



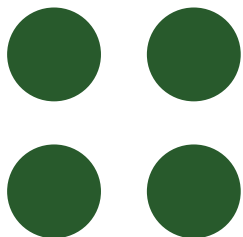
Moscow  
Department  
of Culture



Moscow Institute  
for Social and  
Cultural Programmes



Nekrasov  
Central Library

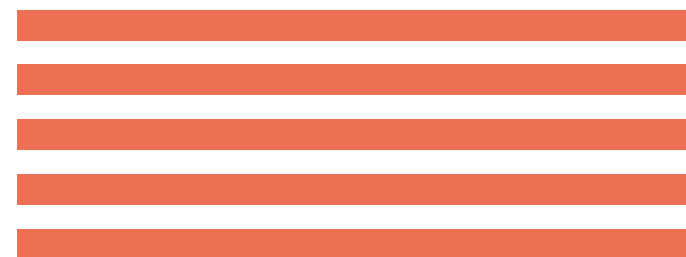


# The Leisure Time Activities of Moscow's Middle-Aged Citizens

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

Part II

Москва, 2018



# Table of Contents

Foreword .....	4
Why Work With Middle-Aged People? .....	9
The Middle-Aged: A Sociological Perspective .....	13
Middle-Aged Moscovites' Free Time: Main Tendencies ...	17
Tools for Engaging Middle-Aged People in the Cultural Life of The City and Obstacles to Their Involvement .....	29
The Middle-Aged Audience: The Different Groups Features .....	53
Recommendations .....	73
Appendix 1. Methods of Data Collection and Information Sources .....	79
Appendix 2. Characterizations of Nuclear Groups .....	81
Appendix 3. Types of Leisure Activities .....	85
Project Contributors .....	89

# 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 for 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 culture centers and events declines. There is then a 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 culture 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 MISCP 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: access to transportation 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.

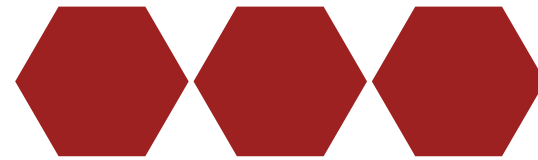
Obviously this text should not be considered as an exhaustive analysis. We ourselves have been left with a lot of questions, such as which specific YouTube channels can best promote libraries' activities? What do older Moscovites see as 'contemporary art'? When does "I don't have time" become code for "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](mailto:info@miscp.ru).

Maria Privalova,  
Research curator

# Why Work With Middle-Aged People?



Unlike children, teenagers and senior citizens, middle-aged people are rarely properly delineated by researchers as a separate social group. The general rule is that people are put into the 'middle-aged category' when they can't be placed into any of the other social age groups.

We are convinced that to effectively work with any group of individuals in society, it's vital to answer the key question: how do the representatives of this group differ to those from other groups? What distinguishes middle-aged people from other citizens?

We view a middle-aged person as somebody who's financially independent and responsible, consciously limiting their own independence for the sake of an important third party.

The two most important characteristics that define a middle-aged person are independence and responsibility. At the root of their independence is financial freedom. This freedom is limited, first of all, by the responsibility that this person has for their significant third parties. These can be children, relatives, friends or colleagues. Almost half of middle-aged Moscovites have responsibility for minors, a responsibility which is often added to by the need to simultaneously care for elderly parents.

Of course, elderly adults are also capable of being responsible individuals, but in most cases they are more

dependent on external support, and the vagaries of their own health. Young people can be independent, but they are significantly less constrained by the need to take responsibility for other people. In contrast to the young and the elderly, middle-aged Moscovites tend to combine high levels of both responsibility and independence. These features of middle-aged life play a key role in their choice of cultural activities.

Middle-aged Moscovites are less engaged in the cultural life of the city than young people of 18-34 years. To illustrate, a third of middle-aged citizens was not involved in any of the city's big events in 2014, and only less than a third took part in the most popular city event — City Day<sup>1</sup>. 43 % of middle-aged Moscovites visit theaters, museums and concerts no more than once a year, while 61 % attend art exhibitions and temporary exhibitions with the same lack of regularity<sup>2</sup>. And finally, more than half of the people in this group never go to culture centers or public libraries at all.

### **Why should cultural institutions be interested in attracting this group of citizens at all?**

First of all, middle-aged people — individuals from 35-54 years old — make up a large proportion of Moscow's population (31 %)<sup>3</sup>, making them a useful cohort to take into account when it comes to attempts to increase the number of visitors to the city's cultural institutions.

Secondly, middle-aged people have the highest average income of all Moscovites: the average personal monthly income in this age group is 31-40 thousand rubles, while the general average Moscow income is only 25-30 thousand rubles<sup>4</sup>, i.e. middle-aged people have the highest paying capacity out of all Moscovites. At the same time, middle-aged Moscovites are also prepared to pay for quality leisure activities.

One third of middle-aged citizens did not take part in any big city events in 2014.

Thirdly, it's also important to consider that half of the middle-aged citizens also have children, so by focusing on the parents, cultural institutions can also indirectly attract the younger generation. As the results of our research show, attendance at cultural institutions is a result of long-established habits. It's often the case that the adults who regularly go to the theater or museums today, were once the children who were most actively encouraged to take part in the cultural life by their own parents long ago. So, the cultural habits (and their discovery of the city's cultural spaces) of today's young Moscovites will in turn be formed by the behaviors of their middle-aged parents.

We will look at the tools for engaging middle-aged people in the cultural life of the city further on in the research. However, for now we will outline the key features that differentiate this group of citizens from the other social/age groups, by describing typical middle-aged Moscovites and their leisure activities.

1. The Audience of Moscow's most popular public event. Sociological research results of City Day — 2015. MISCP, 2015.



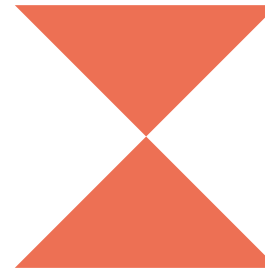
2. Research into the tastes and preferences of Moscovites in the cultural sphere. MISCP, preparing for publication.

3. Based on data from the population census of 2010.

4. Mechanics of Moscow. Research into an urban environment. MISCP, 2015.



# The Middle-Aged: A Sociological Perspective



What distinguishes middle-aged people from the general population of citizens?

How do middle-aged Moscovites live?

Are there differences in the choice of leisure activities within the group?

In general, the profile of middle-aged Moscovites' engagement in the cultural life of the city doesn't break down demographically in any particularly meaningful way. Women tend to go to the theater and museums more often, and the younger individuals in this group (those age 35 — 45) tend to prefer cinemas, cafés and bars. That's essentially all the patterns there are in terms of demographic subdivisions.

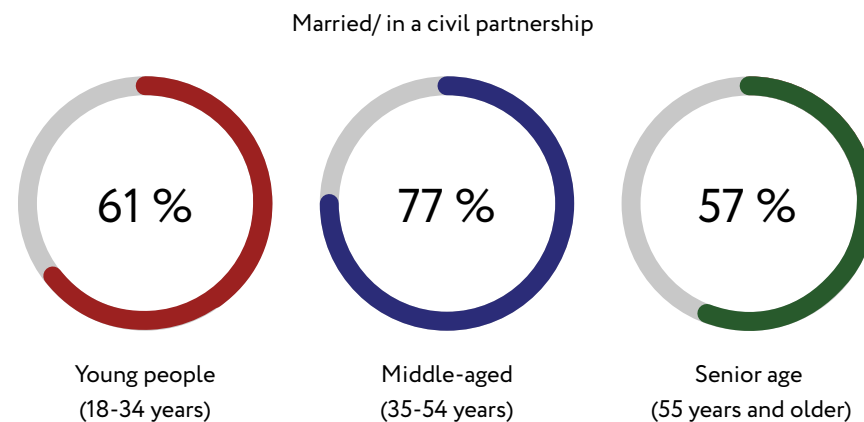
77 % of middle-aged Moscovites are either married or have a civil partnership, and almost half of them have underage children.

In addition to the middle-aged being the wealthiest group, they are also the most educated age group in the Moscow population. Almost 70 % of them have a higher education qualification, and 26 % have a technical college education. Among young people (18-34) only half (52 %) have a higher education qualification while among senior citizens (55 years and above) that number is 61 %<sup>1</sup>.

The middle-aged group is also the most family-oriented group (Diagram 1).

### Diagram 1

What is your family status?



Only 9 % live alone without a spouse, parents or underage children. Having a family or a child can be important factors in engaging a middle-aged person in the cultural life, which is something we will talk about further on.

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



## Key ideas

- 1 The defining features of a middle-aged person are responsibility and independence. When talking about a middle-aged Moscovite, we are talking about an independent and responsible adult, but at the same time we are encountering a phenomenon of consciously limited independence. These aspects play a key role in the choice of cultural activities.
- 2 Middle-aged people bear responsibility for important third parties: children, relatives, friends, and colleagues.
- 3 Middle-aged citizens are the most educated group out of the general population. Almost 70 % of them have a higher education qualification.
- 4 Middle-aged citizens have the highest income of any Moscovites.

## Middle-Aged Moscovites' Free Time: Main Tendencies





How do middle-aged Moscovites spend their free time?



What types of leisure activities do they prefer?



What do they focus on when choosing how to spend their day?

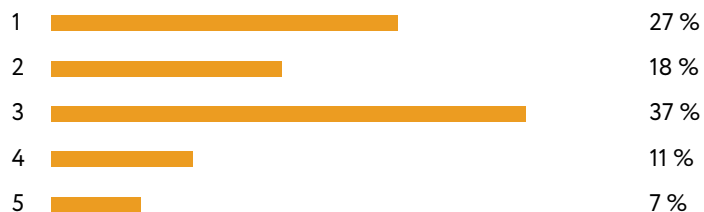
### The popularity rating of various leisure activities

Middle-aged Moscovites very rarely take advantage of the cultural opportunities that the city has to offer. 27 % of this group see themselves as not involved in cultural life at all, and only 7 % talk about their active engagement (Diagram 2).

#### Diagram 2

Evaluate how active your participation is in the cultural life of Moscow

(1 – I almost don't participate at all...  
5 – I participate very actively)



Subjective evaluation is confirmed by objective data on attendance. The highest level of engagement is seen in attendance at theaters, museums, concerts and city celebrations. If citizens consider themselves to be excluded from the cultural life, they will attend the theater, museums and concerts 7 times less than those who consider themselves to be actively engaged. They will also visit culture centers 4 times less frequently, and attend city celebrations and events 3 times less frequently. What's more, the representatives of this group will almost never go to night clubs, public lectures or culture centers: 89 % of them will go to nightclubs once a year or less, 81 % will listen to a public lecture or seminar once a year or less, and 72 % will go to a culture center with the same low frequency.

The unwillingness to participate in the cultural life of Moscow is indirectly confirmed by other data from other city surveys. During our "Mechanics of Moscow" research, respondents were asked a question: "If the city had a large-scale cultural event on, where would you prefer to go?". 45 % of the middle-aged group said that they would prefer to leave the city and head into the countryside. This demonstrates a higher level of avoidance of cultural events than both younger Moscovites and senior citizens.

The citizens who prefer to avoid large-scale city events are mostly put off by the crowds and scale of the event<sup>1</sup>.

*"I was watching those fireworks with a crazy number of people around. I was in a crowd that I couldn't get out of and it took me two hours of walking just to get out. [...] Awful!"*

*Focus groups with middle-aged citizens, woman 39 years.*

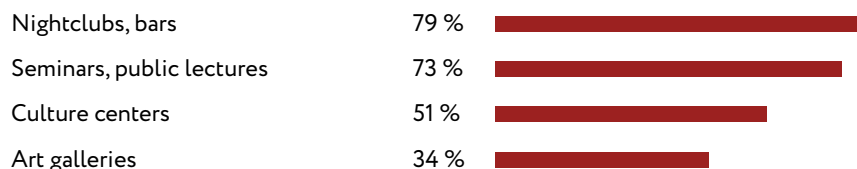
Middle-aged Moscovites who attend large cultural events with friends tend to have a calmer attitude: they are usually

much keener on making new acquaintances and are quicker to get engaged in an event or celebration.

Let's look at the various formats of leisure activities preferred by middle-aged people, from the least popular to the most popular. The most unpopular turned out to be nightclubs and public lectures: ¾ of respondents said they don't spend their leisure time on those activities. In addition, the most unpopular cultural institutions are culture centers: half of the middle-aged population never visits them. Furthermore, one third of middle-aged Moscovites never attend art galleries (Diagram 3).

### Diagram 3

Which of the listed do you **never** attend?

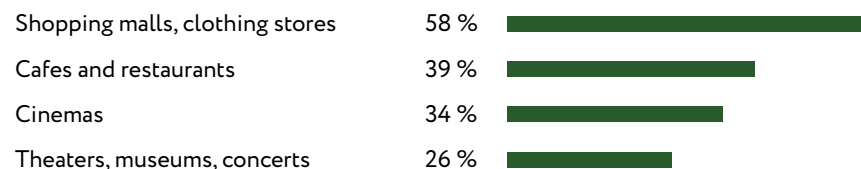


Theaters, museums, concerts, cafes, cinemas, restaurants and shopping malls are all more popular. The relative popularity of these formats is linked to the financial freedom of middle-aged citizens. That's why the middle-aged are often the target audience for these types of leisure activities — other age groups might not be able to afford them.

At the same time, museums, theaters, concerts, and cinemas lose out in popularity to shopping malls and restaurants. This is partially a result of the fact that clothes and food are primary needs for many people (Diagram 4).

### Diagram 4

What do you visit several times a month and more?



Leisure activities outdoors are the most popular with middle-aged Moscovites, which is also true for other age groups<sup>2</sup>. Almost two thirds of people in this group find time for walks in the parks, at stately homes and at nature reserves, several times a month or more.

### Why certain formats are more popular than others?

Even though middle-aged citizens have the largest expendable income, they aren't always prepared to invest their money in their free time activities. There are two reasons for this reluctance to spend on free time activities: firstly, they may prefer to spend the money on leisure activities for a significant other person in their lives (for details see chapter "Tools for Engaging Middle-Aged People in the Cultural Life of The City and Obstacles to Their Involvement"; and secondly, Moscovites may view various types of leisure activity as a waste of their free time (for more details see chapter "The Middle-Aged Audience: The Different Groups Features").

Based on their criteria for choosing leisure activities, middle-aged Moscovites can be separated into four uneven groups:



#### Accessibility

45 % of respondents see the accessibility and convenience of an activity as more important than

its content. This explains the high popularity of walks in the city: they don't entail financial outlay and can usually be easily achieved in the local neighborhood.



### High culture

35 % of middle-aged Moscovites behave in a manner completely opposed to the above two subgroups. They care nothing of the cost, or physical accessibility. Their attention is focused on finding something new, getting involved in high culture and spending their time with family and friends.



### Fun

For 14 % of the surveyed nothing is more important than spending their time in a fun and interesting way.

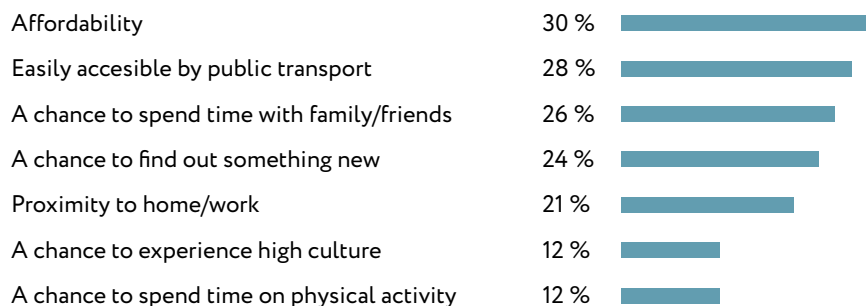


### All of the above

6 % of middle-aged Moscovites pay attention to all of the above when choosing a leisure activity.

### Diagram 5

What's the most important thing to you when choosing a leisure activity (multiple answers possible)?



In general, two strategies for choosing leisure activities can be identified: the formal and the content-based. With the formal strategy — the citizen bases their choice on logistic and financial convenience, while with the content-based strategy, he's sacrificing convenience for the chance to experience something new. In cases where the accessibility to cultural institutions is the same, the prevailing strategy should be content-based, however, at the moment almost half of the citizens go where it's logistically more convenient for them. Reducing this number is the priority for the city's cultural politics.

### How would middle-aged Moscovites like to spend their free time?

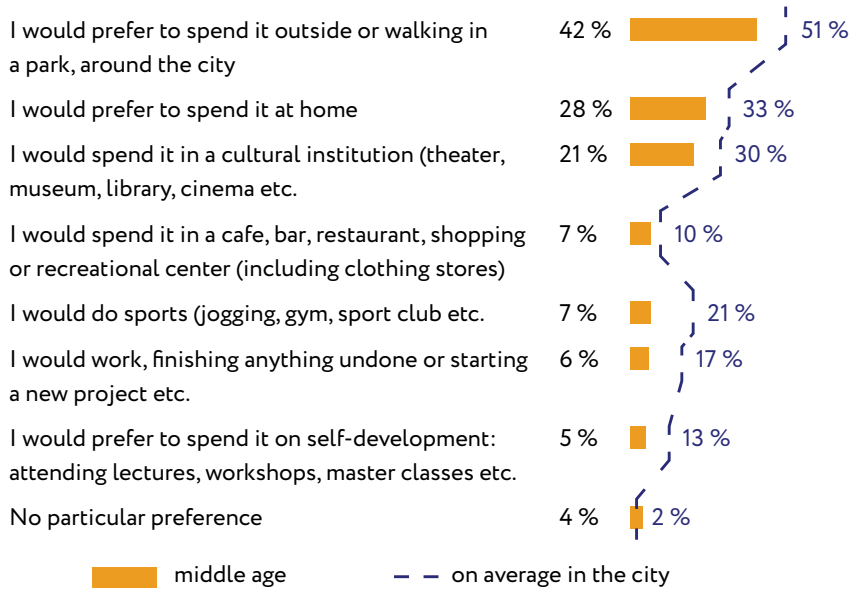
The preferred type of leisure activity among the middle-aged was a walk in the fresh air: either in a park or in the city center. The second most popular choice was — 'stay at home' and the third was visiting a cultural institution. All other choices were significantly less popular with none of them getting more than 10 %. On average amongst all age groups, the 10 % mark was only exceeded by sport, work and self-education (Diagram 6).

A walk outside and spending free time at home are the most "simple" leisure activities and at the same time the most popular. Why is that?

When making decisions on their free time activities, most citizens are guided by the number and complexity of the actions they need to take in order to take part in a given activity. For example, all that's required to watch television is for it to be turned on, whereas to visit the theater, a ticket needs to be purchased, an outfit to be chosen, and the metro needs to be used to get there. Or to go on a picnic in the country with friends, first it's necessary to select a time that works for everyone, then food needs to

### Diagram 6

How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available? (multiple answers possible)



be bought, the car journey to the countryside needs to be undertaken, a fire made etc. Often, the decision to take part in a particular activity depends on the number of necessary actions that need to be taken and also on how familiar these actions are. However, as a new and 'complicated' activity is undertaken more frequently, and becomes a habit, the individual citizen will notice the 'complexity' or 'difficulty' of an activity less and less. Complex leisure activities that require extensive preparation are chosen less frequently even though they can potentially create more positive emotions. A walk in the park doesn't require any preparation and is almost guaranteed to be a nice time, whereas a trip to a gallery or another cultural event requires planning and might not be as enjoyable.

Despite their stated desire to visit cultural institutions, in reality middle-aged people choose more familiar places like cafes and restaurants for their everyday leisure.

Researchers have concluded that gap between the expectations of consumers, and the reality of Moscow's cultural offerings is a general problem for the city. An expert in the sphere of museum and cultural management, V. Dukelskiy notes: "Before you go to a theater you need to choose a play, buy a ticket, do your hair, put on a nice outfit. It would also be nice to know something about the music and the theater you're visiting. These seemingly insignificant difficulties, can at times become insurmountable"<sup>3</sup>.

Spending leisure time in a cultural institution is accompanied by difficulties in making a choice and the absence of guaranteed enjoyment\*. A proper informational policy can help overcome these difficulties. The earlier information about an event sees the light of day, and the clearer it is, the sooner citizens will be able to make plans and adjust their expectations of it.

A particular problem here can be the potential awkwardness that can arise on a first trip to a cultural institution, as the result of a lack of knowledge and experience of the 'protocols' in such places. Can you talk in a library? Is it better to take the guided tour in a museum? What's the right way to dress to go to the theater? In childhood these things were easily learnt, as the child was taken to a cultural institution by a teacher or parents. However, if a person didn't have this experience in childhood, in middle age their lack of experience can be a serious barrier.

\* This does not apply to the classical museums such as The Pushkin Museum or the Tretyakov Gallery (its Lavrushenski lane building) that our respondents called the "cathedrals of culture", seeing their permanent exhibition as sources of guaranteed pleasure.

These barriers contribute to the fact that despite their stated desire to visit cultural institutions, in reality middle-aged people choose more familiar places like cafes and restaurants for their everyday leisure. So although every fifth respondent would prefer to spend their free time in a culture center or gallery, according to the data only 16 %\*\* of them visit a culture center once a month, and only 13 % visit a gallery with the same frequency. At the same time, data shows that 40 % of middle-aged citizens visit cafes and restaurants at least once a month despite the fact that there is little stated desire to visit these locations in our survey (only 7 % stated they would spend their free afternoon there).

\*\* Presumably, this figure is even lower in reality as some of its representatives may simply be transporting their children to culture centers, for the children's benefit. The number of "accompanying parents" can reach as high as 40 % (which is precisely the number of active culture center visitors who have children).

1. The Audience of Moscow's most popular public event. Sociological research results of City Day — 2015. MISCP, 2015.



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

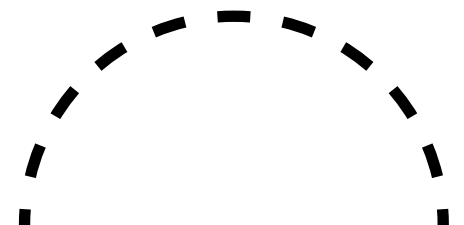
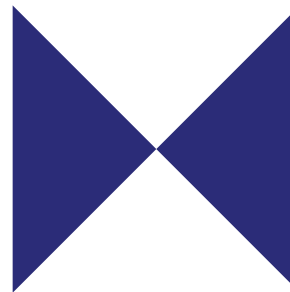
3. Dukelskyi V. U.: Culture is Coming Home // Culture across boundaries. — Moscow, 2004

## Key ideas

- 1 The most popular leisure time activity among middle-aged citizens is spending time in the fresh air, walking in the city and green zones.
- 2 The stated preferences for leisure activities of many citizens do not match the reality of the activities that these same citizens actually partake in.
- 3 Financial, physical and even emotional problems can reduce the probability of a person choosing a certain type of leisure activity.
- 4 Difficulties in choosing a leisure activity result not only from the limited offerings of the cultural institutions themselves, but also from the lack of information on the offering. Irrelevant and inaccurate information hampers the proper planning of a visit.
- 5 Culture institutions can view the gap between the desired and actual leisure activities of middle-aged Moscovites as unrealized potential to grow their audience.



Tools for Engaging  
Middle-Aged People  
in the Cultural Life  
of The City and  
Obstacles to Their  
Involvement



Why are middle-aged Moscovites less engaged in the cultural life of the city than young people?

How does the presence of children shape their leisure activities?

What do citizens prefer to do by themselves in their free time?

What types of leisure activities are affected by an individual's financial constraints?

### Subjective reasons for non-engagement

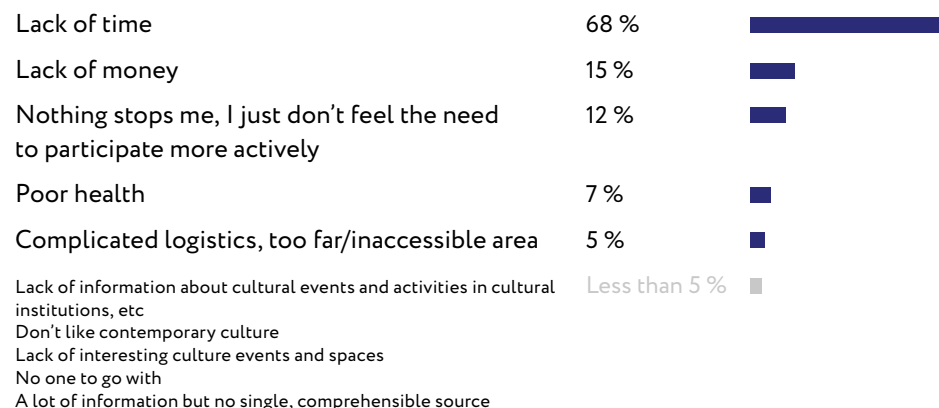
Among the factors that the respondents themselves point out as reasons for a low level of participation in cultural life, only one answer went over the 50 % mark — “lack of time”. Only two other answers were cited by more than 10 % of respondents: “lack of money” and “nothing stops me, I just don't feel the need to participate more” (Diagram 7).

Only a small number of citizens point out the ‘information barrier’ as an obstacle. 4 % complained that they don't receive enough information about current events and activities in cultural institutions; even fewer than that say there is so much information that it's difficult to navigate. This means that subjectively speaking this problem is almost non-existent.

The answer “lack of money” is actually connected with the income of the respondent. Middle-aged citizens with an income of less than 20 thousand rubles chose this

### Diagram 7

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



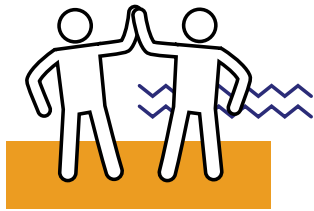
answer twice as often as other respondents. The connection between their answer and the actual lack of money is confirmed also by the fact that the key criteria for choosing a leisure activity for them is affordability. Respondents in this subgroup often prefer to spend their free time doing “simple” activities such as reading books and walks in the park.

The answer “nothing stops me, I don't feel the need to participate more” is true for the people who are already most active in cultural life. The number of people who visit theaters, museums, culture centers and art exhibitions among this group is twice as high as in other groups.

The most popular answer — “lack of time” is not as straightforward as it may seem at first. By choosing this answer, the respondent is de-facto stating that he is ready to spend his free time somewhere else, just not in cultural institutions.



So what is it that they are ready to spend their free time doing? There are at least three alternative ways of spending time that are common among people who cite a “lack of time” for cultural activity. Let’s take a look at each one separately.

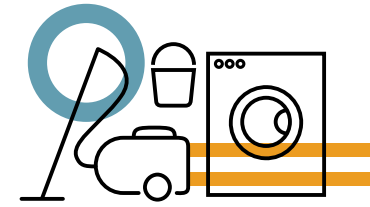


### Being with friends and close ones

The chances that a respondent will choose “lack of time” as an obstacle to their participation in cultural life is directly

proportional to the number of contacts in their mobile phone. Individuals who have more than 200 phone numbers in their contacts list are 33 % more likely to cite “lack of time” as an obstacle to having a more active cultural life. The more contacts a respondent has the more they choose to spend time with friends, colleagues and family as their main leisure activity. At the same time, we understand that most cultural institutions aren’t adapted for meetings with friends — that niche is taken by cafes, restaurants, shopping and recreation malls and (when weather permits) open spaces: parks and green zones. Almost 70 % of respondents who choose those locations for their leisure time are younger than 45 years old; furthermore, almost 70 % are men. In this case, it’s important for cultural institutions to evolve in two directions: firstly, to provide services that are similar to those that cafes and shopping and recreation malls provide (food courts, shopping, entertainment for children) and secondly, to provide more family activities.

### Housework



The second competitor for cultural institutions in the “fight” for middle-aged people’s free time is household chores. This is as true for women as it is for men. There are many citizens who would be happy to go to a large-scale event or visit a cultural institution, but find that the time they would spend on such visits is instead taken up by housework. At the same time, focus groups have shown that this way of spending time is seen as the most time and energy consuming and by far the least pleasurable.

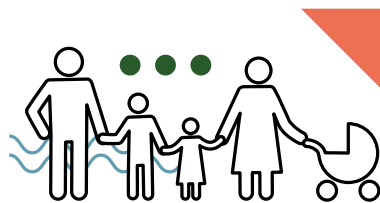
*“What’s staying home for me? Well, if you’re at home suddenly there’s a ton of work to do! You need to clean all over, you get started and then realize there’s more and more to do and so it’s all daunting and depressing.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites, woman, 45 years.*

Those who are busy with housework would benefit from having various activities on offer in cultural institutions near their home and also from information on events and celebrations happening in their neighborhood. Citizens who spend their free time doing housework were 1.5 times more likely to identify “proximity to home/work” and “a chance to spend time with friends/family” as their criteria for choosing a leisure activity. An ideal way of informing them would be a personalized invitation through their mailbox, an email or text message. This personalized approach to informing people, would also allow them to feel part of their local community.

## Large family

Usually, the presence of a child is an important factor — often acting as a trigger for more participation in the cultural life of the city. However, bringing up several children at the same time has the opposite effect and opportunities to visit cultural institutions actually reduce for these parents. Family programs that take into account the interests of children of various ages can be of significant interest for this group of citizens. The increase in demand for family leisure activities is also indicated by the active development of various offerings in this sphere, which began in the 2010s. A good example of an offering aimed at children of different ages is the “Family trip — All to a museum together!”<sup>1</sup> project, which was set up in collaboration with more than 50 museums. On the website of the above project parents can choose their preferred time and plan activities to do with the children, taking into account their age. Also, if the cultural institution is aimed primarily at an adult audience, it may be useful to develop a new section on the website for children. The Museum of Moscow, for example, has such a section<sup>2</sup>.



To sum up, there are no genuinely impassable obstacles to encouraging more middle-aged people to take part in the cultural life of the city. In the next few sections, we will talk about how cultural institutions can work with this age group successfully.

## Tools for engaging middle-aged citizens in the cultural life

### Visiting Habits

When adults (including middle-aged citizens) choose a type of leisure activity, existing habits are an important factor. Those

who have visited museums frequently in the past, are much more likely to want to continue.

The longer a person is engaged in doing a certain activity, the higher the chances that he will continue to do it. If the habit of going to a cultural institution becomes a ritual, then the chances of it being abandoned are much lower.

There is a normative belief amongst parents that they must “instill the love of culture” in their children, and by that they mostly mean theaters, museums and galleries.

The earlier this habit forms the easier it will be for the person to keep it up throughout his life. Many of a cultural institution’s adult visitors today were once children who were taken there by their parents tens of years ago.

*“My parents were always into sports. And I used to do all kinds of stuff: basketball, volleyball and swimming — I can’t even remember it all. And they took me to theaters too from when I was little, first to puppet theater and then on to the others.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites who actively visit cultural institutions, woman, 36 years.*

Habit as a factor for engagement in the cultural life is not only relevant for the middle-aged, but also for young people (to a lesser extent) and senior citizens (to a higher extent). However, there are two specific features of middle-aged life as discussed previously that also have a significant impact on the leisure choices of middle-aged citizens: their high level of responsibility for others and their financial autonomy. Below we will show how these two aspects specifically relate to the leisure activity of middle-aged citizens.

## Leisure with children

People with children are far more likely to visit a cultural institution with their kids, than with adult friends. This is most evident in the case of parks (60 % go there with their children as opposed to 27 % who go with friends), cinemas (43 % as opposed to 17 %), shopping malls (22 % as opposed to 9 %) and city and neighborhood events (15 % as opposed to 5 %) (Diagram 8).

It could be said that children function as a kind of trigger for bringing adults into the cultural life of the city.

*"I'm lazy, I never want to leave the house, but she [twelve year old daughter] takes me everywhere. She took me to [the play] "Alice in Wonderland", ... we've been to a lot of the museums on Arbat, saw the panorama, we see many things."*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites who actively visit cultural institutions, woman, 38 years.*

Based on the focus group data it is clear that there is a belief among parents that they must "instill the love of culture" in their children.

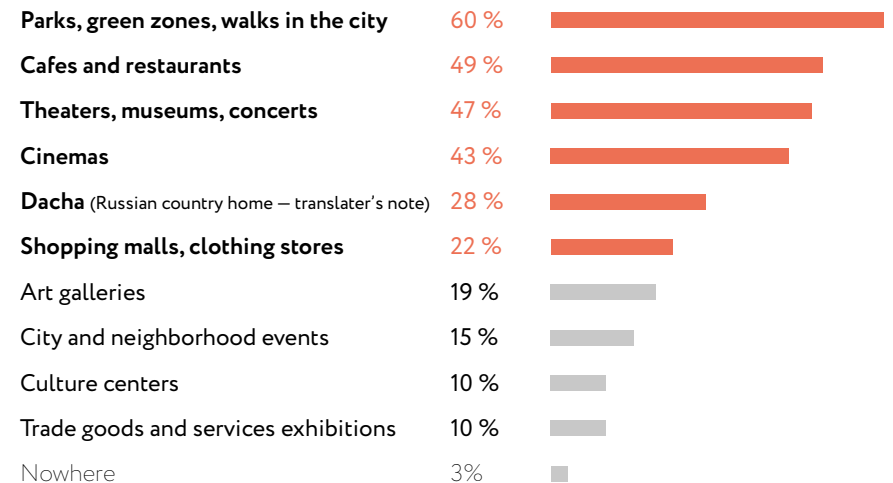
*"I was at the library on Shabolovka. It's not that big, there are bigger ones. But I took a book series there about Ancient Russia, everything about how they lived, what they ate and everything. I want to get my child into it. But at the moment he's not interested in libraries."*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites who actively visit cultural institutions, woman, 35 years.*

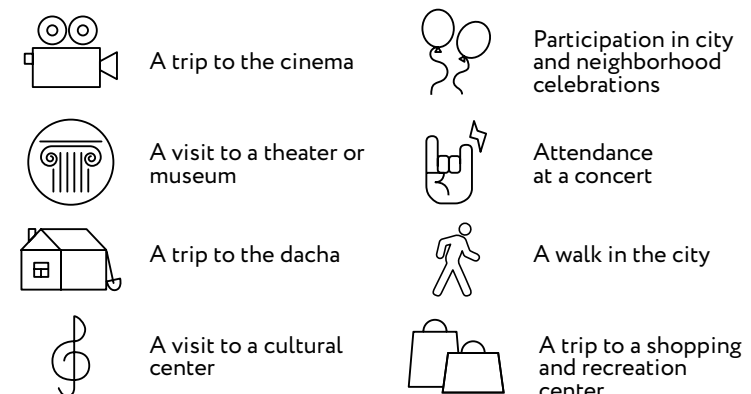
## Diagram 8

Which of the listed do you usually visit with children?\*(multiple answers possible)

\*amongst those who have underage children



The presence of a child influences the frequency of uptake of these cultural activities:

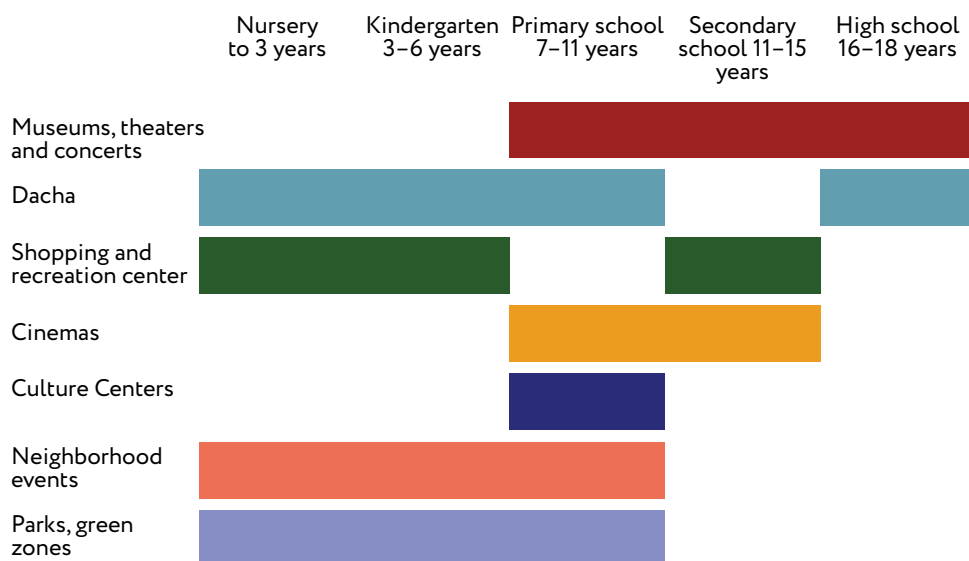


For all these formats the presence of the child has a positive influence: parents on average visit theaters, museums and parks more frequently than those who don't have children. However, differently aged children have different influences on how often parents get involved in certain activities (Diagram 9).

Parents of non-school age children usually choose formats like shopping and recreation centers, dachas, neighborhood events and parks. The frequent trips to shopping malls are probably connected with pragmatic needs rather than leisure. All other popular formats tend to revolve around spending time in the fresh air.

### Diagram 9

The influence of a child's age on the type of cultural institution that is visited by his parents.



For parents of non-school age children, the key aspects are safety and ecology: i.e. those who have small children, tend to spend as much time as possible outside (in parks or the country). At the same time, a parent's evaluation of safety will not be an objective view based on the presence of metal detectors or a large number of police in the vicinity, it will instead be based on purely subjective feelings. Based on expert opinion\*, the most important thing for Russian parents is the 'controllability' of a space: for instance, in a theme park for a couple of thousand people they would feel very anxious for their children despite all the security measures that were taken by the organizers. So, parks and large cultural institutions would benefit from organizing separate spaces for children.

\* From an interview with the Director of a large children's entertainment complex in the central administrative area of Moscow.

The widest range of activities is enjoyed (Diagram 9) when a child reaches primary school age. As the variety of activities the child is capable of enjoying grows, so does the level of his parents' engagement in the cultural life of the city. This can be attributed to the fact that at the time of school age the child is ready to comprehend complex types of leisure (museums and theaters) and attends cultural institutions with his parents. As he grows up, he continues to go to these places with his parents, but simple formats, like a trip to the park no longer requires parents' involvement. In addition, primary school is the time when a child most actively absorbs new information, as parents usually organize additional education and activities at this age.

However, it's also important to take into account the fact that a large amount of information and an unfamiliar atmosphere can exhaust a small child of pre-school and primary school age, so to make them feel more comfortable in a cultural institution there needs to be a play room where they can have a rest.

A gradual decrease in parents' involvement in leisure activities is connected with the child's moving on from secondary school and becoming more independent. At 16 a child very rarely goes to the cinema, shopping and recreation center or park with his parents. But the level of parents' interest in such formats as theaters, museums and concerts is still high until the child reaches adulthood. This can be due to parents' attempts to educate the child and instill in them the habit of going to such places on their own.

Educating school age children (especially the older children) is an important requirement for their parents, when it comes to choosing a cultural activity. If their children gain new experience and knowledge at an event in a cultural institution, then it is considered a success by the parents. The teenagers themselves are drawn to the opportunity for an interactive experience with objects<sup>3</sup>.

### Leisure time with friends

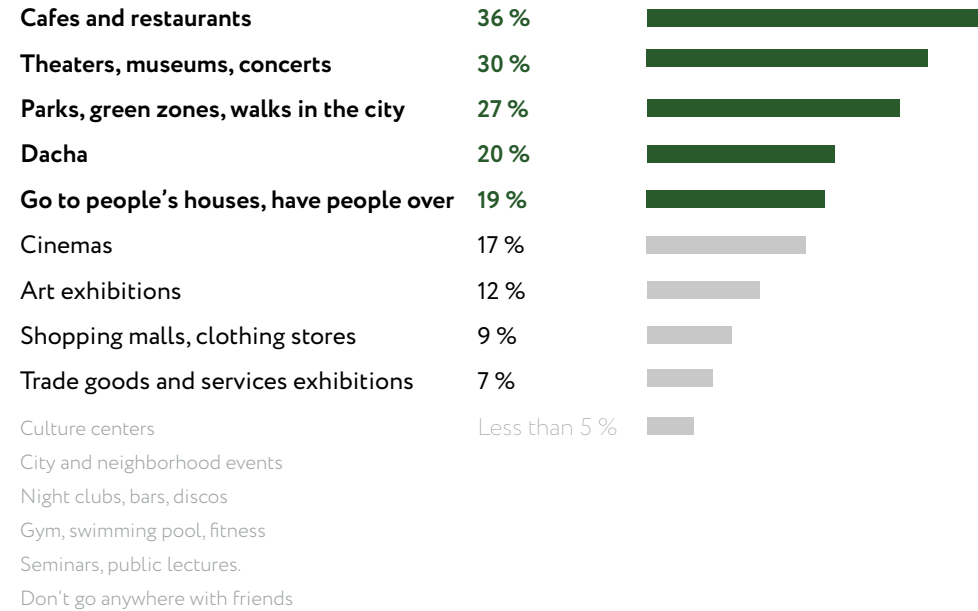
Aside from children, another tool for attracting citizens into leisure activities is friends. Focus group participants often mentioned that the quality of their leisure activity doesn't merely depend on the services offered, but on whom they're enjoyed with — with friends being the first choice.

When Moscovites choose a format of leisure with friends their main goal is socializing and communication while the atmosphere is merely a backdrop, whether it's a cultural institution, dacha or café.

The option of going to a café with friends is usually chosen by people who have a relatively high level of financial freedom. In addition, if there's a child in the family, it's important to have the option of leaving them with somebody (i.e. a grandparent). The availability of such an option increases the likelihood of an individual choosing a café or restaurant as a place to meet friends by 30 %.

### Diagram 10

What do you most often visit with friends, acquaintances, colleagues? (multiple answers possible)



Two types of middle-aged Moscovites visit the theater or museums with their friends. Firstly, it's those people who have a habit or tradition of going to cultural institutions. Secondly, are those citizens who are most open to meeting new people in public places. They are the individuals that are always ready to have a chat with a stranger at an exhibition or museum.

Going to the park is usually the choice of citizens that have a flexible working schedule or a lot of free time. It's usually the same people who attend city celebrations and events more than others.

The most popular formats of leisure activities for middle-aged Moscovites are directly connected with socializing. The people in this group are keen on communicating with each other and visit cultural institutions in groups of friends.

Going to the dacha with friends is related to the frequency of going to the dacha in general (of course, this is assuming an individual actually has a dacha). The more a middle age person generally spends time at the dacha the higher the chances that they will choose it as a place to spend time with their friends. Even citizens who only go to the dacha once a month also see it as a possibility for spending time with friends. It's also worth noting that the dacha is seen as an extension (an upgraded version) of spending free time at home, and not as an ecological activity or a chance to improve their health, etc.

The fifth most popular leisure activity is going to a friend's house. This is the least expensive and the easiest to plan format. At the same time, as with trips to the dacha, it's an activity that makes no use of the cultural infrastructure of the city. This format is usually chosen by Moscovites who are less integrated into the cultural life of the city.

Attracting groups of friends into such cultural institutions as museums, culture centers and libraries is a difficult task. The main problem is that friends are primarily oriented towards socializing together and aren't interested in specialized cultural services. Having cafes in cultural institutions is one possible compromise. On one hand admittedly, there is a chance that the groups who attend such institutions will go nowhere other than the café, thereby neglecting the main service of the cultural

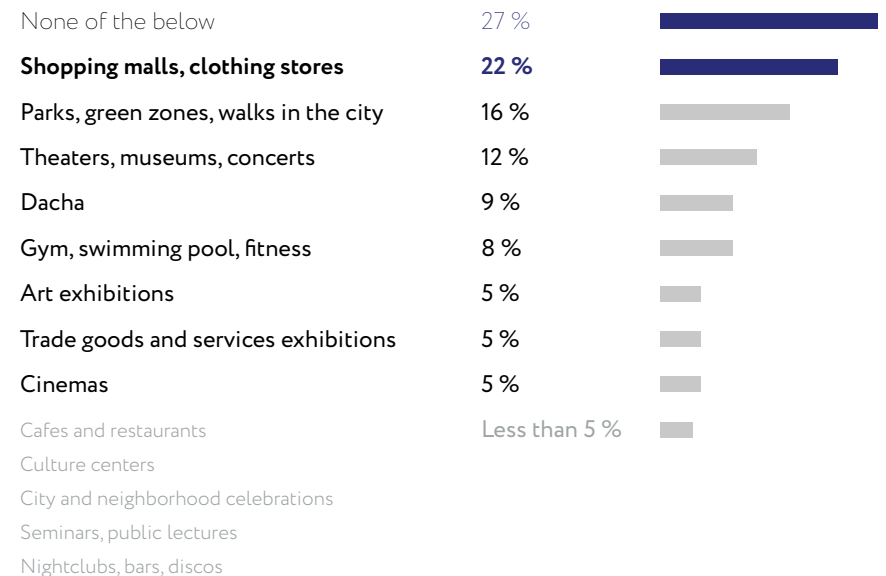
institution. But on the other hand, having come for the café, the chances of them going on to enjoy the rest of the cultural offering are certainly higher than if they had never visited at all.

## Independent Leisure Activity

Spending their free time alone is by far the least popular choice for middle-aged citizens: more than a quarter of people in this group never spend their free time alone.

### Diagram 11

Which of the below do you usually visit alone?  
(multiple answers possible)





Among the activities that middle-aged people take part in “for themselves” four main preferences stand out from the rest:



Shopping



Internet surfing



Visiting theaters, museums or concerts



Walking in the parks or green zones

Internet surfing is one of the most popular individual activity. It's important to note that different groups of citizens use different areas of the internet. The internet resources that Moscovites use to get information about the cultural life of the city can be divided into three types: social media, forums and news websites. The same content can be found in all three types, but its presentation will differ in each case.

Social networks are more of a short post format with an emotional tone. News websites on the other hand give information that's dense and detailed in content, but short in length and without the emotionality. Most of the forums are dedicated to one subject or problem, and have the most detailed and full messages. As leisure activities usually entail new experiences and emotions, spreading information via social media seems to be the most productive format. The effectiveness of this format is also compounded by the emotional component of posts as well as the quick distribution.

The possibility of sharing news with friends via a social media feed or in the format of personal messages is also relevant because a theater visit, or a trip to a museum or concert is usually done in a group. Only those citizens who are already integrated into the city's cultural life, go to these places by themselves. For this reason, we can conclude that the transformation of these activities from a group pursuit to an individual one isn't possible without a prior involvement in the cultural life of the city.

Citizens will only develop the habit of regular trips to cultural institutions by themselves, in cases where they have an existing track record of visiting the same institutions with friends, children or acquaintances.

The most regular visitors at cultural institutions today are people who were introduced to art and culture by their parents. Parental influence usually has the biggest impact on forming cultural habits, but these habits can also be acquired with the help of friends.

*“...My love for the theater was influenced by my friend [...] When we were in University together [...], I used to watch plays on TV and used to hate them, I hated the theater and it seemed very boring to me. Until she made me go — she said, ‘Ira, let’s go to the theater’, and I said ‘I hate it [the theater], I don’t like plays’. I thought they were so boring and not interesting at all. Movies were a different story, but plays — no. But she dragged me along anyway and then I realized what a difference there is between watching a play on TV and in real life — it’s like heaven and earth [...] She really helped me to fall in love with theater.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites who actively visit cultural institutions, woman, 52 years.*

Walks in the park as an individual activity are popular for two different reasons, each with a different motivation. The first can loosely be described as “obligatory” because it’s chosen by default, by citizens who have almost no information about the cultural life of the city. For example, they aren’t aware of the free services that the cultural institutions are offering, even though they potentially would have enjoyed them. In this situation — the park is the easier choice for them in that it doesn’t require a search for additional information. The other motive can loosely be called “ecological”. This applies to people who love nature and feel calmer when they’re away from the hustle and bustle of city life. In the case of the “obligatory” walkers, cultural institutions can compete with parks very well, in the case of “ecological” walkers however, it’s a much taller order.

Organizing various open-air events during the summer will therefore be an effective tool for attracting a new audience. This format is also very good because it allows the organizers to connect directly with people who would potentially like to diversify their free time but lack information about the opportunities the city has to offer.

### Income as a factor of (non)engagement in cultural life

The cultural life is more of a lifestyle choice for wealthy middle-aged citizens than for those with a lower income\*.

\*This is not only true of Moscow. Foreign studies have also shown a link between income level and cultural participation, which is customary for almost all spheres of culture. See, for example, Buraimo, Jones, Millward (2011). Participation and engagement in cultural activities, Analysis of the Taking Part Survey.

## The influence of income on the choice of leisure activity

Income **does not** affect the following leisure activities:



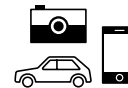
Visits to culture centers



Walks in the parks, green zones and city



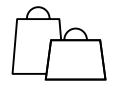
Fitness, gymnastics, jogging



Trips to trade goods and services exhibitions



Attendance at city and neighborhood celebrations and events

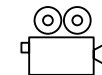


Trips to shopping malls, clothing stores

Income **affects** the choice of the following leisure activities:



Attendance at theaters, museums, concerts



Trips to the cinema



Visits to nightclubs, bars and discos



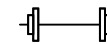
Attendance at seminars and public lectures



Attendance at art exhibitions



Trips to cafes and restaurants



Gym, swimming pool



Leisure time at the dacha



As would be expected, many of the activities whose popularity was not affected by income, were those that do not involve direct expenditure. The exception is shopping malls and clothing stores, but that's explained by the fact that most citizens visit those locations out of necessity.

Among the activities that are dependent on income are trips to cafés and restaurants, cinemas, theaters, museums and concerts as well as lectures and seminars.

Furthermore, the level of engagement with a leisure activity does not grow in relation to the increase in income. Thus, if a middle age citizen begins to earn twice as much money, it doesn't follow that he will now attend the theater twice as often. Furthermore, not many cultural institutions can compete with theaters, cinemas and concerts for the loyalty of the wealthier audience. The reason for this is the underdeveloped range of services that cultural institutions are able to offer. An example of such a service was the special "promenade excursions"<sup>4</sup> for 2 thousand rubles, for a limited number of participants, which was advertised by the Tretyakov Gallery in 2016. Such offers can attract middle-aged Moscovites, being aimed at smaller, more select groups of people.

However, by focusing on the wealthier citizens, it's important not to abandon the principle that cultural offers should be available to all sections of the population. It's important to create optional extras and benefits for the wealthier Moscovites, without discriminating against other groups of citizens.

For people who aren't able to pay the entry fee to places like museums and galleries, a system of concessional and fully free of charge options is already in place.

*"The Moscow government made every third Sunday free of charge in Moscow museums. I found out about it two years ago... We have already been to many places on this program and more than once. Why not? We take advantage of it."*

*Focus groups with middle-aged citizens, woman, 39 years.*

Having said that, not everyone knows about the discounts and concessional opportunities for visiting cultural institutions. Aside from using the most popular channels of information (TV and internet news media) to promote these services, it could also be effective to use radio, social media and advertising on the Metro — especially as these channels are the ones most preferred by citizens who cite the lack of money as an obstacle to their more active participation in the cultural life of the city.

1. See: [kidsinmuseums.ru](http://kidsinmuseums.ru)



2. See: [mosmuseum.ru/kids](http://mosmuseum.ru/kids)



3. 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.



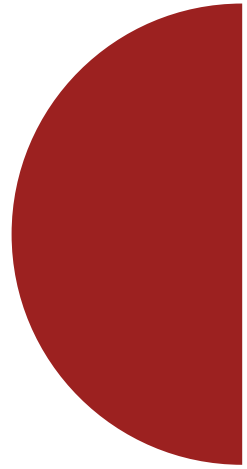
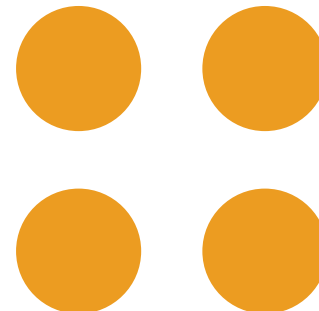
4. Description of the "promenade excursions" on the Tretyakov Gallery website is as follows: "The format of 'promenade excursions' is a themed gallery tour that includes theatrical performance with actors and musical program".

## Key ideas

- 1 In the cultural sphere citizens are prone to form habits. The habit of visiting (or not visiting) a cultural institution stays with the person throughout almost their whole life. In other words, those who have visited museums regularly in the past will continue to try to do so.
- 2 The earlier this habit is instilled the easier it will be for the person to keep it up throughout their life. Many cultural institution visitors today are those who were taken there by their parents tens of years ago.
- 3 The cultural life is more accessible to wealthy middle age citizens than those with a lesser income.
- 4 Although middle-aged citizens have the highest financial capabilities of the population, they are not always able to get their demands for cultural engagement met by the existing provision from cultural institutions.
- 5 The main obstacles to middle age citizens participating more actively in the cultural life of Moscow are: lack of time, money and also the lack of an obligation to do so. However the main obstacle – “lack of time” means that citizens invest their free time into other formats: especially housework and meeting friends.
- 6 The answer “lack of money” isn’t always connected with the respondent’s income, but more often with the desire to save.
- 7 The more contacts a middle-aged person has, the more frequent is their choice of spending time with friends as a leisure activity. Cultural organizations aren’t designed for friendly get-togethers, so this niche is instead taken by cafes, restaurants, shopping and recreation centers or parks.
- 8 Visiting a café in a cultural institution increases the chances that a citizen will return for the cultural services as well.
- 9 For those who are busy with housework it’s important to develop offerings in cultural organizations closer to home, and also inform people of local events and celebrations that are taking place in the neighborhood.

- 10 Usually, a child acts as a trigger for engaging parents in the cultural life. Although bringing up several children at the same time usually reduces the frequency of parents' visits to cultural institutions.
- 11 Children have a particularly strong influence on trips to cinemas, participation in city and local celebrations, trips to the theater / museum / concert, spending time at the dacha, walks in the city, visits to culture centers and trips to shopping and recreation malls.

## The Middle-Aged Audience: The Different Groups Features





What groups can middle age citizens be divided into?



What types of leisure do the most educated middle-aged Moscovites prefer?



Why do more than a quarter of middle-aged citizens spend their free time at home?

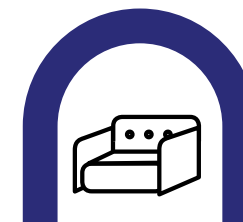
Not all citizens spend their free time in the same way and while developing programs and events it's important to take into account the specific requirements of each group of citizens, and properly understand them as a target audience.

Among middle-aged Moscovites there are six groups that can be delineated in terms of their leisure preferences. Discussion of these six groups will form the main body of this chapter.



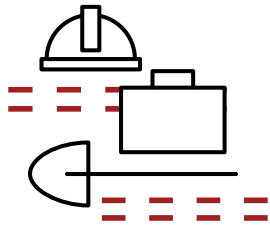
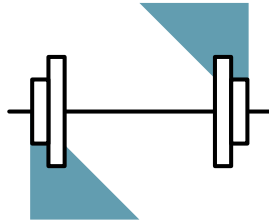
**Keen walkers — 42 %.** Their main free time activity is walking. The main reason given for this preference is health and wellbeing, although in reality it may also be connected with financial constraints.

**Stay-at-Homers — 28 %.** They prefer to spend their free time at home. They see no reason for a change of scene and are frightened by new things. At the same time, the stay at homers don't experience a lack of information about the cultural life of the city. They simply refuse to take the opportunities that Moscow is offering them, by choosing home-based alternatives, which allow them to carry out their routine daily activities, uninterrupted.



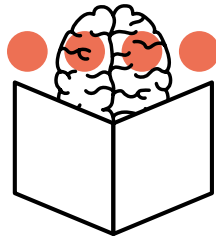
**The Involved— 21 %.** Spending leisure time at a cultural institution is a very common habit for this group, for whom a trip to a museum is nothing out of the ordinary. The Involved are those who are already very actively engaged in the cultural life of Moscow. This group represents the most active visitors to museums, theaters and concerts in the capital.

**Athletes** — 7 %. These are people who already have a physically active life style. This group would not be put off attending a cultural activity by any logistical complications.



**Workaholics** — 6 %. Workaholics aren't working a lot because they have a low income, on the contrary — they have the highest earnings among middle-aged Moscovites. They see no direct, or even indirect benefit in going to a cultural institution, and so consider many cultural activities to be a waste of time.

**Self-developers** — 5 %. Self-developers are aiming at increasing their cultural capital and are ready to spend their 'excess' earnings on doing so. So, for example, instead of taking on a part time job or searching for one, they prefer to broaden their education and cultural knowledge.



### Keen walkers

This group contains those citizens who, when asked: “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” answered “I would prefer to spend it outside or walking in a park, around the city”.

**Keen walkers** make up the biggest group of middle-aged Moscovites — 42 %. Working with this group is difficult due to their lack of interest in cultural institutions.

*“My husband and I take walks, and not just in the park, but also around the old streets of Moscow. We don't need any theaters or anything, just a nice walk. If the weather is nice — that's all we need.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites, woman, 35 years.*

Choosing to go for a walk can be motivated by health reasons as well as the financial circumstances of this group: 42 % identified affordability as the key criteria when choosing a format of leisure activities.

**Keen walkers** usually choose their own neighborhoods for talking walks. For example, during large city celebrations, they prefer local events in their area, more than any of the other groups.

Another reason for this preference is family. All people in this group live with children or grandchildren younger

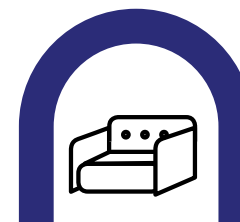
than 18 years. A walk in the park is universally popular with families, as it is interesting for both children and grown ups.

*"I live in Uzhnoe Tushino [...] so we make the trip for the child. To Izmailovskiy Park or Kolomenskoe — he's too big for playgrounds, so we try to take him to these parks, but it's all about his computer at the moment."*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites, woman, 36 years.*

Citizens whose main leisure activity is walking, often prefer locations in close proximity to their home. So a way of attracting **Keen walkers** into the cultural life of the city could be by organizing mutual events between parks and cultural institutions. Such events can introduce this group of people to cultural organizations and overcome any possible distrust of them.

For a wider engagement of **Keen walkers** it's important to provide an opportunity for family leisure that could be interesting for them as well as for their children. However, the financial constraints on this group should also be taken into account.



## Stay-at-Homers

**Stay-at-Homers** are those who answered the question “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” with “I would prefer to spend it at home”. **Stay-at-Homers** represent more than a quarter of the middle-aged audience — 28 %.

Stay-at-Homers see no reason for a change of scene and are frightened of anything new.

**Stay-at-Homers** rarely trust strangers and don't expect any positive actions from them. For example, they are more likely than any other Moscovites to state that it's not a good idea to meet people in public places. They are also more afraid than other groups to send their child to a summer camp, often worrying that the child might “fall in with the wrong crowd”.

At the same time, the distrust of the **Stay-at-Homers** is not just aimed at specific individuals, but at society and its institutions as a whole. The cautious attitude towards the world around them isn't limited by the city: a **Stay-at-Homer** would spend their holiday in Moscow not because he can't afford it (the average income of 31-40 thousand rubles is the same as the income of his peers\*), but because he sees no reason for a chance of scene and is frightened of anything new.

\* The level of income is broken down by group as follows (from the highest to the lowest):  
1. Workaholics  
2. Athletes  
3. Self-developers  
4. Stay-at-Homers  
5. The Involved  
6. Keen walkers  
For more information on this see Appendix 2.

A Stay-at-Homer knows that the city has a lot of opportunities on offer for an interesting leisure activity, but refuses to take them. Only 1 % of this group say that they aren't receiving enough information about the cultural life of the city. Also, only 1 % of people in this group think that Moscow doesn't have enough interesting events and spaces.

One of the key obstacles for visiting cultural institutions for Stay-at-Homers is the high prevalence of limitations, conditions and rules. A city apartment has far fewer of these demands, so the choice to stay at home is an easy one from their point of view. They are also attracted by the dacha, and the broader freedoms it offers than conditions in the city.

*"Before I wouldn't miss any premiers. And now I don't even want to go anywhere. Because you stay at home – turn your computer on, find a film and watch it, and then again in a week's time. And it's fine. You just have a snack and come back to watch the rest. Money has nothing to do with it, because to get yourself some nice beer and shrimp – you won't save any money. But it would just be a nice way to get some rest and enjoy yourself."*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites, man, 43 years.*

**Stay-at-Homers** — are the most difficult group to involve in the cultural life of the city, but if you learn how to attract them, then the large number of individuals in this group will guarantee good results. Our assumption is that the distrust that **Stay-at-Homers** feel for the world around them, can only be shifted by the provision of lots of clear information: they have to know beforehand what to expect if they decide to visit an art exhibition. This requires detailed, well put-together promotions of events, with exhaustive information about what's on offer at a cultural institution, expert opinions and so on.

It's important for a **Stay-at-Homer** that the visit to a cultural institution doesn't take them too far out of their comfort zone. They may well be frightened off by any excessive rules and regulations surrounding the experience (dress codes, behavior codes etc.). This doesn't mean that a person from this group will show up at a theater or museum in their pajamas and behave in an unrespectable way, it just means that too many restrictions will simply see them turning away at 'the door' and heading home.

To overcome this problem, it's important to put effort into showing a **Stay-at-Homer** exactly what they can expect to get out of a cultural institution. The Gorky Park website is a good example, with its clear and detailed "Things to do"<sup>1</sup> section, which can potentially do a great job of reassuring reluctant **Stay-at-Homers**, and encouraging them to join in and have a great time.

Local culture centers and neighborhood libraries are also very relevant for the Stay-at-Homers. Their positioning as "homely" spaces may make them significantly more attractive to this group of Moscovites.



## The Involved

**The Involved** are those who answered the question “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” with “I would spend it in a cultural institution (theater, museum, library, cinema and so on)”.

**The Involved** make up 21 % of middle-aged Moscovites.

The chance to spend their free afternoon in a cultural institution is most often chosen by those citizens for whom a trip to a museum or a gallery is not anything out of the ordinary, but already part of their active cultural life style: 44 % of this group go to theaters, concerts or museums several times a month or more. Among other middle age citizens the number of people who display the same regularity in going to cultural institutions is twice as low.

There are more women among **The Involved**: 70% of this group is female. This proportion of women to men is typical of audiences for Moscow cultural institutions as well as citywide cultural events<sup>2</sup>.

*“I go places all the time. I have a wonderful husband — he’s interested in everything and almost every week we’d be out to a theater or several times to a gallery and so on. In other cities too. All in all — I get around a lot.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites who actively visit cultural institutions, woman, 39 years.*

The education level of **The Involved** is high: 75 % of this group have a higher education qualification which is 6 percentage points higher than on average among middle-aged Moscovites.

In addition to the most popular channels of information on the cultural life in Moscow — TV and internet news websites — social networks will also be a good choice to communicate with this group. This source is used by the involved 1.5 times more than others.

**The Involved** are already actively engaged in cultural life, but that doesn’t mean that cultural institutions shouldn’t continue working to attract them. On the contrary, their preferences and needs should be taken into account as a first priority, as they represent an already loyal audience that can potentially bring their friends and relatives along to the institutions too.

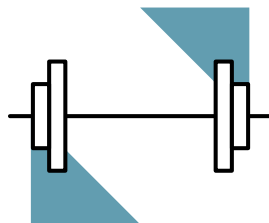
When working with this group, a successful strategy would be to position the cultural institutions as organizations “for a closed group”. This can be done by creating a club system that includes several cultural institutions. Active visitors are very interested in this approach.

*“For instance, when you come to the Tretyakov Gallery {its Lavrushensky building} and you get a coupon {there} with a discount for something else. Everyone wants to get those 30-50 % discounts to visit a {different} building of the Gallery. I would gladly go.”*

*Focus groups with middle-aged Moscovites, man 40 years.*

If this promotional invitation can include several people, **The Involved** would then be able to invite their less active friends and acquaintances.





## Athletes

**Athletes** are those who answered the question “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” with “I would do sports (jogging, gym, sport club etc.)”. This group makes up 7 % of middle-aged Moscovites.

Athletes include a large number of people with higher education qualifications or academic title.

**Athletes** are those who have an active, sporty lifestyle. They are more likely than other Moscovites to go to the gym and swimming pools: almost half of them do this several times a week or more.

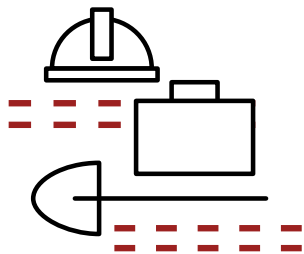
When choosing a cultural leisure activity the members of this group aren't concerned by possible complications and difficulties, such as an inconvenient location for an event. They are prepared to travel to remote locations for an interesting experience as part of, say, a citywide celebration.

Interestingly, among **Athletes**, the number of people with higher education qualifications and academic titles is higher even than in **The Involved** — 80 %. They have a high average income as well: around 41-50 thousand

rubles, which is 10 thousand rubles higher than the average income of middle-aged Moscovites.

It would possibly be wrong to expect high interest in single or permanent sporting events in parks, for instance, with this group. They already lead a very active lifestyle and do sports several times a week. Cultural institutions can't compete with specialized centers (gyms, fitness clubs etc.).

**Athletes** — are a demanding audience, which is difficult to attract. However, aside from creating new offers for them, it may also be possible to get their attention by adjusting cultural offerings in line with the 'active' formats they are already familiar with. The “Running city”<sup>3</sup> event was a good example of this, combining competitive and educational elements in a way that allowed physically active citizens to learn about the city and its history. Or treasure hunts at the VDNH<sup>4</sup>, which also combined education and sports.



## Workaholics

**Workaholics** are those who answered the question “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” with “I would work, finishing anything undone or starting a new project etc.”. This group represents 6 % of middle-aged Moscovites.

During their free time Workaholics prefer to work: as they are constantly locked into an ‘economic consumption’ rather than a cultural mindset, and so see no alternative to working in their free time as well.

**Workaholics** aren’t working because their income is low: on the contrary it’s the highest out of all middle-aged Moscovites, exceeding the average income by more than 20 thousand rubles at around 51-75 thousand rubles a month.

It’s possible that the reason behind their preference for working in their leisure time is linked to their inability to see an alternative due to low cultural capital: **Workaholics** are locked into an ‘economic consumption’ mindset, rather than a cultural one. As such, they see little direct or even indirect benefit from attending cultural institutions. However, the same group is far more positive about spending time visiting their friends, or having friends over

to visit them. **Workaholics** are twice as likely as the other middle-aged groups to choose this format for spending their free time. This may be connected with the number of social contacts they have. People in this group are twice as likely as people in the other groups to state that they have more than 200 contacts in their address book.

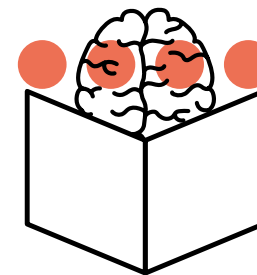
Two thirds of the **Workaholic** audience is men — and no group has a higher proportion of males. On average the level of education in this group is lower than in other groups: only 65 % of **Workaholics** have a higher education qualification. At the same time, it’s important to note that having a higher education qualification in this group doesn’t automatically guarantee a higher level of income.

Working with the **Workaholics** is difficult due to two interconnected factors: their negative attitude to many formats of cultural leisure activities and their existing low levels of attendance at cultural institutions.

It’s possible to assume that their dismissive attitude towards cultural activities is the result of a lack of clearly presented information about the possibilities. It’s important to bear in mind that this group isn’t very large but is difficult to engage. However, it is the group with the highest expendable income.

To attract the **Workaholic** audience, cultural institutions need to focus their attention on the most suitable events, i.e. those that are focused on the practical benefits of cultural activities. These ideal events may include lectures or seminars, which help a modern citizen develop their professional skills and solve everyday problems. The internet has a large number of these mini-trainings on offer: from the basics of investment to speed potato peeling. Educational formats and topics that have applicability out in the off-line world, could be very attractive for **Workaholics**.

In cooperating with **Workaholics**, we suggest focusing on channels of information that they trust: blogs and forums. It is worth pointing out however, that there is an important difference between forums and social network communities. Forums are usually seen as a place where professionals come together into one community and where any topic questions can be answered. Social networks on the other hand require a much shallower level of knowledge, and are more informal.



### Self-developers

**Self-developers** are those who answered the question “How would you prefer to spend a free afternoon if one suddenly became available” with “I would prefer to spend it on self-development: attending lectures, workshops, master classes etc.”. **Self-developers** make up a little more than 5 % of middle-aged Moscovites.

They are oriented towards horizontal connections and informal contacts: it’s important for them to create personal connections. They strive to multiply their cultural capital and are ready to spend money to do so (their level of income is higher than the average in the group by 10 thousand rubles). That’s why instead of working or finding new careers, the **Self-developers** spend their time on education and elevating their cultural level.

The choice of investing in their education is dictated by, on the one hand, the large amount of free time that this group has (only 71 % of the people in this group have full time employment), and an active attitude towards their leisure time activities on the other. Formats like sports, culture and cognitive tourism, as well as independent road trips in their car are all popular among this group. Furthermore, **Self-developers** are more likely than citizens in any other group to travel abroad, which indirectly suggests that their demand for quality cultural offerings is high.

These citizens are also more likely than any others to state that they have no one to accompany them to their preferred cultural institution. When organizing lectures, workshops and masterclasses it's important to include time for informal socialization between visitors as well as the organizers and the hosts, in order to attract this group. This would allow the **Self-developers** to not only acquire new knowledge but also make new acquaintances — something that is very important for them.

1. See: [park-gorkogo.com/what-to-do](http://park-gorkogo.com/what-to-do)



2. Success and the future of city's cultural events. Sociological research results of 'Library Night' and 'Night at a museum' events in Moscow. MISCP, 2015.



3. See: [runcity.org/ru/events/](http://runcity.org/ru/events/)



4. See: [vdnh.ru/events/vystavki/ekskursii-kvesty-na-vidnkh/](http://vdnh.ru/events/vystavki/ekskursii-kvesty-na-vidnkh/)



## Key ideas

- 1 Although middle age is a unified social phenomenon, there are several groups that can be identified within this demographic, based on the popularity of their leisure preferences.
- 2 **Keen walkers** make up the biggest group, and are not particularly interested in visiting cultural institutions.
- 3 **Stay-at-Homers** make up one quarter of middle-aged Moscovites. They are aware of the city's potential for interesting leisure time activities, but refuse to take advantage of them, preferring alternative activities at home.
- 4 **The Involved** make up 21 % of middle-aged Moscovites. Most of them are women.
- 5 **Athletes** are the citizens who lead the most physically active lifestyle. This group contains people with a high education level and income. They make up 7 % of middle-aged Moscovites.

# Recommendations

- 6 **Workaholics** (6 % of the respondents) see no alternative in their free time, but work. The reason for this is their low cultural capital: they are locked into consuming economic goods rather than cultural ones. Most of the people in this group are men.
- 7 **The Self-developers** are those who in their free time want to elevate their cultural level. They make up just over 5 % of middle-aged Moscovites.



The key questions that the cultural institutions can ask of this age group and the questions that this research is dedicated to are: “Why should we work with middle-aged Moscovites?” and “How we do so successfully?” At the same time, even the middle-aged Moscovites who work in cultural institutions have trouble in giving a positive answer to the question “Would I come here if I weren’t working here?”\*.

The importance of working with this group is difficult to overestimate. First of all — middle-aged Moscovites are a large group of people with high levels of income, most of whom express an interest in the cultural life of the city. Secondly, almost half of this group are parents who will pass the experience of attending cultural institutions on to their children.

As this research has shown, there are a variety of groups within the main body of 35-54 year old Moscovites. So to work with them effectively, it’s important to not only take into account the general characteristics of middle-aged people, but also to look at the narrower segments of this audience and develop ideas specifically for each group.

\*From an expert interview with the director of a Moscow culture center.



**Keen walkers.** The largest group of middle-aged Moscovites. When choosing a leisure activity they mostly prefer those that are close to home, so to attract them into the cultural life of the city they will benefit from events that are organized together with cultural institutions in parks. For an even larger involvement of this group it’s important to provide an option for family leisure activities that would be interesting for them as well as for their children. It’s also important to remember the financial limitations of this group.



**Stay-at-Homers.** The most difficult group to attract into the cultural life of the city, but if they are attracted, than the relative size of this group can be the key to good results for cultural institutions. One of the key obstacles to attending cultural institutions for this group is an overemphasis on limitations, rules and requirements. As the Stay-at-Homers’ level of trust in the outside world is low, they need more information on cultural institutions and events. The key characteristic of a cultural institution that is keen on attracting this group is predictability — which requires a lot of detailed information to be made available to the potential service users. Local culture centers, libraries etc which market themselves as “homely” will also interest this group significantly.



**The Involved.** This group represents the current main audience for cultural institutions. This group does not just aspire to the cultural life, they are already spending lots of free time in it. This is also the group that is potentially the most likely to influence other people into joining the cultural life of the city as well. When working with this group of Moscovites, cultural institutions should market themselves as a place “for a closed group”. This positioning can be achieved with the creation of a club system that unites several cultural institutions. If the membership of a club system and loyalty program for regular visitors can be shared among several people, then the people already in this group will be much more likely to bring their less involved friends and acquaintances to the cultural institution.



**Athletes.** When choosing a leisure activity, people in this group aren't put off by possible difficulties connected with the logistic and geographical complications of an event. They are willing to go to remote, peripheral neighborhoods for an interesting event as part of a citywide celebration. So creating unique and interesting content can attract the **athletes** regardless of a cultural institution's location. They might also be interested in events that combine physical activity and other formats of leisure.



**Workaholics.** This group does not see a direct benefit in attending cultural institutions, and so consider many formats of leisure activities to be a useless waste of time. Their dismissive attitude towards leisure activities is generally a result of a lack of information, or its poor presentation. To attract the workaholics, cultural institutions need to accentuate the practical value of their activities. This can be lectures or seminars that will help a modern citizen to improve his professional skillset and solve everyday problems. For working with this group we suggest focusing on their trusted information channels: first and foremost, these are professional forums.



**Self-developers.** More people in this group than in any of the others complained that they have no one to attend cultural institutions with. When organizing lectures or workshops it's important to include time and facilities for informal socializing between visitors, organizers and hosts. A more flexible approach to group visits will allow the self-developers to bring their friends along to a cultural institution.

Appendix 1

# Methods of Data Collection and Information Sources





Throughout this research into the leisure time activities of middle-aged Moscovites, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used.

In the course of a mass telephone survey, Moscovites between the ages of 35 and 54 years were given the opportunity to answer questions that were then united into the following basic theme blocks: channels for acquiring information about the cultural life of Moscow, participation in the cultural life of Moscow, obstacles that prevent participation in the cultural life of Moscow, formats for spending free time (the actual and the preferred), planning of leisure time, social demographic characteristics. The method of a standardized formalized interview was used. The volume of the sample was 1000 respondents. The acquired data underwent statistical quality control.

The results of the quantitative analysis of the respondents' answers retrieved through a mass survey of the citizens was then enhanced by the data from four focus groups — group discussions with middle-aged citizens about their leisure activities. One focus group with each of the following subgroups was conducted: active visitors of cultural institutions, stay-at-homers, parents of underage children and people with no underage children.

Four expert interviews with professionals in the leisure sphere who actively work with this social age group were conducted as part of this research. Two of the interviewees work in the private sector and two in the government. We have also conducted a secondary analysis of our database of expert interviews with a view to developing recommendations for working with families.

## Appendix 2

# Characterizations of Nuclear Groups



Within all six of our analysis groups, we have identified “nuclear groups” — made up of individuals with the most typical models of leisure time behavior for each of the groups. The social-demographic characteristics of these nuclear groups are shown in the tables. They have been discovered based on decision trees (CHAID), in which all substantive variables of the middle-aged were taken into account.

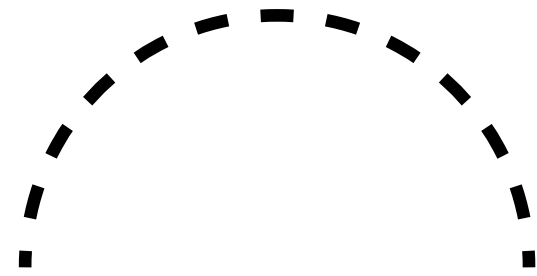
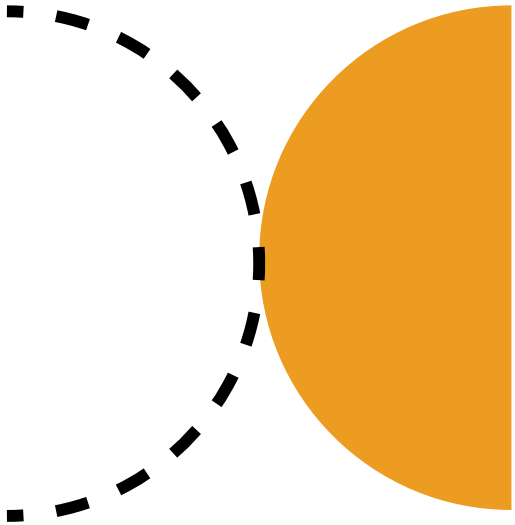
The indicators that are significantly higher or lower than the average are in green and orange respectively.

Characteristics	Nuclear group						Sample average
	Stay-at-Homers	The Involved	Athletes	Keen walkers	Self-developers	Workaholics	
<b>Sex</b>							
Man, %	54	30	45	40	55	100	44
Woman, %	46	70	55	60	45	0	56
<b>Age</b>							
Average age, years	45	45	43	41	44	41	43,8
Median age, years	45	45	42	41	44	40	43
<b>Education</b>							
Incomplete high school, %	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Highschool graduate, %	6	3	4	2	2	5	4
Technical college graduate, %	26	20	16	21	23	30	26
Higher education, %	67	75	76	77	73	65	69
Academic degree%	1	2	4	0	0	0	1
<b>Income</b>							
Average income, thousands, rubles	31-40	31-40	41-50	31-40	41-50	51-75	31-40

<b>Source of information</b>							
TV, %	51	54	48	58	48	48	56
Radio, %	13	13	11	14	11	9	12
Newspapers, %	19	15	11	14	11	5	17
Magazines, %	4	2	6	10	5	2	6
Metro advertising, %	6	5	6	8	13	11	8
Online news websites, %	26	9	57	40	40	45	38
Blogs and forums, %	45	41	49	50	40	56	43
Social networks, %	8	45	9	14	20	5	9
Relatives, friends, acquaintances and colleagues, %	3	14	14	6	13	9	9
Don't get any information, %	1	9	0	0	2	2	1
<b>Subjective obstacles to participation in the cultural life of the city</b>							
Lack of money, %	15	18	13	15	16	3	15
Difficult logistics, %	3	6	6	8	9	6	5
Lack of information, %	4	6	4	8	5	2	4
No comprehensive source, %	2	2	4	2	2	2	2
Not enough interesting events, %	1	5	3	0	9	0	3
Don't like it, %	2	4	1	4	5	5	3
No one to go with, %	5	3	3	2	7	0	3
Poor health, %	8	7	1	0	14	2	7
Lack of time, %	74	63	80	73	60	70	68
No obstacles, %	11	16	9	12	17	20	12

Appendix 3

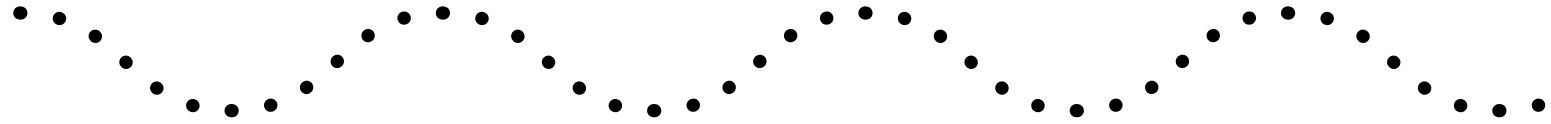
# Types of Leisure Activities



## How often do you...? (%)

	Several times a month or more	Once every couple of months	Once a year or less	Never
Visit theaters, museums, and concerts	25	33	30	12
Visit cinemas	34	24	17	25
Go to cafes and restaurants	39	24	12	25
Go to shopping malls, clothing stores	58	20	8	14
Go to art exhibits	16	22	28	34
Visit culture centers	14	15	20	51
Listen to lectures, go to seminars	11	8	7	74

# Project Contributors



Research Curator:

**Maria Privalova**

Methodology development:

**Alexander Kostukov**

**Ivan Napreenko**

**Kiril Puzanov**

**Pavel Stepanzov**

**Yulia Chursina**

Authors:

**Alexander Kostukov**

**Kiril Puzanov**

Collection and procession of quantitative data:

**Polina Zhigareva**

**Alexander Kostukov**

**Kiril Puzanov**

**Pavel Stepanzov**

**Yulia Chursina**

Editors:

**Alina Bogatkova**

**Anna Kozirevskaya**

**Maria Privalova**

Translators, Copy Editors:

**Dan Vesty**

**Asija Mudrov-Vesty**

Design:

**Aglaya Demidenko**



Moscow  
Department  
of Culture



Moscow Institute  
for Social and  
Cultural Programmes



Nekrasov  
Central Library

Kostukov A., Puzanov K.

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.

Published by the Nekrasov Central Library, Moscow, 2018.

Based on data and preliminary analysis by the Moscow Institute for Social and Cultural Programmes.

Find this publication online at **[miscp.ru](http://miscp.ru)**.

ISBN 978-5-903108-35-0