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BOOK REVIEW

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Socio-cultural and Modernization Processes in the Regions of Siberia

A book review on: Nemirovsky, V. G. *The Regions of Eastern and Western Siberia in the context of socio-cultural transformations and modernization processes in Russia: a monograph* / V.G. Nemirovsky. 2nd ed., updated and add. M.: INFRA-M. 2016. 165 p. (Scientific thought).

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The monograph *The Regions of Eastern and Western Siberia in the context of socio-cultural transformations and modernization processes in Russia* is the work by Dr. Sociolog. Sci., Professor, V. G. Nemirovsky. It is the result of the author's deep scientific understanding of the specifics of modern social processes in Eastern and Western Siberia. The aim of the research is to conduct a multi-factor analysis of socio-cultural transformations and modernization processes in these regions in addition to similar changes taking place in Russia as a whole. A multi-factor analysis is a ground for evaluating both qualitative and quantitative components, as well as the scope and intensity of changes in regional and all-Russia rates and establishing a correlation between them. Moreover, this type of analysis serves for identifying national and regional security factors. In this framework, the focus of the study is the Krasnoyarsk Territory, a typical Siberian region with a high level of urbanization, developed industry, progressive scientific and educational sphere, and a relatively low population density.

The author concentrates on significant differences in dynamics and structure of modernization processes and, therefore, in the level of modernizing socio-economic entities among the federal districts of the Russian Federation that evolve as macro-regional communities and among entities within federal districts as well. Many of them are at a fairly low level of socio-cultural and economic development and require special, primarily financial, support to implement transformation programs. As a result, this provokes certain risks to Russian integrity, undermining the system of national security. In fact, the previous hierarchy of federal districts

and federal entities has undergone some modifications, yet the distance between some of them, even within districts, has increased. The monograph emphasizes a relevant issue of “new” or “reiterated” industrialization of modern Russia, and draws attention to the results and prospects of modernization (as well as innovation) activity in Russia.

Siberia is not only abundant in raw materials and territorial resources, but also it has some significant socio-cultural features. In this regard, the results of theoretical and empirical research enable the author to answer the following questions: How do socio-cultural specifics affect modernization processes in Russia as a whole? Do special features of Siberian regions boost the efficiency of the processes or, conversely, hinder the development of the society and the state? What new values and forms of behavior do modernization changes lead to? What way do such processes actualize in Siberia that is originally an integral but very specific part of Russian territory? How do Siberians live? Do Siberians live better or worse than other Russians? Thus, studying the rating of Russian regions the author carries out a comprehensive assessment of the socio-cultural situation that has emerged in Siberia as a result of implementing modernization policies in Russia over a number of years. Without exaggeration, Siberia is a salient factor in modernizing Russia as a whole, both creating favorable conditions for modernization and, to a certain extent, capable of exerting a great impact on it. All this undoubtedly confirms the relevance of the work done by V. G. Nemirovsky.

The structure of the work comprises twelve chapters, united by a single idea and logics of presenting research results.

The methodological and empirical bases of the work are fundamental. The research methodology encompasses the anthropo-sociological approach (proposed by N. I. Lapin, Dr. Philosoph. Sci., Professor, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences), as well as a number of other modern sociological concepts by foreign and Russian scientists. The research material covers five representative studies that include formalized interviews among the residents of the Krasnoyarsk Territory in 2010-2015, several expert polls, and in-depth interviews conducted in the region. At the same time, the author supplements the method created within the cross-regional program *The Problems of the Socio-cultural Evolution of Russia and its Regions*¹ and uses it in his research. All studies have the financial support of the Russian State Scientific Foundation. In addition, an important role in the implementation of tasks solved in the present work belongs to the data obtained as a result of similar surveys carried out by colleagues in the Altai Territory (2010, n = 1,200), the Republic of Khakassia (2010, n = 600), the Omsk Region (2008, n = 1,230), the Novosibirsk Region (2010, n = 500), and Russia as a whole (2010, n = 1,163). To analyze the data employed in the monograph the author widely uses the methods of mathematical statistics, in particular the correlation and factor analyses.

¹ Lapin N. I. On the preparation of a socio-cultural portrait of a region according to a typical program and methodology—*Socio-cultural portrait of a region*.

The first chapter, *The Socio-cultural Context of Modernization in Russia*, addresses the issues of modernization processes in Siberian regions, emphasizing the fact that modernization in Russia is nothing more than an attempt to respond to the challenges and risks of modern society. The author claims that these processes are actively attracting the attention of Russian scientists. Various approaches and points of view regarding the phenomenon of modernization evolve. Yet, modernization changes are uneven and non-linear. The author emphasizes the negative role of the “resource curse” that continues to persist over Siberian regions in realizing not only the goals of modernization, but also the tasks of new industrialization of the country. Furthermore, the author argues that the prospects of these processes are difficult to assess without a proper study of the socio-cultural situation and problems in Siberian regions.

The next chapter *The Public Vision on Modernization and Innovation in Addition to the Objective Situation in Russia and Siberian Regions*, contains an analysis of statistical indicators (including indices based on them¹) of modernizing Russian society as a whole, as well as of the regions in the Siberian Federal District. The author provides the reasons proving that the dominance of industrial production in a number of regions will slow down the development of secondary modernization. V. G. Nemirovsky presents the results of the study of the phenomena of modernization and innovation among the population of the region and makes a conclusion on modernization lag in the Siberian macro-region in comparison with other territories of the country, and especially with Central Russia.

The third chapter, *Socio-cultural Modernization of Russia within the Institutionalization of Utopias and Dystopias*, considers a significant role of residents’ social identity in the analyzed processes and describes the main components of the traditional analysis applied to the value parameters of social changes. Studies by Russian scientists create a picture of socio-cultural transformations, including the values of Russian people, which are not typical of an effectively modernized society. In this regard, the author makes a successful attempt to consider the processes that occur in Russia within the framework of the “utopia-dystopia” dichotomy, which seems rather heuristic for modern sociology.

The next part of the work concerns *Socio-cultural Specifics of Dystopia in Russia in the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. The contemporary Russian society is characterized as a kind of neoliberal dystopia that formed in Russia in the 1990-2000s. The study employs a methodological model of the minimum universe based on the diatropic cognitive paradigm. Within this methodological model, the author analyses neoliberal dystopia at the material-economic, functional-organizational, and informational social levels.

The fifth chapter, *Settler and Socio-cultural Identity of the Population in Russian Regions*, focuses on modern Russian society being a rather weakly integrated identity space. It provides an individual with various ways of socio-cultural self-identification. Although many domestic and foreign researchers consider the problems

¹ China Modernization Report Outlook (2001–2010).

of self-identification, the regional aspects of this process in modern Russia remain poorly studied. This fact increases the relevance of the work under review. It shows, in particular, that “for all respondents from the five regions of Eastern and Western Siberia (considered in the book), settler identity is lower than that of the Russian population as a whole. On the average, only every fifth Siberian respondent identifies with the residents of Russia” (p. 51).

The sixth chapter *Social Dangers and Obstacles in Modernizing Regional Community* introduces the results of a non-trivial analysis of the sense of social security, opposed by the sense of social insecurity. Its factors get much consideration in the monograph. V. G. Nemirovsky applies the results of empirical studies conducted in various regions of the Siberian Federal District to justify the idea of a motivational tandem, made by a combination of the feeling of fear and the feeling of shame that motivates social activities of Siberian people. A widespread external locus of control is significant in shaping social fears. The research emphasizes a low level of both regional and national social identity development (in many Siberian regions and in Russia as a whole). This fact is among the serious constraints to the process of effective modernization in Russia.

Further, in the seventh chapter, the author states that developing social confidence of the population with their current and past social experience is integral for modernizing the contemporary Russian community. According to the author’s position, institutional trust (that is the trust in the government and administration institutions) is essential for the success of modernization. Moreover, the research in this chapter, (like in other chapters of the monograph) bases on extensive empirical data and provides the reflections on the phenomenon of distrust and its manifestation in mass consciousness. To conclude, the growth of institutional and in some aspects of personal trust creates favorable circumstances for further modernization processes in the region.

The eighth chapter *Social Development of Eastern Siberia and Some Aspects of Shaping a New Utopia (the case of the Krasnoyarsk Territory)* identifies three socio-cultural types of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. Employing the results of the expert survey, the anthropocentric and socio-cultural paradigm characterizes the region as functionally balanced, with multi-dimensional individual support; functionally unbalanced, declaring individual support; functionally unbalanced, unfavorable for the individual. The chapter highlights some features of modern social utopia in the mass consciousness of Russians and Siberians. Moreover, the author focuses his attention on a sharp increase in the social distance between those who have power and wealth, often used not for the good of the state, and those who are deprived of it.

The ninth chapter *The Image of the Desired Future and the Frames of Death as Socio-cultural Phenomena* presents the analysis of the image of the future that regional residents desire. This image being a significant regional socio-cultural feature serves as one of the essential indicators determining the transition from dystopia to utopia. Basing on the analysis of the preferred characteristics of future life, the author concludes that consumer and hedonist values have been significant-

ly enhanced in the mass consciousness of the regional population. People are becoming more and more eager to live not just in prosperity, but to become simply well-off. The author states that in the majority of respondents, dreams and hopes about the desired future justify their social activity. These dreams do not interact with the awareness of life finiteness. At the same time, factor analysis reveals a variety of latent orientations, reflecting the interrelation of the image of the desired future and death frames. This fact indicates an intermediate state of the socio-cultural situation and a contradictory transition from dystopia to utopia.

The next chapter of the monograph *The Vision of the Krasnoyarsk Territory Residents on Authorities and their Activity* encompasses the results of semi-formalized interviews with respondents. The aim of these interviews is to identify the ideas of the population about federal, regional, and municipal authorities, positive or negative results of their activity, and their ability or inability to express public interests. Thus, the respondents' opinions rated almost equally: 49% believe that the Russian elite expresses the interests of society and the region to some extent, and 46% practically do not believe in that, or believe to a small extent (p. 131).

When comparing a region with a person, it is associated with a man endowed with positive moral, mental and physical qualities, with a clear predominance of masculinity. Comparison of anthropomorphic images of the region and Russia as a whole showed the prevalence of positive ideas about the region in the mass consciousness of its residents in comparison with the whole country. Here, the author also analyzes the opinions of experts on Russian society and highlights both positive and negative evaluations.

The last chapter of the monograph *The Attitude of Regional Population to Socio-occupational Groups in the Context of Modernizing Russian Society* contains the results of study of various elements of Russian society structure in terms of their social "usefulness" or "uselessness" from the respondents' point of view, as well as on a number of other criteria: "our – their", "prestigious – non-prestigious", "promoting modernization – preventing it". As a result, peculiar ratings of the "usefulness" and "uselessness" of various social groups are obtained (pp. 141-145). To interpret the data, the author uses the estate model of the social structure in Russia, justified by S. G. Kordonsky and other contemporary authors. The use of factor analysis leads to unconventional data. Thus, in the mass consciousness / unconsciousness of regional residents, there is a latent idea that such groups as civil servants, senior government officials, judges, law enforcement officers, municipal civil servants, politicians, and labor migrants "bring almost no benefit to the state".

On the contrary, according to the respondents' opinions, state employees, employees of special services, military personnel, and people involved in "creative professions" (designers, actors, writers, artists, advertising specialists, IT, etc.) bring the main benefit to the state (p. 146). The book expresses a justified concern that some of the surveyed residents of the region do not understand the significance of social interaction institutions, which are integral in the structure of Russian society. In particular, the fact is that "some high-resource social strata and groups are perceived by the polled residents of the region as "alien" and "harmful". This im-

age may indicate the opposition at the level of respondents' mass consciousness / unconsciousness between the titled and untitled classes in modern Russia" (p. 152). The results of the analysis of respondents' opinions on social groups that promote and hinder modernization make a solid ground for the conclusion on the need for a profound adjustment of social and regional policies.

The conclusion comprises the summary of the interim results of the work done. The author emphasizes that regional modernization strategy in Russia should stem from monitoring national and regional socio-cultural processes. The national and local research methodology should be compatible and comparable, taking into account the experience of similar studies.

The references contain 72 textual sources, including 15 foreign, and 20 electronic resources.

The content of the monograph complies with the requirements for such manuscripts. Its relevance cannot be doubted. It is a unique work that provides a multi-modal and comprehensive consideration of the socio-cultural processes in Siberian regions. The book summarizes original both foreign and Russian sociological statistical data and employs the results of numerous empirical studies in various territories over a relatively long observation period.

The scientific novelty of the book is determined not only by an integrated approach to the analysis of socio-cultural transformations and modernization processes in the regions of Siberia and the Far East, but also by the search for most effective social practices to preserve and develop a unique regional society in Russia.

In our opinion, a major advantage of this work is further development of the socio-cultural approach and the application of the class structure model of Russian society by analyzing respondents' mass unconsciousness that comprises life (death) frames, and other theoretical and methodological innovations. Within this framework, it is essential to consider modernization changes in Russia through the prism of the socio-cultural processes of transition from the neo-liberal dystopia to the new utopia.

In general, the monograph *The Regions of Eastern and Western Siberia in the Context of Socio-cultural Transformations and Modernization Processes in Russia* contains relevant scientific results that deserve the attention of readers and contribute to the sociological science in general, and to the development of modern regional research of Russian society, in particular. The monograph is presented in a good scientific language; the material is consistently and logically organized, and fully comprehensible. The conclusions of the study are supported by the results of empirical research. It will be of interest not only to university lecturers, but also to state regional policy makers, local management bodies, researchers of social phenomena and processes in modern Russian society, both at the regional and all-Russia levels.