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RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES IN SOCIAL ECOLOGY

(M. A. Сосунова, *Методологија и методы современной социальной экологии*, Москва, МНЭПУ, 2010).

In a relatively short period of time, social ecology (the mid-last, 20th century) has reached a significant development and it is accepted as a distinct sociological science, both by the scientific community and the whole society. As a relatively new and young science, it should be defined in a more accurate manner both in terms of its research subject and methodology, as it is the case with emerging science. By "rounding-up" the research subject and methodology, this science will become a full member of the society of sciences, opening thereby the possibility for studying further its subject and confirming its importance for the society. The monograph written by I.A. Sosunova on the method and methodology of modern social ecology is a successful effort to formulate the relation between its research subject and methodology to a full extent, and a contribution to the quality of research and organization of human environment. Considerations in this monograph can be systematically classified into three groups (while not presented as grouped and systematized in the following manner).

The first group consists of considerations on social ecology in the general context of scientific development, genesis of the modern conceptualization of interrelations of nature and society, social ecology as a field of sociological knowledge and security as social-ecological interests of society.

The second group consists of considerations which indicate the social-ecological tension from the standpoint of methodology and methods of evaluation. In this context, public opinion is investigated as a regulator of social behaviour in terms of social-ecological tensions, while particularities of social analysis of social-environmental problems are also taken into consideration. These considerations are specifically focused on concepts of expressing the process of social and environmental problems in social

cognition and mass behaviour of the public in terms of social-ecological tensions. In addition, there are two other considerations as well: consideration of the evolution of the scientific basis for resolving environmental issues and consideration of the general environmental issues and concepts of sustainable development and social-ecological basis of the integrative-adaptive processes in the post-soviet area.

The third group consists of reflections on the social and environmental issues in the Russian Federation. The most important of these is by all means the reflection on the development of social and human sciences in Russia with a short retrospective of the development and connection with the environmental policy and education and the public environmental policy. These considerations represent a contribution to a more complete insight into environmental considerations and ecological (political) practice present in one of the largest and most developed countries in the modern world. Their value and importance are increased by research results used by the author, who was funded by the significant public funds such as the Russian Fundamental Research Foundation and the Russian Humanitarian Foundation (pp. 383-384).

The fourth group consists of several sociological essays about the significant social and environmental issues that point to the actuality of social-ecological insights and the need for their critical consideration from a sociological point of view. These essays are the following: Ecological culture of education for the sustainable development; Ecological morality as a sociological category; Social-environmental aspects of quality of life; Contemporary natural grounds and the environment; State-environmental policy and social-environmental priorities; Eco-design of the environment as specific activity; Modern social and environmental situation in Russia and the prospects of its development; The social-ecological system of monitoring as the source of credible empirical information and the participation of society in making environmentally significant decisions. Since they are unfinished, each of these essays in some way represents a call for its completion based on the theoretical and methodological foundations that it already contains.

This monograph is a significant scientific work, the importance of which can (and should) be expressed in the following three points: *First*, it represents a significant contribution to the development of the theoretical basis of social ecology through a critical consideration of ideas about the relationship between nature and society in modern technological and social development. *Second*, it represents a theoretical introduction to the

theoretical and practical experience in solving environmental problems of one of the most developed countries of the modern world. *Third*, it is a critical reflection on the problem of ecological monitoring and its improvement from the aspect of providing high-quality information for addressing problems at both environmental and civilization level.

However, if making education, the system and its content ecological these findings will be able to demonstrate their effectiveness when addressing environmental problems, representing a response to the challenges of our civilization (A. Toynbee), referred as knowledge civilization. Thus, insights provided by this study support environmental education from the commonsense approach with more or less flavour of biological dogmatism, ensuring its sustainable development in an ever-growing scientific knowledge about the cosmos, society and man, and their interdependence, as well as the need for preserving humane mankind and society in conditions of complex and rapid changes in both the cosmos and society. Anticipating the demand for considerations of cosmic-scale environmental issues, and given the recently acquired knowledge about cosmos, I am pleased to recommend this study to all professionals whose activities are directed towards humanistic considerations and practical (political) commitment to preservation of the environment and the improvement of quality of life of man in his human dignity.