

## СОЦИОЛОГИЯ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ И СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ SOCIOLOGY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES

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SOCIAL PROBLEMS CREATION AND SOLVING  
IN A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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**Abstract.** Knowledge society is characterized by such significant development of science and education that we should not speak about the successful solving of the problems that society faces without successful prediction of the social problems, moreover we should talk about the problem-oriented social development and even about the planning and creation of the main future society problems. The strategy of social problem creation – problematization – is based on the orientation of the absorption of small problems by their displacement by the wayside, or transformation into components (or problem-means) of bigger problem as something whole (problem-goal). Thus, if we find a big, core problem, we find the way to create a mechanism for the solution of the majority of small problems. According to Nicklas Luhmann, the systems manage the contradictions, but they use them precisely because they are produced by systems. The communication community is a very specific source of controversy and stress to the system – in the case when the system is functionally protects the value positions of other communicative community.

**Keywords:** social problem; problematization; knowledge society; communication; tension; communication community.

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СОЗИДАНИЕ И РАЗРЕШЕНИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ПРОБЛЕМ  
В ОБЩЕСТВЕ ЗНАНИЙ

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**Аннотация.** Общество знаний характеризуется таким значительным развитием науки и образования, что мы не должны говорить об успешном решении проблем, с которыми сталкивается общество, без успешного прогнозирования социальных проблем, более того, мы должны говорить о проблемно-ориентированном социальном развитии и даже о планировании и созидании основных проблем будущего общества. Стратегия создания социальной проблемы – проблематизация – основана на ориентации поглощение мелких проблем путем их перемещения на периферию, или трансформации в компоненты (или проблемы-средства) более серьезной проблемы, как некоего целого (проблемы-цели). Таким образом, если мы находим большую, основную проблему, мы находим способ создать механизм для решения большинства малых проблем. По мнению Никласа Лумана, системы управляют противоречиями, но они используют их именно потому, что они производятся системами. Коммуникативное сообщество является очень специфическим источником противоречий и напряжений в системе – в случае, когда система функционально защищает ценностные позиции другого коммуникативного сообщества.

**Ключевые слова:** социальная проблема; проблематизация; общество знаний; коммуникация; напряженность; коммуникационные сообщества.

The knowledge society, at least since the time of the Enlightenment, is a certain regulative ideal and, at

the same time, in some aspects can be seen as characteristic of, if not the status quo, then, in any

case, a sustainable society trends – namely, the post-industrial stage of social evolution. At this stage, society is characterized by significant development of science and education that we should not speak about the successful solving of the problems that society faces without successful prediction of the social problems, moreover we should talk about the problem-oriented social development and even about the planning and creation of the main future society problems. We should remember that problem is not a natural fact – it is a state of human affairs produced by humans themselves with big help of their minds. A particularly striking example of such creation and planning can be considered in the sphere of education, the inherited tradition of knowledge transition, complemented and even replaced by the development of the latest scientific discoveries (the last few years – almost in on-line mode). Scientific research becomes now more a part of the open educational process itself, then a particular discovery process isolated in laboratories. Modern education is increasingly characterized not only by technologies of problem-based learning, but also by an artificially created conditions for problematization of the whole educational process, that is, to be successful the learning needs now certain challenges, not only for students but also for professors and even administration.

We can make some paradoxical, but only at first glance, analogy between organization of educational process and holding of sporting events – is not only a sport, but also education and science (as well as virtually all other spheres of public life, according to Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's elegant comparison [8]) are transformed into an arena of original performances, where it is creating not just visibility of achievements but more about the birth of the genuine new achievements in the face of unlimited (with the help of modern media) audiences. Education always has forte in artistry, and in some sciences traditionally rhetoric contributes to achieving better results [9], but now here comes the moment of truth for many universities and many representatives of the professors: «Hic Rhodus, hic salta». No previous merits and achievements (explicit or imaginary) can replace the requirement to make a performance – to show own competence and ability in front of everyone.

In case of the sport, in preparation for certain large-scale international sport events – like the Olympic Games, World Championships etc. – the host country undertakes the provision of not only the conditions for sport events themselves, but of all the

convenience for all people during the competitions and above – for a large number of tourists, journalists, staff, the official delegations of foreign states and others. All this requires from the host country of a sports event not just to invest significant financial resources, but also to make significant in terms of volume and complexity organizational efforts. Thus the conduct of a particular sport event acquires the character of a rather significant social problem for the host country of the competition. The problem, which, however, has the character of desired, moreover – carefully planned, and even more so – the problem of obtaining of this event by potential country-hosts could be solved with all possible means. A striking example is held in Poland and Ukraine for the European Football Championship in June 2012 or the World Cup 2018 in Russia.

This type of social problems deserves special study, because it changes if not an overall assessment of the phenomenon of social problems, then, in any case, it requires a new, more differentiated approach to its consideration. If we pay attention to what one should assess as current, situational, partial social problems that inevitably arise in a mode of related problems of evolution, so moreover we have to speak of core problems of human evolution, that become the central social problem, which defines main social event itself, which is the highest, the ultimate goal that justifies and determines means of the solution of all of the current problems. If such a central social problem were deliberately planned and extremely useful for the society, the attendant social problems, as a rule, were problems in the conventional, old, traditional sense of the word.

Now is the high time to rethink the scientific approach to understanding of the social problems at the paradigmatic level – it is necessary to pass from the thinking about problems and their solutions in the mode «catch-up» (when they will dominate us) to the anticipatory design of the knowledge about problems. Problems or suddenly grab us, and we have to deal with them in an emergency, as with accidents, or we create for ourselves problematic working conditions – for better stimulation ourselves to achieve our goals in such way. «Catch-up» and advanced deal with problem – there is quite pertinent analogy with different versions of social modernization in the case of two directly opposite social situations for different societies as a result of the use by them diametrically opposed social policies [5; 7].

One strategy is focused on borrowing someone else's positive experience and based on trying to apply it to specific local social circumstances (this

strategy in itself may already be successful only in part – due to differences in the set of circumstances of different societies). This strategy is losing, however, not even because of its lack of efficacy, but because of social cognition attention is diverted from its own foundations, and accordingly – lose their own, inherent trends. As a result of such strategy of «catch-up» the modernization should persistently apply for the new role models – again borrowed, strange, that do not fully meet the domestic needs. This development would proceed in the best case according to a model that resembles Zeno's paradoxes «Achilles and the Tortoise» [6], when the fleet-footed Achilles to overtake the tortoise must pass first half of the way towards her, and during this time the tortoise, albeit slowly, but further it moves away from Achilles. This is endless and futile attempt to catch up certain leaders.

Another strategy is based on the orientation of the absorption of small problems by their displacement by the wayside, or transformation into components (or problem-means) of bigger problem as something whole (problem-goal). Thus, if we find a big, core problem, we find the way to create a mechanism for the solution of the majority of small problems – certainly not all of them and certainly just for the period of solving of this big problem. The difficulty with this strategy is art to make the right choice of the goal that is deserve to be problematized. The term «problematization» is widely used in a science, here scientist constantly chooses what he will do in the near future, what focus he have to do. In a knowledge society the science should not just be the main productive force, it should be also a model of successful social behavior, perhaps even a model of a successful course of action, and moreover, even lifestyle. In this perspective, one can understand the correct meaning of the strategy «to create problems». It does not mean to complicate one's life as much as possible, or look for all sorts of problems «on one's head». On the contrary, the whole point is to provide a selection of social problems according to the mechanism of problematization based on the selection of the «big problem» – such a problem, the solution of which will override all other problems as «smaller», including the expenses of their decision within this big problem. To do this, even at the stage of selection, one should consider how the solving of one problem will help to solve the others. If this is not the only and the main criterion for choosing of such a big problem, than in any case, it is one of the main.

This approach leads us to the systemic approach in social cognition, which probably provides most consistently the identifying and creating of the links between different social phenomena and processes. A systematic approach to social cognition will inevitably explain the social dynamics, because it is in the nature of social processes to be manifested as the interdependence of different, at first glance, autonomous social formations (communities, individuals or societies) as part of the same system at its core reality, and an inverse dependence of the system whole from the way in which interaction of its parts is coordinated – the coordination, which is constantly changing and updated in unstable equilibrium mode. This equilibrium should be explained not so much according to the point of identifying of the specificity of each of these parts as according to the position of the functional importance that each of them becomes as a part of the system of the social wholeness.

The dynamics of social reality acquires the character of a fundamentally multidimensional process, which leads to permanent stress and implicit (as well as explicit) conflicts. Mankind evolution gives for such a complexity of social reality more and more undeniable evidences, that was recorded as by the classics of positivism philosophy so by modern Western scholars, among which perhaps the most consistent position in consideration of the social reality as based on the principle of distinction (which to a certain extent corresponds with the positivism principle of differentiation) we can find in Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems [10-12].

Luhmann observes that the basis of conflict is precisely the multiplicity of reality. But this multiplicity is not, in principle, known in advance – a reality in the Luhmann's theory is fundamentally open and uncompleted. The reason for this Luhmann's vision is his understanding of the system as existing thanks to the its production of contradictions, and not because of their destruction: «So, here we also adhere to the self-referential, autopoietic concept: the contradiction itself produces something of what it is, what is contrary to, and from materials that themselves can exist without contradiction» [11, p. 495]. Indeed, according to Luhmann the systems manage the contradictions, but they use them precisely because they are produced by systems [12]. This does not mean that other contradictions do not exist, but systems do not «see» them.

This Luhmann's concept of the system reminds Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's concept of the monad

[4]. But unlike these monads, systems are able to operate with contradictions. «The contradiction is the uncertainty of the system, rather than individual transactions; but in this case it deprives these operations benefit from certainty they acquired through participation in the system, extracts from basal self-reference as elements of the system» [11, p. 493]. Thus Luhmann destroys the idea of the system as something definite, but by that, in his opinion, the system will receive only benefits. After all the system uncertainty is not absolute, but expresses its readiness for new incarnations, which are deprived of elements of the system, which in themselves are, for Luhmann, self-identity, and a new quality can be obtained only through a new quality of the system in which they can re-enter as constituents parts, but differently than before. Luhmann considers the contradictions as a mechanism of the providing of the existence of systems in time, however, in the specific sense: «Therefore, the contradiction is often considered as promoters of the systemic movement or even as dialectical development drivers. However, their relation to time is laid down deeper – it is always already given, if contradictions will be actualized, and ultimately goes back to temporalization of the complexity by constantly disappearing time elements» [11, p. 502]. This disappearance is also not to be construed as absolute, but it is the disappearance for this state of the system and for a given moment.

Luhmann's drift to the subject of conflict is carried out through the concept of communication. After all, any conflict is a specific communication, and, according to Luhmann, all social systems are communication systems: «Social systems exist as communication systems, so they create contradictions through communication deviations... Only the excessive demand for the unity of communication constitutes a contradiction by choosing what unites fit to this requirement» [11, p. 497-498]. Of course, not all of the communications are equally conflicted – every communication has specially devoted to conflict: «The conflict is operational independence of the contradiction giving through the communication. Thus, there is a conflict only when somebody communicates about expectations and when somebody communicates about the non-acceptance of communication» [11, p. 530]. Such communication should keep the system in suspense – in the sense that the system must constantly be «in the tonus», that is in working condition. Therefore, it is necessary to permanently destroy the first to achieve a reliable unity, and it is through their own efforts: for the static

unity is less reliable than the dynamic unity [10]. Static for Luhmann means stiffness of the structure, rigidity, and therefore, weak flexibility, elasticity, that significantly reduces the adaptive capacity of the system. Only a system, that is constantly in a state of crisis and constantly successfully comes out of it, is really reliable. So, in order to be a reliable strategic, the system has to make itself unreliable tactically: thus it runs in its protective effect (autoimmune) mechanisms. Static system only looks legitimate – their immutability is not only a sign of their weak interaction with the outside world, but also a sign that it does not develop and does not constantly update their protective ability, their ability to regenerate.

Thus, dynamic systems are more sensitive to events not because of their weakness, but because of their power – they aspire to this sensitivity and specifically develop it. In social systems such sensitivity is ensured by communication. Such communication should constantly provoke tension and destabilizing of the system, but it provokes them not chaotically, however without following some external logic, but according to the logic of the system itself. Luhmann describes this tactic on the example of communication focused on the practice of «connections», ie, when the system adds to the justification of its need all possible events with its own, already procured stress scenarios, using the already well-known for the system scenarios from the possible variation of its destabilizing, ie, the system makes an accident in contingency: «Contradictions articulate contingency that underlying systems as double contingency behavior towards accession. Possibilities that are in the field of view, are arranged not in a direction of reality, but of impossibility. This again leads to the fact that the reproduction must deal with the impossibility of reproduction: the system does not respond to one or another of the mutually exclusive opportunities, and to the very adherence behavior» [11, p. 502]. Luhmann strive not the creation of a system of insecurity, but the creation of a registry of known species of insecurity – which of them will happen is unknown, but it could be only one of the known from the prepared set of insecurity. As a result of such a classification the system attaches some new unreliability to the set of the varieties of its unreliability. Moreover, even this set and such classification should not be indisputable – the system must be prepared not only to face new challenges, but also periodically internally structurally readjust to this. Luhmann takes to his explanation the term «immune system» mechanism [11, p. 504], and for an explanation of its knowledge



– the term «social Immunology» [11, p. 509], bringing together as much as possible in this aspect of their functioning the social and organic systems.

So, all the possible unreliability of the social system as challenges are operated out by a kind of selection and are distributed according to the known to the system the species of unreliability for which it has already fulfilled the script of responses. Moreover, the system does not wait passively for some kind of insecurity, but it actively provoke them: «In connection with this contradiction can be seen as special devices for the connection of insecurity; they instill uncertainty, so to speak, purposefully – as in the analysis, specifically targeted at this, so in contradictory communications» [11, p. 502]. We are talking about a certain corridor of possibilities in which the system challenges are already quite strong and unexpected, to destabilize the system, and at the same time not strong enough and unexpected, to destroy it. Such controlled challenges are attracted by the system through the creating of a controversy as an active mode of interaction with their environment.

Because here Luhmann talks about the reliability and standardization of communication, he refers to the system of law as the most appropriate for its function of providing this type of communication. According to this, the problem of social conflicts as a special type of social interaction is seen by him in the field of the right terminology: «The prospect of the conflict emerges from the mass of everyday expectations those that are justified in the case of a conflict. This justificatory perspective associated with normativity of the expectations and subordinated to the scheme «legally/illegally», ie it is included in the complete universe in which there are only two mutually exclusive values. On the basis of this scheme the conflict experience can be summed up in anticipation, and thus reduced to the form in which it comes to conflicts at the interaction level, only as an exception, even if there are expectations, which are themselves highly improbable» [11, p. 510].

Luhmann said that the conflict should be localized and instrumentalized, it should not receive excessive powers – he even compares the ratio of the conflict to the system with the relation of the parasite to the living organism – when the conflict goes out of control: «...for such parasitism typical is not the desire for symbiosis but tendency to absorption of the host system by conflict as long as in conflict involved more attention and resources» [11, p. 533]. Thus, despite the provision of a high role and importance of social conflicts, Luhmann does not create his theory

of social systems as a conflictology – his theory only gives explanations and recommendations to the latter.

The experience of Luhmann's theory of social systems can better serve our understanding of the systemic approach in social cognition-oriented explanation of a method of reproducing of the multiple coexisting communication communities [3]. Each of such community is not an abstract, as it turns out in Luhmann's theory, but a very specific source of controversy and stress to the system – in the case when the system is functionally protects the value positions of other communicative community. Then the nature of these contradictions and tensions occurs basically defined by specific values that are involved in conflict, and the contradiction in the meaning and functional contradiction would be designed on the basis of deep-seated value contradictions.

As a special communicative community can be considered, on the one hand, all those who involved in the functioning of the education sector, on the other hand – all those who are acting as a consumer of services in this sphere. The first community, community of the producers of the education service, according to our division into traditional, modern and postmodern communication communities [3, p. 8-19], obviously, refers to the modernization communicative communities [1], while the community of students as too choppy in its composition and still having a certain and stable common features should be considered as postmodern community [2].

From this standpoint, the main sources of problematization of the functioning of education we should select according not to the criterion of content of education, but more according to criterion of actors with more important for the educational sphere communicative qualities. Such big problems are, firstly, the problems of the functioning of the organization of the educational sphere, so to say, the offer of the educational services, and at the second place there are the problems relating to the behavior of the students themselves, ie the demand for educational services. To stimulate the development of the educational sphere, and through it, to stimulate the society as a whole, can, therefore, by the offer encouraging or by stimulating of the demand for educational services. In any case it is necessary to apply the different strategy of the problematization, because we are talking about different types of communication communities, which will act as the leader for a particular strategy.

If we turn to the content side of the problem, the choice of a «big problem», which we mentioned at

the beginning of this article, will be much wider and diverse. In any case, such an understanding of the social problems on the example of the education sector offers a wide scope for social studies and for the practice of social change.

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