

Life as Citizenship: About the Metaphorics of Political in Late Antiquity and Byzantium

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The article discusses the polysemous Byzantine concept πολιτεία (“state, citizenship, way of life”), considering it from the viewpoint of conceptual history. Based on an overview of contemporary scholarship that places the Byzantine state in relation to the history of society and history of culture, I suggest a new approach to the Byzantine conceptual apparatus combining elements of the traditional history of concepts and Hans Blumenberg’s metaphorology. I also advance the hypothesis that the distinctive semiotic regime, in which Byzantine concepts operated, resulted from a reorganization — and partial reduction — of the system of classical knowledge. In Graeco-Roman antiquity, the world was conceived of as comprising four levels, each demanding distinct approach: the universe (cosmos), human community existing within the structures of the polis, the household (oikos), and the individual’s character (ethos). These levels corresponded to four domains of knowledge. Cosmogony studied the interaction of the cosmic elements. Politics occupied itself with community. Economy (oikonomia) was approached mostly on practical terms. Human character was investigated by ethics. A new configuration of concepts established in the classical period emerged in Byzantium, these concepts shifted from one level to another, or simultaneously occupied several levels. The understanding of these processes demands attention to the two following factors; first, the meaning of specialized concepts was safeguarded by the continuity linking the Byzantine culture to the classical philosophical paradigm; second, Christian universalism invited the construction of homologous conceptual structures, thus contributing to their incessant metaphorization.

Keywords: state, politics, conceptual history, metaphorology, Christianity, universalism, republicanism

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Mobility and Solidarity. Paper Two

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This article is a continuation of “Mobility and Solidarity. Paper One” (Russian Sociological Review, vol. 10, no 3). Solidarity is considered from the point of view of co-intended meaning, as an additional motive accompanying the main motivation of participants of interaction, and at the exhaustion of the initial motive, replacing this motive. An example of such a motive in elementary interactions is fidelity. Fidelity, according to Georg Simmel, enables participants to make logical induction from the facts of the current behavior to the expected behavior of partners. Other type of communication concerning solidarity is civil friendship, as described, in particular, by Aristotle. However any friendship presupposes too narrow and too specific circles of contacts, it can be only a prototype of modern solidarity. Religious ethics of fraternal affection and ethics of military brotherhood compete with friendship and often force it out. The more friendships are free from “world orders” (M. Weber), the more they come nearer to the type of pure solidarity. The exchange of gifts can be considered as another type of solidarity, though in modern societies it has only limited potential of universality. The most important phenomenon of modern mobile society is pure togetherness (Z. Bauman). Here solidarity is present as an imputed motive, one of the accepted vocabularies of motives, and often invoked post hoc to explain why those who aren't forced to it by power, money, or value commitments stay together.

Keywords: fidelity, friendship, fraternal affection, gift, symbolically generalized media, pure togetherness

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Figurations of Memory: A Process-Relational Methodology Illustrated on the German Case

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Jeffrey Olick is one of the most prominent researchers in the field of memory studies today. Yet, none of his works have been translated into Russian. "Figurations of memory" is one of his most important texts. It is dedicated to the process-relational methodology. J. Olick criticizes traditional approaches to collective memory as a static thing, whereas it should be studied as a process. On the other hand, the author criticizes a mainstream understanding of memory as a unified object. Instead, he suggests that there are multiple mnemonic forms and practices that should be investigated. As a result he presents a new methodology that is based on analysis of the four essential aspects of memory work: field (in the Bourdieuvian sense), medium, genre, and profile. This method of analysis leads to emergence of additional empirical categories, such as official, vernacular, public, and private memory; affective, aesthetic-expressive, instrumental-cognitive, and political-moral media; the normal legitimation, German traditions, German victimhood, and German guilt genres; and the reliable, moral, and normal profiles. Though the final model may seem rather complex, the author claims that it is clearer and more precise than other models of research of collective memory. He claims that this methodology is universal for studying a large number of sociological topics.

Keywords: sociology of memory, memory studies, collective memory, cultural sociology, politics of memory, process-relational methodology, figurations of memory, Holocaust

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About New Historical Turn in Sociology

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This paper provides an overview of a historically-oriented cultural approach in American sociology. It maps sociology's emergence in the 1970–80s in the U.S. against the background of vast public protest activity and the parallel attempts by sociologists to offer paradigms different from structural-functionalist and positivistic approaches reigning social disciplines at the time. The paper discusses relational and temporal analysis as a major principle of such sociology. Here, social phenomena are seen as dynamic and multi-faceted, and their configurations stem from historical cultural contexts. William Sewell's conception of the "event" is examined as an example of such an approach. Using the case of the "taking of the Bastille" Sewell restores the context where it became possible to re-interpret this occurrence as a historic event in such terms as revolution, power of the people and the end of despotic rule. This new discourse became possible due to certain configurations of institutions and collective meanings which provided the context for the following events, a condition often referred to as path dependency. The role of a sociologist then is to identify such significant institutional and cultural contexts for the understanding of how social change occurs. Further, the paper emphasizes the importance of such an approach for cultural sociology, and for the strong program, in particular. As one example Jeffrey Olick's work is of utmost importance as it suggests a methodology to analyze an event's meanings not as one pertaining to timeless cultural codes but as conditioned by a sequence of historical events granting it its particular significance.

Keywords: "strong program", cultural sociology, event, collective memory, historic turn, relational sociology, temporality, path dependency

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Language, Logic and Culture

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In this early paper Mills tries to justify the possibility of the study of thinking (including logical thinking) from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge. According to the author, what sociology of knowledge needs is a concept of the mind which incorporates social processes as intrinsic to mental operations. The author considers two socio-psychological hypotheses that may become a ground of the sociology of knowledge. The first is derived from the social statement of mind presented by G.H. Mead who proposed a notion of the “generalized other”. From Mills’ point of view, every “thinker” orients his/her thinking to the generalized other, which is an internalized audience with which the thinker converses, i.e. a focalized and abstracted organization of attitudes of those implicated in the social field of behavior and experience. Therefore, thinking is a social process, based on the norms of rationality and logicity common to his/her culture. The second hypothesis deals with the role of language in thinking. Language serves as a mediator between thinking and social patterns. The function of words is the mediation of social behaviors, and their meanings are dependent upon this social and behavioral function. Proposing the consideration of the meaning of language as a common social behavior evoked by it, Mills finds a way to combine three levels of analysis: psychological, social and cultural.

Keywords: language, Mills, sociology of knowledge, thinking, logic, generalized other

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Nationality Debates

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The paper analyzes a process of formation of Russian nationalism throughout the 19th century since the formation of the first nationalist programs. The paper also considers competing approaches for the conception of “nationality” and “nation”, as well as transformation of these concepts, formation of the doctrine of “official nationality”, its functioning and the reaction of various ideological currents to this doctrine. The focus is on the debates of 1840–60s between westerners and slavophiles and the features of the slavophile national project. Author also focuses on the unfolding of these doctrines, competing with alternative projects of the Russian nation, as well as the modification of the imperial project. Russian nationalism was formed in the 1860–70s, at the time of active antagonism and internal polemic, not only with the traditional imperial project, but in the collision of the main points of concern. The main point is the “Polish question”, which is interpreted as a deadlock in cooperation with Russian nationalism and empire — the main problem of empire. Firstly, Russian nationalism had no one reasonable solution to save the Kingdom of Poland as a part of the empire. Secondly, traditional methods of imperial domination didn't work in Poland: acquired in the Vienna congress, it was more developed compared to the metropolis. In addition problem points were (1) ukrainofilstvo, (2) “ostzeyskiy question” and (3) “Slavic questions”. Tension between Russian nationalism and the empire is thought as the major factor causing historical dynamics of understanding of “nation” in Russian public thought of the nationalist trend.

Keywords: empire, nation, nationality, Slavophilism

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An Agenda for a Congress of Hermits: A New Book on Political Philosophy

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Society as a Reality Given to Senses

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“Unhurried man”: A Conversation with Alexander Bentsionovich Gofman

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The *Russian Sociological Review* publishes an interview with Alexander Gofman about the late sociologist Alexander Kovalev. Gofman and Kovalev had been friends since the 1960s and worked together in the same research department at the Institute for Concrete Social Research, later renamed the Institute for Sociological Researches of Academy of Science of the USSR. They also actively took part in the renowned seminar of Yuri Levada. In his reminiscences, Gofman sheds additional light on the history of the rebirth of Russian sociology in 1960s and its intellectual routes. Conflicts of the 1970s illustrate the problems of the relationship between the sociological community and power and the impact of power on the research agenda, interests and perspectives. In Gofman's view, Kovalev was an intellectual who decided to take a non-participative position. In this respect he is significantly different from his colleagues from the 1960s (“sixtiers”) who argued for active participation in social life. In the interview, Gofman also discusses the role of many other famous sociologists (e.g. Igor Kon, Yuri Levada, Yuri Davydov and others). This interview is a part of the research project on the history of Russian sociology in the 1960s.

Keywords: history of Russian sociology, Kovalev, Gofman, Levada, Kon, Davydov

An Interview with Alexander Dmitrievich Kovalev (March 4, 1998)

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The interview with the well-known Russian sociologist Alexander Kovalev was recorded in 1998 as a part of the project “The Seminar Movement in Sociology: the Second Science, or The Glass Bead Game”. It is published to commemorate Kovalev. In this interview, Kovalev primarily discusses the famous seminar organized by Yuri Levada of which Kovalev was a participant. Kovalev focuses on his academic career in sociology when the discipline was reborn in the USSR after long period of oblivion. He also considers a variety of pioneering theoretical studies and reception of western sociological ideas through translations and overviews. Kovalev was interviewed about the participants of the seminars and their motivation, the topics discussed at the seminar meetings and the seminar organizers and leaders of Soviet Sociology in the 1960–70s. Additionally, Kovalev provides a broader understanding of the seminar movement in the social sciences, its popularity among soviet intelligentsia and its functions which spread far beyond academic ones. Following this interview it is possible to argue that the major function of Levada’s seminars was educational. First of all, the seminars provided members of the sociological community with an education in theoretical foundations of the discipline. This type of education was impossible within the acceptable general sociological theory, specifically historical materialism. Secondly, these seminars educated the intelligentsia and provided knowledge of western social theories.

Keywords: history of Soviet sociology, Kovalev, history of Russian sociology, Levada, Chalikova, sociological seminars

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