

## **GLOBAL WORLD'S AND MICROWORLD'S DIALECTICS IN PUBLIC CONSCIENCE OF THE RUSSIANS**

The global world is not represented directly in living arrangements and public conscience of most social groups, strata, classes in all countries, it is represented in a hidden, latent way and quite often in insignificant amounts. The global world's problems directly and immediately worry a comparatively small group of experts and officials – politicians, leaders of political parties and heads of socio-political organizations, some scientists – politologists and specialists in international affairs. And what is more, one can say that excessive enthusiasm for the problems of the world order in real political world together with the desire to intrude in their solution in all cases without exceptions (as e.g. in the policy carried out by the former US President B. Obama and his team) leads to their flux perception, hypertrophy of their understanding and consequently inadequate reaction to the changes in the world.

One can say on the basis of sociological data that it is not global problems that worry most people in the first place – they are interested in what makes sense in their immediate environment where they live, and that living environment reflects principles and values according to which they live (or striving to live). In this case, the global world is reflected in people's life latently, in a captured way and mostly as a background, which forms a kind of picture in a frame but expressed individually or for a group.

---

<sup>1</sup> Head of the Department of Theory and History of Sociology of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Chief Researcher of the Institute of Sociology of the RAS, Chief Editor of the RAS journal Sociological Studies, Corresponding Member of the RAS, DSc in Philosophy, Professor. Author of more than 660 publications, 22 monographs and 5 textbooks, including: Paradoxical Man; Sociology of Labor; Thesaurus of Sociology; Milestones of Sociology (editor-in-chief); Centaur-Problem: An Attempt at Philosophical and Sociological Analysis; Political Sociology (editor-in-chief); Sociology of Management; Phantoms of Russian Society; Sociology of Life, etc. Honored Professor of Lomonosov Moscow State University and the RSUH. Honorary Doctor of the Institute of Sociology of the RAS. Laureate of the Kovalevsky Award of the RAS.

But does it mean that the global world is not related or related insignificantly to the everyday life of the people? Sociological data allows to come to the conclusion that in case of a part of the people (but far from all) in all countries, including Russia, world problems appear before them in a special way – as evaluation of the position of other states, having certain direct relations between each other – either confrontational or friendly. The most vivid part of the global world's and microworld's inter-connection in public conscience, in the world order of the people is revealed exactly in that. Much more complex interactions between them are formed when we are speaking about other sides of public and personal life in the fields of labor, culture and recreation, everyday life.

No matter what politicians and analytics say when trying to explain the attitude to global, international, and national problems, people are first of all worried about what directly affects their purposes, principles and values, their interests making sense in their lives, which orient them to respective deeds and actions. And because of that it is interesting to see, basing on the data of sociological research, how the dialectics of the surrounding world's perception reflects in this situation at various levels of its arrangement. Note, please, that using this approach we operate with the notion of the “*lifeworld*,” which we interpret as complex and contradictory existence and functioning of the main subjects of social action – people, social groups and communities, their potential and possibilities, their perception and reaction to changes taking place in the society and the world. It is exactly from here that (non) readiness to understand/reject, take/not take, assist/be passive/oppose carried out or supposed transformations originates.

Note, please, that the lifeworld is different, it exists in variety, manifesting as special features of the individual, the special and the universal. We'll speak exactly about these characteristics of the lifeworld as this world, notwithstanding the abundance and variety, still has one universal structure [Husserl, 2004]. And this uniting structure is formed by *life purposes*, which no matter all the varieties of

characteristics of people's lives are such entities which express a specific vision of this world, its main (basic, determining) principles and values [Toshchenko, 2016: 153-185].

In order to have a comprehensive and complete characteristic of the lifeworld, let's start from finding *its basic essences*, forming one whole of the contents of such of its components that are directed to finding out and determination of the leading, significant and most important life purposes and principles, embodied in the main institutional positions of an individual, and in which the global world's problems are reflected differently.

First, the lifeworld of an individual *as a **citizen*** is mostly manifested in two hypostases: *a) as a **global world's man***, having this or that attitude and/or perception of problems taking place in other countries, their unions, in international organizations; *b) as a **man from a certain society (state)***, where economic, social and other kinds of policies affect his living arrangements.

Second, a certain influence of the global world tells on an individual *as a **resident***, which reflects the level of territorial arrangement (of a city, settlement, village), as there is no doubt that the mesic environment surrounding an individual, though concentrating attention on everyday life, touches upon the aspects of world problems that can influence an individual's living arrangements in a settlement to a certain extent.

Third, *people also have a **microworld***, which is also really embodied in a man's lifeworld *as: a) a **worker*** (level of inclusion in production process, process of labor); *b) as an **individual*** (level of social micro-environment – family, neighbors, friendship).

Let's discuss that in detail basing on the data of the All-Russian research of the Russians' lifeworld (*LW-2014*) and data of other research centers – Institute of Sociology, Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center and Levada Center.<sup>1/</sup> At the same time we'll try to find purposes from the point of view of inter-connection of world and personal problems in socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural

activities of the Russians and their mutual relations with the outside world, taking into account the perceived personal purpose, their changes and special features during the years Russia is being reformed.

-----

1/ All-Russian research “The Russians’ Lifeworld and Evolution of Forms of their Participation in Bringing State and Public Transformations into Life (1990-2010)” (Russian Science Foundation’s project # 14-18-02016), carried out on October 25-30, 2014. 1,750 people in 18 regions of the country were surveyed, taking into account representative sampling according to gender, education, marital status, place of residence, form of ownership and work experience. The survey took place in all economic regions of the country representing Central Russia, the Volga Region, the South of the country, the Urals, Siberia and the Far East as well as two megalopolises – Moscow and St. Petersburg (*LW-2014*).

**A Russian as a citizen of the global world and nation-state.** First of all, let's pay attention to what is vital for the people, what they orientate to, what they prefer. The analysis of information from all the leading sociological centers without exception shows approximately the same distribution of value orientations. According to the LW-2014, the most vital for the Russians in their lives were their family (95%), health (87.6%), work (69.4%). And at the same time politics was acknowledged as very important (16.2%) with 33.4% refusing to recognize the politics' role in their lives [The Lifeworld... 2016: 350]. This allows to come to the conclusion that politics plays not the main but an auxiliary role for the people, and sometimes it is a neutral role when determining one's real life arrangements. At the same time it's possible to suppose that politics is presented to a common citizen from two main perspectives – as foreign policy (touching upon the general evaluation of the world situation and relations with other countries as well as the most significant events of international scales) and home policy referring to economic, social and cultural policy of the state. An individual's features as a citizen are first of all manifested exactly in these appraisals.

*As for the attitude to international events*, the interest of the people is manifested not in relation to the geopolitical situation in the world, but it is revealed when evaluating relations with states (countries) which in this or that way touch upon the interests of Russia, its position and the role on the international arena. That's exactly the reason why the reunion of the Crimea and Russia was of the most interest and supported by more than 90% of the Russians (95-96% residents of the Crimea also voted for this decision). If we take big political events of the last decade, events in the Ukraine, war in South Ossetia, participation of Russia in neutralization of the Muslim state of ISIL in Syria did not leave people indifferent. In our opinion, such actions of Russian foreign policy are supported by big groups of the population with relying on feelings characterizing the idea of Russia's position in the world: 47.2% said that they'd wish "Russia to return the status of a great power" [The Lifeworld... 2016: 364]. Here features of the civic stand of the people are manifested clearly irrespective of their position in the

society and that influencing or not influencing their personal life.

*No less significant is the civic stand of the people when they evaluate political, economic and social actions of their state.* There is no direct correlation here between a socio-economic position of an individual and his/her attitude both to the state policy in general and separate political decisions. Sociological data certifies that some generalized vision of the conducted policy comes to the foreground, and an individual acts from the position of a citizen of his/her country, and to a less extent from his/her personal positions. By the way, it's possible to notice in a lot of data that a Russian often, like a Soviet man, more actively worries about the state of events, actions, the state of economy and politics common to all Russia then he/she demonstrates in relation to his/her family or personal status and he/she worries even less about international affairs. Here the influence of the macroworld (global world) is manifested in a more indirect way. Let's examine that in more detail. According to the LW-2014, at present there is no unambiguosness in evaluating economic reforms: with 38.4% being sure that they are going in the right direction and 22.7% denying it, nearly two out of five (38.9%) refused to evaluate them, and that, in our opinion, tells about great doubts in determination of one's civic stand. Exactly this mass – 38.9% – more likely doubts than supports the carried out economic policy. Attempts to find out such a contradictory evaluation lead to getting information, indirectly having an exit to an original opinion: besides complaints on inefficiency of internal economic policy, people quite often appeal to the experience of China, the USA, Germany, Sweden and other countries, depending on personal preferences and understanding of the existing state of affairs. To put it differently, the global world in the form of nation-state and society in the conscience of the Russians represents a not yet formed contradictory evaluation, in case of which it is difficult and even impossible to speak of a common civic stand.

It's exactly at this level that ideas of *social justice* are formed, it is understood and interpreted differently – and it should be emphasized – by people depending on many conditions and factors. To put it differently, there are many

ideas in their conscience – and various ideas – about justice. The common is how an individual perceives and evaluates the attitude of the state and society to him/her, what attitude to the world is formed in his/her case when interacting with those official organizations he/she contacts. And now 39.3% of the Russians (LW-2014) say that they feel injustice. And this is a very significant number, which, in our opinion, is the basis of the present and future social tension. How to change this alarming conviction? It seems that the opinion as to how the Russian state should treat its citizens first of all becomes such an indicator of justice. When “The Russians’ Lifeworld” survey (LW-2014) was conducted, 63.2% of the Russians connected that with just attitude of the state to them, equal rights for all and guarantees of social well-being. When analyzing justice, one should pay attention to the fact that each ninth Russian (11.9%) felt “shame for the present state of their country,” and that, in our opinion, was influenced, on the one hand, by comparison with the USSR experience, which was reckoned with in the world, and, on the other hand, comparison with achievements of the states, which developed successfully in difficult years (China, India, Germany).

The influence of the global world is manifested to a certain extent when identifying oneself as *a citizen of one’s country, as a person proud of belonging to it*. And though the wording of this question in questionnaires is criticized for directness, there are doubts in its competence for violation of intimacy, a number of researchers still ask this question. According to the LW-14, 54.4% considered themselves citizens of the Russian Federation, 9.1% citizens of the USSR. One should note that public surveys in the beginning of the 1990s showed that most people did not divide belonging to the USSR and the RSFSR. This trend began to manifest itself originally in the course of the quarter of a century – in increasing a number of people identifying themselves not with the citizenship but with their nationality – there were already 39.2% of them in 2014. In our opinion, it can be explained by the surge and even hyper-activation of ethnic and national conscience, advancing under the influence of the state policy to a considerable extent [see also: Drobizheva, 2003; Simonyan, 2013]. But in application to Russia

as our data shows, there are still civil stands and not ethnic and national, or ethnic and confessional that prevail in public conscience and respectively in the behavior, being a guarantee to observance of guaranteed stable state development.

Such a characteristic of the essence of citizenship as *patriotism* certifies that practically three fourths (72.6%) said that they shared this individual conviction (LW-214). It's noteworthy that notwithstanding frenzied criticism of this feature of conscience and behavior in the 1990s, when liberal propaganda implemented the slogan "Patriotism is the last refuge for scoundrels," there has been no refusal in mass conscience from acknowledging oneself as a patriot, though bitterness and criticism of changes taking place and consequently disagreement and rejection were considerable. This was manifested especially vividly in attempts to discredit the most outstanding demonstrations of patriotism – the feats of 28 men under the command of Major General Panfilov and Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya.

**A Russian as a resident.** Perception of the surrounding world by an individual at this level – meso-level – lies in the problems which characterize his/her everyday life, organization of all aspects of living arrangements as a city resident, settlement or village dweller. And this is manifested in appraisals of one's living quarters, communal and consumer services, provision with and accessibility of basic goods, the state of public transport. Speaking about the main purposes of the Russians' lifeworld in the economic realm, one can say that infrastructure characteristics, providing living conditions, are an important problem for them. As the LW-2014 survey showed, residents of both cities and villages are worried about the problems of providing and creating acceptable for them conditions of life, among which the first place is taken by satisfaction of elementary basic needs: 54.7% are worried about unsatisfactory solution of *housing and communal problems*. According to other research centers, it is exactly these problems in recent years that appear in public surveys as the most urgent and significant to arrangement of everyday life of the people together with price increase, basic



everyday goods becoming more expensive [See e.g. Gorshkov, 2015; Levashov, 2016].

Besides, at present a Russian as a resident at the same time with poor solution of these problems (54.7%) is no less worried about the state of the public health system (55.7%), possibility to provide effective education for children (28.1%), poor ecology (20.5%), criminal situation, crimes (18.7%), poor transport connections (18.2%), lack of environment for cultural life (14.8%). As we see, a whole range of everyday realities was named, it includes practically all sides providing rational arrangement for functioning of a big range of territorial organizations of people as residents. Here global aspects are manifested indirectly, in latent, captured way, when living conditions of people in developed countries are compared. And it is exactly them that serve as basis for evaluation of actions of local authorities: only 12.3% of the Russians think that they can influence decisions of city (regional) authorities to this or that extent, and only 5.9% are ready to address to them for help in difficult situations [The Lifeworld... 2016: 356, 362].

When evaluating their urban/rural life, people appeal to the experience of arrangement of this life abroad more and more often on the basis of personal acquaintance as a result of business or tourist trips as well as a possibility to familiarize themselves with everyday life of other states and people by way of mass communication means.

### **A man as a worker.**

General appraisal of the economic policy and economic reforms from the point of view of the life-purpose contents of personal life closely correlates with appraisal of the standard of living. In October, 2014, 54% of people said that they live from payday to payday, and 10% said that they “hardly make ends meet.” This appraisal allows to come to the conclusion that striving to provide a respectable social level of vital consumption for most people has not still been realized, though there are some positive changes. At the same time, notwithstanding frequently

sounding accusations of people in “consumerism,” it’s hardly appropriate to say that they bring down the essence of their living only to providing their material existence, desired standard and quality of life (even by their standards). *Prosperity and well-being was, is and will be the most important purpose of people’s activities when arranging their lives.*

In this connection it is important to notice evaluation of labor as means to achieve well-being. The Russians are worried about payment for their work, the place occupied by working activities in their lives, their profession, their inclusion in economic realities, hierarchy of social statuses and social prestige. According to the LW-2014, only every fifth (20.1%) thinks that his/her work is appraised justly. The rest either doubt (39.6%) or deny (24.7%) the justness of payment for it. To put it differently, the purpose of working life, aimed at acknowledgement of respectable payment for labor, is not attained by most, which also becomes the basis and grounds for social discontent and tension.

Widely spread information about payment for labor in developed countries, forms of worker’s participation in the management of organization, trade unions’ activities in protection of his/her rights, employment and social assistance guarantees influence this perception of one’s working life and evaluation of one’s position as a worker a lot.

### **The role of interpersonal communications in the Russians' life.**

People see the essence of ideas in the field of culture, first of all, in *preservation of spirituality*. However, this orientation is not embodied in real life: most – 62.4% – are very worried and 31.5% are moderately worried about moral decline. Notwithstanding attempts to rely on religion, historical traditions, desire to adopt experience of other states, they do not give the required effect because this striving is undermined by: a) the prevailing mindset (which is realized) that success in life is provided by owning capital, financial resources (opinion of 67%); b) conviction that promotion (career advancement) depends a lot on influential contacts (opinion of 57%); c) having power or its servicing (opinion of 58.2%); d) media and first of all TV orientation to commercial success, the result of which is orientation to inferior and quite often perverted tastes; e) liquidation of upbringing functions in all educational structures – from preschool to higher educational establishments (opinion of 93.6%) (LW-2014). This is even more demonstrative as the role of the spiritual and axiological factors is considerably reduced: the role of education and professional training in successful building of their lives was mentioned by 19% only, and practically the same number of respondents – 19.9% – mentioned importance of personal qualities (attractiveness, intellect, talent). [For details also see: Zapesotsky, Smolin, 2016].

Thus, the essence of spirituality should be looked for not only in the field of culture, education, science, religion. It is also generated by public life, the structure of relations with the immediate surroundings as well as what negative phenomena people see in modern Russian society. In this connection we'd especially like to underline that human measurement of these phenomena is characteristic of most people – 93.6% do not want to put up with drug addiction, 93.9% – alcoholism and hard drinking, 91.9% – rudeness and offensive behavior. As for negative processes in the society, 87.4% disapprove of corruption and bribe taking, 84.3% – bureaucratism, 92.4% – stealing, 72.1% – passion for enrichment. However, we have to state that this expression of worries about negative phenomena is passive and verbal and it is practically not realized in any way in certain public activities.

The fact that 80.3% said that they were not members of any non-governmental, non-commercial organizations, speaks about that indirectly. And another 82.5% said that in the year of survey (2014) they did not take part in any cultural events.

All that allows to come to the conclusion that seeing one of the purposes of their lives as being spiritually rich people and wishing to have a worthy society in which they live, people do not do much in order to assist cultural unity of people, respectable way of life and peace of mind for the sake of personal and public future. At the same time it is possible to say that in the spiritual field many Russians, while comparing their country with numerous Western, first of all West European countries, reject a number of unacceptable for Russian mentality features – tolerance without principles, justifying homosexuality, multiculturalism which brought people to a dead end, negation of national special features of culture and inter-personal communications. To put it otherwise, forcing on principles of living arrangements under globalization brand is not acceptable for the Russian culture and Russian mentality if we take all their features. Exactly that raises the question of the complex dialectics of relations with various components – global, national and individual – in an individual's lifeworld. And what is more, we run across an interesting paradox in the spiritual field: if the Russians are inclined to appraise achievements of developed countries in the economic realm, social sphere highly enough, in the spiritual field most Russians are sure of the opposite – the Western world has something to learn from the Russians. In this connection, attempts of many liberal actors insistently forcing a number of dubious values, directly opposite to national mentality, on the population of Russia, are absurd and unacceptable.

In the end, I'd like to say the following. The intelligentsia has always played a significant role in spiritual and cultural development. However, its influence is at present evaluated rather modestly, and if we say it more precisely, it lost the role of that moral force which had been played by its predecessors from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and practically during the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the LW-2014, only one third of the Russians (31.6%) thinks that intelligentsia influences the life

of the society to a certain extent, while 23.7% speak about its insignificant role, and each fifth (19.7%) about practically no role, with 25% having trouble answering. All that allows to come to the conclusion that at present intelligentsia in Russia is not the force which could fully personify the moral potential of the society, could be a shining beacon for young people starting their lives, a judge on the way of understanding the purpose of life.

Thus, the dialectics of the global world's and microworld's interaction is specifically reflected in the people's lifeworld. The global world interests people, as they perceive themselves as citizens, who are not indifferent to the fate of their state, their people. The Russians have always actively reacted to the events of international scales, when, in their opinion, the problems of Russia's importance on the international arena were touched upon. In their everyday life these problems reflected as a comparison with achievements or downfalls of other countries or comparison with the historical past. And at the same time the fact was revealed that as internal problems become more difficult, attention to international problems weakens, stimulating various internal problems – ideology of isolationism and reticence, growth of nationalism and social tension.

#### References

*M.K. Gorshkov, N.N. Sedova* "The Self-Sufficient" Russians and their Priorities in Life // Sociological Research, 2015, # 12.

*E. Husserl* The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. St. Petersburg, 2004.

*L.M. Drobizheva* Social Problems of Inter-National Relations in Post-Soviet Russia. Moscow, 2003.

*A.S. Zapesotsky* Culture: A View from Russia. Moscow, St. Petersburg Humanitarian University of Trade Unions, 2014.

The Lifeworld of the Russians: 25 Years Later (end of the 1980s – middle of the 2010s) / Ed. by Zh.T. Toshchenko. Moscow, 2016.

*V.K. Levashov* The Russian Society: 25 Years of Neoliberal Reforms // Sociological Research, 2016, # 11, pp. 45-54.

*R.Kh. Simonyan* Russia and the Baltic States. Moscow, 2003.

*O.N. Smolin* Higher Education: Struggle for Quality or Attempt upon Human Potential // Sociological Research, 2015, # 6 and 7.

*Zh.T. Toshchenko* The Sociology of Life. Moscow: UNITY-DANA, 2016.