Meaning of life: an analysis from positions of sociology of life

Summary. The paper deals with sociological treatment of “meaning of life” notion from theoretical positions of “sociology of life” concept. A history of its emergence in sociology, in public space and everyday reality is offered. Definitions of “meaning of life” are analysed as they are reflected in philosophical and psychological writing, as well as treatment of this notion in sociology. Methodological and methodical approaches to interpretation and operationalization of the “meaning of life” are discussed. Basing on an analysis of theoretical search and empirical studies results, essence, contents and structure of meaning of life are defined and its feasible classification is suggested. The paper concludes with methodological aspects of identifying meanings of life of Russians today basing on the findings of a recent all-Russian sociological survey.

Keywords: sociology of life • life world • meaning • meaning of life • social consciousness • behavior • activities • social environment

Man in the world of institutions: on logics and mechanisms of social construction of reality

Summary. The author treats opposing «subject – structure» notions as a key problem of social science; descriptions of this opposition reveal in different manners competing conceptual and methodological strategies in sociological theorizing (metodological individualism vs. holism, sociological nominalism vs. realism, subjectivism vs. objectivism etc.). Attention is paid to attempts at synthetical resolution of «subject – structure» problem, as reflected in some sociological theories of the second half of the 20th century («social contruction of reality» by P. Berger and T. Luckman, A. Gidden's structuration theory e.a.). A possible convergence of «contructivist» и «struturalist» positions is argued for as demonstrated by theoretical interpretation of societal institutions emergence from inner logic of social interaction with their subsequent «autonomization».

Keywords: «subject – structure» opposition • social theory • sociological constructivism • social action • institutions • routinization • reification • alienation

ISP RAS responds to challenges of time

Summary. The paper demonstrates motivations, goals and meanings of key ISP RAS projects headed by G.V. Osipov, that offer frameworks for a program to renovate Russian social science, as well as basic problems accompanying its elaboration and expansion. In author’s view success of this program is an important precondition for objective cognition of ongoing social processes in contemporary Russia.

Keywords: crisis • society • state • desintegration • paradigm • rationality and values

Russia and USA: new architecture of interaction
Summary. By the multiple examples of interaction between superpowers and newly constituted states – former USSR republics – the author shows that major threat consists in the attempts of quasi-states in post-Soviet area that lead to confrontation between the RF and the US in their self-interests. Most evidently these politics have been expressed in the actions of Maidan authorities of Ukraine which decided to unleash terror against their own people in the East of the country to please the US and the controlled by them NATO. The author thinks that Russia’s reaction to such unfriendly actions by the US and their Ukrainian protégés should be adequate, reserved and peacekeeping but in case of crossing the red line – tough and uncompromising. In connection with the current situation, the problem of myth-fighting becomes increasingly actual. The myths not corresponding to reality should be decisively rebuked including the myth of “indissoluble Slavic unity”. The historic memory of the relationships between Russians and their neighbors should be restored in full extent without exemptions of some “uncomfortable” for mythology facts. It is time for Russia to give up (at least, for some time) missionary work and altruism in relations with its neighbours in Eastern Europe and build these relations exclusively on the basis of mutual interests and adherence to reciprocal obligations.

Keywords: globalization • confrontation • mythology • blackmailing • superpowers • self-sufficiency • isolation • sanctions • aggression • partnership • messianism • well-being • traditions • culture • paradigm

45 LEVASHOV V.K. (Institute of Social and Political Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia)

Russia’s society: 25 years of neo-liberal reforms

Summary. The article deals with results of liberal reforms in Russia and specific economic crises in the recent quarter-century. Author’s position regarding essence, nature and social effectiveness of such transformations in offered. It is concluded that reserves and potentialities of the liberal model of economic development are limited. Data of “How are you, Russia” sociological monitoring permit to disclose citizens’ attitudes to inner politics of Russia’s government and foreign policy priorities. Potentialities of Russian civil society are discussed.

Keywords: sustainable development of society • civil society • social risks • liberal reforms • economic crises • sociological monitoring • potentialities of civil society

54 MILEKHIN A.V. (ISP RAS, Romir Research Holding, Gallup International/WIN, Moscow, Russia)

Gallup International global polls: the ways world media interpret global opinion research results

Summary. The article considers the problem of global public opinion data collection via global surveys conducted by Gallup International/WIN association simultaneously in several countries. The question of global survey results interpretation is considered from both researchers’ and the global media’s point of view. The article looks at various classification types and calculation methods that can be used in research in order to obtain certain nuances and angles on the study. The question of expediency of macro region global samples, ones that consider different weights of a country in the total sample for the sake of obtaining more precise data, is also raised. The article discusses possibility of developing additional classifiers based on the principles of geography, history, culture, religious beliefs for the sake of a fully comprehensive approach to research. According to author, our changing world permits no longer to calculate results of joint global studies without any consideration for the weight of a participating country’s total population. Attempts to create macro regions solely on a geographical basis seem inadequate these days. The simplified approach to analysis in global research basically reduces studies to mere “voting polls” hindering attempt to really try and get the entire planet’s actual public opinion on an issue, the latter objective requiring a global representative sample. Unfortunately, the world’s mass media gladly use such simplified and predictable data which in turn result in an effect quite opposite to the idea initially conceived by the creators of global public opinion surveys, people like George Gallup and his colleagues. Via global public opinion polling, those researchers hoped to warn world leaders against making new mistakes, against future wars and conflicts. Today media using just the very top layer of global poll results, use the latter for propaganda.

Keywords: Gallup International • global survey • public opinion • global poll • regional classification • country weight • global samples
Pensioners: how they live and how to improve their situation

Summary. The paper discusses pensioners’ situation not only from the position of their pensions’ *per se* as it is the case widely these days. No less important is assessment of family incomes in basic groups of pensioners, specifics of their families’ composition and sources of contributions to family budgets, structures of incomes use for consumption and their future trends. Such an analysis is essential for grounding changes in pensions provision policies as well as in elaborating Strategy of actions in the interests of senior ages up to 2020 as resolved by Russian Federation government, 5th of February, 2016.

Keywords: pension • pensioner • pension system • family budget • elderly population

Influence of value-motivational sphere on life satisfaction of the aged

Summary. This study investigates characteristics of life satisfaction of the aged with different family status, analyzes relationship of life satisfaction and value-motivational sphere, reveals the influence of components of value-motivational sphere on various aspects of life satisfaction. The article proves that the aged living in families are characterized by a level of life satisfaction higher than those living alone: they are characterized by more pronounced interest for life, integrity and integrative “self-image”, satisfaction with life achievements, optimistic assessment of the future, availability of new life goals, self-confidence. Similarity in the hierarchy of values and motives of the aged with different family status is revealed. Principal values are those that are directly related to the life of the person itself and its microenvironment. The aged are motivated for communication and activities that benefit other people, they attempt to be involved in the live of other people and to find certain place in it. The aged in families have a higher level of index intensity for a number of value-motivational tendencies: communication, health, welfare, pleasure, social usefulness, mass action. Life satisfaction among the aged in families is associated with the values and motives ensuring their involvement into social interactions of their microenvironment, while among the people living alone – with the values and motives providing solutions of everyday problems. It is revealed that life satisfaction among the aged in both groups increases while importance of material benefits decreases in general hierarchy of values. The aged living alone experience great satisfaction by realizing communication motives, social usefulness, significance of recognition and respect of people around them. The aged living in families experience great satisfaction from importance of the motives that might be realized in their families. Thus, the family appears both a principal need and the condition ensuring a higher satisfaction with life in the old age.

Keywords: values • motives • life satisfaction • the aged • family status • living alone • living in families

Internet in the life of elderly people: intentions and realities

Summary. Modern society may be characterized by rapid numerical growth of the elderly people. This process presents the state and society with new challenges associated with transformation of a number of social institutions for the elderly. However, modern society sees in the older people economic ballast, people excluded from cultural trends due to lack of skills in the use of new information technologies. To overcome these previously unknown forms of social and age inequality, social policy reorientation is needed to support employment of elderly people and to overcome the digital division. Equally important is public opinion reorientation, aimed at public and elderly awareness of idea of self-respect and seeing in the elderly a social resource.

Keywords: elderly people • social exclusion/inclusion • digital inequality • access to e-mail
Crisis and protection of the citizens’ labour rights

Summary. Author, basing on the monitoring sociological data of the Institute of Sociology (Russian Academy of Sciences), analyzes influence of a “new crisis reality” on the minds of the Russian citizens and on their readiness to defend their social and economic rights and interests. Sociological data demonstrate that the society today is focused on the preservation of stability, albeit a crisis stability. And such effective world-wide popular ways of legitimate rights’ protection as participation in the enterprises’ management, street protests, solidarity actions and strikes are not too popular among Russians. At the same time, author emphasizes that the level of protest activity, as well as other forms of civic participation, are not directly derived from the social displeasure. The level of social activity and other forms of social participation used to go through serious fluctuations, unexpected bursts and downturns. Collapse of social and labor rights, of the right to move (including the right to travel abroad) and to peacefully express discontent, collapse of the right for a fair trial or freedom of business could seriously politicize society, encourage it to become more active and take solidarity actions to defend fundamental civil interests. As the author claims, these problem are especially true for social groups and strata, that are recognizing link between level and especially quality of life and presence/absence of political freedoms. In this regard the author analyzes prospects for new forms and practices that citizens would use to defend their labor and other socio-economic rights (although, author notes, many of these practices are of a network-informal nature and combine social and political agenda). Also, examined is potential of expressing radical forms of social discontent. The author stresses that a “creeping” legitimization of violence, used as instrument for resolving of economic disputes and for the fight against political opponents, is particularly dangerous in this context. Besides, it is noted that radical forms of protest could be provoked by limitations of many legal forms of defence of workers’ legitimate rights and interests, that are reduced within the confines of struggle against extremism.

Keywords: crisis • the “new economic reality” • labor rights • employment • social unrest • protest • protest activity • solidarity • individual adaptation

Contemporary models of Russian citizenship

Summary. The article states that the existence of an institutionalized model of citizenship is important for any country. Especially if the country is undergoing transformation, previously having lost socially recognized model, which implies a massive loss of civic identity. Russia has two main stages in the transformation of Soviet citizenship. The first is described in terms of democratic transition, when declared and by a large part of the society accepted is the need to move to the liberal-democratic citizenship of Western model. However, this transition has not occurred. For some time a hybrid model of citizenship has been created in Russia represented by a surrogate institution aimed at solving situational tasks of preserving the ruling regime to complete process of constructing distributive clan economy. At the moment, the model of citizenship, with the essential features of the previous model (conservative hybrid), underwent turbulence and is in a non-equilibrium state, from time to time taking form of citizenship of past eras. This transition can be completed by some restoration of the position, from which transformation of Soviet citizenship began. The empirical material reflects author’s research at the regional level, a comparative analysis of the data in 2005 and 2015.

Keywords: civic consciousness • civic model • Soviet citizenship • civic hybrid • civic watchdog

“Phenomenon” of trust to Russia’s president

Summary. The paper discusses phenomenon of citizens’ high trust to Russia’s president V. Putin. The trust keeps to remain invariably strong, “not reacting” to low efficiency of government economic policies and protracted failure to resolve a number of serious societal issues. Among factors of trust, management of mass consciousness is detailed – utilization of various political technologies; myth-making; media support; absence of strong opposition and critics. Also, an important role is played by public activity of the politician, his personal qualities, achievements in solving some problems of citizens. Impact is also made by specifics of political culture and mentality of Russians, their gullibility and paternalism.
Keywords: president • trust • citizens • mass consciousness management • political technologies • image • political culture

MILITARY SOCIOLOGY

114 KOKOSHIN A.A. (M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Social sciences branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia)

On the Sun Tsu heritage

Summary. Modern meaning of the thoughts of the treatise “The Art of War” by Chinese military leader and theorist Sun Tzu is considered in relation to the concepts of war and military force in the life of state and society, of the aims and objectives of war, of the required quality of commander, problems of managing the military sphere etc. Active use of Sun Tzu ideas in modern Chinese and American political-military and military-strategic thinking, in the statutes of the United States armed forces is noted. This treatise, so the author, is one of the most important samples of traditional Chinese social-scientific thinking, and it retains much of its relevance in the XXI century.

Keywords: the role of war in state’s life • getting “profit” from war • victory over enemy with “preliminary estimation” • requirements to military commander • military sphere management

124 Sociology of international relations

KRASILSHCHIKOV V.A. (E.M Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia)

In the trap of median incomes level: a sociologocal interpretation of economic issues (Brazilian case)

Summary. The paper addresses slow-down of economic dynamnics in a large rising country – Brazil. The author draws attention to the conservative nature of Brazilian modernization, continuously reproducing the dualism of antiquity and modernity, which results in the existence of an extensive layer of poor – “subproletariat”. It is shown that an active social policy pursued in Brazil in recent years has reduced inequalities in the distribution of income and significantly reduced poverty. However, about one third of the economically active population of Brazil are not willing for modern occupations. They actively supported the conservative macroeconomic policies of the authorities, profitable large exporters of raw materials, agribusiness and financiers. The article discusses the issue of policy limits for the accelerated development of education. This specificity of socialization of children from “subproletariat” families, not allowing them to learn the curriculum, prevents formation of a modern labor force. The solution to the problem of improving efficiency of the economy and technological upgrading depends on the social sphere, which itself calls for unconventional approaches to them.

Keywords: Latin America • Brazil • poverty • deindustrialisation • conservative modernisation • middle-income trap • inequality • socialisation • sub-proletariat

133 PODOLSKAYA E.A. (Kharkov University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy”); NAZARKINA V.N. (National University of Pharmacy), both – Kharkiv, Ukraine

Social security: essence, threats and ways of ensuring

Summary. The essence and sources of threats to social security are discussed as well as the ways of ensuring social security. The methodological potential of the theory of human capital is shown. Models of human development and human security conceptions have been analyzed to substantiate the substitution of the individual-centred security conceptions for the state-centred one. A new definition of the security essence has been suggested: human security (rather than territorial security) is treated as being of paramount importance; security provided by armaments gives way to security guaranteed by stable human development. The meaning of security as a social phenomenon has been specified. The term “social security” is regarded as standing not just for protection against threats, but also for instrument of appreciating the degree of the social policy objectives realization. On the basis of social security indices threats to social security in modern Ukraine have been described. As main areas of life activities, social regulations have been named: modernization, civil self-organization, legitimation.
Key words: aggression • civil security • trust • legitimation • modernization • tension • public order • social security • threat

CENTENNARY OF RUSSIAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BORONOEV A.O. (St.-Petersburg State University, Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society); LOMONOSSOVA M.V. (St.-Petersburg State University, Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society); MIRONOV D.V. (St.-Petersburg State University); SKVORTSOV N.G. ((St.-Petersburg State University, Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society)

Preserving traditions of Russian sociology: Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society role. A Contribution to 100th Anniversary of Its Establishing

Summary. The article addresses milestones in the history of the Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society. The authors note when such a professional society had been established the processes of institutionalizing sociology in Russia became stronger and the consolidation of sociologists became real fact. Today, as shown in the article, the Society develops sociology at different levels of Russian socium, and propagation of sociological knowledge and education is emphasized as one of the important part of its activity. The authors assume that the Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society preserves today traditions launched in early 20th century Russia and contributes to the consolidation of sociologists' professional community.

Key words: history of sociology • Russian sociology • Maxim Kovalevsky’ Sociological Society • institutionalizing of sociology in Russia

FACTS. COMMENTS. NOTES

PISHNYAK A.I. (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia)

Parents’ perceived risks related to children’s school education in Moscow

Summary. This article analyses schoolchildren’s parents subjective perceptions of risks related to education in Moscow. The study examines prevalence of differing opinions on this issue and attempts to classify subjective risks. Basing on the data of survey of 1–11th grade students’ parents conducted in 2013 in Moscow by Institute of Megalopolis Human Development (IMHD), three different types of risks are identified. The first type is intra-school risks which include dissatisfaction with characteristics of schools (educational programs and teaching staff as well as ethnic composition of school classes). According to the data, this sort of risks affects 67% of families with schoolchildren in Russian capital. The second type – intra-household risks – covers risks of lacking household resources. Approximately 39% of respondents declare at least a component of such risks. Third type – external risks – concerns indicators of child-friendliness in the urban space. About 83% of parents fear street crime on the way to school or lacking reciprocity among citizens. A special attention is paid to the intersection of different risks and concentration of intra-school, intra-household and external risks in the minds of respondents. It should be pointed out that more than half of schoolchildren’s parents do not find any risk in the context of education. However a considerable number of respondents – 44% – presume that at least one type of risk occurs and almost 23% notice at once system, intra-household and external risks.

Keywords: school education • education at school • risks of education • quality of education • subjective risk assessment • urban environment risk • parents of pupils

TROSHINA T.I. (M.V. Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, Russia); MOROZOVA O. M. (Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russia)

“On the brink of Europe’s ecumene” (Nenets’ life in the township of Varnek)

Summary. The article presents results of research of collective self-preservation issue in the societies living in remote inaccessible areas of the European Russia North. The authors took part in an Arctic expedition organized in 2015 by Northern (Arctic) Federal University and conducted a study in remote settlements of Arkhangelsk region. Analysis of social practices aimed at cultural self-preservation of the Nenets’ settlement “Varnek” (island of Vaigach on the border of the Barents and Kara Seas of the Arctic Ocean). The authors identify forms of social relations, which have been used by the imperial authorities of the Arkhangelsk province to organize life of the Nenets in the Novaya Zemlya (ban on alcoholic beverages, communal life of former nomadic individualists, organization of school system and health care, spread of Russian life forms, food, clothing), and Soviet policy to include the Nenets in the
national legal, social, economic, cultural space. In 1990th this activity was discontinued, but was reproduced in some forms by the population. As a result, township preserves a symbiosis of traditional forms of social life and innovations. The study of self-preservation strategies and practices of the resident population of the northern territories offers concrete empirical data to address reproducing labor force for the Far North. The use of relatively cheap “shift method” (temporary migrant workers) can lead to costly, several times higher than the benefits, government spending on the maintenance of social and cultural infrastructure for the migrant workers and on the negative consequences that can occur when long-isolated people are not united by common socio-cultural traditions.

Key words: remote territories • population • Nenets • sociocultural risks • collective self-preservation

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