

# SCIENTIFIC REVIEWS

DOI: 10.15838/esc.2023.2.86.12

UDC 331.5.024.5, LBC 65.24

© Leonidova G.V.

## Ways to Reduce Social Inequality

Review of the book: Bobkov V.N., Bobkova T.E. et al. (2022). Standard of Living and Quality of Life of the Russian Population: From Reality to Designing the Future: Monograph. FCTAS RAS. Moscow: FCTAS RAS. 274 p.



**Galina V.  
LEONIDOVA**

Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences

Vologda, Russian Federation

e-mail: galinaleonidova@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0003-0361-2099; ResearcherID: I-7139-2016

**Abstract.** In the context of new geopolitical, financial, economic and epidemiological challenges, the issues of ensuring a decent standard of living and quality of life for the Russian population are still a priority in Russia's domestic policy. The relevance of this problem arouses scientific interest, which is confirmed by the publication of more than fifteen monographic studies over the past five years. The article analyzes the findings of a study published in 2022 in the monograph *Standard of Living and Quality of Life of the Russian Population: From Reality to Designing the Future*, prepared by a team of authors and edited by V.N. Bobkov, N.V. Loktyukhina, E.F. Shamaeva. The authors of the book – economists, sociologists, specialists in the field of medicine, environmental protection and labor law – presented the results of four years of studying the components, social standards and indicators of the standard of living and quality of life in modern Russia, their qualitative identification and quantitative assessment in the context of excessive socio-economic inequality. The main advantage of the monograph is an interdisciplinary approach to studying the quality of life, which allows for a comprehensive analysis of this indicator of the state of society from the standpoint of economic, social and legal relations. The article notes the structuring of the material, the sequence of its presentation – from theory to methodology and practical recommendations, brevity and accuracy of judgments about the categories under consideration, and a clear perspective of the authors. The novelty of the proposed publication is due to the fact that it

---

**For citation:** Leonidova G.V. (2023). Ways to reduce social inequality. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 16(2), 216–229. DOI: 10.15838/esc.2023.2.86.12

investigates new tools of governmental and corporate policy to regulate the standard of living and quality of life, in particular, the presentation of the authors' concept of a medium-term national program to reduce absolute monetary poverty. These tools are becoming an important step toward reducing social inequality. In practice, this is "designing the future", as the authors put it, and this is what provides the monograph with both scientific and practical significance.

**Key words:** quality of life, standard of living, population, precarious employment, unconditional basic income, concept of a medium-term national program to reduce absolute monetary poverty.

### Introduction

The relevance of studying the quality of life is due to a number of circumstances, primarily the increasing importance of its significant improvement for modern Russia. The quality of life as one of the resulting indicators of the state of society, on the one hand, acts as an evaluative indicator of "the life of all spheres of the social system (political, economic, spiritual, social), on the other hand, is the most important factor affecting the state of society, its sustainable development" (Sushko, 2018). Therefore, the problem of the standard of living and quality of life is in the focus of attention of the government, society, and, of course, researchers.

Public attention to this problem is primarily associated with the constitutional provision of the welfare state, "whose policy is aimed at creating conditions for a decent life and the free development of a person"<sup>1</sup>. This is also confirmed by the inclusion of parameters of the standard of living and quality of life in the list of national goals of the RF<sup>2</sup>. National projects and federal activities in three areas are the implementation of real actions in this regard: "Human Capital", "Comfortable Living Environment" and "Economic Growth"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Russian Federation: Adopted by popular vote on December 12, 1993, with amendments approved by all-Russian vote on July 1, 2020. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202210060013> (accessed: October 20, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Decree on the national development goals of Russia until 2030, dated July 21, 2020. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63728> (accessed: October 20, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> National projects of Russia. Available at: <https://национальныепроекты.рф/> (accessed: October 24, 2022).

The research interest is due to the problem of "terminological chaos" (Rossoshanskii, Chekmareva, 2016), caused by a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of the quality of life and also due to the need to systematize the knowledge accumulated by foreign and Russian scientists in this field, and the search for ways to solve current problems of the standard of living and quality of life.

A comprehensive approach to the discussion of the mentioned problems is proposed in the collective monograph *Standard of Living and Quality of Life of the Russian Population: From Reality to Designing the Future*. Its authors are scientists of one of the leading academic institutions – the Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of FCTAS RAS, in particular, the staff of the Laboratory for issues of standards of living and quality of life. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the publication, representatives of various fields – economics, sociology, medicine, environmental protection, and labor law – took part in the preparation of the book. The monograph was edited by Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor V.N. Bobkov, Doctor of Sciences (Economics) N.V. Loktyukhina, Candidate of Sciences (Engineering) E.F. Shamaeva.

The purpose of the article is to review the research results published in the monograph, to highlight the peculiarities of the material and its practical significance, and to evaluate the new tools of social policy proposed by the authors from the perspective of regional governance.

### Research methodology

As an empirical basis, the authors of the collective monograph relied on data from Rosstat, Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of HSE, official materials of Russian ministries and agencies, the results of public surveys, in particular the authors' survey of the unemployed.

The reviewed monograph consists of six sections (14 chapters), in which from general to specific, from theory to methodological and practical recommendations, the problems of the standard of living and quality of life of the Russian population are revealed – from its real state to the authors' vision of the future.

The first section of the monograph is devoted to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of the standard of living and quality of life. The second section considers modern challenges to the standard of living and quality of life. Information about the monitoring study of income and standard of living based on social standards is presented in the third section. The fourth section is devoted to new tools of state and corporate policy for regulating the standard of living and quality of life. The authors put forward a concept of the medium-term national program for reducing absolute monetary poverty and their proposals on approaches to designing the standard of living and quality of life of Russians (the fifth section of the monograph). Finally, the sixth section accumulates the conclusions of the entire study.

### Conceptualization of the quality of life: Structure and components

The starting theoretical point of the monographic publication are the categories of “standard of living and quality of life”. Based on the research of Russian (S.A. Ayvazyan, V.N. Bobkov, N.M. Rimashevskaya, etc.) and foreign (P. Abbott, A. Walker, P. Hermann, etc.) scientists, the authors of the monograph specify theoretical and methodological basis for studying the standard of living and quality of life (*Fig. 1*). In particular, the

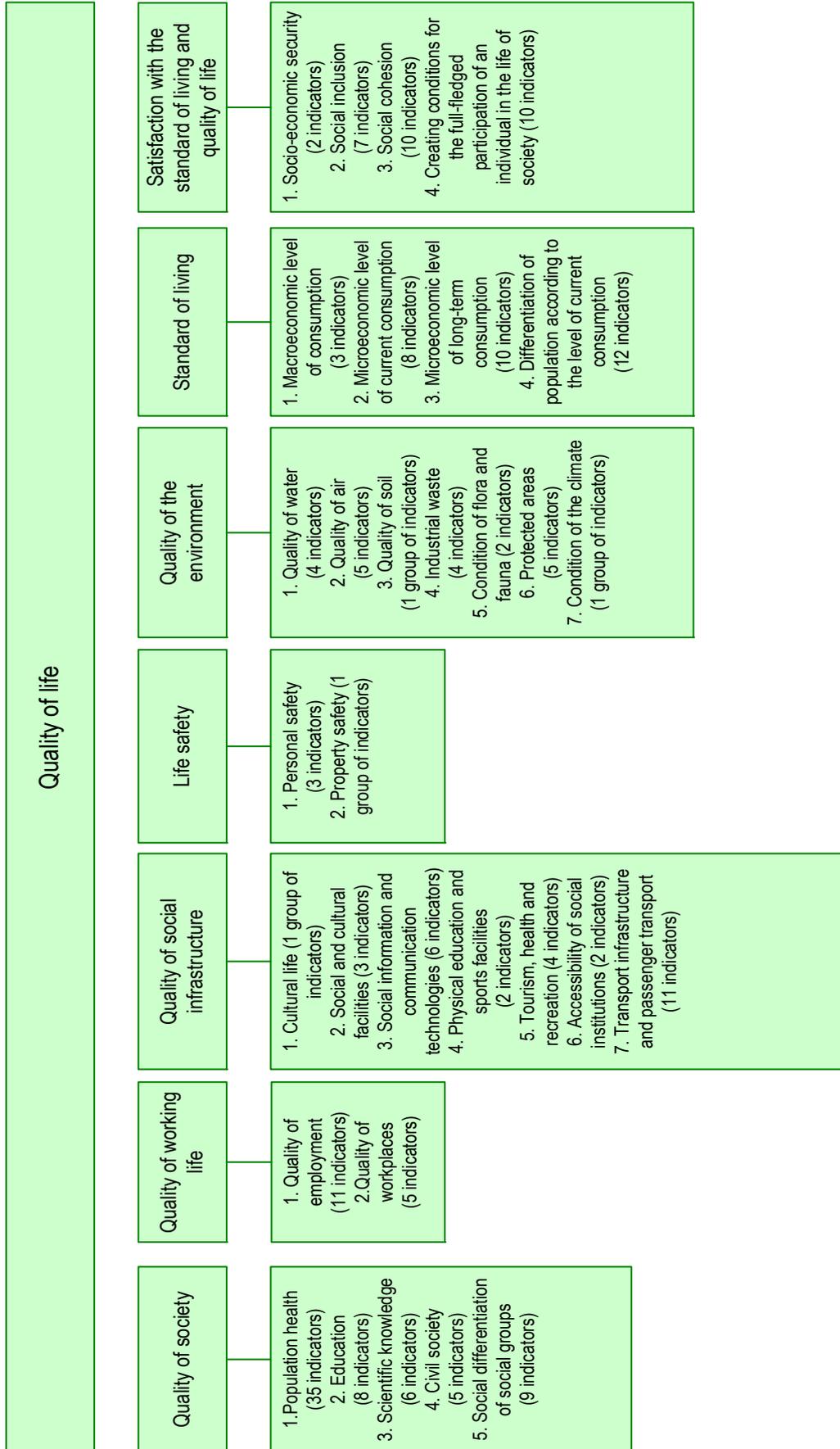
spheres of formation of the standard of living and quality of life (health and healthcare; life safety; worldview; socio-psychological; intellectual and educational; spiritual and cultural; professional and labor; family and personal; civil and social; anthroponatural and socio-economic spheres) are systematized and their components (quality of society; quality of working life; quality of social infrastructure; life safety; environmental quality; standard of living (consumption); and people's satisfaction with the standard of living and quality of life).

It should be noted that the diversity of knowledge fields, operating with the concept “quality of life”, and differences in the goals of scientific research, have generated a large number of approaches to the definition of the structure of the quality of life, its conceptual and structural models. Many of these models correlate with the concept presented by the authors of the collective monograph.

Thus, one of the modern models (Ruževičius, Akranavičiūtė, 2007) contains the following structure of the quality of life: physical, material and psychological state, education and self-development, social relations, self-expression and recreation, safety and environment (*Fig. 2*). Like the authors of the collective monograph, the researcher builds a logical relationship between the evaluated areas of the quality of life and its components, thereby showing the diversity of aspects of human life and drawing attention to the complexity of the concept.

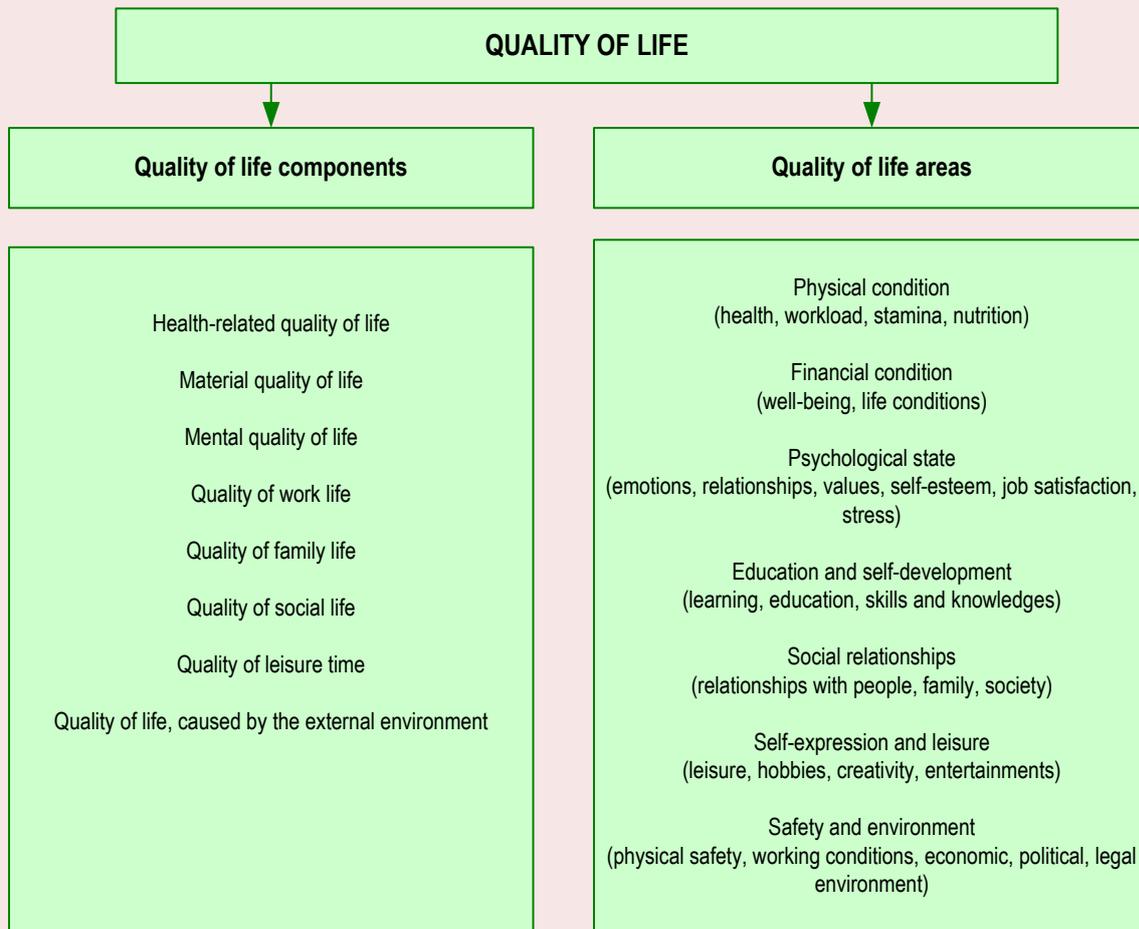
We should also mention the structure of the quality of life presented by a group of American researchers (Schalock, 2004). It is based on eight evaluation areas: emotional well-being, interpersonal relations, material well-being, personal development, physical well-being, self-determination, social inclusion, rights, interrelated with three factors: independence, social participation, well-being. We should note, that this

Figure 1. The concept of the quality of life, presented in the monograph “Standard of living and quality of life of the Russian population: From reality to designing the future”



Compiled according to: (Standard of Living and Quality of Life..., 2022).

Figure 2. Conceptual model of the quality of life



Compiled according to: (Ruževičius, Akranavičiūtė, 2007).

concept is focused on evaluating the quality of life as a whole and people with disabilities as a special socio-demographic group. In other words, the definition of the quality of life is based on the degree of inclusion in society.

A similar position is held by other scholars (Cummins, 2000), who propose the following structure of the quality of life: material well-being, health, work, family well-being, security, social relationships and emotional well-being.

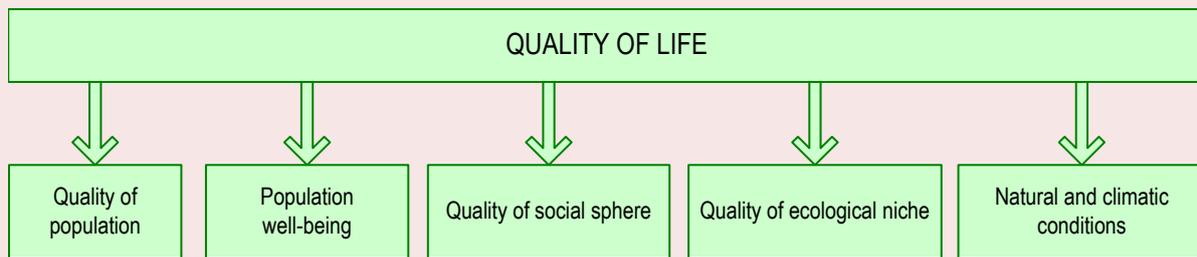
Russian scientists concentrate on the most problematic elements (Rossoshanskii, 2019). For example, in the studies of S.A. Aivazyán the quality of life is structured by five key blocks (Fig. 3),

comprehensively describing “the environment and the system of life support of the population” (Aivazyán, 2012).

The approach of scientists from the geography faculty of MSU (Zubarevich, 2007) differs in that the structuring of the quality of life is carried out in two ways: the definition of the minimum and the total list of components (Fig. 4).

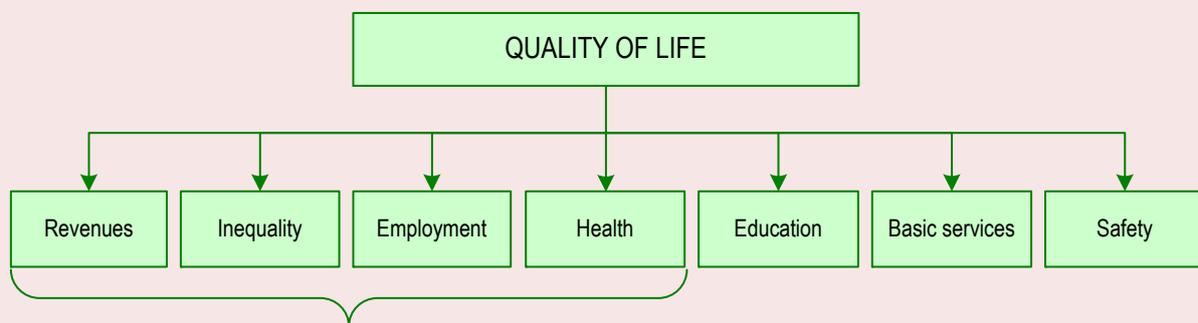
Thus, even the most modest review of theoretical and methodological sources of research on the quality of life allows us to evaluate a quite significant contribution of the authors of the collective monograph to the conceptualization of the term and its comprehensive study. Being

Figure 3. Structure of the quality of life according to S.A. Aivazyan's approach



Compiled according to: (Aivazyan, 2012).

Figure 4. The structure of the quality of life according to N.V. Zubarevich's approach



A minimum set of components, reflecting the most acute problems

Compiled according to: (Zubarevich, 2007).

generally in the mainstream of such studies, the authors offer a broader view of the content and structure of the quality of life, give a comprehensive view of the variety of components and indicators, which are important for the development of scientifically based national social policy in the Russian Federation.

We should note another feature of the collective work, in particular the decomposition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the possibility of their interpretation in the aspect of reproduction of the components of the standard of living and quality of life substantiated in the

monograph, which is confirmed in the work. The national set of the SDGs is reflected in the state strategic documents<sup>4</sup>, respectively, its indicators are included in the concept of quality of life, presented by the author's group.

#### **Quality of employment and quality of working life**

The authors of the monograph define the quality of employment (QE) and quality of working life (QWL) as the central problem of the quality of life concept. The paper gives a theoretical overview of these concepts with an emphasis on the quality of working life as a broader category that includes,

<sup>4</sup> On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation: Presidential Decree 400, dated July 2, 2021. Available at: [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_389271/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_389271/) (accessed: 20.10.2022); On the National development goals of Russia until 2030: Presidential Decree dated July 21, 2020. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63728> (accessed: 20.10.2022).

along with the quality of employment, the quality of the working environment (the workplace) in which employment takes place. The authors note: “Today, there is no unified scientific approach among researchers to assessing both the quality of working life and the quality of employment” (*Standard of Living and Quality of Life...*, 2022). The inconsistency in the conceptualization of the above categories is due to the fact that different approaches meet: 1) different number of indicators, 2) different levels of evaluation (territory, industry, enterprise). Moreover, the QWL is multidimensional, has a bilateral evaluation position (measured by objective and subjective indicators), is characterized by multiple evaluation parameters, the dynamics of socio-economic and technological conditions, and changes in employees’ attitudes toward working conditions and work in general (Leonidova, Ivanovskaya, 2021). It should also be noted that the approaches to the content of QWL and QE are different. Thus, the authors point out that since 2000 several research projects at the international level have been undertaken: the European Employment Strategy; the OECD Better Life Initiative; the International Labor Organization’s Decent Work Concept<sup>5</sup>; the UN EEC initiative<sup>6</sup>; the OECD Job Quality System; the European Working Conditions Survey, and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions approach<sup>7</sup>. All these projects somehow consider the quality of employment as “the state of an individual’s labor activity, which allows them to fully realize the totality of their needs arising through the labor process, while creating a positive effect in the socio-economic and political spheres of society” (Salnikova, 2007). From the analysis

<sup>5</sup> Decent work. Report of the ILO Director-General. 87th ILO session. Geneva, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Measuring Quality of Employment: Country Pilot Reports. UNECE, Geneva, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Quality of Employment Conditions and Employment Relations in Europe. Dublin: Eurofound, 2013.

presented in the monograph, we can conclude that employment quality is a “multidimensional, still forming concept of the complex relationship between employee and work” (Veredyuk, 2018). The author’s approach to the definition of QWL as an integral and system-forming component of the standard of living and quality of life, considered at two levels of integration: the quality of employment and the quality of jobs, is very important in this case.

#### **Industry 4.0 and the quality of life**

A distinctive feature of the monograph is the systematization of modern challenges and their impact on the quality of life. Perhaps it is worth noting that such a concentrated analysis of the above-mentioned problem has not yet been found in the scientific literature. The authors chose the quality of working life as the field of concentration of contemporary challenges and highlighted positive and negative trends in the impact of typical technical and technological aspects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) on the development of labor relations and society. Two areas of influence were identified: the transformation of jobs and public communications (which corresponds to the component “quality of employment”) and the impact on the quality of working life and society.

The authors link the problem of Industry 4.0 impact on jobs to major scientific and technological innovations (robotics, development of the Internet of Things, Big Data analysis, cloud computing, IT technology, IT security, simulation modeling, intelligent materials) that “create qualitatively new environment and jobs to transform production, services and information, labor and society in general” (*Standard of Living and Quality of Life...*, 2022).

The authors reveal the impact of Industry 4.0 on the quality of working life through development opportunities and emerging threats that must be confronted.

What are the opportunities highlighted by the authors of the monograph? First, the development

of the diversity of labor markets and forms of employment, which manifests itself in flexible, non-standard forms of employment that change its structure (Mandl et al., 2015). The growth of such employment forms offers the prospect of a more complete use of people's abilities and self-realization.

Second, the authors note such an opportunity as an increase in labor productivity and employee requirements, a reduction in labor sphere, which is facilitated by the automation of a growing number of tasks in the economy and other spheres of life. The transformation of employee requirements increases interest in the expansion of continuing education, motivation to acquire modern knowledge, including the use of information and communication technologies.

Third, there has been a tremendous increase in the connectivity of labor markets, economies and societies, which is manifested not only in the enormous scale of external and internal labor migration, but also in human development, the so-called e-migration. Employees are becoming increasingly mobile spatially and functionally and this allows them to work anywhere and anytime<sup>8</sup>, to increase income from employment.

Fourth, human intelligence is complemented by artificial intelligence, which "multiplies natural, human intelligence to maintain the manageability of socio-natural systems at all levels of human activity and their communities, opens up completely new potential horizons for humanity" (*Standard of Living and Quality of Life...*, 2022).

In considering the threats of Industry 4.0, the authors focus the reader's attention on the most obvious and truly dangerous problems of human development. First, there is widespread precarious

employment, which infringes on workers' labor and social rights in terms of working hours, regularity and dignity of wages, labor protection, vacations and social insurance. It is enough to say that in 2018, 68.6% of salaried employees of organizations had signs of precarious employment, including 61.2% of households experiencing unfavorable material well-being as a consequence of this (Bobkov, Odintsova, 2020a). The same trend is noted in the studies of the researchers of Vologda Research Center of RAS (Popov, Soloveva, 2021): among salaried employees in the Vologda Oblast, the coverage of precarious employment is 39%, among entrepreneurs and self-employed it is 28%.

The authors speak of the threat of enormous unemployment as "the combined market capitalization of companies and their revenues are rapidly increasing, while the number of employees is decreasing" (*Standard of Living and Quality of Life...*, 2022).

The undermining of labor's social function is also among the threats of Industry 4.0, especially in the remote employment. Capitalism, according to researchers, is being transformed into a so-called platform capitalism (Degryse, 2017).

The authors do not ignore the threats posed to humanity by artificial intelligence, as the work – leisure balance is destroyed (Cook, 2020), the boundaries between free time and working time are erased, which leads to a decrease in the quality of working life of employees. Cybersecurity risks are increasing manifold, etc.

The authors also call the forecasted instability of modern societies, arising from negative mental, spiritual and moral, socio-economic, political and environmental contradictions in their development and the growing social tensions, as a threat of Industry 4.0. The digitalization of the labor market is accompanied by routine technological changes, which lead to the effect of emptying "middle" professions and professional polarization, to the inequality of access to digital tools and digital

<sup>8</sup> Messenger J., Vargas L., Gschwind L. et al. (2017). *Working Anytime, Anywhere: The Effects on the World of Work*. Eurofound. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1658en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1658en.pdf) (accessed: October 24, 2022).

competencies. The problems of disequilibrium in the biosphere and ecology are not ignored by the authors.

A characteristic feature of the book is the practical component of the analysis. The authors accompany the problematic issues in each chapter or section with arguments for possible solutions to various problems. So, in this case, it is proposed to neutralize the negative effects in certain forms of employment and activities; to use macro-regulation that includes the development of science and education; to develop institutional foundations for the creation of new highly efficient jobs; and to apply new institutions for the organization of society that improve its social quality.

The impact of digitalization and the digital divide on the standard of living and quality of life is described in detail and methodologically by a group of authors. The level of digital inequality is most evident in the use of the Internet and the differentiation between urban and rural population. Digital exclusion means either a complete loss of access or a significant decrease in accessibility for the individual (Gruzdeva, 2022).

Analyzing the problem of the digital divide and the policy documents on its reduction, acting within the framework of national projects, the authors conclude that the task of reducing the digital divide is not explicitly formulated<sup>9</sup>, and therefore is not supported by indicators and their planned dynamics, i.e. the question arises of the insufficiency of the planned measures. Moreover, as studies by Vologda Research Center of RAS show, “under conditions of increasingly early exposure of children to ICTs, an increase in life expectancy, the trend toward digitalization of the economy, social sphere and public administration in the foreseeable and

forecasted future, the entire population of the country will somehow need the opportunity to use at least the Internet, so as not to be excluded from most social processes. In this case, it will be possible not just to talk about the general level of the digital divide, but to differentiate it at various levels (for example, at the basic, user and professional levels) for a new understanding of the influence of different factors” (Gruzdeva, 2022).

The book’s authors did not ignore such a catalyst for fundamental changes in employment as the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred in 2020. The author’s group, in their own manner, has analyzed in detail and thoroughly the trends that have emerged in the field of research interest, concerning the quality of employment and related relationships. It should be noted that in this section the new forms of employment, their pros and cons, particularly the platform employment, self-employment, remote employment are analyzed in detail. Special attention is paid to the reasons of their spreading, positive and negative moments, it is pointed out that all these new phenomena require research and managerial impacts.

#### **Quality of life, education, precarious employment**

A large research block of the monograph is devoted to the issues of the standard of living and quality of life, considered in the context of professional education and precarious employment problems. In this section the authors on the basis of the developed original toolkit of multicriteria identification of social groups by the standard of living and quality of life and assessment of the scale of population localization in them (its individual categories), identified the most vulnerable groups from the economically active population (EAP), characterized by a low standard of living and quality of life (Bobkov, Odintsova, 2020b). The research approach in identifying population groups that differ in terms of the standard of living and quality of life relies on a set of criteria that are based on social standards.

<sup>9</sup> Unified plan for achieving the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024 and for the planning period up to 2030. Available at: <http://static.government.ru/media/files/j8IV1FkssLpUqI89JCXZ2mLilLEn7H8.pdf> (accessed: October 24, 2022).

Social standards for identifying groups with low standards of living and quality of life among the economically active population based on education and employment situation

Identification criteria	Requirements of social standards
Education	Basic or secondary general education
Employment situation	1. Availability of employment
	2. Absence of precarious employment
	3. If there is employment for hire: employment, requiring basic or secondary general education (employment as unskilled workers or enlisted men)
	<i>Signs of precarious employment</i>
	<b>1. Key:</b> 1.1. No official registration of employment; 1.2. Unofficial (partial or full) employment income; 1.3. Income from employment, which in relation to the subsistence minimum of the working population (SMwp) does not reach 4.1 SMwp
<b>2. Additional:</b> 2.1. Deviations from standard working time (excessive or insufficient working time); 2.2. Existence of debt on salary; 2.3. Reduced wages or reduced working time not by employee's initiative; 2.4. Forced unpaid leave by the administration initiative; 2.5. Dissatisfaction with employment conditions	
Compiled according to: (Bobkov, Odintsova, 2020b).	

According to our assessment, the social standards are the authors' findings of the research group, which have scientific novelty and practical relevance. The monograph gives the minimum requirements of educational standards and employment provisions. Orientation to social standards allows developing real managerial decisions.

An example of social standards for identifying groups with low standards of living and quality of life in the economically active population, based on education and employment situation, is shown in the *Table*.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the research is the definition of criteria for precarious employment. The peculiarity of the author's approach to the identification of precarious employment is the differentiation of its features into key and additional (see *Table*), which makes it possible to identify the most vulnerable population groups.

The use of the toolkit developed by the authors allows identifying that more than 90% of the employed and unemployed, classified in the lower

groups on the standard of living and quality of life, do not reach the minimum requirements for one or more of the criteria of material and property security: 64.3% are on two or three criteria, i.e. they and their households are characterized by absolute monetary poverty, housing poverty, and/or they have no or insufficient financial reserve; another 28.5% are on one of the three criteria.

We should note that such an approach (estimation of unstable labor relations through the number of instability signs) was also used in Vologda Research Center of RAS (Leonidova, Rossoshanskaya, 2018). With its help it was shown that the more signs of precarious employment a worker has, the less productive their labor contribution is, the less effectively their labor potential is used.

One of the peculiarities of contemporary studies on this issue is the discussion of the phenomenon of the precariat – “a numerous socio-economic group deprived of most rights and guarantees” (Popov, Soloveva, 2020). In this case, Zh.T. Toshchenko's ideas that define employment precarization as “an objective-subjective phenomenon that quantitatively

and qualitatively transforms the established practices of the population's participation in labor activity", deserve special attention (Toshchenko, 2018, p. 81). The positions of the authors of the reviewed book slightly differ from the ideas of Zh.T. Toshchenko, because the nature of the precariat, in his opinion, "is not limited to issues of the labor relations stability".

In the monograph, based on an assessment of the compliance of the employed and unemployed with the requirements of the standards, the population groups with low standards of living and quality of life are identified as the core, extended core and periphery, which together cover 42.7% of the EAP population (2018 data). It should be noted that this group includes not only the unemployed, but also the employed population (both salaried and self-employed). This observation indicates the presence of such a category as the working poor in the country. Similar conclusions are contained in the works of other researchers (Ashmarov, 2018; Leonidova, Basova, 2020; Ryabushkin, Kapelyuk, 2020).

The monitoring results of the interregional differentiation of the main indicators of the standard of living and quality of life, carried out by the monograph's authors, indicate the unevenness of the existing indicators and indicators of the standard of living and quality of life in Russia's regions, with high interregional inequality in some of them. The authors point out that by the level of absolute monetary poverty, the purchasing power of the average per capita monetary income of the population, the R/P 10% ratio, and the interregional gaps are too large within one country. This shows significant spatial disparities in the living conditions of the Russian population, threats to the country's social security and requires the development of comprehensive measures to improve the situation and raise the standard of living and quality of life of citizens in all Russian regions.

### **New tools for regulating the standard of living and quality of life**

The section devoted to the areas of improvement of the standard of living and quality of life contains the authors' accumulated vision of the unresolved problems, despite the changes in the Labor Code of the RF on distant (remote) labor, adopted at the end of 2020. For example, E.S. Gontmakher calls the refusal to establish in the law the right of employees to be "unconnected" and the preservation in the Labor Code of the RF of the odious norm of Article 101 on the irregular working day the biggest "disappointment" of the employment amendments (Gontmakher, 2019). Unresolved issues are the regulation of distant labor, complicated by a foreign element, the application of regional norms of labor law in situations where the distant employee and the employer are located in different regions of Russia, the lack of a clear framework for legal regulation of labor through online platforms.

The monograph's authors draw attention to such an instrument of state regulation of the labor market, as the State Employment Service (SES), currently experiencing increasing competition from private recruitment agencies. One of the priorities of the SES is the organization of vocational training and additional education of unemployed citizens and job seekers. According to the authors, it is the active program, more than any other aimed at overcoming the digital divide and the digital skills formation, reducing the imbalance of supply and demand in the labor market and therefore to improve the quality of employment.

The universal basic income (UBI) is also considered as a new instrument of economic and social policy. The conditions for its implementation, according to the authors, maturing objectively as a way to resolve the contradictions of socio-economic development. The book expresses confidence that now there are opportunities to experiment with transitional forms of unconditional basic income for the most vulnerable population groups.

However, it seems that the introduction of the UBI has not only supporters, but also opponents. The latter base their opinion on the fact that the introduction of UBI is possible in such a transformation of society, when corruption disappears, when society will mature to not consider this payment as a reason to refuse to work, etc. An analysis of the literature shows that in many countries the introduction of the UBI is focused on equalizing the income of the middle class and is possible only at a high level of socio-economic development of the country.

The arguments for implementing UBI (Kislitsyna, 2019) are based on the experiences of countries where it: a) has reduced poverty and inequality, improved public health (Tanner, 2015); b) has led to job growth and reduced school dropout rates<sup>10</sup>; c) has provided income security for non-working parents and caregivers, thereby expanding their rights, especially the rights of women<sup>11</sup>.

Quite a serious problem is achieving a balance in the implementation of UBI “between, on the one hand, ensuring the satisfaction of certain minimum needs of people, solving the problem of extreme poverty, but, on the other hand, not allowing basic income to turn into the only source of livelihood” (Gontmakher, 2019).

#### **On the development of the concept of the medium-term national program for reducing absolute monetary poverty**

Taking into account the undoubted relevance of the tasks, associated with increasing real incomes, reducing poverty and social inequality, the absence of a full and comprehensive system

of measures in this direction and at the same time, the expected transformation of the relevant state policy, justified by the authors of social standards of living and quality of life of Russians, the monograph presents the author’s concept of the medium-term national program for reducing absolute monetary poverty. The solution to this problem directly relates to an increase in the real income of the poorest part of the Russians and is an important step toward reducing social inequality, since it raises the standard of living of the lower-income strata. The conceptual solution to the problem of reducing absolute monetary poverty is the same “designing the future”, stated in the title of the collective monograph.

The concept focuses on the development of socio-economic policy measures; their resource justification and the modeling of future results are carried out. The materials of the concept, proposed by the authors, can serve as the basis for legislative decisions in the field of improving the standard of living and quality of life of the Russian population.

#### **Conclusion**

Thus, the monograph’s authors have managed to convincingly and consistently analyze the phenomenon of the standard of living and quality of life, its theoretical and methodological foundations, describing its indicator components and calculated integral indices for evaluation and comparative analysis. The monograph methodologically substantiates the concept, tools, measures and prospects of reducing absolute monetary poverty.

It is necessary to note the practical value of the work (carried out by the authors). First of all, the collective monograph “Standard of living and quality of life of the Russian population: From reality to designing the future” will be of interest to a wide range of specialists, researchers involved in the study of social and labor relations and problems of the standard of living and quality of life, and also to readers, interested in the social aspects of

<sup>10</sup> Lucas C. (2016). These are the simple reasons why a basic income for all could transform our society for the better. *Independent*. Available at: [www.independent.co.uk/voices/if-everyone-was-given-a-basic-income-it-would-probably-cost-less-than-camerons-means-testing-for-a6814701.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/if-everyone-was-given-a-basic-income-it-would-probably-cost-less-than-camerons-means-testing-for-a6814701.html) (accessed: February 15, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> Universal basic income: Concepts, facts, and practices: A summary of the World Bank publication *Exploring Universal Basic Income: A Guide to Navigating Concepts, Evidence, and Practices*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2020.

regional development. The conceptual documents, developed by the authors, can be used by public authorities in the development of appropriate social policy. Also, the materials of the monograph will be in demand in the educational process by both teachers and students (graduate students, undergraduates) of economic and sociological specialties.

## References

- Aivazyan S.A. (2012). *Analiz kachestva i obraza zhizni naseleniya* [Analysis of the Quality and Lifestyle of the Population]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Ashmarov I.A. (2018). “Working poor” in modern Russia. *Istoriko-ekonomicheskie issledovaniya=Journal of Economic History and History of Economics*, 4, 556–570. DOI: 10.17150/2308-2588.2018.19(4).556-570 (in Russian).
- Bobkov V.N., Bobkova T.E. et al. (2022). *Uroven' i kachestvo zhizni naseleniya Rossii: ot real'nosti k proektirovaniyu budushchego* [Standard of Living and Quality of Life of the Russian Population: From Reality to Designing the Future: Monograph]. Moscow: FCTAS RAS.
- Bobkov V.N., Odintsova E.V. (2020a). Influence of precarious employment on household well-being. *Sotsial'no-trudovye issledovaniya=Social and Labor Research*, 39(2), 30–41. DOI: 10.34022/2658-3712-2020-39-2-30-41 (in Russian).
- Bobkov V.N., Odintsova E.V. (2020b). Low level and quality of life among economically active population: Identification criteria and assessment of occurrence. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz=Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 13(5), 168–181 (in Russian).
- Cook D. (2020). The freedom trap: Digital nomads and the use of disciplining practices to manage work/leisure boundaries. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22, 355–390.
- Cummins R.A. (2000). Objective and subjective quality of life: An interactive model. *Social Indicators Research*, 52(1), 55–72.
- Degryse C. (2017). Sharing the old of work in the digital economy. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. Brussels: ETUI.
- Gontmakher E.Sh. (2019). Universal basic income: The political economic aspect. *Ekonomicheskaya politika=Economic Policy*, 14(3), 70–79. DOI: 10.18288/1994-5124-2019-3-70-79 (in Russian).
- Gruzdeva M.A. (2022). The age factor in the digital divide: The edges of inequality. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz=Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(4), 228–241. DOI: 10.15838/esc.2022.4.82.14 (in Russian).
- Kislitsyna O.A. (2019). Introduction of the unconditional basic income system: What do Russians think about it? Who is for, who is against? *Vestnik Instituta ekonomiki RAN=The Bulletin of the Institute of Economics of the RAS*, 3, 32–47 (in Russian).
- Leonidova G.V., Basova E.A. (2020). The region’s social policy and the “working poor’s” problems in the context of the working life quality. *Problemy razvitiya territorii=Problems of Territory’s Development*, 3(107), 7–26. DOI: 10.15838/ptd.2020.3.107.1 (in Russian).
- Leonidova G.V., Ivanovskaya A.L. (2021). Working conditions as a factor of increasing its productivity in Russia’s regions. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz=Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 14(3), 118–134. DOI: 10.15838/esc.2021.3.75.7 (in Russian).
- Leonidova G.V., Rossoshanskaya E.A. (2018). Precarious employment as a barrier to effective implementation of employment potential. *Problemy razvitiya territorii=Problems of Territory’s Development*, 1(93), 7–21. DOI: 10.15838/ptd/2018.2.93.1 (in Russian).
- Mandl I., Curtarelli M., Riso S. et al. (2015). *New Forms of Employment*. Eurofound. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Popov A.V., Soloveva T.S. (2020). Employment precarization: Discussion on the essence and ways of measuring. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya=Sociological Studies*, 9, 103–113. DOI: 10.31857/S013216250009618-2 (in Russian).

- Popov A.V., Soloveva T.S. (2021). *Prekarizatsiya zanyatosti: ugrozy destabilizatsii polozheniya rabotnikov dlya razvitiya Rossii: monografiya* [Employment Precarization: Threats to the Destabilization of Workers for Russia's Development: A Monograph]. Vologda: VolRC RAS.
- Rossoshanskii A.I. (2019). *Kachestvo zhizni naseleniya: voprosy otsenki i instrumenty povysheniya* [Quality of Life: Assessment Issues and Tools for Improvement]. Vologda: VolRC RAS.
- Rossoshanskii A.I., Chekmareva E.A. (2016). Current state and development of the theory and the method to study quality of life of the population. *Problemy razvitiya territorii=Problems of Territory's Development*, 1(81), 145–159 (in Russian).
- Ruževičius J., Akranavičiūtė D. (2007). Quality of life and its components measurement. *Engineering Akranavičiūtė Economics*, 2, 43–48.
- Ryabushkin N.N., Kapelyuk S.D. (2020). The working poor in Russia: Assessment of the size of the problem. *Ekonomika truda=Labor Economics*, 7(6), 489–498. DOI: 10.18334/et.7.6.110529 (in Russian).
- Salnikova I.N. (2007). Quality of employment – desirable and actual. *Chelovek i trud*, 6, 76–78 (in Russian).
- Schalock R.L. (2004). The concept of quality of life: What we know and do not know. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 48(3), 203–216.
- Sushko V.A. (2018). Quality of life of the population of Russia in the 21st century: Prosperous years (2002–2012). Review of the monograph by Yu.P. Averin. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Ser. 18: Sotsiologiya i politologiya=Moscow State University Bulletin. Series 18. Sociology and Political Science*, 24(3), 189–204. DOI: 10.24290/1029-3736-2018-24-3-189-204 (in Russian).
- Tanner M. (2015). The pros and cons of a guaranteed national income. *Policy Analysis. CATO Institute*, 773. Available at: [object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa773.pdf](https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa773.pdf)
- Toshchenko Zh.T. (2019). The precariat phenomenon: Theoretical and methodological premises of its study. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya=Sociological Studies*, 9, 51–63. DOI: 10.31857/S013216250006669-8(55) (in Russian).
- Veredyuk O.V. (2018). Quality of youth employment in Russia: Analysis of job satisfaction assessments. *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya: ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny=Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes*, 3, 306–323. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2018.3.16> (in Russian).
- Zubarevich N.V. (2007). *Sotsial'noe razvitie regionov Rossii: problemy i tendentsii perekhodnogo perioda* [Social Development of Russian Regions: Problems and Trends in the Transition Period]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo LKI.

### Information about the Author

Galina V. Leonidova – Candidate of Sciences (Economics), Associate Professor, Leading Researcher, head of laboratory, Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences (56A, Gorky Street, Vologda, 160014, Russian Federation; e-mail: [galinaleonidova@mail.ru](mailto:galinaleonidova@mail.ru))

Received April 6, 2023.