

ABSTRACTS

THEORIES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Lashenov A. Postindustrial Society Reconsidered: from Cybernetic to Sociological Theories

The author analyses different theoretical approaches to information society concept. He distinguishes between two groups of information society theories: 1) theories based on technological (cybernetic) approach where information means scientific knowledge, and 2) theories based on humanitarian approach (philosophical, symbolic, sociological, globalization approach) where information means social communication.

SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Bystriantzev S. Scientific Law as a Formal Methodological Sign of Sociology's Scientific Status

The article argues that scientific law as a form of scientific knowledge is an important element of research in natural and social sciences. Different methodological schools studied various aspects of scientific law wording. It is important that scientist is guided by finding a law – this is a formal sign of science.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Allakhverdova O. Mediation: New Communicative Practice to Solve Conflicts

This paper treats the technology of mediation, traces its history in Russia, and presents mediation as an alternative method to solve conflicts in comparison with judicial process and arbitration. The negotiation technology is a new communicative practice which has its specificity and differs from communication in general. The stages of mediation, goals and tasks of mediator at each stage are treated in depth in the article. The advantages and weaknesses of using mediation in Russia are discussed.

Pivovarov A. Intrapersonal Communication as a Sociological Topic

The results of studies of the significance of intrapersonal communication for sociological theory are reported. The phenomenon of intrapersonal communication is considered as an essential component of any level of social communication. The author analyzes theoretical

propositions of M. Weber, G.H. Mead, A. Schutz, Y. Habermas and shows that each of these great sociologists has his own clearly expressed attitude to intrapersonal communication processes and imaginary interactions. We believe that sociological approach enables us to consider verbal conscious inner communication of a person as being structured according to the forms identical to the forms of external social communication and supporting individual rational actions and exchange of these actions in the course of social interactions. It is demonstrated that analysis of intrapersonal communication is very important for understanding of the rational motivation of actions. Specifics of intrapersonal communication essential for definition of a type of individual action are discussed. An original model of intrapersonal communication is presented.

Sychev A. Tendencies and Factors of Mass Media Diversification

The article attempts at generalization of contemporary mass media processes. The special attention is given to demassification process which consists of diversification of mass media production and differentiation of audience. The starting point for audience differentiation is the differentiation of social structure. The demassification process is considered on the example of Russian commercial broadcasting.

SOCIOLOGY OF LABOR

Shihao K. Social Partnership at an Enterprise: Case-Study of the Dockers' Trade Union at St. Petersburg Port

The concept and institution of social partnership has appeared in Russia in the beginning of 90s. Since then it has widely spread. A lot of research was made at federal and regional level, especially on Russian Tripartite Commission. This article focuses on social partnership at an enterprise level. The case-study of dockers' trade union in St. Petersburg shows that active trade union organization, which relies on workers, uses "social partnership" term as a moral argument in negotiations. Case-study treats the 2004-2005 strike at St. Petersburg port. The main sources of information are official statements and articles published in the local newspaper, observation materials, interviews with dockers, and various trade union documents.

Shcherbakova D. Resistance to Organizational Innovations: Methodology of the Sociological Research

This article advocates sociological approach to studying the resistance to organizational innovations. The author defines the resistance to change in organization as any attitude or behaviour, which demonstrates the unwillingness to make or support change. The resistance can appear on individual, group, in and over-organizational level. Resistance types and forms are described in the article. The instrument for measuring degree of expected resistance to organizational innovations is also offered. Reasons for the resistance, in the author's opinion, are natural, legitimate and concrete. They can be divided in individual-psychological and group barriers. The main task of management in the period of organizational innovations is the creation of innovative culture, which promotes innovations and neutralizes resistance.

SOCIOLOGY OF LAW

Goloviznina M., Lichtenstein A., Danilova N. Juvenile Justice: Sociological Analysis of an Institutional Reform

The article offers a sociological explanation of the logic and results of the institutional reform in the sphere of juvenile justice. The authors investigate the case of St. Petersburg, where the pilot project aimed at juvenile justice proliferation was started in 1998. The process of Social Workers' Service formation and its interaction with other agents (civil courts and the departments on juvenile crime prevention) is explored. Analyzing project development, the authors come to conclusion that the direction and results of the reform are accounted by the divergence in participants' understanding and interpreting of the institutional innovations. It is shown that the law frames, which stipulate the rules of the game, as well as former experience of interaction, bring about this divergence. The failure of the reform is explained by the fact that Social Workers' Service, being put in the field where different interpretations counteract, is forced out of the spheres of juvenile justice and juvenile delinquency prevention.

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Tyurina Y. Problems of Theory and Methodology in Russian Sociology of Education

This article explores the reasons of theoretical and methodological monotony in Russian sociology of education, suggesting some new methodological approaches to the empirical research of education.

Kashlacheva T. Quality Assurance in Higher Education as a Directing Vector of the Bologna Process

In the 2000s the system of higher education has been changing in the context of formation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Russia's joining this process generates the necessity to study current experience of integration of Russia into the EHEA. This let reveal the potential and variants of the development of Russian higher education system. This article is devoted to examination of the objectives, current initiatives of improvement of quality assurance in higher education on a European and national scale, and problems arising in this Bologna directing vector in 2000–2006.

Leontyeva E. Studying under the Protection: Informal Patronage Practices in Russian Higher School

This paper deals with education strategies in Russian universities based on stable and repeated personal connections between students and university employees. It is considered that some of these strategies depend on character of connections and their intensity. They can be strong or weak, constant or periodic. In the author's opinion the “shadow patronage” became more popular in recent times. It disguises itself as an aid of relatives and promotes the growth of corruption in higher education.

REPORT

Galsanamzhilova O. Some Reflections on Structural Marginality in Russian Society

This article develops the concept of structural marginality, investigating main transitional and peripheral marginal groups in Russian society. The author observes an increase of the marginal groups of migrants, refugees, social outsiders, and members of the low-class. That leads to social tension, extremism, and nationalism.

NEWS/INFORMATION

Sociological Epistemology and Methodology in the XXI century

The Conference «Sociological Epistemology and Methodology in the XXI century» was held at the Faculty of Sociology, St. Petersburg State University 16–17 November 2006.

The Fifth All Russia Seminar «Sociological Problems of Power Institutions in the Context of Russian Transformation»

The Seminar was held at the Sociological Institute in St. Petersburg
15–16 December 2006.