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USE OF FACE-TO-FACE GROUP METHODS OF EXPERT EVALUATION IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RESEARCH

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The success of scientific research depends primarily on knowledge and the ability to use a wide range of methods in order to solve the research problem and reach the goal. The significance of the use of face-to-face group methods of expert evaluation is connected with a search for ways of optimizing the organization of the work of expert groups which are based on personal contact of specialists with one another. The research subject of this article is a study of techniques and stages of the use of the brainstorming method and the method of synectics, aimed at focusing readers' attention to the rules of their use in analyzing political institutions and processes. The author has concluded that face-to-face group methods of expert evaluation are irreplaceable in the process of generating new and outstanding ideas. The use of the «brainstorming» method: first, increases effectiveness of analysis; second, facilitates a radical critical processing of early-made projects; third, gives an opportunity to develop conclusions based on coordinated opinions. The synectics method is one of the important methods used in political science in such spheres as political prediction and modeling. The author especially marks out psychological methods (judgments by analogy), which could enhance the process. Nowadays, the use of such analogies (personal analogy, direct analogy, symbolical analogy, fantastical analogy) in solving political issues is practiced very seldom, and because of that their consideration might be interesting.

Keywords: *face-to-face group methods of expert evaluation, method of «brainstorming», synectics method, personal analogy, direct analogy, symbolical analogy, fantastical analogy.*

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Among researchers who developed and have continued using face-to-face methods of expert evaluation are: V. Avksentyev, G. Gritsenko, A. Dmitriyev [3], B. Aksumov, A. Hots [2], N. Anokhina, E. Meleshkina [1], L. Boyko-Boychuk [4], S. Grigoryev [7], G. Kokhan [9], A. Melvil, I. Timofeyev, A. Myagkov [12], V. Podshivalkina [14], A. Chirikova [5], D. Shvetsova [16], W. Gordon, I. Janis, G. Miller, A. Osborn.

«Brainstorming» was developed in the 1950's. This method presumes a strict compliance with certain rules: 1) no critics are allowed; 2) freedom, breadth and originality of view are welcome; 3) the more ideas, the better; 4) think how to improve the mentioned ideas or to combine some of them into one [13].

Basic stages of «brainstorming»:

1. A group of experts suggests any – even the most adventurous and improbable – versions of the solution and develops scripts of the situation, which are criticized in this stage.

2. A group of analysts discusses these ideas and scripts and defines the results of the «brainstorming» in the shape of a final document.

Such an approach is one of the basics of «brainstorming». Therefore, the generation of ideas and their discussions are separate. This proposition is based on «the psychological phenomenon of duality of the human consciousness: we possess critical consciousness on the one hand, and creative consciousness on the other hand» [13, p. 26]. In addition, consideration of ideas at the same time with their producing not only slows down the creative activity, but also threatens to make good ideas, that are in need of improvement, unclear during the superficial discussion. «It is impossible to move ahead with an applied brake» says the axiom of «brainstorming».

Membership of the expert group in «brainstorming»:

First of all, it is necessary to set-up parameters of a total number of the group's experts. For a long time it was thought that only a small group of 7 ± 2 can work efficiently. In Psychology it is called «Miller's Magic Number», after the man who established the fact that in the human brain only such a number can be remembered [11]. Having too large a group, first, will drag out the problem discussion; second, will cause an inevitable loss of concentration of the discussion's participants on its subject and will not allow for the psychological mechanisms of disclosure of the creative potential of the experts [15, p. 76].

The «brainstorming» group usually consists of 3-5 regular members forming its backbone, 5 newcomers, a leader and a secretary who writes down all the proposals. The group's «backbone» consists of key political experts of the structure that initiated «the brainstorming». It is important to avoid the situation of always having the same people participate in the «brainstorming». In this case, as psychologists say, the group may stop generating new ideas.

The phenomenon of group thinking was discovered by an American psychologist I. Janis during the study of groups that make political and military decisions: «the thinking style of those who are totally drawn into a single group, ... is more important than a realistic judgment of possible actions» [8].

It occurred that over time, groups with an invariable membership started making unprofessional decisions which would not be accepted even by a non-specialist (a decision

made in the early 1930's under the direction of Great Britain about the utility for the country of strengthening positions of Hitler in Germany; recommendations of experts close to the US President H. Truman on the necessity of starting a military conflict in Korea).

The leader's role in the first stage of «brainstorming»:

The leader should monitor the observance of the method's rules; define a problem for the group; monitor the experts' concentration of attention exclusively on the discussion's subject; and support beginners who might feel psychological discomfort. The leader is supposed to begin a discussion from quite simple questions. He is also encouraged to meet the beginners' answers with approval, a practice very important for them in terms of their feeling an equal partnership with other participants.

«There is no need to make a list of ideas: first, it reduces their perception by other participants; second, it slows down the whole process. Usually, priorities are established and during a round each expert may state one idea. If he/she does not have one, he/she misses the turn» [13].

There are different variations of «brainstorming» modifying this process. For instance, some western psychologists suggest starting the discussion at a lunch. According to them, it will help participants get closer. During the lunch it might be that the main group gets to know newcomers. The essence of another method called «stop and go» developed by Kh. Shmidkhauzer is this: «within 3-5 minutes the participants sketch possible problems' solutions, then for the same amount of time, in silence, they think over the suggested ideas, trying to improve them or find something new. Then they start over» [13, p. 240].

In the second stage of «brainstorming»:

A few hours before the criticism stage, a leader calls all the group's members and asks whether they have found some new solutions, which are added to the list, as well. The leader should also analyze all the developed solutions, take out the duplicated ones, and divide them into groups according to their similarity. After that, experts get together again: the solutions passing criticism are added to the group's assets, and the failed ones are rejected. As a result, a large number of ideas that can be implemented in practice will be presented in the final document.

Some authors suggest entrusting criticism to a group that did not take part in developing the ideas. This results in the appraisals' objectivity, because in criticizing somebody else's ideas experts will be more impartial. There's no need to use this method if the professionalism of the participants in their area of expertise is obvious.

There is another method of face-to-face expert evaluation called synectics by W. Gordon (W. Gordon is a founder and Head of a consulting company Synectics Incorporated). Initially it was founded in the 1950's-1960's as a method to stimulate creative work when searching for innovative problem solutions in industry and administration. The synectics method was founded on the use of 4 types of judgment by analogy (personal, direct, symbolic, fantastic).

W. Gordon sees the experts' role in the discussion in a different way. According to his point, the most correct solutions can be suggested by dilettantes rather than specialists. «Experts-scientists tend not to go out of their area of discipline, which prevents them from

discerning totally new horizons of knowledge. Their science keeps them within strictly established limits, they are absorbed in its ordinariness and cannot see the problem from the unexpected and non-traditional point of view» [6, p. 93-96]. Because of that, W. Gordon thinks that a group of people from totally different professions is able to offer solutions in various fields.

For experts W. Gordon assigns the part of a «points man who controls traffic» [6, p. 118]. The professional appraisal of suggestions coming from other discussion members becomes a primary function of experts. «Experts should make familiar what is unfamiliar to the group's members; the group's members, non-specialists in the issue discussed, should make the familiar unfamiliar for experts, encouraging the experts to think beyond the constraints of that science they represent» [6, p. 33-35].

In the beginning stage, the greatest numbers of possible solutions are produced, and often they are incompatible (hence, the origin of the method's name: in Greek «synectics» means «joining of different elements»). So-called «synectors» lead and set the pace of those discussions.

W. Gordon especially marks out psychological methods (judgments by analogy), which could enhance the process. Nowadays, the use of such analogies in solving political issues is practiced very seldom, and because of that their consideration might be interesting.

Personal analogy is used to identify a person who makes a decision with someone («entry to the object» by means of presenting yourself as an object). For instance, while organizing an election campaign it is possible to put yourself in the place of a potential voter and act his way. A number of experts called «Group of Counteraction» put themselves in the place of opponents to the decision and try to predict their possible actions. Then, on the basis of the conclusions, a decision may be adjusted or possible countermeasures developed.

Direct analogy: a person looks for a situation considered to be a problem, but from an absolutely different sphere. He tries to extrapolate the principle of an observable object to the object of his research (It is an attempt to transfer an anthill or a hive system to a human community, what is also called «Lions and Foxes» in Machiavelli's types of politicians.).

Symbolical analogy is similar to direct analogy but here the objects taken as a sample may not be explained by an expert. This analogy is concise, usually 2-3 word phrases, and expresses the problem's essence or the object's particular function in a figurative form. Such phrases are combinations of contrasting notions. For instance, a physical issue on the use of thermal processes for cooling can be designated as «burning ice». Such an analogy can effectively be used while discussing political issues: «iron curtain», «cold war».

Fantastical analogy – here you give vent to your wildest fantasy then adapt it to the current issue. This analogy is based on Freud's idea that all our creative work is an implementation of our desires. W. Gordon was convinced that seemingly fantastical projects could smoothly turn into quite sensible and optimal solutions. Similar ideas were suggested by Plato («The Republic») and M. Weber; utopian ideas of T. More and T. Campanella; «Moscow 2025» by V. Voinovich. «R. Akoff developed a strategy of ideal

planning in administration. Its essence is close to fantastical analogy: a group of experts considers what a problem's solution should look like and then they try to develop a plan of action most suitable for the ideal» [15, p. 83].

Here is an example of the use of «brainstorming» in the research project at MGIMO-University (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) in cooperation with the social and educational fund «INO-Center» (Information-Science-Education, Moscow) in 2006.

This method has 3 stages:

- Development of a possible situation by experts (introduction; key words defining main tendencies of the possible situation; possible variations of succession of events.
- Reception of multifaceted opinions orally.
- Preparation of a final document with analytical conclusions.

The group of experts consisted of MGIMO-University's scientists, representatives of the I. Kant Russian State University, as well as representatives from the Far Eastern, Tomsk, Ural, Irkutsk, Voronezh, Saratov universities (the total number was 12 people).

Their goal was to develop 4 alternative scenarios for the future Russia in 2020 based on specific current issues and challenges historically close to Russia.

Such issues/challenges are: the external environment's influence on Russia, social and economic as well as political modernization of Russia, its political regime's characteristics and quality, its territorial structure (the level of centralization and the logic of relations between the center and regions).

As a result of this expert work on the basis of foregoing variables such scenarios have been made:

- «The Kremlin gambit» – limitation of political and economic competition in the country for the sake of the strategic goal of Russia's modernization [10, p. 66-86];
- «Fortress-Russia» – The country should unite to resist external threats even if that limits some individual's rights and freedoms. Russia balances between the world centers of power, rising as a «fortress» over a dangerous «ocean of chaos» [10, p. 73];
- «Russian mosaic» – Russia becomes more «mosaic» and decentralized. This is agreeable to the external world as well as to the most active and successful regions which may gain from it as much as possible [10, p. 74];
- «New dream» – a new active generation in Russia that is interested in open political and economic competition. It is its «new dream» which gradually turns into a reality [10, p. 74].

The results' interpretation:

1. All 4 of the scenarios of the future Russia in 2020 based on the experts' developments are possible trajectories of the development of the country and the world. The «Kremlin gambit» scenario is accepted as a most possible projection of the strategic plan of the current authorities for the next 12 years.

2. Patriotic «Fortress» and democratic «New Dream» are not accepted as opposed alternatives. Democracy in Russia should emerge independently without any help from overseas, and its price may not be Russia's subordination to foreign contractors.

3. Suspicious attitude toward the external world despite an evident denial of the idea of new «iron curtain».

4. Trajectories of the country's development in the logic of «Mosaic» and «Fortress» look illegitimate to experts. No need to sacrifice civil rights and political competition to an accelerated modernization and a status of a great state. Or, on the contrary – infringe upon national interests for the sake of political and economic competition.

5. Taking the «Gambit» variant, experts want even more – a strategy of breakthrough and intensive development, fresh ideas, new vision of the future, new technologies, free competition in politics and economics, and the possibility to influence while making decisions.

On the whole, experts consider Russia's future in a pragmatic vein.

Thereby, face-to-face group methods of expert evaluation are irreplaceable in the process of generating new and outstanding ideas. The use of the «brainstorming» method: first, increases effectiveness of analysis; second, facilitates a radical critical processing of early-made projects; third, gives an opportunity to develop conclusions based on coordinated opinions.

The synectics method is one of the important methods used in political science in such spheres as political prediction and modeling.

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Ломко И. Г. Применение групповых очных методов экспертной оценки в социально-политических исследованиях // Ученые записки Крымского федерального университета имени В. И. Вернадского. Философия. Политология. Культурология. Том 2 (68). 2016. № 1. С. 9-15.

Успех научной деятельности во многом зависит от знания и умения применять совокупность методов, позволяющих раскрыть проблему исследования и достичь поставленной цели. Актуальность применения групповых очных методов экспертной оценки связана с поиском способов оптимальной организации работы экспертных групп, основанных на личном контакте специалистов друг с другом. Предметом исследования данной статьи является изучение техники и этапов применения методики мозгового штурма и метода синектики с целью привлечения внимания читателей к правилам их использования при проведении анализа политических институтов и процессов. Автор приходит к выводу, что групповые очные методы экспертной оценки незаменимы в процессе генерации новых и незаурядных идей. Использование методики мозгового штурма позволяет: во-первых, увеличить результативность анализа; во-вторых, облегчает радикальную критическую переработку ранее подготовленных проектов; в-третьих, предоставляет возможность разработать заключения, опирающиеся на согласованные мнения. Метод синектики является одним из важных методов, применяемых в политической науке, в таких сферах, как политическое прогнозирование и моделирование. Автор акцентирует внимание на умозаключениях по аналогии (прямой, личностной, символической, фантастической), с помощью которых можно качественно обогатить данный процесс.

Ключевые слова: групповые очные методы экспертной оценки, метод мозгового штурма, метод синектики, прямая аналогия, личностная аналогия, символическая аналогия, фантастическая аналогия.