences the way senior citizens look at new occurrences. For them, anything new is seen through the lens of the familiar. New situations can feel uncomfortable and unfamiliar events can be frightening.

To define the elderly period of life, it's customary to use the term 'third age'. The origin of this title dates back to France in the 1970s, when French Universities were offering the elderly a chance to study. The term was later used by Peter Laslett, an English scientist who identified 'third age' individuals as those who have entered the period of life that begins with retirement, but who have health, energy and a positive outlook that keeps them active. This is the culmination of their lives, and offers the potential for experiencing the fullness of life as a whole, alongside the highest level of development of an individual's identity. Laslett also noted that the occurrence of the 'third age' phenomenon is only possible in developed countries with a high number of elderly citizens².

The term 'third age' emphasizes the potential that people who have moved out of middle age have. A large amount of free time opens up new possibilities such as travel and study. Not to mention that the term 'third age' allows to avoid the discriminatory term 'pensioners', which reduces a person's identity to their merely professional employment status. Here and throughout the text, we will be using this term along with 'the elderly', 'older Moscovites', and 'senior citizens.'

Seeing the third age as a time of great opportunities goes hand in hand with the concept of the liberalization of aging. As the American physicist and inventor John

Vincent noted, it's important to differentiate between 'liberation from old age' and 'the liberalization of old age'. The first is achieved through a kind of eternal youth, whereas the second is achieved by constructing the significance of the third age. In other words, liberation from old age is driven by the desire to stay 'forever young', despite the inevitability of aging. The liberalization of old age on the other hand, refers to the ways in which the elderly are relieved of the burden of responsibilities and constraints that younger and middle aged adults experience. At this point in life, more free time becomes available to fill with things that the person has long dreamt of doing, for instance learning something new, or creating art. "The first" (liberation from old age), Vincent adds, "is no more than an illusion, where the second one (the liberalization of old age) is a realistic opportunity"³.

The flip side of paternalistic politics is the fact that pensioners can become passive objects of care, dependent on state support.

The 'liberalization of old age' approach can be contrasted not only to the illusory 'liberation from old age' but also to the paternalistic and purely patronizing position of the state in the social politics of old age. The flip side of paternalistic politics is the fact that pensioners become passive objects of care, 'fosterlings', dependent on state initiative. The attitude towards senior citizens in Russia is often based on a paternalistic idea: while offering support, the state writes the elderly off as a stereotype of dependent individuals, who should 'retire to their much-deserved rest'.

However research shows that even with the inertia of the paternalistic approach, some of the senior citizens

successfully achieve the principles of 'liberalization of old age' by continuing to work, study and keep fit on their own initiative⁴.

Their recreational and cultural activities are still not researched well enough⁵, but leisure time is a significant part of the senior citizens' lives the importance of which will only grow in the 21st century. Hopefully, this study partially fills in the blanks.

1. Daria Belostotskaya
"Old age is a social death":
what happens with
the elderly in Russia.
05.10.2015

// "Society for all ages"
Forum. However, this is
a relevant problem for
other countries as well.
See Bryan Borzykowski Is
retirement a slow death?
15.09.2014 // BBC News
Russian

2. Laslett P. The
emergence of the Third
Age. *Ageing and Society*,
7. 1987.
P. 133–160. Laslett P. A
fresh map of life: The
emergence of the Third
Age (paperback ed.).
London: George Wieden
eld and Nicholson. 1991.

3. Vincent J. Oldage. New
York: Routledge. 2003.
P. 168. Quote from: D.
Rogozin Liberalization
of aging, or work,
knowledge and health in
senior age// *Sociological
Journal* 2012. No 4.

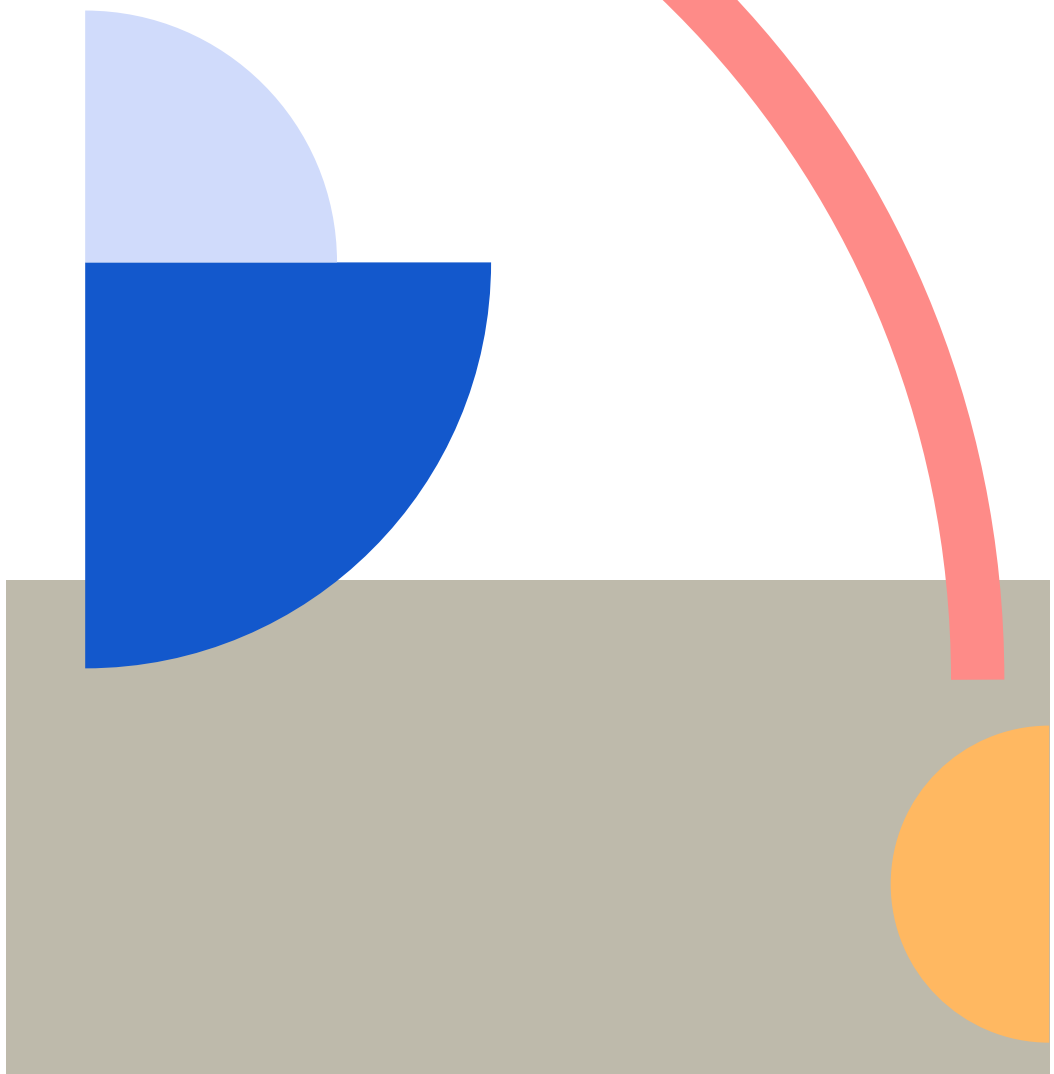
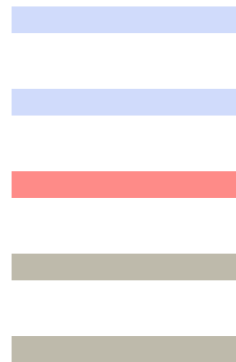
4. D. Rogozin
Liberalization of aging,
or work, knowledge and
health in senior age//
Sociological Journal
2012. No 4.

5. Exceptions are rare. See
example L.A. Sizov, I.N.
Sedova, N.G. Troitzkaya
Characteristics of
organizing leisure
activities for people
of the 'third age' // *Journal of economy and
entrepreneurship* 2015.
T. 2. No 3 (56–2). C.
504–506.

Key ideas

- 1 Senior citizens are a potential source for the expansion of the audience for cultural institutions. Their representation as a proportion of the population of Moscow and Russia as a whole will continue to grow in the coming years.
- 2 Senior citizens spend a large amount of their free time with grandchildren and can play a vital part in getting the younger generation into cultural activities.
- 3 Decentralization of cultural institutions, their accessibility is an important requirement for involving people of the third age in cultural life.
- 4 Senior Moscovites have a great deal of life experience, which influences the way they see new situations and things, including cultural offerings.
- 5 Elderly people are willing and happy to share their experience and skills, as they strive to bring value to the community.

Leisure Activities of Senior Citizens



Leisure activities and quality of life

In the international context, the leisure time of elderly citizens has been the focus of researchers' attention for many years¹. The growing rate of urbanization, the change in family structure (the shift to a nuclear family consisting of parent/s with children), and the increasing number of senior citizens – all these factors are changing the image of elderly individuals and their social position.

The more active a senior individual's life is the lower the chances are that they will face social isolation and an identity crisis.

Researchers often connect leisure activities with overall life satisfaction². Leisure activities make a person feel his values, help him measure up to social expectations, give aesthetic pleasure and provide a chance to gain new experiences³. They also note that quality of life directly correlates with the level of activity, quantity and intensity of social contacts. The more active a senior individual's life is the lower the chances are that they will face social isolation and an identity crisis, which often follows the loss of familiar roles (particularly work and family roles)⁴. Therefore, the positive effect of leisure activities can be intensified if they are directed at creating and maintaining social connections.

Some remarkable findings have come out of some recent comparative research into the lives of Swedish senior citizens. A survey revealed that people who spend their leisure time energetically and with a variety of activities

are more agreeable and that their lives have improved in the past ten years. A reduction in leisure options leads to the opposite result: people more often report that the quality of their lives has declined. A special significance is connected with active leisure activities for people who don't have a strong connection with their family. This is where a compensating effect is apparent: leisure time is a substitute for the lack of a social network. For those who see their family more than once a week, an active life of leisure is seen as of reduced importance when it comes to quality of life.

At the same time, for those who see their family less, leisure activities are directly related to the level of satisfaction with life⁵.

How do senior Moscovites spend their free time?

On the whole, senior citizens are potentially one of the most appreciative audiences for cultural attractions. Research into the visitors of various city cultural events such as "Night at a Museum" and "Night of the Arts" showed that senior citizens criticize the event and the cultural institution that organized it 1.5 times less than younger people (under 35)⁶. 60 % of them were happy to recommend the institution and its events to their friends and family*. In light of this it seems reasonable to assume that while overall cultural consumption for senior citizens is low, the mere fact of attending a cultural event reinforces the value of the experience for them. It would be incorrect to assume, however, that senior Moscovites are happy to receive all cultural offerings equally. On the contrary, their preferences need special attention and we will discuss them in this chapter.

Participation in cultural life is a moving conceptual target. With age, engagement in the cultural life of the society declines, reaching its lowest level after 70 years of

*For evaluation of visitor satisfaction of events and cultural institutions we used a marketing tool — Net Promoter Score, NPS. Find out more at netpromoter.com/know

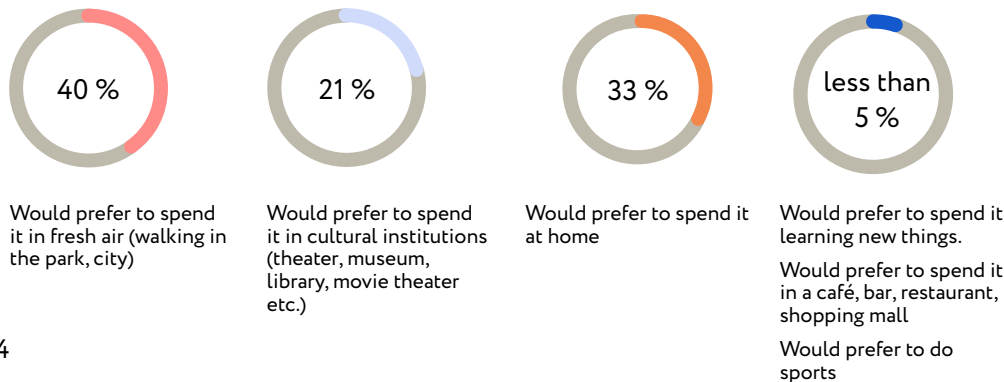
age. This happens first of all for health reasons. However, international studies showed that involvement in cultural life has a positive effect on the wellbeing of senior citizens⁷. Therefore, we have a paradoxical situation: a decline in health leads to a decline in cultural activity, while an intensifying of cultural engagement has a positive effect on overall wellbeing. So by actively involving elderly people in cultural life, not only do cultural institutions create a loyal audience but they also become a resource for an improvement in the quality of life of their fellow citizens.

The most popular types of leisure activity

The most popular leisure activity is visiting parks and green spaces. Park and city garden walks fulfill a number of senior citizens' requirements. First of all it's the most affordable activity as it's free, and larger parks may have various interesting events on which would also be free. Secondly, parks and green zones are usually quiet and serene, which means a comfortable and peaceful time. And thirdly, walks are seen as a way of staying fit, which is very valuable for certain groups of senior citizens. Finally, due to Soviet city planning, parks and green zones are distributed evenly throughout the city, which means that they are always within walking distance.

Diagram 1

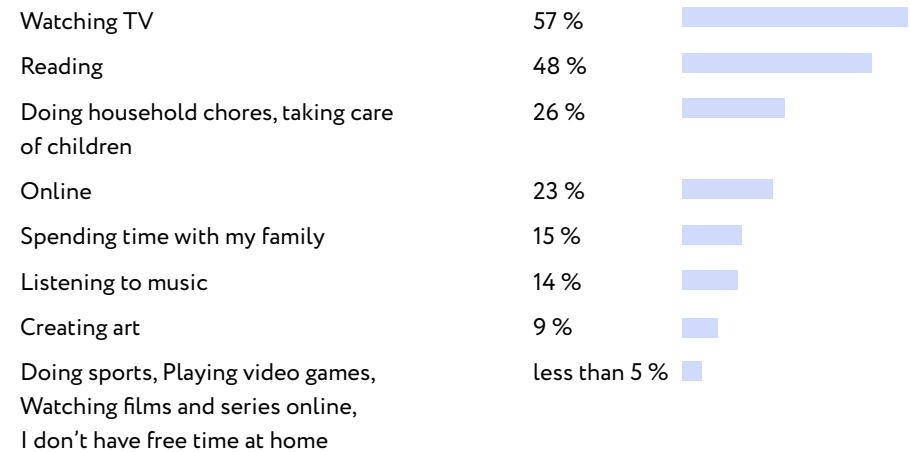
How would people of the third age prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available?



A third of senior citizens would prefer to spend their free time at home. The three most popular ways of spending free time at home is watching TV, reading or doing household chores.

Diagram 2

How do you spend your free time?



It may seem that a third of people wanting to stay at home is a high number, but it's only higher than the norm for the middle-aged by 5 percentage points⁸. The reasons that people stay at home are different for every age group. Middle-aged people want to spend time at home as a way of taking a break from work and spending time with family. With senior citizens the reasons are often connected with a decline in mobility. Further on, we will look at the reasons for choosing to spend free time at home in the chapter "Factors of Engaging Senior Citizens and the Obstacles to Their Involvement".

Senior citizens are concerned with social judgment of their behavior. Being by themselves, alone in a cultural institution makes them feel uncomfortable.

The next most popular leisure time activity is visiting a cultural institution. And although a fifth of elderly people report themselves to be interested in the idea, in reality they attend them less frequently than other groups of citizens. In comparison with the middle-aged group, the involvement in cultural life of people over 55 plummets by almost a quarter. If the comparison is made between pensioners and people of 18 to 25 years of age the difference would be almost 50 %⁹.

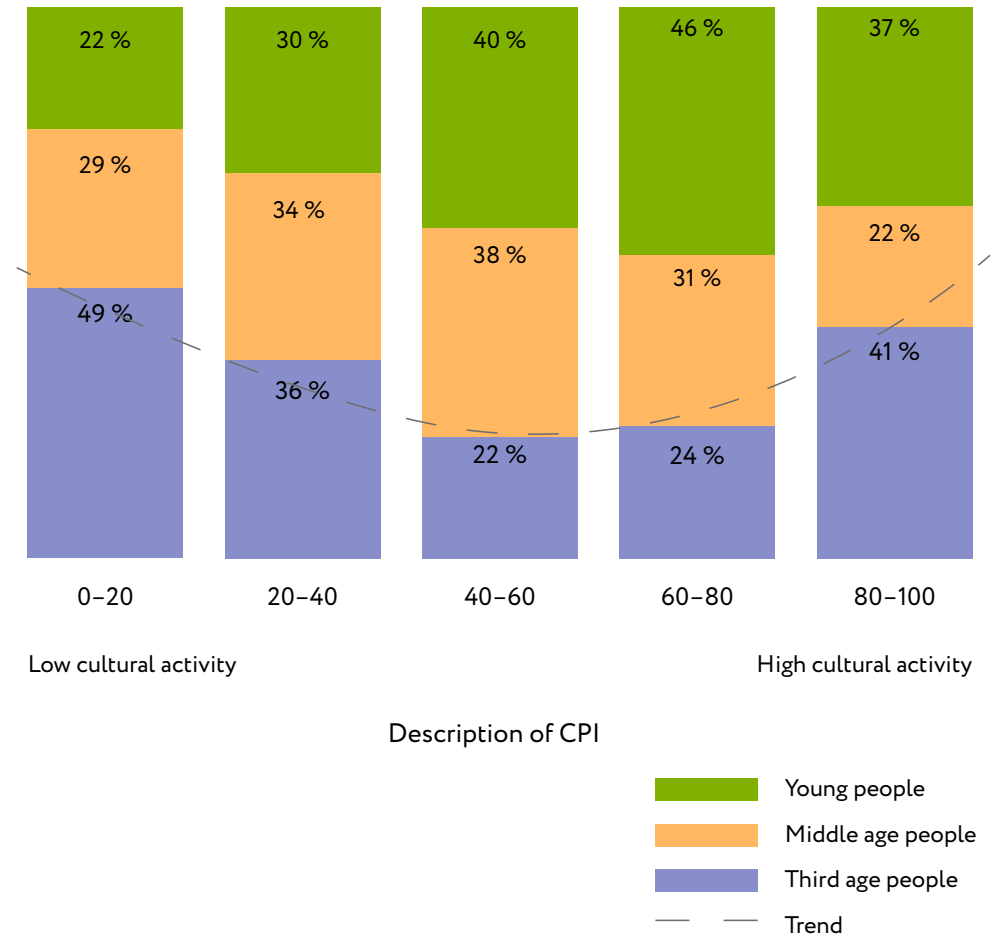
The senior age is when a drastic polarization of cultural activities happens: people of the third age begin to very actively visit cultural institutions, or the opposite — practically stop doing so completely. Such polarization is uncharacteristic for other age groups. This is very evident in the analysis of the Cultural Participation Index (CPI)*.

The diagram shows that 49 % of Moscow’s least culturally active citizens are people of the third age — but also, that 41 % of the most active citizens are also from this age group.

*The Cultural Participation Index for Moscow citizens was calculated based on survey data, gathered by MISCSP. The basis for this index is the frequency of involvement in a cultural activity: reading books, visiting museums, theaters, exhibitions, concerts etc. The index can be anything from 0 points (never been or go anywhere) to 32 points (go frequently, several times a week). For convenience these points were put into a 100-point scale (from 0 to 100); to do that the Index points are divided by 32 and multiplied by 100.

Diagram 3

Cultural Participation Index of Moscovites depending on their age



The diagram shows that 49 % of Moscow's least culturally active citizens are people of the third age — but also, that 41 % of the most active citizens are also from this age group.



Health

37 % of the less active group evaluated their health as bad or very bad, while amongst the very active group that figure was 10 %.



Education

71 % of the most active group have a University degree whereas less than half of the inactive group have a university level qualification.



Maintaining of social network

Third age citizens who spend their free time with friends and colleagues are 1.5 times more likely to get into the most active cohort.

Senior citizens who have at their disposal the previously mentioned resources will most likely see old age as a chance to finally do something that they love, learn something new and generally live for pleasure.

"...Some people who didn't realize their potential when they were working now finally have time to make those dreams come true. People who have different skills but

didn't develop them can finally start to. For instance, all my life I wanted to paint and so I didn't wait for somebody to offer me courses or clubs, I went out, met artists and started painting. Now I am a professional artist, I do painting and floor-standing vases. I went even further and now interior designers buy my stuff to put in wealthy people's homes..."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 66 years.

An alternative — non public space that plays a large part in senior citizens' lives is the dacha (*translator's note — country home*). However we cannot state that once people reach retirement, the dacha begins to compete with the public cultural institutions for people's time and attention. On reaching retirement, the frequency of visits to the dacha also reduces, just as do all other cultural or social activities.

"I forage for mushrooms, I walk around for pleasure, by myself. I go to the dacha without my husband, because he doesn't want to and says to me "you're going to get exhausted", but I go anyway. And I don't see anyone and that's my rest."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 64 years.

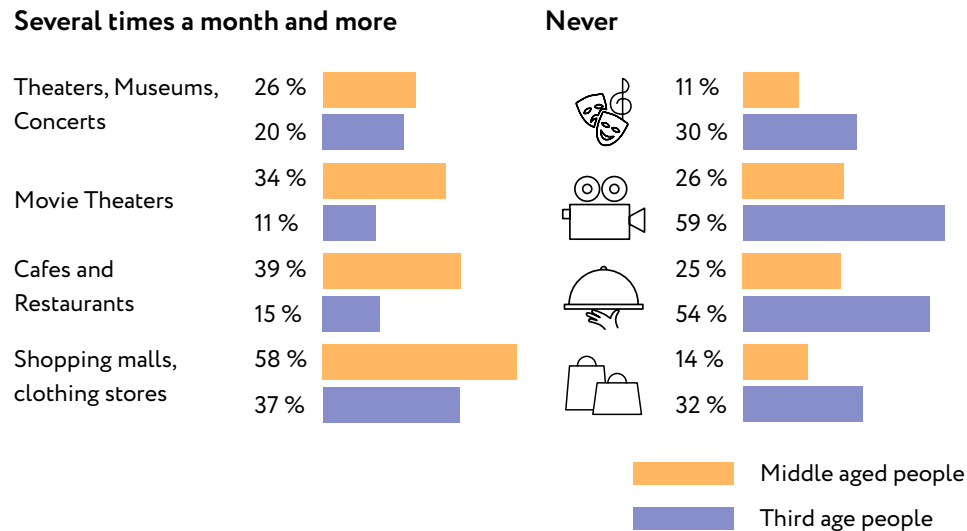
Keeping a garden or growing vegetables gives elderly people a needed physical activity and also helps to realize their creative potential. Also, the dacha can fill a need that a public cultural institution obviously cannot. It's a place where an individual of the third age can have a break from the responsibilities and commitments that society has given them, be at one with themselves and only do the things they want to do. In this respect, senior citizens are similar to the Moscow teenagers that we described in the first part of our research¹⁰. The norms and rules of behavior that are required in a cultural institution can often push visitors away, as they can see them as a restriction on their freedom.

Disregarded types of leisure activities

The least popular leisure activities among senior citizens — in contradiction to the middle age group — are public activities that require financial expenditure: theaters, museums, cafes, movie theaters, shopping malls etc.

Diagram 4

Frequency of involvement in various types of leisure activities for senior citizens and middle-aged people

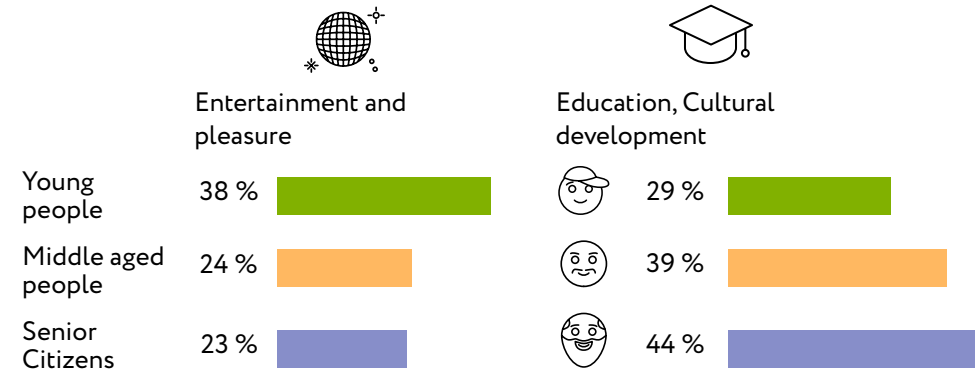


The most unpopular use of leisure time among senior citizens is attending bars, nightclubs and such like, i.e. places that are labeled as ‘young people’s’ environments by general public opinion. However, stereotypical views on ‘age appropriate’ recreation are not the only reason for avoiding these locations. Leisure activities are also defined by certain values that change with age. Going to nightclubs

and bars is associated with hedonism and entertainment; people of a more mature age prioritize ‘useful’ activities like education and cultural development.

Diagram 5

The value of entertainment and self-development depending on age



As shown on the diagram the value placed on entertainment reduces with age while educational activities and self-development grow in value.

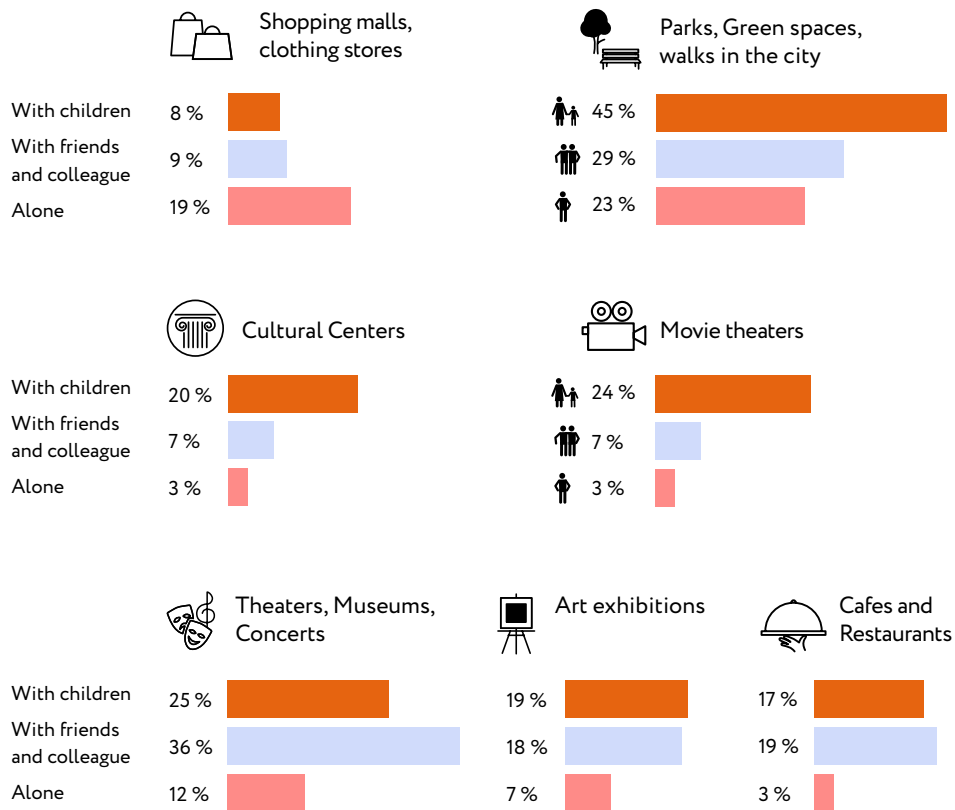
Choice of companions for spending leisure time

People of the third age more often spend their free time in the company of friends or children than by themselves. The same tendency is seen with middle-aged people but the reasons for this are different. In the case of middle-aged people, leisure time activities are often dictated by the people that are dependent on them: relatives, friends, children. Spending free time with them is not only recreational but is also their responsibility. For the elderly, the presence of close people around them is desirable, as it

simplifies things and makes any new cultural experience generally much more comfortable. For this group, spending free time with friends and relatives is not only recreational — it is a basic necessity.

Diagram 6

Where and with whom do third age Moscovites spend their free time?



It is often difficult for people of the third age to go to a new place by themselves, where they would feel embarrassed:

"I won't go by myself. I don't have any friends here to go with. I feel very self-conscious by myself and uncomfortable...No, I wouldn't go, I'm just too embarrassed."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 62 years.

Senior citizens are preoccupied with external judgment of their behavior. Being in a cultural institution by themselves they often feel 'out of place' and enjoying the new experience becomes difficult.

Moderator: "Do you go more with friends or by yourself?"

Woman, 65 years: "I like to go with either grandkids or friends."

Modera.tor: "And ever by yourself."

Woman 65 years: "Never by myself."

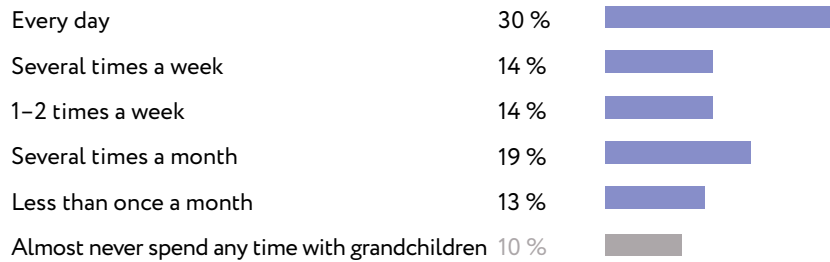
Man, 74 years: "It's not comfortable to go alone."

Focus group with senior citizens.

It might seem logical to assume that elderly people often spend time with their grandchildren and so don't have time for their own cultural activities. That statement is not entirely correct however. For senior citizens a child can become a trigger for getting involved in cultural life. Time spent with grandkids often means going to various cultural events and venues. However, it is important for cultural institutions to offer more than just children's attractions if they wish to retain the loyalty and attendance of senior citizens, as programs more specifically aimed at their age and interests will likely prove far more successful.

Diagram 7

How often do people of the third age spend time with grandchildren?



"I mostly take my granddaughter to cultural events. If before [...] for instance, I never went anywhere [to cultural venues], now, I am sort of being nudged to go."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 62 years.

City celebrations

When choosing a place to visit during large scale city celebrations (like Victory day or City Day), senior citizens often choose local neighborhood events. On average, a third of them stay within their neighborhood and attend local celebrations and only 18 % travel into the city center. The reasons for this aren't simply a question of low levels of mobility. Most of them simply prefer the smaller-scale, peripheral venues. In addition, they often visit these celebrations with their pre-school and primary school-aged grandchildren. Being responsible for young children, they demand a high level of safety, which is difficult to achieve in a jam-packed city center. Also, going out with a young child means that there is a limited timeframe that the child will be engaged and happy to be out, and many people don't want to spend a large amount of that time on travel¹¹.

It is important to note here however, that the preference for smaller, peripheral events does not have to be seen as a negative thing from the point of view of the drive for cultural engagement. By deciding to attend local venues not far from home, senior citizens also become active participants of their local cultural life — which is just as valuable as involvement in the cultural life of the city center. A good example of this would be the "Library Night" event. Whereas only 15 % of the audience of most public city events are senior citizens, for "Library Night" this proportion rose to 25 %*. We believe this was due to the decentralization of the event: it went on around the whole city and included many small neighborhood libraries¹².

Decentralization of cultural life — is the phenomenon of a shift in the concentration of cultural provision from the city center, to other outlying neighborhoods that were once considered peripheral. This change is occurring all over the world¹³. In Moscow the most appropriate basis for this decentralization are the libraries — as they are a network of cultural institutions evenly distributed throughout the city. So it is safe to say that developing recreational centers for senior citizens within libraries is definitely a good place to start. A city library in Klaipeda is a good example of how a library can be reorganized to become a cultural and information center for senior citizens¹⁴.

* At the same time, it is worth noting that the overall level of citizens' participation in "Library Night" was significantly lower than that in "Night of the Arts" and "Night at the Museums".

1. Gibson J., Singleton H. Leisure and Ageing: Theory and Practice. Human Kinetics, 2011.

2. Cultural leisure activities of pensioners. MISCP, 2014.



3. Toepoe V. Ageing, Leisure, and Social Connectedness: How could Leisure Help Reduce Social Isolation of Older People? // Social Indicators Reseach. 2013, 113(1). P. 355–372.

Key ideas

- 1 Active leisure time improves subjective wellbeing and allows people of the third age to feel part of the city's social life.
- 2 A high level of involvement in cultural activities is reliant on good health levels, a higher education degree and a network of social contacts.
- 3 The frequency and intensity of cultural participation declines with age, however the repertoire of recreational activities remains the same with middle-aged people: the three most popular activities are — resting at home, a walk outside and visiting a cultural institution.
- 4 Cultural activities that are less popular with people of the third age are those that involve financial outlay: theaters, museums, restaurants, cafés and movie theaters.
- 5 Attending a cultural institution overall is generally considered to be a socially respectable activity, as long as it is in the company of others. The prospect of going alone causes embarrassment and discomfort.

4. Moorer P., Suurmeijer T. P. The Effects of Neighbourhood on Size of Social Network of the Elderly and Loneliness: a Multilevel Approach // *Urban Studies*. 2001. Vol. 38. P. 105–118.

5. Silverstein M., Parker M.G. Leisure Activities and Quality of Life Among the Oldest Old in Sweden // *Research on Aging*. 2002. Vol. 24. № 5. P. 541–544.

6. Moscow's "Night Life" MISCP 2016.



7. Exploring the Longitudinal Relationship Between Arts Engagement and Health, Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt and Arts for Health. 2015.

8. The leisure time activities of Moscow's middle-aged citizens. Research into those age groups that are less engaged in the cultural life of Moscow. MISCP, 2017.

9. Research into the tastes and preferences of Moscovites in the Cultural sphere, MISCP, preparing for publication.

- 6 Attracting pensioners into cultural life can be done via the creation of events for their grandchildren: the work of children's clubs should be synchronized with various activities for people of the third age.

10. The leisure time activities of Moscow's teenagers. Research into those age groups that are less engaged in the cultural life of Moscow. MISCP, 2016.

11. The audience of the most popular Moscow celebration "City Day — 2015" MISCP 2016.



12. Success and future of the city's cultural events: "Library Night" and "Night at a Museum" MISCP, 2015



13. Cultural decentralization. Strategy and types. MISCP, 2014

14. Koveckienė E. The library as a cultural and information centre for elderly people: the experience of Klaipėda city library. 7th Congress of Baltic Librarians, P. 127–132.

Factors of Engaging Senior Citizens and The Obstacles to Their Involvement



Motivation for participation in cultural life

When choosing to spend their free time at a cultural institution, senior Moscovites take into account financial affordability (28 %), the ability to get there on public transportation (24 %), proximity to home or work (18 %), and also the opportunity to learn something new (19 %). Further on we will find out that these are basically the other side of the barriers that keep them from being actively involved in cultural life.

The ability to comprehend new information and experiences is evidence for the elderly that life isn't over and still goes on.

It is especially important to find out what is behind the third most important motivation — to learn something new, as this drive corresponds exactly with the basic purpose of cultural institutions. So what do respondents mean when they say 'something new'? At first glance, it's a simple reference to having or 'consuming' new experiences for their own sake. However, when it comes to people of the third age, new experiences aren't merely aesthetic excitement—they are actually a fundamental necessity when it comes to maintaining an active outlook on life and self-development.

Woman, 56 years: "I'm developing, and enjoying it, I'm interested."

Man, 60 years: "And the further along I go with it, the more I want to live. There are lots of very talented [artists] out there, and you can't miss anything, you have to constantly grow."

Woman, 59 years: "No no, you can't [stop]."

Woman, 65 years: "If you stop for a second — you'll hibernate. My daughter always says: "Where are you going again? You aren't feeling well". And I say to her: "Should I just lie down and wait for death then?" What else is left then?"

Focus group with senior citizens.

The ability to comprehend new information and experiences proves, first of all to the respondent, that life isn't over and that there is room to grow. Getting out and going to a public event or attraction is important in itself as it reinforces the sense of being involved in social life. For a senior citizen, attendance at a cultural institution in the public sphere demands mobilization, getting one's self into 'a decent' state.

Man, 63 years: "I'm sorry, why do you even go to a museum to see something or show yourself off?"

Woman, 65 years: "To see something."

Woman, 55 years: "To be honest, all the places we go to are to socialize."

Woman, 65 years: "I'm not just going to go looking like this [to a museum], I'll do my hair, put on a nice outfit, we go and look around..."

Focus group with senior citizens.

Based on our focus group data, a trip to a cultural institution is considered to be a socially respectable activity and this acceptance is passed on to participants in such trips. So, a visit to a cultural institution brings aesthetic pleasure, helps to keep one's self 'in touch' and supplies social recognition. For people of the third age, external evaluation of their experience is very important. Social recognition plays a bigger role for them than for people of other age groups¹.

Information as a resource and an obstacle to participation

The less involvement citizens have in the cultural life of the city, the less likely they are to complain about the lack of information about cultural events. This implies two things (non-mutually exclusive): they aren't interested in anything that the modern cultural life of the Capital has to offer; or they don't know what's on offer, i.e. get the wrong information from the wrong places.

At the same time, all respondents agree that the cultural life of Moscow is varied and intense.

Moderator: "Does any of the people {present} want to go {somewhere} but finds there isn't anywhere to go?"

Woman, 64 years: "There are places where you can go in Moscow."

Woman, 71 years: "There's always a choice."

Moderator: "But...you're exhausted?"

Woman, 71 years: "[Just that] there's no desire to go really."

Focus group with senior citizens.

Fighting this lack of interest is fairly difficult, as it involves overcoming pre-existing habits relating to visiting cultural institutions.

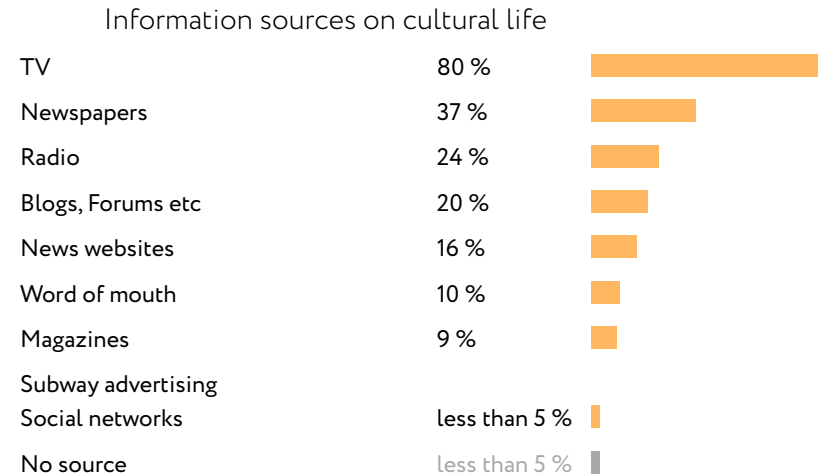
"Like I said I was taken {To the Tretyakov Gallery} when I was 5 and I remember how astounding it was for me. The giant paintings and whole space... I go there now and remember that time again. And I took my own daughter there when she was five too. To have the same experience. And she goes there alone or with her friends now."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 58 years.

It's fair to say that part of the problem comes from failures to present information on cultural opportunities successfully — or inability of elderly people to find it. To simplify this process we suggest researching which information channels senior Moscovites tend to use the most.

The structure of communicational channels on cultural life in Moscow is fairly ordinary². Traditional sources of information dominate the sphere, with the main source being television.

Diagram 8



The TV channels that are commonly used to inform citizens of cultural events are "Moskva 24", "Kultura", and "Moskva Doverie".

Due to its rigid time schedule, availability and predictability of content, television is the main go-to activity for spending leisure time.

Senior Moscovites are fairly active users of the Internet — 41 % go online every day. The websites most frequently mentioned in focus group discussions were KudaGo.ru and Afisha.ru

However, focus groups show that pensioners often have difficulties using search engines and are likely to only visit a number of familiar web resources. In other words, their web horizons are limited compared to those of other age groups. At the same time, it's important for this group to find information about venues and events that fulfill their main requirements, which include: the possibility of free/concessional admission, and the offer of a variety of leisure activities that are interesting for them.

"For it to be free [i.e. information about free events — editor's note] is very difficult to find if at all. Because I want it to be free."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

However, internet based information sources are not enough to cover all senior citizens. Most of the people who don't attend theaters, museums and concerts are also part of the cohort that never uses the Internet. To attract these individuals, other channels of information need to be used.

Unlike other age groups, senior citizens don't see printed materials as spam — the level of trust in print is still very high.

Senior Moscovites have a very positive outlook when it comes to printed materials, which can be delivered into people's homes through the mailbox. The level of trust in printed publications among this age group is still very high. However, there is a high level of expectation on the quality of booklets and flyers about cultural life in Moscow — good print quality

and good content of the text itself are considered to be necessities.

"[It would be great] to have a newspaper but one that doesn't make your fingers black as soon as you pick it up, but with nice. [...] So that you won't mistake it for something else and throw it out by mistake. It needs to stand out in quality. And so that you can take it with you as a guide to the event. With the address there...let's be honest, most of us forget things like that due to age. But with this newspaper everything is in it and that would be great! We desperately need something like this!"

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 56 years.

The role of providing information for the elderly can also be taken on by social service centers. Awareness of cultural activities in the city often depends on the quality of the work of these centers. As the discussion during our focus groups showed, their work isn't always effective:

Moderator: "Here's a question, [...] has anyone been to a SOBES (a dated term for organization for social services, founded during the Soviet Union — translator's note)?"

Woman, 56 years: "No."

Man, 59 years: "I don't think we have one".

Man, 63 years: "We haven't even heard of it. Is that the place where you go from room to room? But there's no information..."

Focus group with senior citizens.

The problematic part of the issue is in the quality of distribution of this information: often the cultural resources promoted aren't relevant to the abilities and preferences of the older generation. Another problem is the absence of mechanisms to inform citizens of cultural opportunities in a timely fashion.

"I'm very upset with the centers for social service. I go there a lot of the time and it's always the same people there who have lunch, every day they would go to an exhibition, or a concert, and all I hear about is a concert that happened in Victory Park. Just recently heard that there would be an excursion in "Abramzevo" {park — translator's note}, I went to sign up for it, but it was fully booked. I say to them: "But I'm here every day and tell you to keep me in mind, how does this happen?" and they say, "We don't have time to call everyone". How's that possible — they don't have time?!"

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

In other words, there is a cultural offering in supporting organizations but individuals don't find out about them in time.

Throughout the focus group discussions, participants were divided into two camps: one said they are happy to get information from a series of sources, others said they prefer to have one source that would accumulate all the information on the various cultural events offered by different organizations.

"If once information came in and I liked it [...], I mean a flyer or a newspaper, if we had something like that, I think it would definitely interest and attract people..."

Focus group with senior citizens, man.

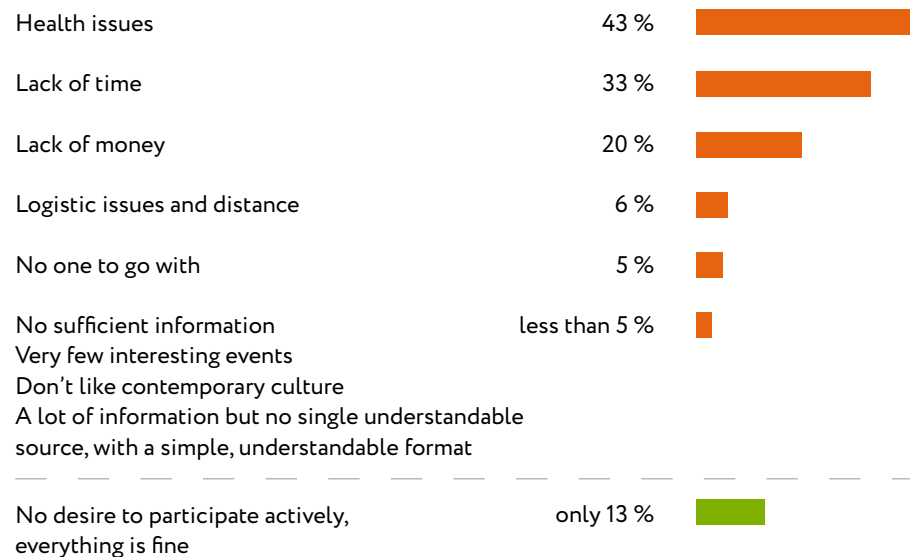
In summary, the discussion showed that older people don't have a uniform requirement for one source or type of information. Attempts to unify the sources of information on cultural events to one format or location could exclude many people, which is definitely to be avoided. The goal here should be to simplify the search for information, not to limit it.

Obstacles to cultural participation

The participation of Moscovites in cultural life can be prevented by a range of objective and subjective factors. Our study helped reveal three major obstacles to cultural activity: health issues (43 %), lack of time (33 %) and money (20 %).

Diagram 9

What prevents you from actively participating in the cultural life of Moscow?



Health and the mobility barrier

Bearing in mind that the in-depth interviews and focus groups regularly turned up references to the problem of mobility (the older a person gets, the more difficult it becomes for them to travel around a megalopolis), it does seem remarkable that when asked "what prevents you

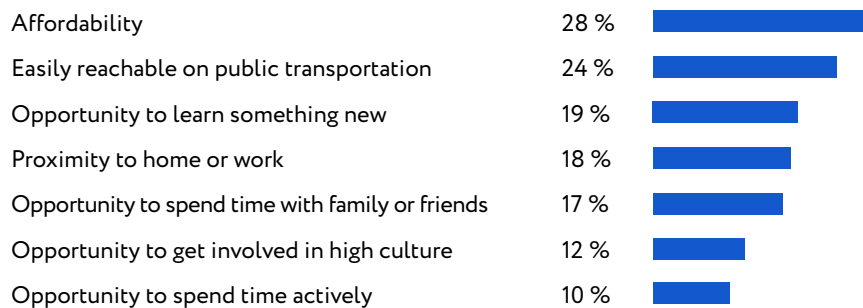
from actively participating in cultural life?" only 6 % of respondents identified "Logistics problems and distance".

Psychological and physical issues make it difficult for pensioners to get to the center of the city where cultural life is concentrated.

However, despite this apparent paradox, analysis of the motivations that drive older Moscovites to choose one cultural activity over another showed that physical accessibility is comparable in importance with affordability (28 %). Similarly, 24 % of respondents asserted that their choice would be influenced by whether a cultural attraction was "Easily reachable on public transportation", while "Proximity to home/work" was also identified as a deciding factor by 18 % of all respondents.

Diagram 10

What's the most important factor in the choice of leisure activity?



The distribution of answers confirms the importance of the decentralization of cultural institutions in Moscow: pensioners have psychological and physical issues when it

comes to traveling to the center of Moscow, where cultural life is still concentrated.

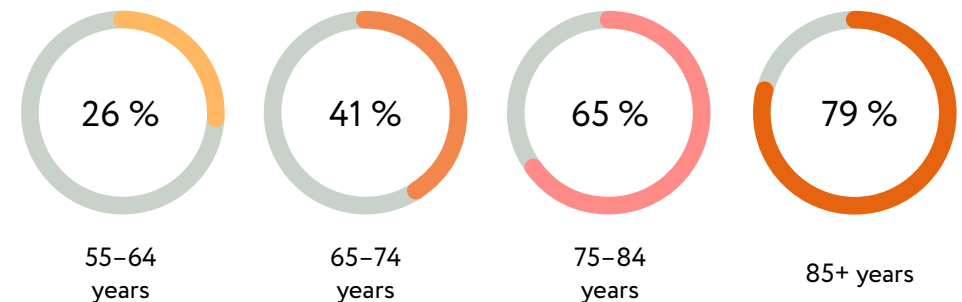
"You leave the house and need to make your way to the metro first. Which is a challenge in itself. Buses and trams aren't that great so you wait and wait until an overloaded one comes along. There are a crowd of people, you only just manage to stumble into it. You get out at the metro. This is where the craziness starts. I get knocked off my feet. Seriously. If I don't get out of the way when the doors open the flood of people knocks me off my feet. [...] So imagine getting there and then having to go through the same thing again after the theater play. But not before waiting at the coat check for an hour! Seriously, an hour. Then the metro again, and the tram, or bus..."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

The requirement for easily accessible cultural attractions is dictated by the health of many individuals in the senior citizens' age group. The widespread answer "My health doesn't allow me to go" as a reason not to participate in the cultural life of the city is directly correlated with age: this answer is mainly heard among respondents over the age of 85.

Diagram 11

The percentage of citizens who note poor health as a reason not to participate in the cultural life of the city



The significance of the accessibility barrier for the elderly is confirmed by other MISCP studies. For instance, in answering the question "If the city had an event..." 30 % of pensioners replied that they would have preferred to stay at home (as opposed to an average of 17 % in other age groups), 33 % would have chosen an event in their neighborhood (as opposed to 25 %) and 15 % would have chosen to travel into the city center (as opposed to 23 %). Convenience of travel is evidently more important than the content of the event: only 12 % of senior citizens are guided by the content of the event itself when choosing where to go. By contrast, in other age groups, 25 % of respondents on average cite the content of the event as the reason for choosing to attend³.

The reason for refusal to travel long distances is not purely health related, but is also caught up in safety concerns. Anxiety over personal safety can greatly reduce the extent of the area that an individual considers 'home territory', making them unlikely to take a trip to a far away part of town to attend an event, see friends who live far away or go to a shop outside of their own neighborhood. Instead, senior citizens prefer to concentrate their attention on household chores. More time and attention that could have been more rewardingly spent in a cultural institutions⁴.

The money issue

Limited financial resources are an objective factor that reflects the difficult economic situation of pension-aged Moscovites. Their average income is two times lower than that of a middle-aged person, which indicates a significant decrease in the consumer capabilities of third age individuals.

Moderator: "Have you ever been interested in something but felt that you really can't go there?"

Woman, 56 years: "Of course, because of money".

Woman, 65 years: "Money dictates everything in the end."

Woman, 65 years: "This magazine "Antenna", also has all these events and weekend planners, but as soon as you see the prices, [...], you think not really..."

Moderator: "So money is the thing [that matters] most then?"

Woman, 65 years: "Of course, I would love to see the 'Nutcracker' over the winter holidays, but the money..."

Man, 63 years: "Just stay home and watch the classics — "Irony of Fate" for instance." {Classic Soviet New Year's film, which is on TV every holiday season — translator's note}

Focus group with senior citizens.

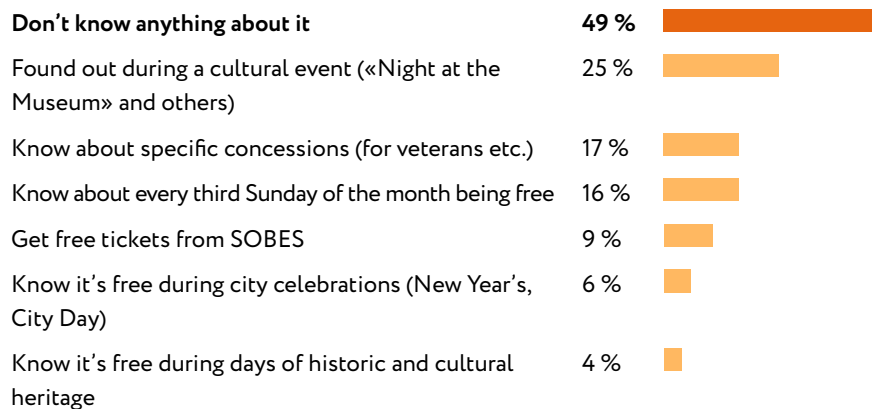
In the focus group discussions, people said that they would be prepared to pay a modest entrance fee to a cultural institution or event — "200 rubles" (man); "some sort of a symbolic price, I think around 300–500 rubles" (woman); "I'm prepared to pay anything up to a 1000 rubles" (woman, 65 years). Affordability limits are a leitmotif in focus groups of non-working and working seniors.

Due to financial difficulties, benefits and concessions become very significant for elder people, although almost half of the people in this group know nothing about them. Only a quarter (25 %) of senior citizens are aware of the opportunities to attend cultural events for free. Knowledge about daily concessions such as free tickets for veterans, available pensioner funds and offers of social service centers is available to even fewer people.

Only a quarter of the senior citizen population is aware that events are free of charge during city culture festivals.

Diagram 12

What do senior citizens know about the opportunities to attend culture institutions for free?



Lack of free time

While giving reasons as to why they can't participate more actively in the city's cultural life, the argument "Lack of free time" is the predominant one among two groups of senior Moscovites. The first one is obviously the working elderly. Work is competing in this case with culture activities as it reduces the amount of free time and requires emotional and physical resources.

"The job takes up all my time and plus everything is much too expensive."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

The second group is those who help to take care of grandchildren. 75 % of pensioners have grandchildren, 59 % of them spend large amounts of time with them — every day or several times a week.

This, however, does not have to create an obstacle for cultural institutions. As mentioned previously, people are prepared to take the younger generation into cultural institutions, even if they don't have time "for themselves". They can be attracted by activities and events aimed at families with kids.

Strictly speaking of course, a visit with a child to a cultural institution is not the same as adult participation in cultural life, however shared trips can evoke further interest in the future.

"Took my grandson to a puppet theater which he adored and that was all we did for him. But then we went to see 'Treasure Island' which we both enjoyed greatly. It was a show on a much bigger scale and more beautiful."

Focus group with senior citizens man, 74 years.

Sometimes work time and care for grandchildren overlap creating a serious burden on the respondents.

"So he [grandson] is now four. And of course he goes to kindergarten, but we get up at 5:30 am to get to our kid's house by 8am, so they can go to work. I come home every night at 9pm. I don't have any time for anything, and when I'm with my grandson, I can't do any of my own things. And then when I come home {from work} I'm completely drained. There's no energy left for any cultural event or theater..."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

The continuation of a working life or the "creation" of its substitute allows senior citizens to maintain a sense of personal involvement in society and thereby mobilize psychological and emotional energy. Personal relevance, the chance to not feel like "an old geezer" is possibly more

important, when it comes to choosing not to retire, than the financial aspect.

Woman, 65 years: "You know what else? When people retire, pensioners become depersonalized, unrecognised. People forget who the person was and what his accomplishments were — it's just a pensioner. And if you retire from work you become nobody. I definitely know it."

Man, 63 years: "Leave work and it's time to die."

Woman, 55 years: "You become lost to society."

Woman, 65 years: "No one will know that you had some sort of education, for instance. That's very degrading and makes you invisible."

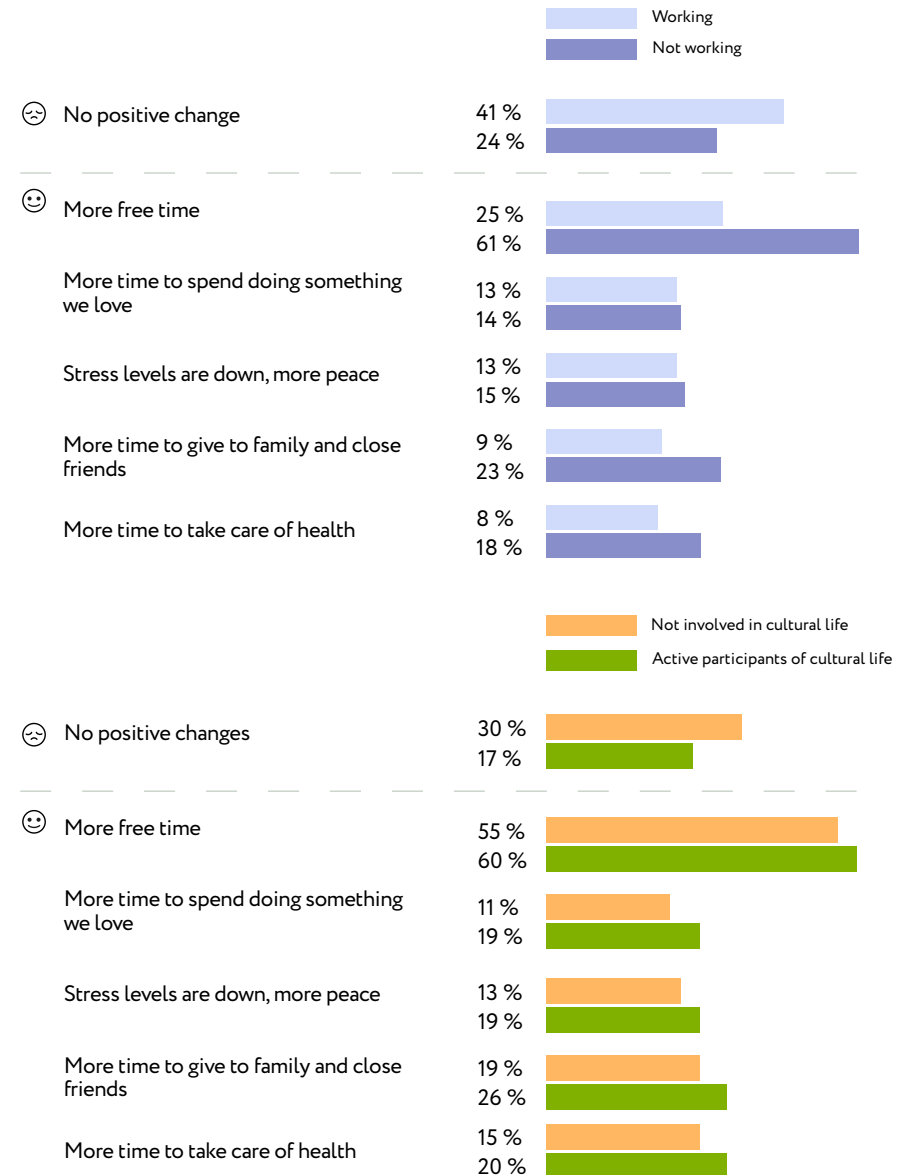
Focus group with senior citizens.

Similar feelings to a working life come from taking an active part in the cultural life of the city. However, the key difference between actively working pensioners and those taking an active role in a cultural life is in the relative reported sense of positivity about old age. Individuals who continue to work past retirement age report a significantly reduced sense of subjective wellbeing, compared to those who no longer work but have an active cultural life.



Diagram 13

Changes that occurred with retirement



Attendance at cultural events and institutions creates greater positivity around the process of aging, than keeping a professional working life alive. Furthermore, even citizens who aren't working and aren't that active in cultural life see their lives more positively than those who continue to work.

The incompetence issue: a perception of contemporary culture

As research showed, older people often have difficulty with perception of contemporary culture. Although the actual percentage of respondents in our survey identifying dissatisfaction or disapproval of contemporary culture as an obstacle to their attendance was small (only 3 %), in the accompanying discussions and focus groups this issue was raised time and time again. This negative attitude towards contemporary culture demonstrates a lack of competence in navigating it. A biased attitude and the unwillingness to learn more about contemporary culture, becomes a strong reason for limiting the variety of leisure activities, excluding individuals from a number of events.

As mentioned, dissatisfaction with contemporary culture was noted regularly by the participants of focus groups. The most emotional reactions are aimed at the theater.

"I don't understand. Why is everything black and white? They run around half naked on stage, turning and twisting. Jump off the chair, crawl under a table. What for? No, I'm never going back!"

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 55 years.

Theater is one of the most loved activities of the older generation. The habit of attending the theater often developed in childhood for this generation. However, the modern theater has changed dramatically: people go there with nostalgic memories that are then contradicted by reality.

Woman, 55 years: "I'm a conservative, and so I have a lot of difficulty attending the theater today. Why? Because I saw all of the old actors on stage and now, when I go to see the same plays with different actors, I can compare. And it's all nice, and the actors seem to be good and all, but something is off. I don't know what".

Man, 63 years: "I don't go to the theater. I went 3 years ago and went to see a couple of things that just put me off completely. The actors of our generation are disappearing, a lot of them have gone already, so it's not interesting anymore".

Focus group with senior citizens.

The theater demonstrates changes in cultural norms and values that society has been through, and does so in a manner that is very immediate due to the absence of barriers between the artists and the performers. At the same time seeing a "bad" play is more disturbing than seeing an unpleasant painting at an exhibition, where you can simply move on quickly to a different one.

"The actors aren't wearing any clothes. I don't know, but I'm not interested in watching this. You can't even understand what the play's about. For instance, going to see one of Kalagin's plays {Creative director of Et Cetera theater in Moscow — translator's note} is so mentally stressful. Seeing all those drug addicts..."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 64 years.

An unpleasant experience in a theater is also more dramatic because it's an expensive activity. After going through major disappointments (once or several times), senior citizens eventually refuse to go to theaters altogether.

"I was invited and went to a couple of these types of plays and just decided for myself that I'm beginning to become disillusioned about the art scene, you know."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 57 years.

It is the inability to understand "what the artist wanted to say" and "what this means" that leads people to dismiss contemporary art as not being art at all.

As a result, the skeptical attitude is then extrapolated to the whole of contemporary culture. Sometimes this skepticism is extended from a distance: a certain cultural activity would be excluded as a possible option due to the way it's covered by the media (with its limited informational scope) and not through personal investigation of the activity itself. The content that's offered through the most accessible information channels is interpreted as 'contemporary culture'.

Moderator: "Is contemporary art — art at all?"

Man, 63 years: "It's disposable. I took part in a shoot {of a TV series}, and a whole episode would take a mere 6 hours to shoot. It's like a conveyer belt. Two-three takes and moving on. And the actors are basically off the street, nobody professional. They can't even act, just repeat the written lines and that's it."

Focus group with senior citizens.

This quote demonstrates the way in which senior citizens place TV series in the same category as contemporary art as a whole. This is where competence issues come into play. In this case we can see competence not only as the ability of a person to comprehend genuinely new cultural activity, but also in their ability to successfully participate in certain leisure activities that correspond with the person's own expectations and the expectations of those around him.

Perception of personal ability, limitations and compliance with the normative image of a participant in cultural life, defines the choice of cultural activity with senior citizens

in the same way that financial and health factors do. Competence in leisure activities depends on the regularity of participation in these activities. However, very often an inaccurate sense among senior citizens that a cultural activity is just "not for me" means that they never give themselves the opportunity to test their boundaries and develop this new cultural competence.

Moderator: "Are there places where you wouldn't go because it doesn't seem like your type of place or because it's not age appropriate?"

Woman, 60 years: "Winzavod" {Moscow contemporary art center — translator's note}

Moderator: "Why?"

Woman, 60 years: "I don't know. I can't see myself in that place. At all."

Moderator: "You don't like it from a distance, or is it what you've heard about it?"

Woman, 60 years: "Yes. [...] I really don't like contemporary installations."

Focus group with senior citizens.

Senior citizens' dissatisfaction with contemporary culture has an additional angle, which is revealed in the analysis of fine art. Respondents see art as something that can stir emotions, and not always positive emotions.

"I almost died at the Ciurlionis exhibition... I felt poorly afterwards. It had a strong effect on me!"

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 59 years.

As the participants of discussions put it — only a comprehensible object can conjure up aesthetic emotions. It is the inability to understand "what the artist wanted to say" and "what this means" that leads people to dismiss contemporary art as not being art at all.

At the same time, Ancient Egyptian art, medieval miniatures or other genres quite different to contemporary realism also require an explanation and translation for their adequate understanding. However, this fact goes unnoticed by the respondents, as these genres are included in the 'classic canon' of art.

Respondents often realize that they don't have the necessary tools to understand contemporary art and as a result want to hear an explanation.

Despite the somewhat negative argument above, it's not true that difficulties in comprehension are an insurmountable obstacle to engaging third age individuals in culture, however cultural institutions should take responsibility for providing adequate explanatory material.

Woman, 68 years: "I've been to a Malevich exhibition and walked around in shock, not understanding all these squares — there's like five different variants of them, and cubism paintings. So I went to lectures especially to understand it, turns out there is a point to all of it after all."

Woman, 55 years: "Maybe, and maybe I haven't matured enough for this artistic language, or am just old."

Man, 70 years: "While the whole world says that the 'Black Square' is a masterpiece!"

Woman, 64 years: "But the 'Black Square' has an explanation! It's the title of our history! It was created and so people implicitly see a different situation, a different kind of Russia, but not many people know that. And no one explains."

Focus group with senior citizens.

The potential of explanation is even more important when we see that respondents often know that they lack tools for understanding contemporary art and as a result are willing to find comments and explanations — they want to understand*.

To overcome these prejudices senior citizens need a 'guide' in the cultural institution itself. His aim would be to help the elder generation eliminate anxiety about new things, and also the feeling that they are being judged negatively. This role can be filled by a peer of the senior citizens. A successful case of involving senior citizens as tour guides would be in the UK city of Exeter and their "Red Coat Guided Tours' initiative. Elderly enthusiasts in regional studies undergo a short training and conduct excursions around the city and its surroundings⁵. There is also a large number of senior tour guides working in the English conservation organization, the National Trust⁶.

*Interestingly enough, in different focus groups it was Malevich who came up as an example of paradigmatic contemporary art.

Introduction to contemporary art: a social experiment.

We have conducted an experiment to see how people of a similar age learn new information in a comfortable environment and with tour guides. We have invited 10 people of senior age (55-70 years) to take part. The experiment took place at the "Garage" contemporary art center, i.e. a location where the main collection of artwork is one that's considered by this age group to be "incomprehensible" and seen in a negative light.

The tour was held by two guides, who talked in great detail about every item on display and answered any questions that came up. After the tour the tourists were involved in a discussion in which they all agreed that the new experience was easy and interesting, while an un-guided trip to a center like this, even with family, would have triggered a negative response.

The incompetence issue: self-perception

One of the reasons why older people are reluctant to seek assistance from government services and support is the unwillingness to see one's self as dependent. People are shy when it comes to demonstrating the constraints of their age to others. This unwillingness can spread from interactions with general government services to cultural institutions and especially events that are aimed at people of the third age. Social self-stigmatization based on age comes into effect here.

"We have a lot of these big events happening, but I don't like massive gatherings like that, you know? It makes me feel unpleasant. And big gatherings of pensioners are just awful."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 56 years.

Although many third age people are still full of life and energy, society labels them as unfit for an active life. Getting help from social services is, in their minds, linked to psychological discomfort: meaning it's an admission of their dependency and a sign that they are not self-sufficient people, who can manage their own leisure time.

"It's not a good idea {to go to SOBES}, because for instance, I felt embarrassed standing there with all the other pensioners. You're 'over the hill' as it is, and that's a daunting thought in itself, but to then go and stand in line for free tickets with all the others... no!"

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 67 years.

During our previous research into the leisure activities of the older generation a different side of the 'cultural incompetence' issue was revealed: older people begin to doubt that some cultural activities are appropriate for them and their age group.

As a result, they consciously eliminate a series of these activities from their options. Usually it's activities that are often associated in our culture with young people and physical activity (dance, cycling, rollerblading etc.).

"When these walking semi-corpses, who even we — the older generation — can't look at dance, it's scary to watch. On the one hand I feel bad for them but on the other, it's hilarious and I don't pity them at all. [...] In general I think pensioners shouldn't do stuff like that, it's embarrassing. They shouldn't be thinking about their soul singing, they should be thinking about what they will present at the gates {of heaven before God}."

In-depth interviews with senior Moscovites.

Legitimization of these 'inappropriate' activities for their age group, as senior citizens see it, can happen if the initiative comes from an official organization. Leisure activities that social service organizations promote are seen to be socially acceptable and within the norm, which is very important for this age group³.

Focus groups reveal a growing loyalty to the work of

supporting organizations that comes with age. Older people in the group often use these services and are left satisfied.

"Veterans Council is a great place and that's where the more mobile pensioners go all the time. "

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 69 years.

Events that are organized by the Veterans Council, unions and business enterprises are very attractive due to the fact that information about them is widely available, and the events themselves are highly affordable. In some cases, the question of company is also taken care of (colleagues, neighbors, peers) and transport (when a shuttle is provided), which are both very important for this age group³.

"If only we had a bus that would take us around the Garden Ring, for instance. Or if it would take us to see the churches of Moscow. That would've been nice. Otherwise we can't go walking, stumbling...I don't do the metro well with all the steps..."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 55 years.

Consequently, supporting organizations can effectively be the go-between for the senior citizens and cultural institutions: changing the attitude to 'inappropriate' activities by, for instance introducing activities with a physical element that's targeted at the senior age group. These measures can bolster the image of social service organizations as offering the possibility of active and varied leisure opportunities.

The limited offer issue

While looking into the obstacles to cultural involvement, it's impossible not to mention the problem of the limited range of activities offered to senior citizens. Events offered by social services organizations are more often than

not regarded as 'afterthoughts' — less valuable, and low priority. This clearly makes them less attractive — to use an old Soviet metaphor, it's like being given 'the leftovers'.

"I went there and seriously, I wish I hadn't, even though it was free. I don't want to go and see a play [...] that is so uninteresting the theatre slashed the ticket price to 100 or 200 rubles, and got social service centers to distribute them to us, just to get us through the door."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 65 years.

Furthermore, there's sometimes simply nothing to choose from due to very limited options.

Woman, 64 years — "I went to our pension fund where we got tickets for a relatively small cost and was told that they don't have anything to offer and don't know about anything. So what do we do then, go from organization to organization in the hope of finding something?"

Woman, 65 years: "I once asked [a social protection organization] — and the reply was "we have nothing."

Woman, 57 years: "When I retired, I went to the social service center and said: 'here's my phone number, here's what I'm interested in: singing, classical music, some kinds of sport, trips to the country — what do you think?' They haven't called me once."

Focus group with senior citizens.

Employees of the social service organizations are often incapable of finding a suitable activity or helping with choosing one, as a result, expectations aren't fulfilled and the person is left disappointed.

It is obvious that there needs to be a direct interaction between cultural institutions and governmental social service organizations, along with an improved system for these interactions. This is needed so that the tickets for various events aren't distributed to pensioners as a last resort, but instead are distributed to offer them genuine variety and choice. The improvement of this work implies a higher level of competence among the employees of these organizations: they must consult people about the leisure activities on offer (this information is supplied by cultural institutions themselves) and directly inform (by telephone) all citizens who have registered their interest⁷.

Senior men are 1.5 times less likely to participate in cultural life than women.

Another reason for the limited options for seniors relates to gender differences. Research shows that men are much less involved in cultural life than women. With age this indicator only goes lower: on average, senior men participate in cultural activities 1.5 times less than women. The reason behind this is that at this time, cultural institutions are unable to offer activities that are of interest to men.

"First of all the prices are crazy. Secondly, it's not always possible to go because the events are mostly for young people and middle-aged people. And then when we do come, it's mostly women {who sit and chat}. Men don't go to these places — they're just not interesting anymore."

Focus group with senior citizens man, 62 years.

A similar situation occurs in the further education area, which can also be offered by cultural institutions.

"Some people attend these clubs, maybe because they live nearby. But they {clubs} are more about a calm way

of life: knitting, painting. Football in my case is not an option anymore — too difficult. Things like chess and checkers are not really my thing though."

Focus group with senior citizens man 74 years.

It turns out that most of the clubs are aimed at activities for women. Most of the things on offer are art related and aren't interesting to men.

A significant gender disproportion is also seen in the case of the UTA Programs*. Gerontologist and social activist Edward Karuhin notes that the UTA programs are aimed at women: *"Women are nice and beautiful. They have fun there, making beaded arts and crafts and things like that. What would men even do there? Not sew and knit, surely! Men don't even want to go there to drink tea with these grandmothers. They don't want to go to 'acquaintance meetings' either. There is a prejudice in these areas and nobody can offer them anything — not gerontologists, not culturologists. Nobody really thinks about that, you know?"*

*UTA Programmes — are a form of working with senior citizens. It includes the organization of various educational courses, creative master classes, and courses of various disciplines. The main aim of the programs that have been launched across the country is to change the stereotypical attitude of older people to their lives: create a shift from a passive, consumerist lifestyle to a new model of behavior where they are more involved in the educational process and the development of socially significant projects as well as in social life in general.

To maintain a consistency between cultural offerings and the expectations of senior citizens, it is necessary to constantly monitor their requests and evaluate their levels of satisfaction after attending a cultural event.

The absence of targeted offers for men is mostly linked to the fact that Moscow is driving senior citizens out of public spaces altogether. Sociologist and specialist in town planning, Elena Chernova notes that public spaces in Moscow are constructed artificially and come down 'from the top' rather than being formed by the society itself⁸. These spaces then fail to correlate with the needs

of various social groups, and particularly the needs of pensioners. A certain inappropriateness in public spaces is felt by men as well as women of senior age. Each of them finds their own way of fighting this feeling, which often results in their retreating from the public space altogether, and going back to a 'segregated lifestyle.'^{*} For men, the garage becomes the preferred location⁹.

Moderator: "So why don't men attend cultural institutions?"

Man, 67 years: "You just don't see these places — we have garages around that are all empty and people build furniture in them, and cars. It's sort of a club with stuff we're interested in. Men look for things that interest them, we talk about fishing and foraging and so on. I know organizations that have empty storage space that they change around so that people can do joinery production there, or welding or something."

Man, 62 years: "People set up garages as apartments."

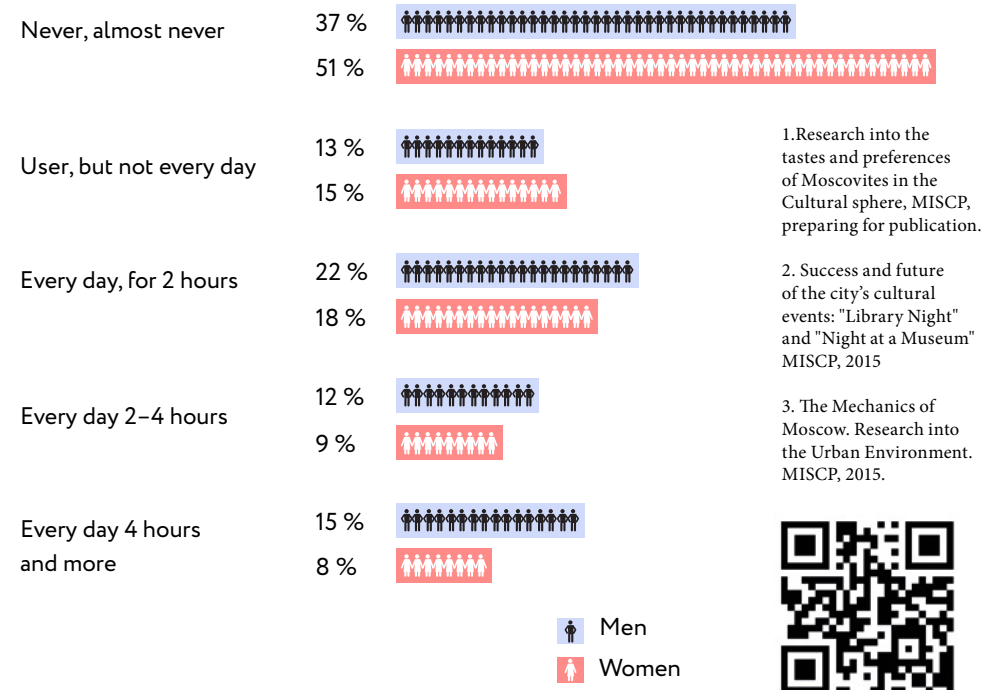
Focus group with senior citizens.

Another alternative to participating in public cultural life that's more applicable for men than for women is spending time online. Senior men on the whole are more active online than women.

^{*}According to sociologist Simon Kardinsky, a segregated lifestyle is a type of social connection that occurs when people live 'in two or more places': apartments, dacha, or garage. In a place that V. Vgain defined as "accumulative" a nuclear family only exists nominally, while "in reality" the predominant type of family is a multigenerational type which is distributed between different houses and living spaces¹⁰.

Diagram 14

The link between gender and the frequency of internet use



1. Research into the tastes and preferences of Moscovites in the Cultural sphere, MISCP, preparing for publication.

2. Success and future of the city's cultural events: "Library Night" and "Night at a Museum" MISCP, 2015

3. The Mechanics of Moscow. Research into the Urban Environment. MISCP, 2015.



4. Cultural leisure activities of pensioners. MISCP, 2014

5. Exeter City Council.



The internet's ability to offer instant access to an almost infinite array of cultural opportunities means that it is a very fierce competitor for citizens' free time with 'real world' cultural institutions. It's also important to note that unlike television, the internet offers an unlimited freedom of choice in what to watch, what to read, what to listen to and who to chat with.

"If I'm interested in art — I do a tour of any museum in the world, at my own pace. If I'm into films and like the ones that are at the Cannes film festival, or the

Venice film festival, all the winners — I can just watch them online, even if they aren't in Russia yet. I love tennis — so I watch that online too. I find everything I need online, I don't need to go anywhere."

Focus group with senior citizens, man, 74 years.

According to our focus group data however, it does appear that women still show a marked preference for visiting real world cultural institutions, for the live social communication opportunities they offer, which the internet cannot replace.

Woman, 55 years: "I want some sort of contact."

Woman, 65 years: "It just feels different — online you sit there alone and if you want to share something with someone — there's no one there..."

Focus group with senior citizens.

Female senior citizens prefer to attend cultural institutions in person rather than consuming culture virtually. From our focus group data again, it appears that women in general are much more aware of the various free events in cultural centers or hobby clubs in their neighborhood as well. Whether or not to attend them is their conscious choice.

City cultural institutions have a hard time competing with private spaces, whether it's dachas or garages, as they have a completely different function. Cultural centers are public places, while segregated space is mostly private and serene.

Nevertheless, cultural institutions do still have a role to play in offering citizens alternative resources — i.e. spaces for senior citizens to decide what they enjoy doing, and then do it. That's what's taking place at the Center for Creative Industries in Moscow where a group of elderly women were given a space to hold an art group. The group

6. National Trust.



7. For details on leisure activities consulting see: Mancini J.A., Orthner D.K. Leisure Time, Activities, Preferences, and Competence: Implications for the Morale of Older Adults // Journal of Applied Gerontology. 1982. No 1. P. 95–103

8. Why public spaces in Russia are an imitation of urbanism. 2014.



9. 'Hello, garage': What Public Spaces in Russia really look like, Afisha Daily. 24.07.2015.



ran master classes, stored their works in the space, hosted tea parties and held exhibitions. To promote such projects it's important to maintain the involvement of the cultural center's employees.

To ensure that the provision of cultural offerings is in line with the actual requirements of senior citizens, it is necessary to maintain a clear line of communication with the elderly individuals involved. As we have mentioned above, senior citizens see themselves first of all through a prism of their experience, which dictates certain perceptions and requests.

Edward Karuhin notes: "There's a rule that I always follow. Never do anything without the elderly. What I mean is not to organize anything or make any decisions without consulting them first, and taking their wishes into account. I don't think this is as important for other groups, teenagers for instance, because senior citizens are people with a large amount of life experience and wisdom and if {the cultural activity on offer} doesn't resonate with their inner preferences then it would all have been a waste of time and resources".

10. Kordonskiy S. At Work // Literary-Philosophical Journal "Logos". 2000.

11. Mancini J.A. Orthner D.K. Leisure time, activities, preferences, and competence: Implications for the morale of older adults // Journal of Applied Gerontology. 1982. № 1. P. 95–103.

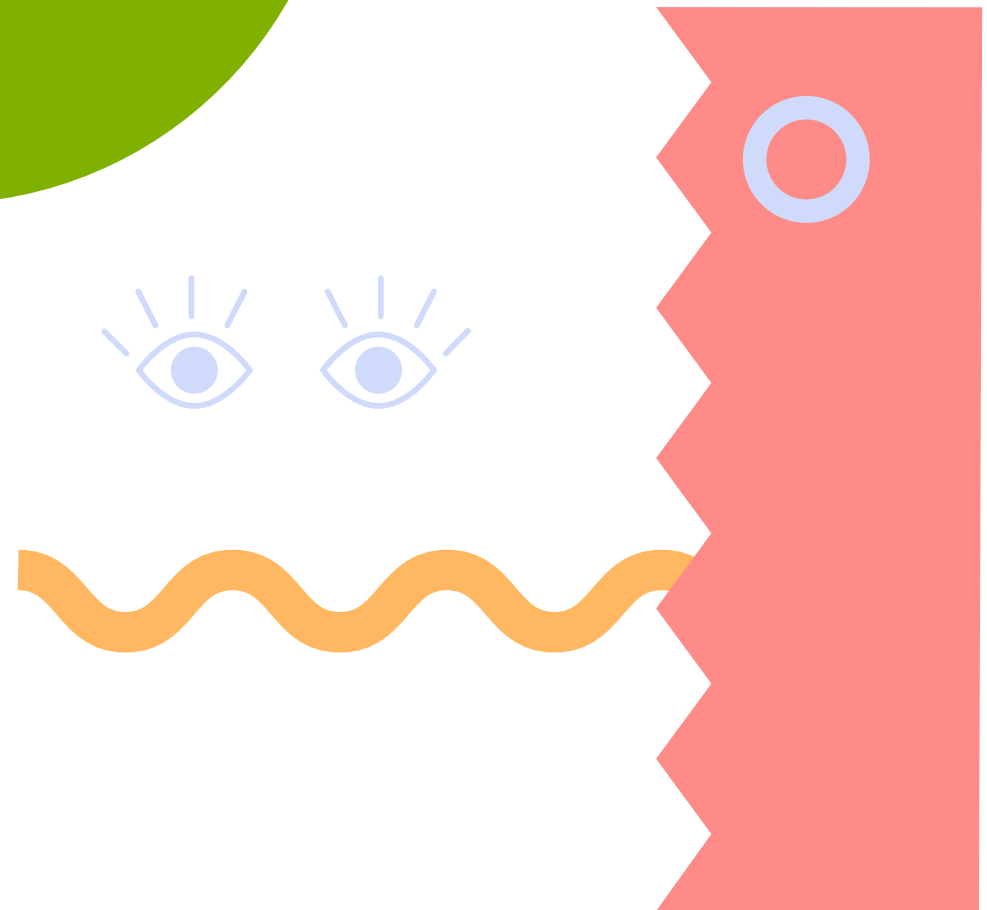
Key ideas

- 1 The leisure activities of senior citizens are restricted by a financial obstacle: elderly people are generally only willing to pay between 200-1000 rubles for cultural attractions. In order to increase the participation levels of people in this age group then, it is necessary to broaden the offering of benefits and free of charge schemes for events, as well as loyalty schemes, bonuses and memberships.
- 2 Even senior citizens with an active cultural life also face financial limitations. These people also have a very clear requirement, which could be met more fully if cultural institutions (especially non-government ones) took into account their financial situations.
- 3 As things stand at the moment, elderly people are not sufficiently informed of the concessions that the city has to offer — providing information on free and reduced-fee opportunities is a key element of the drive for more participation from senior citizens.
- 4 A further complication is that elderly individuals on the whole are relatively inactive when it comes to finding information. This raises the importance of targeted communications — flyers through every mailbox and an information stand next to every building entrance would be a step in the right direction.
- 5 Senior Moscovites have a much more positive outlook on the printed materials and flyers that come through their mailboxes, than other age groups. These booklets and newspapers containing information about the cultural life of the city need to be of good quality and show respect for the reader.
- 6 Elderly people see local newspapers as the easiest and quickest way to present information about cultural opportunities to the residents. This includes those who seek information from other sources, such as the internet.

- 7 An alternative to printed materials could be an internet webpage about cultural life with special sections (concessional admissions, neighborhood events) on the popular Afisha.ru and KudaGo.ru websites; with content aimed specifically at people of the third age.
- 8 Investment in the development and improvement of the quality of cultural institutions' web services has a lot of potential to increase engagement, particularly among those senior citizens (predominantly men) who prefer to satisfy their cultural needs via the web.
- 9 Loyalty to social services organizations increases with age, and senior citizens often view them as being 'user friendly' sources of support into the cultural life, due to their local availability and affordability.
- 10 The elderly can have problems understanding contemporary art – they see it as confusing. To overcome their biases they need a 'guide' within the culture institution. Furthermore, the promotion of new art forms among senior citizens, will only be possible if culture institutions organize additional materials such as explanations, video lectures and free of charge excursions to support an exhibition opening.
- 11 Culture institutions can also offer senior citizens space to use for hobby clubs and realization of their cultural needs. They would then compete with dachas, garages etc. – the private segregated lifestyle spaces.
- 12 It is necessary to help elderly people to let go of prejudices that are linked to "appropriate" and "inappropriate" activities for their age group: this can be done with events aimed at different ages. Cultural institutions can work to eliminate these stereotypes for instance, by using positive images of senior citizens in their advertising campaigns.
- 13 Projects that are aimed at people of the third age must take into account an analysis of their wishes and demands. Ideally, senior citizens should take part in the planning of the project and share their experience.

- 14 Culture institutions can create projects with UTA programs, which can then help with involvement via education.
- 15 We recommend to organize a recreational consultation¹¹ in government support organizations and local culture institutions(the best place would be to use libraries). These consultations can be led by people of the same age group, as they are more likely to be seen as trusted sources.

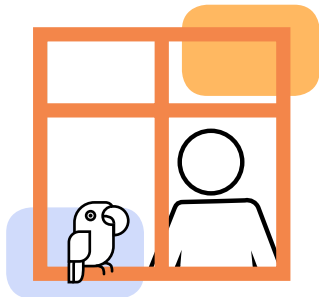
Senior Citizens as Consumers of Culture: The Different Groups Features



In previous chapters we have looked at senior citizens as one homogenous social group: we have described their leisure activities, talked about what drives them into culture institutions and what obstacles stand in their way. However, a more detailed analysis allows us to identify five separate groups among senior citizens depending on their recreational preferences*. Affiliation of the elderly people with one or another 'cultural types' depends on three major factors: state of health, financial situation, density of their social network.

*The quantitative data that was used to formulate these categories are detailed in Appendix 4.

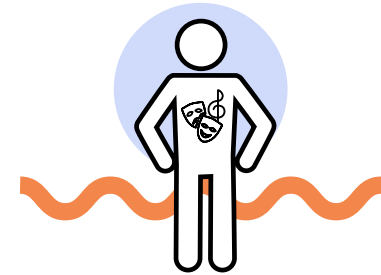
Keen Walkers — 38 %. The eldest group researched. Health plays the defining role for them. Due to limited finances they tend to improve their health in the most accessible and cost-effective way — walking.



Stay-at-Homers — 30 %. Due to a reduction in social capital this group has experienced the biggest decline in cultural activity. Stay-at-Homers see their situation as an objective reality and a natural course of life. They are certain that they already know whatever they need to and everything they need to and aren't looking for new experiences.

Culture Lovers — 22 %.

The preferred recreational activity for this group is attending culture institutions. They see their life situation as more positive than do people in other groups. Out of all the groups this one has the highest income and has the widest circle of friends and acquaintances. They are confident and open to new experience.

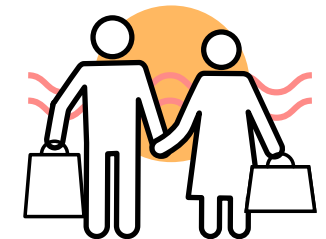


The Very Busy — 5 %. People in this group either continue to work or see taking care of grandchildren as a job. The reasons for doing so lie in anxieties about their financial problems and the fear of losing the social context that comes with the working life. This approach generally brings the desired result — their income is high and their social network is very well developed.

But this doesn't always bring satisfaction: this is the group that is least satisfied with their lives.

Active Consumers — 5 %.

Wealthy citizens with a clear demand for culture: as well as restaurants and shops they can happily spend half of their day in a culture institutions. With retirement they have started attending theaters, museums, exhibitions etc. even more. A key characteristic of this group is that they have a partner in their lives.



The key factor in determining whether an elderly person is more likely to stay at home is the lack of a social network.



Keen Walkers

Keen Walkers are the ones who in answer to the question "How would you spend a free afternoon, if you suddenly had one" chose "I would go outside for a walk in a park or around the city". 38 % of individuals in the third age fall into this category.

"Because I live right next to it, I regularly visit the Kolomenskoe Museum Park and I love what they're doing there. Such a huge difference between what was there before and what's there now."

Focus group with senior citizens woman.

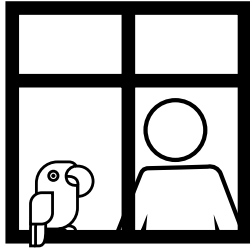
Keen Walkers are the eldest out of the groups researched — the average age is 75 years old. They have the lowest income but a high level of education; there are very few people among **Keen Walkers** who still work. They mostly spend their time with their close friends and relations (more often than people of other groups) and on household chores; when resting — they watch TV, listen to music or read. This group contains more people who also like to spend their time doing creative art.

It's important to note that people in this group have experienced the **deteriorating health** that comes with age more than others. Having certain financial limitations they try to strengthen their health with the most accessible and affordable activity possible — walking. Being well-educated, **Keen Walkers** might even take a trip to a culture institution, but this idea is seen as something that requires extra work that they don't want to do.

"Sometimes you feel really bad. Really. Good health is so important because maybe you'd even want to go [to a culture institution] but then your blood pressure jumps and woops! You can't go anywhere."

Focus group with senior citizens, woman, 59 years.

All participants in this group said that the reason they aren't more active in their cultural life is because of poor health.



Stay-at-Homers

Stay-at-Homers are people who in answer to the question "How would you spend a free afternoon, if you suddenly had one" answered "I would prefer to spend it at home". The proportion of senior citizens who gave this answer is 30 %.

The key factor that influences the decision to stay home is the lack of **social capital** — a very small circle of weak ties, and also the inability to form new connections. With retirement, their social capital as well as the number of actual social ties is reduced. This is then aggravated by the fact that **Stay-at-Homers** often live alone.

The reduction of their circle of friends leads to isolation but people don't see it as a problem and don't complain about the lack of a social life. Accordingly, **Stay-at-Homers** are the group least involved in public culture activities, but also the group least likely to feel the need to change anything.

Stay-at-Homers see their situation as an objective reality, part of the natural course of life. They feel that they know enough and can do enough, and that there is nothing new to learn. Retirement isn't associated with the opening of new horizons or interesting leisure activities, i.e. free time. They spend less than other groups online. They have filled their day with household chores and as a break from these they prefer to watch TV or read.

The two obstacles that keep **Stay-at-Homers** from having a more active cultural life are health issues and a low income, which is very pressing.



Culture Lovers

Culture Lovers are people who in answer to the question "How would you spend a free afternoon, if you suddenly had one" answered that they "would spend it in a cultural institution (theater, museum, library, cinema etc.)". 22 % of third age individuals answered this way.

Culture Lovers, are perhaps the most well-off type of senior citizens. They are more likely than the other groups to say that their lives are filled with interesting things and they are completely happy. These people are very well educated with the **highest income of any group and significant social capital**. As the MISCP research¹, shows education level and income are generally directly related to the level of participation in cultural life.

"I like to visit art galleries a lot — I attend the Tretyakov Gallery twice a year as a must, and visit the Glazunov gallery too. My last visit to the theater was to the "Sphere". The performance was dedicated to WWII, with all the old war songs, I enjoyed it a lot. I also went to the Ermolova Theater, that was a great play, very interesting. Of course we go to the Kuzminki

park and Kolomenskoe. I have recently discovered the Botanic Park in the center of Moscow, that's a brilliant oasis of blooming flowers — very beautiful, I loved it."

Focus group with senior citizens woman.

A third of **Culture Lovers** still work, but their busy schedule doesn't interfere with their involvement in cultural activities. It's important to note that this group is highly mobile — **Culture Lovers** travel easily around the city. This isn't typical of elderly people in general, for whom trips to the center, especially to large-scale events are often the cause of significant stress. Using public transportation and being in a large group of people are both serious challenges for individuals in their third age.

Culture Lovers, however are happy to attend large cultural events in the city center, which shows their high level of involvement in cultural life. They are confident, open to new experiences, trust people and are ready to help if their help is needed. This group were least likely to associate the third age with a decline in their social lives.



The Very Busy

The Very Busy are people who in answer to the question "How would you spend a free afternoon, if you suddenly had one" answered: "I would work — finish what's not finished, and take on new tasks".

The Very Busy make up 5 % of senior citizens.

Full time work doesn't always have a positive effect on older people: there are less people who are satisfied with life among The Very Busy than in other groups.

Retirement, for this group of people isn't associated with new opportunities and self-realization. This is explained by the fact that more than half of the people in this group work — which is much more than the proportion of working people in other groups. In other words, they haven't gained 'more time for themselves' with age. Furthermore, a significant number of people in this group note that with age their working days have become even more intense (which may have something to do with the reduction in energy associated with aging.) The reasons that **The Very Busy** continue to work are rooted in anxieties about their financial problems and the fear of losing the social context that comes with the working life.

The other element of **The Very Busy** group — is made up of people that spend their free time taking care of grandchildren that live separately to them. The traveling time that they spend on getting to their grandchildren's house could be spent on cultural activities instead. All the people in this group said that it is the **lack of free time** that keeps them from taking an active part in the cultural life.

"You come home — the children are there. I have two daughters, four grand daughters and one grandson. Before retirement I wouldn't feel it that much, but as soon as I was retired, my children talked me out of continuing to work, said they need me. So now I'm completely consumed by the grandkids and there's no time for anything else."

Focus group with senior citizens man.

"I have a big dog that needs walking. So I go to the park a lot, not the museum. Then of course, there's the grand daughter, and I run and run and run everywhere, I'm always late and never have any time."

Focus group with senior citizens woman.

In general, **The Very Busy** achieve their goals: their income is one of the highest in the researched groups and because most of them continue to work, they manage to avoid a reduction in their social network. People in this group often go online (more than other groups) in search of information about the cultural life. However, the full time occupation doesn't have a positive effect: there are less people in this group who are satisfied with life than in the other groups.



The Active Consumers

Active Consumers are people who in answer to the question "How would you spend a free afternoon, if you suddenly had one" answered that they would spend it "in a café, restaurant or shopping and recreational mall". **Active Consumers** made up 5 % of our total sample.

The presence of a partner helps an elderly person overcome the feeling that he is somewhere he doesn't belong.

Active Consumers — are fairly wealthy (by the standards of other elderly groups) citizens with a strong demand for cultural fulfillment: as well as restaurants and shops they would also eagerly spend half a day in a cultural institution. As with **Culture Lovers**, the **Active Consumers** have high levels of satisfaction with life. A similarity with **The Very Busy** is that both groups are very active in using the world wide web to find information.

Interestingly enough, out of all the groups, it's the **Active Consumers** who, with retirement have started to visit theaters, museums and exhibitions more often than they did before.

"My wife and I love to visit all sorts of city events: from the Jam Festival to Christmas festivities and so on. We never miss anything. We also attend culture events on every third Sunday of each month... less so during the summer of course..."

Focus group with senior citizens man, 58 years.

A key characteristic of people in this group is that they live with a partner. For senior citizens this plays an important role: cafes and bars (excluding shopping malls) are places that people of this age do not wish to visit alone as they are considered to be age inappropriate. The presence of a partner helps elderly people overcome the feeling that they are somewhere they don't belong.

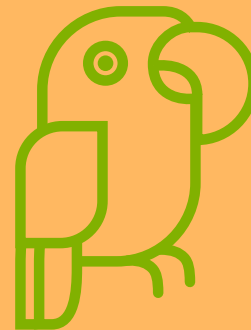
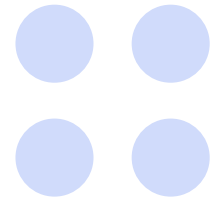
1. Research into the tastes and preferences of Moscovites in the Cultural sphere, MISCP, preparing for publication

Key ideas

- 1 The key factor that influences a senior citizen to stay at home is a reduction in social capital, which is the main reason for being categorized in the **Stay-at-Homers** group.
- 2 People with poor health and a wide circle of friends are more likely to spend their free time walking in the park or a city.
- 3 Continuing to work, as **The Very Busy** do in order to maintain financial independence and their social connections, brings its results. However their level of satisfaction with life is the lowest.
- 4 The desire to attend culture institutions and other public places like restaurants and shopping malls is higher among financially secure Moscovites that have good health.
- 5 An active involvement by senior citizens in cultural activities is connected with their satisfaction with life. **Culture Lovers** and **Active Consumers** are those who give the most positive evaluation of their lives.

Recommendations

- 6 The groups that most often receive their information about cultural life via the web are **The Very Busy** and **the Active Consumers**.
- 7 The presence of a partner widens the choice of leisure activities to include those that are usually seen as age inappropriate – like a restaurant or a bar.



In this chapter we will summarize and add recommendations that may be useful for cultural institutions when working with the third age citizens. In summarizing the above, we will once again point out that attending cultural institutions is in many ways a habit that develops into a necessity. So working with the cultural activity of senior citizens means starting the work with middle aged people, and ultimately teenagers.

Stay-at-Homers. At first glance, increasing the involvement of this group in the cultural life appears to be a real challenge, given their preference for staying home. However, it's wrong to say that they show no interest at all in leaving home to do something active: **Stay-at-Homers** actually report the highest demand (19 %) for something 'active' to do outside the home, it's just that their habits or circumstances make it difficult. This indicates that their social isolation is predominantly enforced. An "active" way of spending time in this context means any time they leave the house for something genuinely outside their daily routine. Their demands on the quality of a cultural activity are lower than in other groups on the whole: **Stay-at-Homers** aren't spoiled by attention and receive any targeted attention with gratitude.

An attractive cultural event for **Stay-at-Homers** may be a city festivity that takes place locally, in their neighborhood. Large-scale events on the whole have a big impact on the elderly: including visitors of various ages allows them to feel a connection with the younger generation and a link to city life.

Due to their often complicated financial situation, it's important for **Stay-at-Homers** to receive services free

of charge. Culture institutions should work closely with government support organizations (such as the Veterans Council etc) to promote the distribution of information about concessions and free events.

Keen Walkers. The recommendations that are valid for **Stay-at-Homers** are also valid for **Keen Walkers**. Emphasizing the availability of green zones as places for culture activities including fitness and wellness activities, (especially in peripheral neighborhoods) will attract **Keen Walkers**. It would be useful to distribute information about the work of culture institutions and specific events in those same parks and green zones where **Keen Walkers** would be more likely to notice it.

Culture Lovers. People in this group are already actively involved in the cultural life of the city so their preferences and tastes should be considered when planning events and cultural programs.

Due to their mobility and activeness this group has the biggest potential to be recruited as volunteer recruits to work as tour guides and excursion leaders. Volunteering can have a big impact on elderly people, as it will satisfy the psychological demand for "bringing value to the society". This relevance of life experience is more important to older people than to people of other ages. Furthermore, people of this age group place a lot of trust and faith in a positive example; so senior volunteers can successfully involve their peers in this type of work. At the same time it's important to develop loyalty programs in culture institutions: regular visitors can get discounts and special offers for themselves and friends of any age.

The Very Busy. People who are consumed by work and grandchildren are very difficult to attract to cultural life — they simply do not have the time or energy left for anything. However, as mentioned before, their own grandchildren can

attract them to culture institutions. So places that organize activities for children, should also think about activities for adults. Senior people would then be involved in their own educational or entertaining activity and not simply waiting until the child is finished with their club or attraction. It's important also, to choose themes that are interesting for this group: for instance talking about modern ways of child raising or various ways of connecting with children and teenagers. Also senior citizens can be asked to express their own interests in what they would like to do and what they would like to take part in.

It's important to understand that The Very Busy are eager to 'load' themselves with responsibilities because they have negative stereotypes about old age. Culture institutions can slowly soften that stereotype by using active and happy elderly people in their advertising and marketing materials.

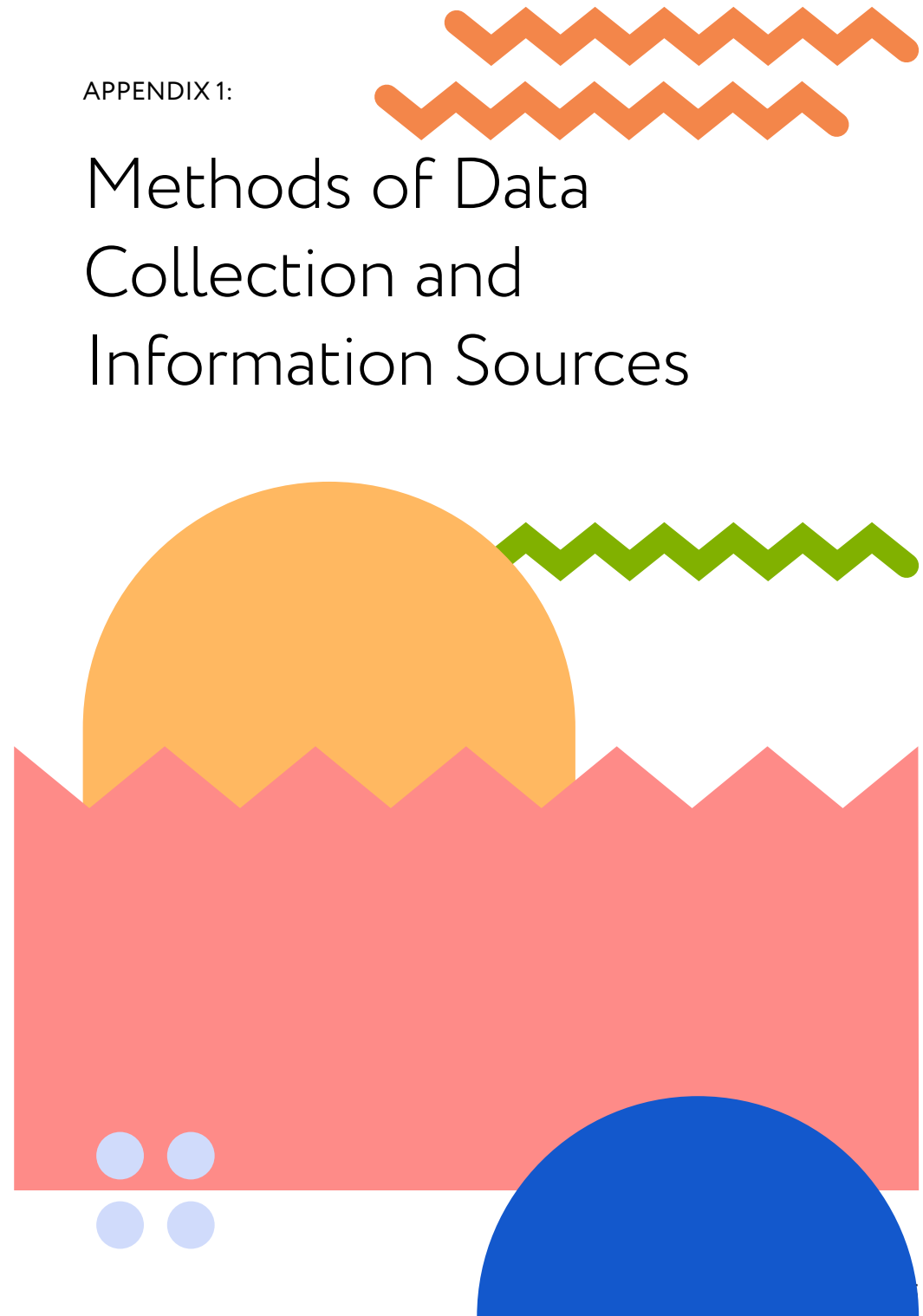
The Active Consumers. To attract this group there needs to be an investment in comfortable infrastructure within a culture institutions including cafes, gift shops etc. Their attention can be drawn by stands and stalls representing various cultural institutions in shopping malls. A good example would be the project that the Nekrasov Library has carried out by placing such stands in the "Okeania" and "Vodniy"¹ shopping and recreation malls.

In accordance with their increased mobility and wide range of interests, it's important for this group to get relevant information about culture events, and find it quickly online. Organizers and culture institutions need to carefully consider the most effective methods of getting information about their resources in front of senior citizens.

1. Nekrasov Library // "Okeania" Shopping and Recreation mall

APPENDIX 1:

Methods of Data Collection and Information Sources



Throughout our study into the free time of senior Moscovites qualitative methods were used as well as quantitative methods.

In the course of a mass telephone survey Moscovites over 55 years of age were asked a series of questions that could be divided into the following themed blocks: channels of information on Moscow's cultural life, participation in Moscow's culture life, obstacles to participation in Moscow's culture life, formats of free time spent (realistic and desirable), planning of free time, social-demographic characteristics. The method of a standardized formal interview was used for the survey. The volume of the sample was 1000 respondents. The received data underwent a statistical quality control.

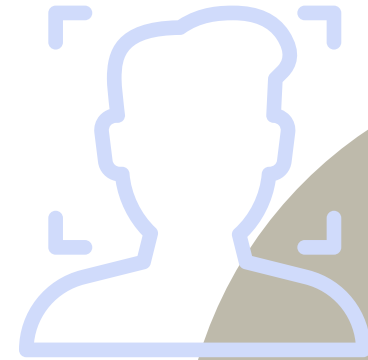
The results of the quantitative analysis of respondents' answers gathered via a mass telephone survey was enhanced by the data collected from four focus groups — which involved group discussions with senior citizens. The criteria for selection were as follows: the activeness of participation in the cultural life, and employment.

As well as the above, in the course of the study four expert interviews were also conducted with leisure professionals, who work closely with this age group.

APPENDIX 2:

Focus Groups Topic Guide

A guide for conducting focus groups with senior citizens



Introduction

Active Consumers

— Hello, my name is <...>. Thank you all for taking part in this focus group.

I am part of a research team from the Moscow Institute for Social and Cultural programs. We are researching what Moscovites think of their free time and the way in which they spend it. The things we will be discussing today are important for the Moscow Department of Culture. This information will help make the city more interesting and comfortable for its citizens. Please write your name or how you would like to be addressed on your badges.

— What is your name please?

— How often do you attend museums/theaters/cultural institutions?

— Which ones?

Part 1.

Leisure time as a whole

Daily timetable:

— Tell me, do you live alone or with someone? Tell me about your typical day? What do you do ?

Free time and leisure activities:

— Have your leisure activities changed with retirement? Do you plan your free time? How?

Leisure time activity choice:

— What's the most important thing that you take into account when choosing an activity? What do you use to make your decision?

— If you don't go anywhere (to a cultural institutions) how do you spend your free time?

Part 2.

Cultural institutions

The importance of cultural activities:

— Is it important to you to visit cultural institutions at all? Why? Do you think that attending them is important because it's important to grow culturally or because it's a requirement (because it's socially acceptable)?

Formats of attendance:

— Where do you go? Who with? Who do you spend time with more on the whole? Where did you go before retirement? Do you go alone? Why? Have you been to "Night at the Museum"/ "Library Night" events?

Interesting formats:

— Which cultural institutions do you prefer? What do you like in general? What about in terms of cultural clubs/libraries/leisure clubs? Do you attend them? Why not? Would you like to? Which formats of cultural activities are familiar and which ones are new?

Social connection:

— Have you had a chance to make new friends/acquaintances there? How important is it for you to make these new acquaintances?

Channels of information:

— Where do you find out about cultural life? What would be the most convenient way to receive this information?

Demand for further education:

— Imagine that your neighborhood has clubs with a high teaching level. Would you attend them? Is that interesting for you? What would they have to be like?

Part 3.

General questions

Retired:

— Would you have liked to continue working if there was such an opportunity? Why?

Working:

— Your age allows you to finish work, but you continue to do so — why? What conditions would make it possible for you to stop?

— What do you do outside of your home? Education, volunteering? What do you think about that?

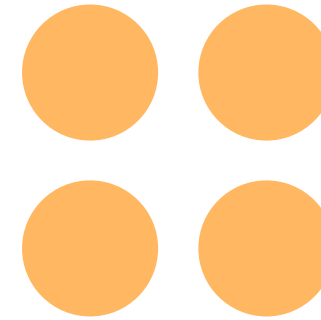
— How has culture changed in the last 20-30 years? Can you give examples of what you like and what you don't like?

— What in general prevents your peers from attending cultural institutions more? What are the biggest problems? Let's imagine what kind of a cultural event would attract your and your peers' attention?

APPENDIX 3

Expert Interview Topic Guide

A guide for conducting an expert interview



Introduction

This section is designed for introduction and presentation of the project. Introduce yourself and your organization briefly. Show the project presentation and summarize the main points.

— Tell me, what does your organization do? In what cases do you work with senior citizens? Are they your main audience or do you work with other age groups as well?

Main section

Introduction to their work

The main goal here is to find out what they do and how our research can help them in their work. Test our hypotheses. How correct/relevant/new are they.

— Tell me, how often do you interact with pensioners (regularly/intermittently)? Which methods do you use to work with them? Do you think there are differences in communicating with pensioners and other age groups?

— How well is the city equipped for realizing your projects with senior citizens (and how ‘pensioner-friendly’ is it as a whole)? How important is it to include senior citizens in the cultural environment of the city? Do you personally work on this issue? What specifically do you do?

Shortcomings of the research

This section is where it's important to find out what our research is lacking. What could be added?

— In your opinion, have we included all the reasons there are why pensioners aren't active participants of cultural life? What do you think would be the most helpful ways to engage pensioners in the cultural life?

Practical implementations

Continuation of the previous section, what practical implementation can the research have.

— What forms of engagement do you use? How effective are they? Which points could quickly find practical implementation? What is needed for their realization?

Review of the research

The concluding section where we ask them to express their view on the research and give their expert opinion. Summarizes the conclusion.

— Were there any places where you were forced to think about and disagree with or disbelieve the information presented?

— Who else should we speak to in your opinion? Which information about pensioners is important? Who are the experts and credible people in this area?

APPENDIX 4:

Social Demographic Characteristics of Groups of Senior Citizens

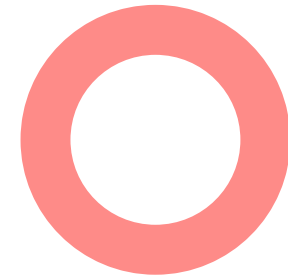


Table 1

Keen Walkers

Sex:	Communication channels (where people get information about Moscow's cultural life):	Subjective obstacles to participating in cultural life:
Male 43 %	Television: 91 %	Poor health: 100 %
Female 57 %	Newspapers: 57 %	Lack of time: 21 %
Average age: 75 years	Radio: 38 %	Lack of money: 16 %
Median age: 75 years	News websites: 23 %	Logistic difficulties: 9 %
Education:	Blogs and Forums: 12 %	No one to go with: 6 %
Unfinished High school 2 %	Magazines: 14 %	No obstacles/no desire to participate actively: 3 %
High school graduate 10 %	Relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues: 10 %	A lot of information but no understandable source: 2 %
Technical 22 %	Subway advertising: 9 %	Insufficient information: 0 %
Higher 62 %	Social networks: 7 %	Lack of interesting cultural events and spaces: 0 %
Doctorate 3 %	Do not receive information about culture life: 3 %	Don't like contemporary culture: 0 %
Average income: 15 001–20 000 rubles		
Working: 2 %		



Table 2

Stay-at-Homers

Sex:	Communication channels (where people get information about Moscow's cultural life):	Subjective obstacles to participating in cultural life:
Male 46 %	Television: 86 %	Poor health: 54 %
Female 54 %	Newspapers: 36 %	Lack of time: 32 %
Average age: 69 years	Radio: 16 %	Lack of money: 20 %
Median age: 67 years	Blogs and Forums: 14 %	No obstacles/no desire to participate actively: 10 %
Education:	News websites: 13 %	Logistic difficulties: 5 %
Unfinished High school 5 %	Relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues: 8 %	Don't like contemporary culture: 4 %
High school graduate 13 %	Social networks: 5 %	Lack of interesting cultural events and spaces: 3 %
Technical 30 %	Magazines: 6 %	No one to go with: 3 %
Higher 51 %	Subway advertising: 3 %	Insufficient information: 1 %
Doctorate 1 %	Do not receive information about culture life: 2 %	A lot of information but no understandable source: 0 %
Average income: 15 001–20 000 rubles		
Working: 19 %		

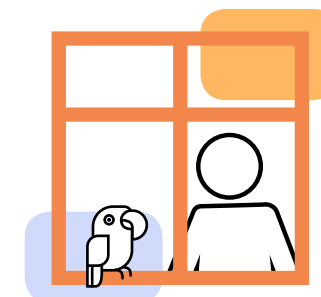
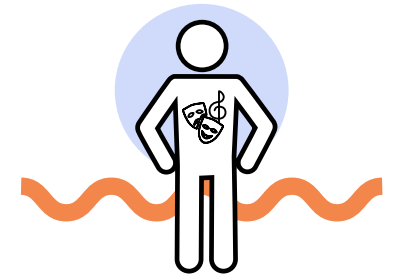


Table 3

Culture Lovers



Sex:	Communication channels (where people get information about Moscow's cultural life):	Subjective obstacles to participating in cultural life:
Male 45 %	Television: 81 %	Lack of time: 38 %
Female 55 %	Newspapers: 43 %	Poor health: 35 %
Average age: 67 years	Radio: 21 %	Lack of money: 20 %
Median age: 66 years	Blogs and Forums: 20 %	No obstacles/no desire to participate actively: 9 %
Education:	News websites: 15 %	No one to go with: 7 %
Unfinished High school 2 %	Relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues: 6 %	Insufficient information: 6 %
High school graduate 8 %	Social networks: 5 %	Logistic difficulties: 3 %
Technical 21 %	Magazines: 4 %	A lot of information but no understandable source: 1 %
Higher 68 %	Subway advertising: 2 %	Lack of interesting cultural events and spaces: 3 %
Doctorate 1 %	Do not receive information about culture life: 1 %	Don't like contemporary culture: 2 %
Average income: 25 001–30 000 rubles		
Working: 29 %		

Table 4

The Very Busy

Sex:	Communication channels (where people get information about Moscow's cultural life):	Subjective obstacles to participating in cultural life:
Male 54 %	Television: 75 %	Lack of time: 100 %
Female 46 %	Newspapers: 38 %	Poor health: 9 %
Average age: 66 years	Radio: 32 %	Lack of money: 7 %
Median age: 65 years	Blogs and Forums: 30 %	Logistic difficulties: 7 %
Education:	News websites: 23 %	No obstacles/no desire to participate actively: 7 %
Unfinished High school 4 %	Magazines: 9 %	Insufficient information: 4 %
High school graduate 9 %	Relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues: 7 %	A lot of information but no understandable source: 0 %
Technical 21 %	Subway advertising: 4 %	Lack of interesting cultural events and spaces: 4 %
Higher 64 %	Social networks: 4 %	Don't like contemporary culture: 2 %
Doctorate 2 %	Do not receive information about culture life: 2 %	No one to go with: 4 %
Average income: 25 001–30 000 rubles		
Working: 53 %		



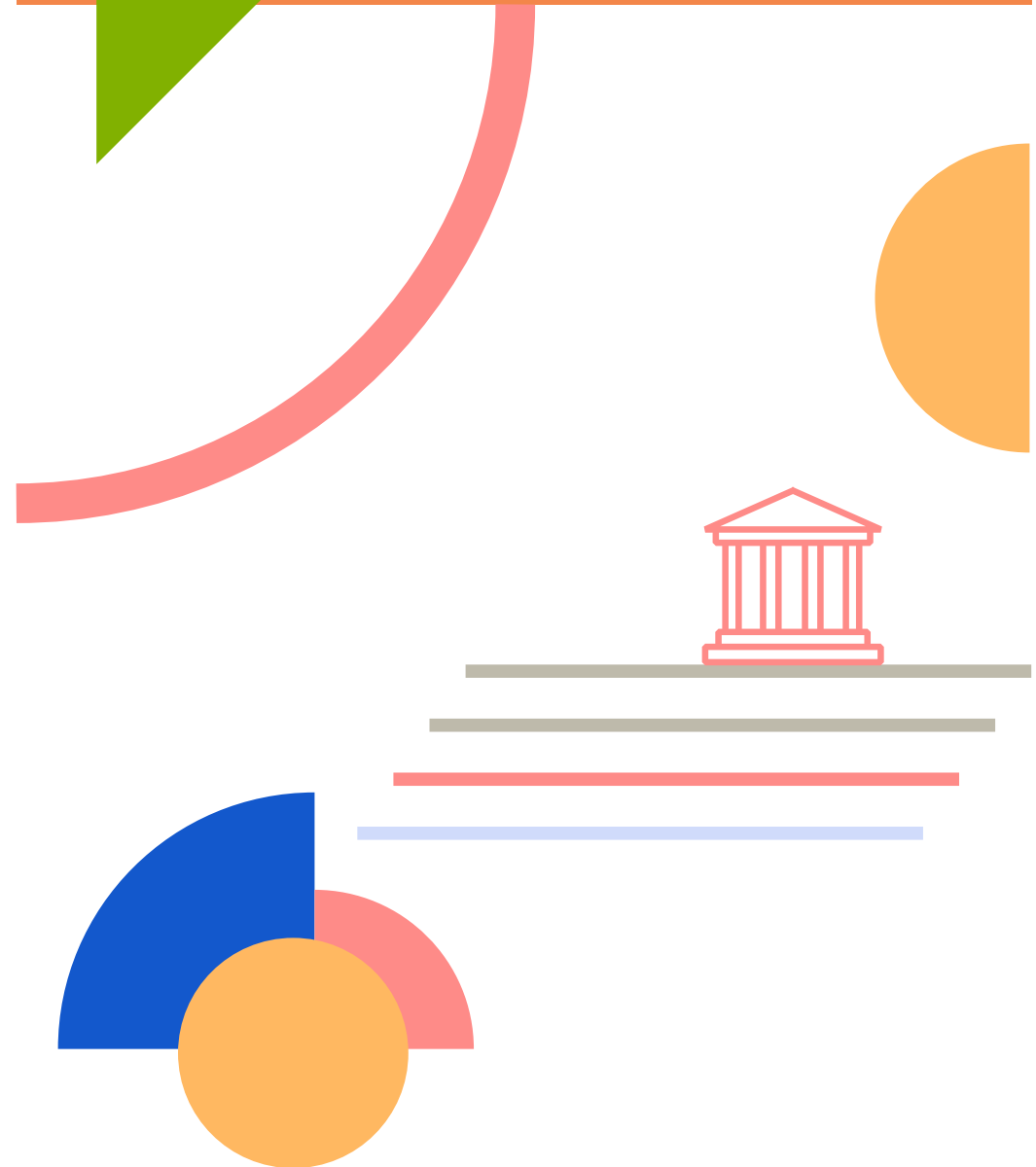
Table 5

The Active Consumers



Sex:	Communication channels (where people get information about Moscow's cultural life):	Subjective obstacles to participating in cultural life:
Male 54 %	Television: 81 %	Lack of time: 38 %
Female 46 %	Newspapers: 45 %	Poor health: 29 %
Average age: 65 years	Blogs and Forums: 27 %	Lack of money: 25 %
Median age: 65 years	News websites: 26 %	No obstacles/no desire to participate actively: 14 %
Education:	Radio: 22 %	Logistic difficulties: 8 %
Unfinished High school 1 %	Magazines: 16 %	Insufficient information: 6 %
High school graduate 2 %	Relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues: 11 %	Don't like contemporary culture: 3 %
Technical 21 %	Subway advertising: 5 %	No one to go with: 3 %
Higher 74 %	Social networks: 5 %	Lack of interesting cultural events and spaces: 2 %
Doctorate 3 %	Do not receive information about culture life: 1 %	A lot of information but no understandable source: 1 %
Average income: 20 001–25 000 rubles		
Working: 30 %		

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