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Conflict Situation and its Manifestation in Assessment of Quality of Life

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This article deals with the questions of reality of conflict on the material of assessment of quality of life. The results of the research showed that the psychological (internal) factors must be taken into account in assessment of quality of life. They allow to take into account the lower threshold characteristics of quality of life, resulting in possibility, and very often necessity of relocation and removal of resources from the territory.

The object of the study was the conflict situation of the main social groups, manifested in their perceptions of quality of life. The study groups included representatives of business, the authorities and general public. The main method of analysis was conflict-analysis, allowing a constructive strategic approach for working with the reality of conflict.

Keywords: constructive psychology of conflict, conflict situation, reality of conflict, threshold characteristics in assessment of quality of life

In this article we will study conflict situation on the material of socio-economic and political life, namely, on the material of assessment of quality of life of population.

It is believed in constructive conflict psychology that, to start with, a real resolution of conflict requires a clear understanding of the whole reality of a conflict, which is the beginning of developing a constructive strategy. Reality of conflict includes the history of conflict, its reasons, emotional stress and the actual situation as a component of a conflict.

Traditional notions of conflict suggest the opposite – the first thing to do is to look for universal methods, techniques, “recipes” to win in a conflict. And involvement in a conflict

results in an attempt to quickly do something that will stop the situation. It is also connected with a desire to get rid of stress and with the general attitude to a conflict as a “problem”. But very often immediate actions and rash decision not only fail to make life easier, but make it much more complicated.

Analysis of reality of conflict involves finding answers to questions such as: who is involved in the conflict?; what are their goals? (what do they want); what are their interests? (why do they want to reach that goal?); what does each of the parties have to resolve the conflict? And only then, you can choose the ways that will help to meet the interests of each party, and as a result – to remove the contradiction and really resolve the conflict.

Orientation at fast action appears everywhere: in everyday life and in work processes and decision-making, at various levels and in various fields of activity.

The principle of constructive retention and resolution of a conflict is formulated specifically to distinguish a “pseudo resolution” from real “resolution”. To resolve a conflict means to work with the entire reality, seeing it as a task to solve.

Importance of working with a conflict as a task is manifested in a special way in the sphere of administrative and political decision-making. For example, prolongation of the general strategy for centralization of power and control, strengthening administrative components in the system of methods of governance has become the basic technology of ensuring functioning of the state government in the mode of reproduction. At the same time, the desire for centralization of political decision-making at times dominates over attempts to ensure power organizationally. The actual insufficient organizational development of power contributes to widening gaps between the levels of decision-making, increasing uncoordinated actions and decreasing the influence of coordinating mechanisms for cooperation among the various power and governing bodies.

Such specifics of levels and relations in decision-making lead to inefficient decisions and actions, especially when the subject of decision-making is a difficult and not fully understood thing as assessment of quality of life.

At the present time there are a large number (about 60) of different methods of assessing quality of life, that use thousands of factors of human life in society as a whole and in its individual spheres.

However, most of these methods are, first of all, objective in nature, inadequately considering people’s subjective attitude towards quality of their life; secondly, they are aimed at comparing

levels and quality of life in different regions and countries and are not adapted for administration.

Such factors as housing, education, healthcare are the subjects of economic analysis and are in the focus of attention of the authorities. Moreover, it is clear that these factors are criteria of economic development and are used in the assessment of quality of life in currently existing methodologies.

At the same time, there are a number of questions and problems that do not get their responses and solutions in existing approaches.

For example, attracting young highly-qualified specialists to the territory of the krai for ensuring sustainable development of the area is done with the help of a number of socio-economic factors without taking into account subjective feelings, needs and motivation of young people.

An example of this is the situation with the current system of education, which shows that it is arranged in a way that does not help to attract and retain young teachers, for whom it is monotonous, routine, not prestigious and not showing any visible horizons of professional development [7].

It is quite natural that declarations or “decrees from above” alone, without acceptance, assimilation, and realization of ideas of development by every teacher in their own work, are not enough for real, visible changes.

In the same way, the question about retaining and attracting highly-qualified specialists does not have its answer.

In other words, the existing approaches and models of assessment of quality of life do not take into account such an important factor as people’s behavior and do not answer the question about the conditions under which highly qualified specialists, young people and residents of the area will work or develop and invest into one or another aspects of life of the territory.

Organizing and conducting the research

Organizing and conducting this study, we proceeded from the fact that dynamics of the behavioral patterns of major groups can be indicative of effectiveness of management decisions, can help to design and predict the processes of development.

In the context of the issues and objectives of the study it was important for us to identify the factors that affect the quality of life and discover the threshold characteristics, which “force” people to make cardinal decisions and “move” to other places of living and spheres of business.

To solve this problem, we developed a research model. At the core of this model is the hypothesis that, along with the factors that determine the quality of life, promote or hinder the development of life potential and capital, there are also their threshold characteristics, influencing the decision to change a place of work and life.

As independent variables were identified: age, modality, aspirations and economic / demographic / social / activity factor. In other words, we believe that objectified factors and their perceptions do not determine the behavior directly. Behavior changes under the influence of internal factors, which, in their turn, form personal resource capabilities of making and implementing a decision.

At the first stage, characteristics of quality of life were identified, taking into account different professional (sociological, economic, psychological, organizational, etc.) approaches, as well as going beyond them. For this, an analysis of existing international and Russian studies was conducted, and the method of “brainstorming” was used. The identified characteristics were grouped into meaningful factors, which are represented by: employment, education, health, environment and family.

At the next stage, groups of people, whose attitudes, opinions and notions are important for making this or that decision, were identified by the method of expert assessment. Three groups were identified that were included into the sample of the research. They are government officials, population and representatives of professionally active groups, realizing business behavior.

We proceeded from the assumption that the behavior of active, business people is crucial and affects the behavior of other social groups.

At the second stage, the factors of quality of life were identified which affect the behavior of business people (representatives of small and medium-sized businesses). For this purpose focus groups were conducted. The first group with representatives from business, which we called “Business”. The second group – business people, initiating and carrying out production, “Producers”. And the group of social services, which includes representatives of the social sector.

The choice of such participants is due to the need to identify the characteristics of quality of life, affecting decision-making in professionally active groups. The objectives of this stage were to identify the characteristics of quality of life, influencing behavior of people who are active in business, and the factors which help to retain professionals in the krai.

The group focused interview allows us to detect ideas about such characteristics of quality of life that contribute to active, passive, protest behavior.

At the third stage, ideas and opinions about the quality of life of population itself were studied. We proceeded from the assumption that there is a set of factors determining migration / immigration behavior of people. For this purpose, a sociological survey was conducted to study the ideas of population about the content of the

concept of “quality of life” and its assessments in accordance with their ideas about it.

The structure of the questionnaire included blocks for studying ideas about way of life, environment, life safety, health care, education and upbringing of new generations, business, the authorities, etc.

The questionnaire contained 55 questions, including socio-demographic data. In total, 1,409 respondents were interviewed.

At the fourth stage, by the method of interview, ideas of the authorities about notions of population about the factors of quality of life – reasons of decision-making of different groups about change of place of residence and business activity.

At this stage the method of in-depth interviews was used. The sample included representatives of legislative and executive power.

Results

As a result of the conducted focus groups it was found that the participants of the group “Business” identify such factors of quality of life as: medicine, education, business security, peace of mind, presence of goals in the territory, having work.

The main component of this concept, according to the opinion of the focus group participants, is “presence of work that a person likes”, and all the other factors “result from this one”. Most of the interviewees identified the concept of quality of life as the presence of a balanced complex of “Live, work, rest”.

According to the participants, a set of characteristics, that describe “a suitable place to live”, includes a more complete list, namely: geographical location; natural conditions; population density; support of business by regional authorities; degree of monopoly; power vertical; legislation; tax burden; number of regulatory bodies; distribution mechanism in

the region, level of staff qualification; speed of communication and presence of specific individuals, responsible for the general situation.

The most common characteristic given in this group is the authorities’ interest in business and industry, their support of these spheres.

Identifying the factors, provoking protest forms of behavior or migration tendencies, the focus group participants noted: lack of work, lack of staff, lack of consumers, low potential of areas within the country, lack of infrastructure. In answers to this question, the factors of lack of work and lack of infrastructure were most often named.

During the analysis it was found that the factor of prospects dominate among business people, and among present factors the one which is crucial is loss of relevance of the business in this region.

Participants of the focus group “Production” included into their ideas about quality of life: security, cultural environment, a healthy environment, satisfaction provision of social services, access to education and quality of food.

The most significant component of the concept of “quality of life” was “satisfaction with provision of social services”.

According to the “producers”, the characteristics “of a suitable place to live” are: accessibility and quality of education, accessibility and quality of medicine; safety (i.e., low crime), quality and cost of housing, ecology, availability of kindergartens, availability of rest for children and adults; prestige of socially-important professions; socio-cultural environment and convenient infrastructure, highly-qualified experts, possibilities of self-realization, level of wages. The most important characteristics named were- quality and accessibility of education in the region.

According to the participants in this focus groups, the following factors cause the protest

behavior: bad ecology and natural disasters; technical or industrial disasters; high level of unemployment; excessive migration (dominance of other nationalities); low wages, low level of socio-cultural environment, excessive density of buildings in the city; excessive administration (bureaucracy, raising of taxes, etc.), tragic events in family life; persecution or severe control arrangements. A significant factor, according to the “producers” is a factor of “bad ecology and natural disasters”.

Dominance of factors of prospects was revealed in this group, in particular prospects for career advancement.

In the notions of the focus group “Social services” the following factors are included: stability of the surrounding social environment; stability in wages, food, accommodation, entertainment; satisfaction with provision of social services, state of the environment; level of culture and education; sense of justice; availability of opportunities for development and freedom, material standard of living, presence of positive prospects. The main components of their notion about quality of life are: satisfaction with provision of social services; state of the environment; level of culture and education.

Description of a place as suitable and desirable for living is represented by the following characteristics: quality of housing, quality of food, safety, environment, health, provision of services, wages, territory, freedom, culture, national factor, possibility of self-realization and professional growth, accessibility of education. The most prominent factors are: provision of services, opportunities for self-realization and professional growth.

So, the principal factors for the participants are the following: artificial raising of prices in the region, the national factor, natural disasters in the territory, appearance of material opportunities for free choice of more comfortable territory.

Participants of this group are guided by factors of the present – material wealth and presence of other opportunities; factors of the future are taken into account when making the trajectory for their children and grandchildren.

Thus, the main characteristics of quality of life in the views of the active professional community have been identified and the hierarchy of these ideas in the cluster has been established.

We have assessed the differences in the expression of factors of quality of life in the views of three professional and positional groups (using the criterion χ^2).

It has been found the ideas about quality of life in general, factors provoking active and/or protest forms of behavior and the factor of time are similar in the three groups. As for the ideas about a desirable place to live- they are explicitly different.

This stage of the research showed that the main factors for making a decision when choosing a particular type of behavior in the cluster of business activity are: lack of conditions (opportunities) to develop the business in the region, natural disasters and “poor” socio-cultural environment.

At the next stage of the research, ideas of population about quality of life were identified. We proceeded from the assumption that there is a set of external factors, in relation to which inner feelings, attitudes and well-being begin to influence migration / immigration behavior. These factors include: income, education, health care, safety.

As a result of the sociological survey, ideas of population about the content of the concept “quality of life” and its assessment in accordance with these ideas were identified.

The questionnaire consisted of blocks for studying ideas about quality of lifestyle, the environment, life safety, health care, education

and upbringing of new generations, business, the authorities and so on.

The data showed that the main factors for population are subjective feelings: state of health, satisfaction with their lives, and only after them: material well-being, availability of apartments, free time, personal, family and work safety. Fig. 1 shows the factors of quality of life, obtained during the survey, which are most important from the point of view of population.

At the next stage, the opinion of the authorities about the ideas of population concerning quality of life was found out.

To accomplish this task, a specially designed in-depth interview was carried out. 21 representatives of legislative and executive power were interviewed.

The results of processing of the obtained information showed that, according to the opinion of the authorities, ideas of population

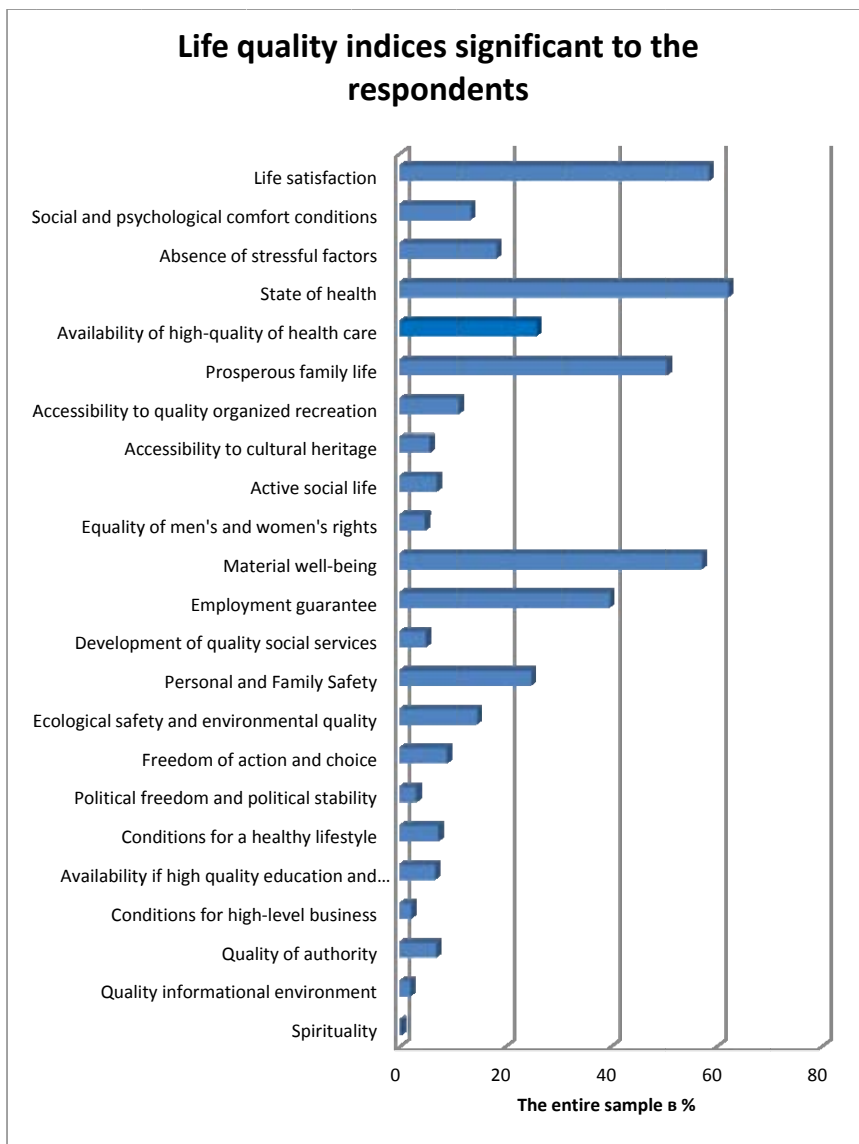


Fig. 1. Factors of quality of life, which are most important for the respondents

about quality of life mainly consist of external factors: level of income, level of tariffs, access to education and health care. In addition to this, the interviewed participants, named one subjective (internal) factor – sense of comfort and security.

Most interviewees, discussing the issue of quality of life as seen by population, distinguished different categories, characteristics and parameters. These categories included: youth, pensioners, working-age population, entrepreneurs. It was noted that ideas about quality of life depend on gender and class (poor, middle class, high level of income).

According to the opinion of the authorities, population's characteristics of quality of life are mainly connected with conditions of life. The list and rating of characteristic of quality of life was made, which, according to the opinion of the authorities, are used by the population.

After that ideas of the authorities about quality of life were identified and ranked.

The authorities classify objective criteria as external factors – demographic, material, social benefits, programs, social support, mortality, and introduction of high technologies (cardiology centre, oncology and perinatal centers), level of prosperity of population, level of wages, additional income, development of production infrastructure, level of unemployment, the environment, outward appearance of the city, human ecology.

The question about circumstances and causes of migration behavior was asked separately. In their responses, respondents distinguished different types of migration – labor and political, as well as different groups of population, for whom there are specific reasons for making such a decision. According to the interviewees' opinion, these groups include: young people, working population, and entrepreneurs. In addition, experts distinguish between external and internal

migration (for example, when a person, in fact, being in the workplace, stops working)

One-third of the respondents said that migration is a natural human desire to live and work where in a better place.

In general, the reasons for making a decision are given below. Experts believe that these reasons are:

Conditions of life – work, living conditions, leisure, self-realization;

Jobs and income, career;

Ecology;

Deprivation of rights, for example, social benefits and privileges;

Conditions for living in other region are much better

Change in the status of a citizen – left school, entered university, moved house, got a job somewhere, got married, etc.

More comfortable living environment

Injustice in the place of residence

Conditions for business

The level and the ratio of wealth

The guarantees for the future and its insurance

Low qualification

Lack of housing

Income gap between groups of population

Increase in prices for articles of primary necessity

Risks to capital – poor infrastructure, logistics system, conditions.

In addition, the experts highlighted some internal (subjective reasons), too. These include:

Feeling of hopelessness – noted by 2 experts

Hangout set (the club)

State of health

Inconsistency between the environment and internal expectations

The analysis of the responses of the interviewees about triggering mechanisms of

protest behavior and its magnetic characteristics found out that:

1. There are different types of protest behavior – active and passive; silent and demonstrated forms; internal and external protest. The set of causes for these groups is different. For example, there are initiators and support groups. The possible causes for initiators are: justice, desire for power, unrealized ambitions, or they are just city's madmen, for support groups – an interest or mere coincidence and a sense of group, for young people – self-expression.

2. There are some external factors, contributing to launch of protest behavior. They are:

- Prices and tariffs
- Non-payment of wages
- Clumsy policies on income
- Distortion of information
- Relations with employers
- Lack of security guarantees
- Deterioration of material conditions
- Neglect of the authorities to peoples'

applications

3. In addition, the experts identify internal factors (causes) of protest behavior. They are:

– Dissatisfaction with actions of the authorities

- Understanding of rightlessness
- For the intelligentsia – the mismatch

between the real pace of change and declared changes

- Deceived expectations
- Violated dignity
- Justice
- The value of life
- Annoying factors that led to resentment,

and this resentment is no longer hidden – medical, social, community services, registration of documents. And on the part of the authorities – lack of interaction, dialogue between the

authorities and population, which results in an increase of a certain critical mass, are created.

4. There is a point of view that the protest behavior does not have a system, it is a technology.

The question of what parameters and characteristics are taken into account in electoral behavior was analyzed separately.

According to the experts, quality of life is used as a factor to attract people to elections and to influence their choice. In this case, quality of life is emphasized and the following parameters are used:

- Housing services and tariffs
- Material
- Spiritual
- Ecological
- Transport
- Environment
- Employment and income
- Housing services
- Performance in innovation and education
- Everything that concerns a particular person, living in this area.

The same as in the previous questions, passive (infantile) and active voting behavior can be distinguished. Elections are a place of trade, where loyalty is bought in exchange for expectations.

Quality of life, according to the interviewees, is formed where population is in contact with the external environment, and in this sense Russia is homogeneous.

Thus, the analysis found that there are labor and political migration, which, in its turn, can be internal and external, active and passive; for each of the types of migration there is a set of external and internal factors of quality of life, that determine a particular behavior and its dynamics.

Furthermore, protest behavior is studied in a special way, the experts distinguish its active and passive forms.

In general, quality of life, according to the experts, has external and internal factors in the notions of population. And first of all, population is focused on external factors, and after that, on internal.

According to the experts, population estimates efficiency of the authorities, first of all, in the characteristics of external factors such as demographic, material, social benefits, programs, social support, mortality, introduction of high technologies (cardiology centre, oncology and perinatal centers), level of prosperity of population, level wages, additional income, development of industrial infrastructure, level of unemployment, the environment, outward appearance of the city.

Next, we made a comparative analysis of the views of different groups that participated in the study, which showed that ideas about quality of life that the authorities, people in business and population have, do not coincide. This is indicated by the data presented in Table 1.

In our opinion, such a difference, first of all, means that institutional conditions are not specified, which makes it difficult for the groups to understand each other's ideas. In this sense, decision-making on the quality of life has the nature of action, and does not reflect interaction, decisions made reflect and connect the interests of not all parties, but only one of them. From the point of view of current trends or fashion, decisions of such kind made by the authorities are, perhaps, adequate, because they partly correspond to the claims of one of the parties. But, from the point of view of reality of conflict, this is a race to the horizon of a decision, but not actually a management decision, because it does not pay attention to signals of risk. In other words, we mean that in assessing quality of life it is

important to take into account the lower threshold characteristics, resulting in impossibility of further actions, expressed in everyday language as a "I cannot go on living like this". At present, only the upper threshold characteristics are paid attention to, catering for which is expressed in everyday language in the question "how do you want to live?" and then trying to satisfy these wishes, but it is impossible to keep up with the expectations.

A social agreement about quality life between power-population and business can be discussed as an institutional form of retention of visions of different groups.

The study also revealed that the assessment methodology should also take into account age specifics. For example, the period of youth is determined in relation to one's opportunities for getting education and status, taking into account the possibilities of relatives, i.e. it refers to quality of life through possibilities of parents and one's prospects.

In the next age group (those who entered the labor market) quality of life is determined by the possibility to realize oneself as a subject in civil, economic and political context.

The potential of the next generation is characterized through evaluation of the peak of life and manifests itself in experiencing the possible contribution to future generations.

Thus, in this work we examined the possibility of research apparatus to characterize a threshold level.

It was found that the area of relationships is the most representative, i.e. not what is included into quality of life, but what qualities emerge as influencing behavior. It was established that the population's attitude towards the factors can be different, in other words people are prepared to tolerate, this influences assessment of quality of life, but does not affect behavior.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of quality of life in notions of respondents

Business people	The Authorities	Population
Having a job that a person likes	Accessibility and quality of social services -Education (whether one pays or not, how much, how much one pays, how much one pays in comparison to annual income, what quality one get sfor this price and so on) – Medical services (whether one pays or not, what the quality is and so on). Because if the services are free, the level of income is not important at this moment. -Housing and communal services – Housing – Transport services – Communications	State of health
Security of business	Level of income	Satisfaction with one’s life
Peace of mind	Quality of the urban environment	Material well-being
Presence of targets in the territory	Ecology	Having an apartment
Satisfaction with provision of social services	Level of education	Free time/leisure
Access to education, health care, quality of food	Manual labour	Guarantee of work
Savety	Financial condition	Availability and quality of health care
Good environment	Safety and insuring of business	Personal and family safety
Cultural environment	Personal and family safety	Ecology
	Comfort	Self-realization
	Claims for culture (spiritual)	
	Claims for ownership	
	Employment	
	Quality of a work place	
	Opportunity to go on vacation	
	Level of health	
	Quality of food	
	Contact with power	
	The distinction between oneself and the state	
	Contentment	
	Dignity	
	High level of anxiety	
	Possibility to influence life	

Due to the fact that the ideas about quality of life in the groups of power-population and business differ, and the authorities believe that the other two groups, first of all, take into account external factors, it is necessary to work out the institutional conditions by organizing, for example, areas of public consent.

Conclusion

The results of the research, which is built on the methodological basis of the constructive psychology of conflict, allow us to draw the following conclusion:

1. The existing methodologies for determining and monitoring quality of life have a number of disadvantages, which significantly reduce their practical importance for the government bodies as a guide for managing development of the region in terms of increasing human potential.

2. It is possible to conduct monitoring that detects clear signals about the risks or,

vice versa, stabilization characteristics of behavior of population, which, in its turn, determines the socio-economic condition of the region. Motivational characteristics, but not evaluation factors can become framework for assessment, i.e. the sum of relations of internal and external factors that cause a person to act and determine his /her behavior.

3. Distinguishing psychological migration allows to see its manifestation, primarily in addictive forms of behaviors (alcoholism, disease, drugs, etc.).

In fact, we are dealing with people's behavior and its strategies: there is a real migration and internal psychological. At the same time, whenever dealing with movement of people, we are dealing with human capital and its movement, which in its turn affects the economic situation in the region, as well as its image and attitude to it.

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Конфликтная ситуация и ее проявление в оценке качества жизни

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В настоящей статье рассматриваются вопросы конфликтной действительности на материале оценки качества жизни. Результаты исследования показали, что в оценке качества жизни необходимо учитывать психологические (внутренние) факторы. Именно они позволяют учитывать нижние пороговые характеристики качества жизни, за которыми стоит возможность, а очень часто и необходимость, смены места жительства и вывоза ресурсов за пределы территории.

Предметом исследования стала конфликтная ситуация основных социальных групп, проявившаяся в их представлениях о качестве жизни. В исследовании участвовали представители групп деловой активности, власти и населения. Основным методом работы стал конфликт-анализ, позволяющий работать с конфликтной действительностью в конструктивном стратегическом залоге.

Ключевые слова: конструктивная психология конфликта, конфликтная ситуация, конфликтная действительность, пороговые характеристики в оценке качества жизни.
