

## **Theoretical and Methodological Grounds of Public Opinion Research in Ukraine**

The article describes the main approaches of understanding public opinion, its structure, psychological, ethical and relationalist interpretations, as well as functions. The article reveals us the stages of public opinion development, shows which methods of its research are the best, determining the relation between quantitative and qualitative methods of its study. The relation between dynamic and static approach in the development of public opinion, balance between rationality and social control, as well as public opinion as a social institution, control and activity are shown in this article.

*Keywords: public opinion, functions, methods, structure, stages of development.*

## **Теоретико-методологічні основи вивчення громадської думки в Україні**

Стаття описує ключові підходи до розуміння громадської думки, її структури, функції, а також психологічні, етичні та реляціоністські трактування. Стаття відкриває етапи розвитку громадської думки, показує, які методи дослідження є найкращі, детермінацію взаємозв'язку між кількісними та якісними методами дослідження. У статті також показано взаємозв'язок між динамічними та статичними підходами у розвитку громадської думки, баланс між раціональним та соціальним контролем, так само як громадська думка як соціальний інститут, контроль та активність.

*Ключові слова: громадська думка, функції, методи, структура, етапи розвитку.*

## **Teoretyczne i metodologiczne podstawy badania opinii publicznejna Ukrainie**

Artykuł opisuje główne podejścia do zrozumienia opinii publicznej, jej strukturę, interpretacje psychologiczne, etyczne i relacyjne, a także funkcje. Artykuł ujawnia nam etapy rozwoju opinii publicznej, pokazuje, które metody jego badań są najlepsze, a także określa związek między metodami ilościowymi i jakościowymi. Pokazano związek między dynamicznym i statycznym podejściem w rozwoju opinii publicznej, równowagą między racjonalnością a kontrolą społeczną, a także opinią publiczną jako instytucji społecznej, kontroli i działania.

*Słowa kluczowe: opinia publiczna, funkcje, metody, struktura, etapy rozwoju.*

Public opinion is one of the topical issues of today's social and humanitarian sciences. The researchers have different views regarding the degree of its development. On the one side, the public opinion has been thoroughly studied in the recent years and much of its specifics has been determined in quite a detail (the interest in it is particularly high during electoral campaigns). For example, Lippmann considers that the public opinion is one of the most interesting and rather ill-researched manifestations of human spirit, stating that "... in today's sociology one can scarcely find another notion with the meaning as vague and arising as numerous discussions" (Lippmann, 2004, 386 p.)<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the academic literature contains loads of diverse definitions of "public opinion" proving how complex and multidimensional this phenomenon is. As a general matter, each definition places emphasis on some aspect of public opinion's manifestation and is attributed to a certain approach to its analysis. Having analyzed the approaches of national and foreign sociologists (M.A. Bokiy, Yu.V. Kirilov, L.V. Shapiro), we should note that all the subsistent definitions might be reduced to two different public opinion concepts.

1. Public opinion as rationality. In this respect, public opinion serves as a tool in the process of developing and taking decisions in the democratic context.
2. Public opinion as social control. In this case, public opinion favors social integration and assures the adequate level of consent for the actions and decisions to rely on.

Along with that, we'll try to specificate the varied approaches to public opinion understanding and consider some of the major dimensions of interpreting this phenomenon.

<sup>1</sup> Lippman U. Public Opinion / Prov. from English. M.: Institute of Public Opinion Foundation, 2004. 386 p

1. In the psychological definitions, public opinion is viewed as a mass phenomenon of group psychology, psychical state of the masses, social and psychological communication phenomenon. The rationale of this definition consists in the following: it points at the base of public opinion – social psychology of masses, their social feelings, emotions, attitudes. Along with that, reducing opportunities of the public opinion to mere ability of reproducing phenomena and facts of reality in the language of social psychology would be incorrect.
2. The ethical interpretations of public opinion describe it as a manifestation of certain morale and morality of society. Thus, D. Potapeiko views public opinion as “a distinctive type of morally extended arrangement”. D. Chesnykov stresses that public opinion is “more or less organized group assessment of human deeds, characters, thoughts, feelings, customs, habits, recognition of the one and condemnation of the other”. From this perspective, public opinion is one of the most significant criteria of the character of social development, conformity or non-conformity to its humanistic ideal.

Ethical definitions of public opinion show that whichever the moral activity of the public opinion is, linking its nature exclusively to morale as a form of social consciousness means reducing its understanding to merely moral judgment, merely domain of moral relations.

3. The relationist (from French “relation”) definitions consider public opinion to be a specific (judgmental) attitude of individuals, social groups, social communities (objects) to facts, events, phenomena of public life and, through them, to their bearers (subjects). “Public opinion, according to B. Hrushyn, is a state of mass consciousness encompassing (latent or obvious) attitude of different people to events and facts of social reality. (Grushin, 2007, 400p)<sup>2</sup>

In this case, public opinion serves as an interaction of the object and the subject where the object affects the subject with evaluative judgment (thought).

This vision of public opinion allows revealing its structure with the following major components: object, subject, forms, mechanism and manifestation methods.

In the meantime, the attempts to consider the phenomenon of public opinion from the single perspective allow seeing only certain aspects of it. In the real world, public opinion as a multifaceted phenomenon, includes the unity of relations and functions.

Therefore, by the public opinion we mean attitude of the individuals, social groups, social communities to specific facts, processes, phenomena of public life that help them to affect, subjugate and control these. Public opinion is an open, public articulation (transfer) of the

<sup>2</sup> Grushin An opinion on the world and a world of opinions. Problems of the methodology of public opinion research. – M.: Politizdat, 2007. – 400 pp. <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Polisci/Peffley/pdf/473Measuring%20Public%20Opinion.pdf>

attitudes of the object to the subject, not a simple summary of the private thoughts people share in the narrow circle of family or friends. Public opinion is a state of social consciousness expressed in public and affecting the functioning of society and its political system. It is the opportunity of population to openly, publicly express opinions regarding topical issues of public life, and its influence on development of social relations reflects the sense of public opinion as a distinct social phenomenon. Indeed, the society has witnessed the development and stable functioning of the response mechanism as regards socially important issues through expression of judgments by the interested population groups. This sort of population response is far from random and sporadic, it is a constant factor of the public life. Functioning of public opinion as a social phenomenon means that it acts like “a social authority” that is “authority granted with will and ability to subjugate the behavior of the social interaction subjects”. Obviously, it is possible where, firstly, there is a civil society with a broad range of rights and freedoms, and, secondly, the government accounts the position of society. Not until then can we speak of public opinion as of the civil society institute. Therefore, we should bear in mind that public opinion can function not in every society.

For instance, the Ukrainian sociologist Natalia Chernysh considers that there is no public opinion in Ukraine and what we call “public opinion” should be called “social attitudes”. This comment is partially based on the lack of influence, of the public opinion, on political and social system – that is, the government fails to consider the position of society (Chernysh, 2003, 543)<sup>3</sup>.

Along with that, the question of what the public opinion is encounters an issue of public expression of attitudes as well. Many sociologists consider that the public opinion exists only in the case of open articulation (public demonstration). Instead, in the case of attitudes and evaluative judgments in the latent, not publicly expressed, form or articulated in the narrow circle — and thus, not influencing the social processes — this is the phenomenon of social attitudes (Natalia Chernysh, 2003, p. 10)<sup>4</sup> or social thought (Andrzej Mlyniec, 2011, p.87)<sup>5</sup>.

It should be mentioned that in the theoretical and methodological perspective the public opinion is considered in the structure of social relations and may be viewed through the categories of 1) “activity” and 2) “social institute”.

In the first case, the public opinion in the broad sense is considered as a collectively interested value-related, evaluative and practical activity of subjects, as well as a result of this activity.

In the second case, public opinion is considered a social power, participating in the social relations management via social influence mechanisms, transfer of standards, values and traditions. Therefore, it (public opinion) might be defined as a specific social institute with its functions.

Social institute is a certain arrangement of activity and social relations. This is a set of purposefully oriented standards of behavior of the individuals in various situations. It has

<sup>3</sup> Chernysh N. Sociology. Course of lectures: a textbook. – Lviv: Calvariya, 2003. – 543 p.

<sup>4</sup> Chernysh N. Sociology. Course of lectures: a textbook. – Lviv: Calvariya, 2003. – 543 p.

<sup>5</sup> Andrzej Mlyniec.- Social Theory and Public Opinion.- Annual Review of Sociology/ V 11. 2011, p.87.-107 <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102659>

a purpose, specific functions, a set of social positions and roles as well as a system of incentives (or penalties).

Social institutes assure stability of social connections and relations in society. The type of the institute (political, economic, cultural etc) stipulates its functions. In the sociological context, a function (from Latin word for “performance, execution”), has the following interpretation:

1. a role, performed by a certain element of social system in its organization as a whole;
2. a dependence of various social processes, expressed in functional interconnections of variables;
3. a social action that became standardized, regulated by certain standards and social institutes<sup>6</sup>.

While exploring the phenomenon of public opinion we should pay special attention to the functions it performs as a social institute.

1. Adaptive function (including socialization, educational and disciplinary functions). An ability to foster, in the individuals, the standards, values, rules of behavior in the changing conditions. An educational function synthesizes theoretical and daily consciousness. Though, this synthesis may have prevailing elements of the daily, the results of implementing the educational function may be considerable. They are seen in stating new information and developing, on this basis, the new knowledge on the phenomena and processes of social reality, in extension of cognitive and evaluative opportunities of personality, in strengthening of “educatory relations” between the people, person’s digestion of moral and ethical standards, values and patterns of behavior, as well as raising the feeling of high responsibility for his or her deeds.
2. Control and regulatory function. It controls the activity of authoritative and governmental bodies on the issues affecting the interests of public opinion subjects. It provides for implementation of certain social relation standards. Public opinion is able to perform its control and regulatory function due to its standing. It is peculiar that the public opinion is almost always able to passionately follow the activity of social institutes, “rise above them”, control them, as well as produce and implant, in the members of society, the standards of social relations. At this, the public opinion acts as a regulator of relations not only between separate people, but also between a personality and a group, the group and the society, as well as between the society and the personality.
3. Advisory function Public opinion might provide advice, recommendations to other social institutes on the possible solutions of certain problems. The content of the advisory function is stipulated by the very name and means that, in case of necessity,

<sup>6</sup> Short Dictionary of Sociology. M.: Politizdat, 2008. P.438

the public opinion may consult, advise or provide suggestions to some sort of a social institute. They might contain a way of resolving the pressing social and political, economic, moral and other issues.

4. Defensive function. Public opinion “takes tutorship” of individuals or official institutes.
5. Prescriptive function. Through the referendum or by means of direct pressure, it points to the ways of conducting the policy on the issues of interest of public opinion. It shows itself in the case when the public opinion results in decisions concerning various aspects of the society’s life and having the predetermined character. This means that the public opinion may not only advise, suggest and consult, but also prescribe and order the social management bodies how to deal with some sort of issue.
6. Mobilization function. An ability of public opinion to mobilize people for certain actions.

While performing a set of functions, public opinion acts in all the spheres of the society’s life. The most important features of public opinion are its prevalence, intensity and stability. The degree of prevalence depends on the public opinion subject that is the social unity this public opinion initiates and depends on the topicality and urgency of the issue. Stability of the public opinion depends on the social needs and interests. Intensity – with the degree of judgment expression (from the urgency of the issue).

We may state that the public opinion is a complex social phenomenon that might be well attributed to the systemic objects. It basically conforms to most features and criteria, approved in the systemic analysis: integrity; various types of internal connections; structural hierarchy; availability of objective and integral character; self-organization; functioning and development.

Considering the public opinion as an holistic phenomenon, able to institutionalize, we may define its objective as satisfaction of certain needs and interests. It neither occurs, nor vanishes all of a sudden — that is, it has its own development cycle. Public opinion has its internal structure, as well as hierarchical build, and functions as a social institute.

From the systemic view, public opinion consists of three components — rational, emotional and volitional.

The rational (cognitive, intellectual) component is about people’s knowledge of events, phenomena, facts being the object of social attention. It greatly depends on the subject’s education and awareness. We might accept the following definition of this component: “talking of the rationally thinking public is possible only on the following conditions: 1) People have gained enough information on this issue as it cannot be discussed without previous knowledge. Therefore, the main requirement here is correctness and volume of information, needed for developing the opinion; 2) Readiness to answer the questions without emotions;

3) Whether the detailed analysis of answers to the relevant questions finds certain connection between them.

The emotional component is closely related to the rational. This entails the moods and feelings as regards the public opinion object. The ratio of the rational and the emotional components in the public opinion allows speaking of the possibility to manipulate it. The prevalence of the emotional component makes the public opinion more susceptible to psychological pressure. Interaction of these two components (that refer to the spiritual part of the phenomenon) results in a social judgment. Though, the public opinion is not only a judgment, but also a practical activity on satisfying the needs and the interests. Therefore, the third component will be volitional that is defined actions of the public opinion subjects. All these components are interdependent and intercomplementary, providing the public opinion with the distinct spiritual and practical integrity.

And if we consider the internal structure of the social opinion, we may see consecutive change of its peculiar stages: from its occurrence to disappearance. This is usually called the dynamic structure of the public opinion. There are several stages within this structure:

- occurrence: the widespread interest in the issue, along with active search for information, expressed by multiple people. A person experiences a need to express his/her opinion (judgment), exchange it with other people and this way the group opinion is formed;
- forming: in the process of the exchanging the opinions and words between the groups with different judgments, big groups (masses) of people emerge. The active work on the search and contact of the like-minded takes place; the dominating opposite opinions are determined and around them the major forces are concentrated;
- functioning: the dominating opinion is legalized and is able to serve as a partner (an opponent) of the managing bodies and organizations, having developed some sort of issue. It (the issue) is in the attention focus. The positions of the majority are well defined;
- decline: it is a fall of the mass interest in the issue (it becomes untopical for most of people (either solving the issue is impossible at the moment, or it is solved, or there emerges something to overshadow this issue). The social content is narrowed, the conflict severity is lost. But the issue still arises the interest;
- disappearance: the opinion loses its public (mass) character, transforms into isolated thoughts of separate individuals and groups. The social judgment fades away. We should note that the boundaries between the stages are movable, blurred. There might simultaneously exist several public opinions regarding different issues (with different objects) and stand on different stages.

The public opinion has its own channels of expression: behavior during the elections (of all levels); participation in legislative activity via referendums, plebiscites, gatherings, meetings

etc; with the mass media and communication means (including rumors); rallies, protests, demonstrations, strikes etc. (that is mass behavioral manifestations of the public opinion); through lobbying structures and pressure groups. And one more, specific, purposefully arranged – sociological one.

The distribution between the channels depends on the social and political situation and is determined by the pattern of self-compensation. It consists in the fact that in case of closing some of numerous channels of the public opinion expression, the flows are redistributed between the remaining channels. Even in case of a strong repressive regime, having made everything for suppressing negative (for the regime) public opinion, it proceeds functioning through the channels like: interpersonal communication; interaction of small groups; education and upbringing etc.

And if “the people are silent”, the simple process of accumulating the public opinion potential takes place. This is its peculiar and highly dangerous form due to inability to predict the behavioral component, on the one side, and the place of the social (political, economical) “explosion”, on the other. Determination of the public opinion change tendencies, systemic analysis of its change and possibility of forecasting reactions to implementation of certain management solutions, first and foremost, belong to the very bases of human life – economical, political and social.

In spite of the fact that the public opinion as a social phenomenon is well-researched in the foreign and national literature, there are no, as of today, a unified approach as regards the methodology of its research.

Following the experts in the methodology of political research J. Mannheim and R. Rich, “a poll provides the researcher with information of five types: facts, perceptions, opinions, attitudes and behavioral reports of the respondents... The group of opinions includes the respondent’s judgment regarding his/ her views to certain objects and events (Mannheim, 1997, p. 184).<sup>7</sup>

According to O. Vyshniak, the public opinion, contrary to the individual opinions and attitudes, is not subject to polling at all. Public opinion polls do not exist and may not exist. One may conduct polls of citizens, voters, consumers, viewers etc, but public opinion might be only researched after filtering the “blank answers” of the people who take absolutely no interest in a certain problem and do not have a definite stand on these issues. (Vyshniak, 2003, 73p).<sup>8</sup>

It should be noted that all the citizens of Ukraine may have their own attitude to various events and processes that take place in the society. Along with that, not all the citizens are willing to express it to the interviewers. And those individuals who express their opinion have far from equal weight in the public opinion forming. So, to find the public opinion on the basis of

---

<sup>7</sup> Mannheim D.B., Rich R.K. Political scientists. Research methods. – M., The whole world, 1997. – P. 184.

<sup>8</sup> Vishnyak O. Technology and results of public opinion research Political Management, 2003 <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/11595/07-Vushniak.pdf?sequence=1>



voicing on certain issues, expressed by individual citizens in the sociological polls, the answers of those without an opinion on this issue have to be filtered out.

We cannot omit the fact that the public opinion is a key institute of democracy neither authorities in power, nor opposition can ignore. At the same time, it might become a manipulation tool as it passes off the attitude of uninformed, unqualified and unconcerned citizens to a certain issue as the public opinion. Therefore, a need to find an adequate means for the public opinion analysis rises to the fore.

The sociology of public opinion, like many other applied scientific disciplines, has many methods of studying and analysing the information it requires. The whole set of methods and practices can be conditionally structured into two large groups: quantitative and qualitative research methods. Such separation is related to the diametrically opposite origin of these methods, in particular in the city of information gathering, its nature and processing tools. However, this division is still conditional, because firstly, to cover the totality of the data, researchers combine these methods in one way or another, and it is rare to find purely quantitative or qualitative studies. Secondly, methods can be easily transformed from one type to another; For example, for example, we can transcribe an interview (qualitative method), encode responses through content analysis (qualitative method) and create a statistical model of public opinion and its trends (quantitative method). Therefore, by describing the different methods within the qualitative-quantitative dichotomy, we will note those methods that can equally be related to both groups (C Williams, 2007, p.65)<sup>9</sup>.

Actually methods of sociological research have a long history of functioning. The qualitative method was used the first one to describe the social phenomena – it was directly contemplation of society and analysts on its basis. With the development of the sciences in the academic environment, the dominant paradigms have been positivism and scientism, so in the 20-30s of the last century, quantitative methods of sociology emerged in the attempt to fit the methodology of the natural sciences under the social and behavioural sciences. This approach remained dominant until the 60s, when along with certain changes in the political space, scientific paradigms were changing, becoming more focused on the individual and his inner world. For example, in political science there was the formation of behavioralism, and in sociology – the “renaissance” of qualitative methods. Nowadays, most researchers are trying to combine both methods, as we mentioned above. Actually, their functional separation occurred: quantitative methods were used to studying macrosocial phenomena, while qualitative methods were used for microsocial phenomena (Brady, 2011)<sup>10</sup>.

Since quantitative methods are more popular, let's start with them. The first and simplest quantitative method is document analysis. It is about sorting a certain information medium

<sup>9</sup> Carrie Williams, *Research Methods, Journal of Business & Economic Research* – March 2007, pVolume 5, Number 3, file:///C:/Users/Julietta/Downloads/2532-Article%20Text-10126-1-10-20110207.pdf

<sup>10</sup> Brady *Overview Of Political Methodology: Post-Behavioral Movements and Trends*, 2011, <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199604456-e-048>

– at first they were mostly printed sources, today they are mostly different Internet messages. There are two types of it: the traditional one, which is simply an interpretation of the message, so it will be referred to qualitative methods; and a content analysis method that involves encoding certain concepts or topics (if we are talking about paragraphs or a system of texts) to translate nominal data into numbers. In general, it is a simple, cheap, and universal method of research. And what is more important, it's quite transparent and objective: there is a clear object, namely a document and a coding system. We need now technically make “two and two”. Moreover, everyone can reproduce the results of the study with similar results. The only drawbacks to the method are its attachment to the document (which may indeed reflect a social phenomenon or not) and the contradictory origin of the code, as different notions may be coded differently depending on the researcher's view. The question may arise even to the very structure of the code: can we adequately express the object of study through this symbolic system (Kohlbacher, 2006, )<sup>11</sup>.

Surveys, questionnaires, interviews and testing are the other important quantitative methods. We have referred these methods to one set, since in our opinion they all reflect the same process of measuring public opinion by bringing different respondents' opinions into common denominators. Methodologically, they are, of course, different: I have clear instructions what questions to ask during the interview and how long it should last, how to ask the questionnaire correctly, how to conduct the interview and what is the best way to give the test.

Each method has its own types accordingly: the survey differs by the means of conducting (on the street or in a certain place; by means of technical devices and live, etc.), tests and questionnaires are divided according to the structure of questions, and interviews by the specifics of the conversation between the interviewer and the respondent.

However, in the end we get a set of raw direct data, which are pre-processed and decomposed into categories at the stage of the process and which are subsequently translated into statistical information by code. The last one is amenable to mathematical analysis, which allows it to be better interpreted. In particular, this allows us to extrapolate and identify trends (and this is exactly what all current sociology holds). In our opinion, these are the best methods of sociological research, which is supported by their exceptional popularity. They allow to capture the information about the studied phenomenon, and a large amount of data almost completely eliminates the personal factor – even statistically, the larger the number of variables, the smaller the percentage of the influence of the fluctuations of one of them.

However, even here there are disadvantages; the high cost and technical complexity of these methods are the greatest ones. The cost does not allow the research to be too massive. The complexity questions not so much the methodology of the research as its result. We mean that the research and its review require special knowledge, so there is a good opportunity for various errors and speculations. For example, the question arises of how representative a sample

---

<sup>11</sup> Kohlbacher, 2006 Volume 7, No. 1, Art. 21 – January 2006 <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/%0Barticle/view/75/153>

of a study is, that is, how it reflects the position of the general population. Moreover, the same special knowledge is needed to test the validity of the study (for example, in the place of operationalization of the research mechanisms to its tasks).

And it depends on the ordinary citizen now whether to believe the research or not. A little salvation is the authority of a research institution, but as practice shows, it sometimes does not save politically motivated manipulations (for example, news agencies can selectively submit data from a reputable source and thus create a desirable interpretation for the reader).

Separately, we would put a sociological experiment and sociometry. This is in fact because they are more hybrid methods than quantitative ones, as the interpersonal interaction of the 'respondent-respondent' and the 'respondent-researcher' plays a significant role here. The essence of the experiment is to simulate within a particular, often small, group of people and to code their behavioural strategies accordingly. In this way, we get certain scenarios of thought or behaviour and, by assuming their relevance to a particular social environment, make a generalized conclusion for society as a whole or for a particular social group.

The experiment is enabled when the researcher is within the study group) and is not included (when the researcher is only an observer). In our opinion, the second option is more appropriate because it contains a smaller chance of consciously correcting participants' responses and reactions, since the former cannot receive a simultaneous reaction (as it often happens during the exams when a student tries to guess via professor's facial expression whether he is right or not).

The quintessential essence of this is sociometry, when the researcher, through certain rigidly structured questions, measures the positions within a tightly integrated thought. Thus, with the help of guiding questions, the researcher forms different situations of interaction between the members of the group, in order to see in the concrete examples, who can be a potential leader of the group. This is necessary because a simple group poll can give you distorted information: if a group has a positional leadership that belongs to one individual, while in communication, the power is taken over by another member of the group.

These methods are good for studying atypical social situations that often cannot be covered by surveys or questionnaires. Moreover, it is deprived of the possibility of dishonesty of the respondent, because the phenomenon occurs in the eyes of the researcher. However, the methods are sensitive to the professional skills of the researcher, who can easily distort the results by their behaviour and consequently objectivity and the breadth of application of methods suffer.

Focus groups are the most common qualitative method in sociology. Due to the method several groups of respondents, selected according to pre-worked criteria, form an opinion from different perspective by means of moderation. The method includes active involvement of both respondents and researchers.

The point of such a study is to get not only the averaged point of view of the totality of individuals, but rather the point of view which can be interpreted as "general" or "public" opinion,

or the opinion of the group as a whole. The specifics of the conduct, in particular the strong involvement of the participants and the conventionality of the discussion, make it possible to obtain what is called “normal distribution” in statistics by cutting off extremes or critical indicators (maximum positive and maximum negative attitude).

The pros and cons of this method are similar to the two previous ones, in particular, the role of the researcher’s personality is also important. However, it should be emphasized that it is the best way to use this method and its types when it is not necessary to obtain clearly structured facts, but a system of perceptions and ideas of the population, that is, it is logical – to answer the question not “how many” but “what?”

Observation is the last method we want to mention today. In fact, any of the above methods can be called observation to some extent, because in any case we have to consider the phenomenon to describe it. An exceptional feature of “proper observation”, the reason why we refer it to qualitative methods, is its essence, and pure contemplation and interpretation of the phenomena of reality. That is, we write about what we see. In fact, it was one of the first methods of research in sociology. There are different types of this method, depending on the location of the researcher, the length of time and the structure of the observation itself. The advantages of this method are its technical simplicity and volumetric result, but it has not been used seriously for a long time because of its high subjectivity and frequent one-sided conclusions.

So, as we can see, sociology of public opinion in its methodology aims at objective reproduction of reality, which is what we see as the pragmatism of sociologists (since it is applied science, they need the most convenient and accurate tools). However, it cannot ignore the human factor completely, so mutual compromise of qualitative and quantitative elements became a compromise, since only finding the balance between the most accurate results them can be achieved.

## References

1. Lippman U. Public Opinion / Prov. from English. M.: Institute of Public Opinion Foundation, 2004. 386 p
2. Grushin An opinion on the world and a world of opinions. Problems of the methodology of public opinion research. – M.: Politizdat, 2007. – 400 pp.<http://www.uky.edu/AS/PoliSci/Peffley/pdf/473Measuring%20Public%20Opinion.pdf>
3. Chernysh N. Sociology. Course of lectures: a textbook. – Lviv: Calvariya, 2003. – 543 p.
4. Andrzej Mlyniec.- Social Theory and Public Opinion.- Annual Review of Sociology/ V 11. 2011, p.87.-107 <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102659>
5. Short Dictionary of Sociology. M.: Politizdat, 2008. P.438
6. Mannheim D.B., Rich R.K. Political scientists. Research methods. – M., The whole world, 1997. – P. 184.

7. Vishnyak O. Technology and results of public opinion research *Political Management*, 2003 <http://dspace.nbu.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/11595/07-Vushniak.pdf?sequence=1>
8. Carrie Williams, *Research Methods*, *Journal of Business & Economic Research* – March 2007, p. Volume 5, Number 3, file:///C:/Users/Julietta/Downloads/2532-Article%20Text-10126-1-10-20110207.pdf
9. Brady Overview Of Political Methodology: Post-Behavioral Movements and Trends, 2011 <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199604456-e-048>
10. Kohlbacher, 2006 Volume 7, No. 1, Art. 21 – January 2006 <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/%0Barticle/view/75/153>