Abstract: Our investigation is based on the results of the sociological surveys of change in strategies of social adaptation of rural population of Russia, spent by authors with uniform technique in Siberia, Volga region, Altai from 1993 to 2014. The proposed method of poverty assessment consist of two major indicators of poverty measurement: average income per household member, subjective evaluation of the household economic situation. Analyzing the obtained empirical data enabled to reveal that in recent years there has been a significant reduction in poverty from the point of view of increasing rural incomes, but subjective evaluation of their living situation has not significantly improved. The paper concludes with a presentation of a theoretical framework for understanding of evolution of coping mechanisms (that protect rural communities from the risk of poverty) in rural development in terms of informal economy, networks and development of non-agricultural economy of rural areas.

Keywords: rural development, poverty, household income, subjective evaluation, coping mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

One of the main results of the reforms of the 1990s. in the post-socialist countries was an unprecedented deepening socio-economic inequalities. Rapid change in the balance of power and society resulted in the aggravation of social problems and a sharp decline in living standards of the general population. The most negative social consequences of the reforms, which
appeared in the first place - is a high level of poverty and unemployment and social polarization. In this - the main cause of social tension and political instability of reformed societies.

In recent years, in conditions of economic recovery, which follows after the overcoming the acute phase of the transformation crisis, the incomes of population has growing, but the problems of social inequality and poverty are remain acute, especially in rural areas. It is a known fact of the poverty of Russian citizens living in rural areas. And in world practice it is recognized that the population is less urbanized social communities have fewer opportunities for their development and is characterized usually by the presence of significant share of the poor. The problem of poverty is closely correlated with the problem of deprivation of the rural population, which binds P. Townsend with a specific set of material assets of households, guaranteeing the possibility of maintaining at least a minimum level of social ties. The lack of such a set means the actual loss of people from society, their social exclusion [Townsend, 2000].

The aim of this paper is to, first, to present an outline of the nature and dynamics of the Russian rural poverty, and, secondly, to identify protective practices (coping mechanisms) of rural communities, developed to overcome social class and socio-spatial inequalities.

**METHODS OF MEASURING RISK OF POVERTY**

It should be noted that the development of the scientific approach to the study of the phenomenon of poverty starts since, when the industrial society was replacing the traditional and, when poverty becomes a problem associated with the processes of industrialization and social reform. Qualitative rebirth of perception disadvantaged is from mid-twentieth century, when all were in vain attempts to overcome poverty and economic, and political methods. It was recognized that poverty is a systemic, multidimensional phenomenon, constantly changing value. The concept of “absolute” (material) poverty gave way to the new “relative” (symbolic) poverty, the criteria of which are the inability (inability) to follow the prevailing standards of consumption and way of life of the majority population, as well as satisfaction with their social situation.

In world practice there are several methods of poverty measurement:

- Regulatory approach, analysing the availability of wealth on nutritional standards and other standards set the minimum consumer (minimum consumer basket). This approach has a long tradition in international poverty research. The so-called basic needs as a criterion for measuring poverty dates back to the work of English economist of the nineteenth century J. Rountree. Leaving aside the considerable difficulties
associated with defining at least a minimum set of necessary products and goods, it should be noted that regulatory threshold of poverty can be used to measure poverty only if cash income reflects real consumption.

- Statistical approach as poor considering either 10-15% of the total number of population distribution in the sizes of the resulting per capita incomes, or a part of this series.

- According to the stratified approach to poor people are, a priori limited in the possibilities of self-sufficiency (the elderly, the handicapped, single-parent and large families, children without parents, the unemployed, migrants, etc.).

- Heuristic approach to poverty defines, based on estimates of public opinion or from the standpoint of the Respondent, the sufficiency or insufficiency of the standard of living of individuals or groups.

In Russia, as an official approach, adopted a normative approach, i.e. belong to the poor population living below the subsistence minimum, or the cost of the minimum set of food, the most essential industrial goods and very low consumption of services.

In Russian sociology a number of researchers uses a combination of several methods of measurement, for example, “normative heuristic method with endogenous component”, developed under the leadership of T. I. Zaslavskaya. The combination and development of these two factors is implemented by the researchers in different systems of indicators of poverty.

Our proposed approach to the measurement of poverty involves two types of indicators, including statistical and normative indicators and subjective assessment of material situation of the family (household).

The most typical factors that contribute to the vulnerability of becoming poor, most sociologists attributed the low level of per capita real income and wealth (“to be born poor”), low level of skills and education, poor health, high familial load, the displacement of the labour market, the individual characteristics associated with lifestyle, value orientations. The proposed method of poverty assessment through the measurement of deprivation (deprivation and social exclusion comes from the direct analysis of the degree of satisfaction of needs. Families can be classified as poor if their resources are insufficient to provide food, living conditions and activities, which is the usual or customary in society. Accounting for subjective self-assessments of the respondents their financial situation allows to make the analysis more relevant to the conditions of the studied area: on the one hand, the Respondent has knowledge about whether his standard of living “normal” or acceptable for this community, and on the other hand, a common understanding of poverty does not exist. This situation, in our
opinion, involve changes in the living standards of Russians in the post-reform years. The part families have been accustomed to poverty, and they do not consider low standards of consumption deprivation. Others compare their current situation with the standards of 1990th and in deprivation when incomes above the official poverty line.

Understanding that specific characteristics led to the emergence of connection attempts normative and heuristic approaches in the development of indicators of poverty. Research conducted by VTSIOM on poverty in Russia, based on five types of indicators. They are: a) the sum of primary and secondary incomes (earnings) of respondents in the month prior to the survey; b) the average per capita income of families of the respondents in the same month; b) the view of respondents on the minimum required wage level of workers; d) their idea of the cost per capita subsistence minimum in the period of the survey; e) an indication of the level of per capita income of families required, “to live fine”. However, measurements on the basis of this approach based on a representative nationwide sample to obtain the necessary empirical data, but still with a certain periodicity (at least once a quarter), require enormous financial resources, known due to the high cost of such works. Given this, and more productive approach, it was deemed appropriate to elect only two major indicators different etymology, not correlated with each other, but having a relation with each other.

These indicators are as follows:
- average income per household member;
- subjective evaluation by the members of the household economic situation of the family.

In monitoring studies conducted from 1995 to 2014, in the framework of this approach, we used two types of indicators to study the problems of poverty.

The first step was to determine:
- the amount of basic and additional income (earnings) of respondents in the month prior to the survey;
- subjective assessment of respondents financial situation of the family.

The second step was to determine:
- the amount of basic and additional cash income, including all transfers of the household in the month prior to the survey;
- average shower cash income per 1 household member in the same month;
- subjective assessment of respondents financial status of a family.
The measurement of the financial position of households was carried out based on the nominal scale, including signs, obtained empirically in the course of many years of research, and includes several categorical divisions, some of which means the situation of poverty of the Respondent (or the risk of such a situation – for example, “On products of money missing, but buying clothes is difficult”).

But since poverty is a socio-psychological state and not just the economic situation, it is possible to measure the psychological state of poverty was used, the scale of self-assessment by respondents of their “life situation”, which includes only 5 indicators, namely:
- more than normal;
- it’s not bad, it is possible to live;
- life is difficult, you can tolerate;
- the situation is dire, impossible to endure;
- difficult to answer.

Thus, the poverty threshold for all stages of the monitoring study were shower subsistence minimum in the period of the survey, determined by government authorities. In fact, we face again “normative heuristic” approach to the definition of poverty. Possibilities of interpretation of the data obtained as a result of the use of such a “normative heuristic” approach allowed us to characterize poverty as a social condition different socio-demographic groups of the rural population and to characterize the dynamics of rural poverty in contemporary Russia, as well as protective mechanisms, produced by the actors of rural development in response to the risks of poverty.

While the problems of poverty and social differentiation were investigated in the context of broader issues of social modernization of the Russian countryside, so being primarily focused on economic and institutional changes, we tried to cover in our researches whole range of changes: social behavior, daily practice, ethnocultural aspects, changes in the rural way of life, political modernization of rural society (including issues of social partnership and local democracy). A comprehensive study of dynamics of change in rural communities included at least three sets of problems, containing more than 100 variables: the socio-economic bloc, covering the problems associated with the level of income of the rural population, property relations, the situation on labor market and forms of employment and the predominant economic activities; sociodemographic block; socio-structural block, comprising questions of social organization
and social relationships of rural communities, the network community profile, the level of trust and social capital, norms that structure social interaction of individuals and groups.

THE SPECIFICITY AND DYNAMICS OF THE RUSSIAN RURAL POVERTY IN THE MIRROR OF STATISTICS

The growth of rural poverty in Russia during the reforms of the 1990s contributed to a number of reasons. First, significantly reduced the scale of production in the agricultural sector, which caused the growth of unemployment. Secondly, decreased the amount of state social assistance to low-income people. Thirdly, in the face of shrinking formal labour market in rural areas is falling wages of workers employed in agricultural organizations. Agricultural workers was one of the low-paid category of workers. For the period of the 1990s – early 2000s the level of wages of agricultural workers relative to the average Russian has fallen from 90% to 40%, and the ratio of minimum wage to average in the industry amounted to only 28 %. In addition, wages in enterprises in rural areas much more often compared to the city, detained, taking advantage of a desperate situation and low legal literacy of people. In the period of recovery growth after the 1998 crisis, the growth of real incomes began throughout the economy but the average monthly wage in agriculture is still lower than in any other sector of the economy (table. 1).

Table 1. Average monthly wage of workers in agriculture, in % of all-economic average level, 2008-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The risk of poverty is most high among the population living in small villages and hamlets, and has a tendency to increase. In 2013, the index of risk of poverty in settlements with populations of less than 200 people, was 3.29 against 2,15 in 2009 and more than doubled the corresponding indicator in rural settlements with populations of over 5 thousand people.
Fig. 1. The risk index of poverty on human settlements of different population in 2013

More than half of poor and extremely poor rural population (with incomes of more than 2 below the subsistence minimum) is employed, which indicates extremely low yields primarily agricultural work, which remains the main activity in rural areas, and widespread rural economic poverty. Moreover, according to statistics, the obvious trend to proliferation of the phenomenon of “labor poverty” – i.e., poverty among the employed rural population (table. 2).

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>58,7</td>
<td>58,2</td>
<td>58,1</td>
<td>58,4</td>
<td>58,7</td>
<td>59,4</td>
<td>59,7</td>
<td>60,7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63,1</td>
<td>63,2</td>
<td>62,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Households with children in 2013 was 64% of all rural poor households. Of these, 32.7 per cent had one child, 22,3 – two and 9% three or more children. The slide into poverty at birth certainly has a negative impact on reproductive behaviour of villagers and demographic situation in the country. Among the rural poor is dominated by persons with secondary (complete) General education, are not in high demand in the labour market. They account for one fourth of the poor and extremely poor villagers. Higher education possess 9 % of the poor and 7.7% are extremely poor. The largest proportion of the poor are concentrated in larger rural settlements (from 1 to 5 thousand people).
THE DYNAMICS OF OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE INDICATORS OF RISK OF POVERTY. SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Analysis of the data of sociological research generally confirms the reduction of rural poverty in Russia according to macroeconomic indicators. The economic growth of the 2000s, accompanied by the growth of social support to the rural population, has led to a certain increase in the welfare of rural residents. The comparison of data of our surveys of various years show the appreciable positive tendencies in this point in question, but we need to explore further, how it connected with shown growth of a standard of well-being of rural population (Table 3).

Table 3. Incomes of the population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Data 2001</th>
<th>Data 2004</th>
<th>Data 2007</th>
<th>Data 2011</th>
<th>Data 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abject poverty (less than 1/2 PM)</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>47 %</td>
<td>22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty (from 1/2 to 1 PM)</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>36 %</td>
<td>37 %</td>
<td>42 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 PM on a member of a family</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>9 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PM and it is more</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of subjective evaluations of their own financial situation of respondents, interpret the situation by personal views, values and opinions, allows a slightly different way to present the situation. Data from different years a gradual decline in the share of “very poor” (rural residents experiencing problems with the availability of food), from 25 to 5% of the respondents. However, the share of “uniquely poor” (respondents who have difficulties with acquiring clothing) remains unchanged, except for certain fluctuations, and is in the research of the last 10 years about 20% (table 4), significantly higher compared with the statistical indicators.
Table 4. Self-evaluation of their financial means by the respondents, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We barely scrape by; not enough money even for food</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have enough money for food, but buying clothes causes serious difficulties</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough money to buy food and clothing, but buying things expendable is a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem for us</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can easily buy things durable. But it is difficult to buy really</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expensive things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can afford expensive purchases - an apartment, a house, and much more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considered above data correlate with the subjective scale of self-esteem “situations” by the respondents. During the same period 2007-2013 there was a reduction in the “pessimists” who choose the answer “the situation is disastrous, impossible to endure” (from 12% to 3%), but the share of other self-evaluations in recent years virtually unchanged, and the majority of respondents tend to regard their position is neutral: “life is difficult, but you can endure” (table 5).

Table 5. “How would you rate your current life situation?”, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everything is more than fine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not that bad and you can live</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is difficult, but you can tolerate</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The situation is dire, impossible to tolerate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to answer</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the inconsistency of the current stage of development of the Russian countryside is that of objective improvement, manifested in the growth of the economy and people’s income does not significantly affect the social conditions of ordinary people and their subjective assessment of the situation, most of them are moderately pessimistic, or restrained optimistic judgments. This contradiction is explained, first, too low “starting point” of growth in the Russian village in the 2000s when wages and incomes were sometimes at a level not sufficient for physical reproduction (and
therefore the impressive growth of the 2000s is too small at the micro-level of individual households). Secondly, on the level and quality of life is influenced by the deterioration of the material base of the enterprises, the lack of social infrastructure, the shortage of safe drinking water and ecological problems. The dilapidated state of rural roads limits the economic development of the village. The reduction in the number of schools, hospitals, cultural institutions and sports limits the ability of rural residents. Despite the fact that rural residents are aware of the need and importance of higher education, many of them can’t give a decent education to their children.

A significant component of rural poverty in Russia is to reduce the quality of the labour force and non-socialization of the rural population. From part of the working-age population formed a fairly stable group of unemployed, not seeking to get a job at all. While the study was not revealed strict correlation between the unemployment rate and income level. Employment on large farms, hired labor from the farmer or self-employment farm no guarantee of prosperity and wealth and save the villagers from the risk of poverty. One of the crucial aspects determining the risk of rural poverty in modern Russia is the socio-spatial factor. Territorial differentiation of natural conditions is a natural basis of the social division of labor, in turn, it accounts for the unique social conditions of life and social image of the population living on the territory of the local, the regional, subregional and regional communities.

**COPING MECHANISMS AGAINST THE RISKS OF POVERTY**

The problem of rural poverty in Russia is widely covered in literature and are well understood by society as a critical point of national development. At the same time recognized strategies of its decision has yet been made, neither explicitly nor implicitly. Generally speaking, this decision lies within the three strategies: 1) increase rural incomes from agricultural employment, 2) the growth of income from non-agrarian employment and economic diversification of rural areas 3) migration of rural population to the cities. And if part of this activity is external to rural society actors, the other part of practices and institutions to counteract the risks of poverty, created and maintained by villagers. Modern paradigm of rural development clearly relies on the resource of self-organization, self-development of the village. The self-organization processes of particular importance in rural areas where the most profound transformations of social life wore a spontaneous, often temporary in nature and was carried out in conditions of prolonged and large-scale crisis that threatened the survival of rural communities. The imperfection of the state agrarian policy and the ineffectiveness of measures
of socio-economic support of rural residents highlights the problems of self-organization of rural society and liberation of creative and entrepreneurial potential of “mass”.

The decrease during the years of reforms more than twice the share of wages in household income led to this situation, when she ceased to perform stimulating, reproductive, social and protective functions [Elohovalova, 2004:36] that stimulated the development of alternative ways of providing rural households in Russia. Self-sustaining households represent a “primary element” of the informal rural economy. To compensate for low or no wages, rural residents are forced to resort not only to sell in the market parts of manufactured products, but also to different ways of diversifying sources of income — in other words, all possible ways of survival: leaving for work in the city, the collection and sale of mushrooms and berries, fishing and hunting, illegal hiring, etc. the national average in 2013, more than a quarter of all employment in rural areas were employed in the informal sector, which is almost three times higher than for the city. Unregistered employment is widely distributed and occupies an important place in the livelihoods of rural people, although it is mostly secondary. At least two thirds of rural residents, formally unemployed, have either permanent or alternating seasonal gainful employment. The study found various forms of unregistered employment. Among the young and working-age men spread out to work in the city and “shift method”, “work at North”. An important source of extra earnings for the villagers collect and sell mushrooms and berries, which lasts from July to October. Mushrooms and berries sold on the motorway or train station, and where such capacity is lacking, the buyers at prices twice lower. In recreational areas (along rivers and lakes) distributed service visiting for the summer season residents – construction of baths, houses, sheds. Cottagers are realized in summer surplus household products, etc. in the Winter the locals guard cottages most affluent citizens. While our research 2007-2014 allowed to discover two alternative types of informal practices: 1) “individualistic” based on reciprocal market and the types of exchange that are sold in informal entrepreneurial activities of households; 2) “integrative”, which combines the features of reciprocal, market and redistributive types of exchange, unites enterprises of the formal sector (reformed collective farms) and the household network.

The surveys showed a the strengthening of social differentiation and reduction in the importance of informal norms and interactions in communities, development-oriented practices of informal enterprise, trade and crafts, “seasonal work”, recorded the event here the degradation of social capital, manifested in the shift of attitudes to personal autonomy and lesser significance of local solidarity ties. In this sense, these coping mechanisms of the countryside against the risks of poverty, as the use of informal practices used in varying degrees by all rural households are contributing to increased
social differentiation and increases the risk for the individual groups of the rural population. Our assumptions are confirmed by modern research in Europe (England), there the finding is not that affluent populations are more formalized and deprived populations more informalized, as is assumed in the modernization thesis, but rather, affluent populations are found to be “work busy” engaging in a wider range of multifarious labor practices and doing so out of choice whilst disadvantaged populations are relatively “work deprived” conducting a narrower limited range of practices more commonly out of necessity and in the absence of alternative options [Nadin, Williams, 2012]. It fact led R. Pahl [1988] to see the informal economy not as a possible survival mechanism of the poor and unemployed, but a new dimension of social polarization with an underclass which is deprived both in the field of formal and informal work.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the analysis of data of the state statistics and our sociological surveys of processes of social modernization of the Russian countryside show that despite the positive dynamics of objective indicators of welfare the situation of poverty perceived by the respondents as a problem, and the subjective assessment of the problem vary slightly. Therefore, poverty as a factor of exclusion and deprivation remains important in rural areas. At the same protective mechanisms against the risks of poverty, develop the rural communities (informal practices, alternative employment) play an ambiguous role. On the one hand, they contribute to raising the standard of living of certain individuals and social groups. On the other hand, the use of informal practices sometimes leads to the inert nature of the development of rural communities and enhances social differentiation. Given this, it would be a mistake to bet solely on the resources of self-development of rural communities, suggesting that with some support (or non-intervention), they will be able to cope with the most serious risk of poverty. It is necessary to take into account the tool (adaptation) the nature of the protective mechanisms of the village. Analysis of current trends in the socio-economic development of the Russian countryside (research 2010-2014.) Shows a reduction in the value of the basic structures, generating informal connections and relations. Hypertrophic development of informal practices and relations in the 1990s. It was called as features of adaptation of the rural population to the market (which was forced, due to reduced formal employment opportunities, to find new channels of social and economic activity) and the weakening of state control in the various spheres of society in the period of large-scale restructuring and the lack of detailed legislative framework, adequate changing realities. As soon as there is no need for informal practices - there are changes that affect the scope and value, working ethos of the peasants.
REFERENCE


