

## РОЗДІЛ 1

## ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СОЦІОЛОГІЇ

УДК 316.74:001

DOI: 10.26565/2227-6521-2020-44-01

## «THE ORDER OF THE SOCIAL» AS A CATEGORY: OPERATIONALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

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The article reveals the heuristic potential of the category «social order», proposed by the author to study the complexity of social systems. Based on historical and sociological material and conceptual analysis, the author demonstrates the potential of this category from the sociology of knowledge perspective. The problem of operationalization of the category «social order» is analyzed. It is emphasized that the key heuristic in this problem is the isolation and construction of the concept «cardinality of the order», which, by analogy with set theory, is understood as a generalization of the number of elements of order, that is the number of existing or possible connections. The definition, systemic connections and methods of operationalization and indication of the categories «social», «order of social», «cardinality of order» are given and analyzed. A separate accent is placed on the analysis of how the category «cardinality of order» allows us to synthesize micro- and macro-issues of research on the social order. The connection of the social order with freedom as a social construct at the macro level, as well as the structures of order with the event processes at the micro level are the most important plots. In addition, an important plot is the ratio of production and consumption of the social order in terms of growth (differentiation) or decline (dedifferentiation) of order power. The figures of «normal actor» (involved in his daily occurrence), producer and consumer of order of social as factors of dynamics of this order are important in this plot. The possibilities of the sociology of knowledge in the study of the social order are investigated. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of imagination as a way of producing social and social order. The conclusion is formulated on the possibilities and limitations of operationalization and indication of the social order through micro- and macro-parameters.

**Keywords:** social, social order, regime, power of order, imagination, production of order, consumption of order, sociology of knowledge, knowledge.

## «ПОРЯДОК СОЦІАЛЬНОГО» ЯК КАТЕГОРІЯ: МОЖЛИВОСТІ ОПЕРАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЇ

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У статті розкривається евристичний потенціал категорії «порядок соціального», запропонованої автором для дослідження складності соціальних систем. Грунтуючись на історико-соціологічному матеріалі і концептуальному аналізі, автор демонструє потенціал даної категорії з позиції соціології знання. Аналізується проблема операціоналізації категорії «порядок соціального». Підкреслюється, що ключовим евристичним ходом в даній проблемі стає виокремлення та побудова ознаки «потужність порядку», під яким за аналогією з теорією множин розуміється узагальнення кількості елементів порядку, тобто кількості існуючих або можливих зв'язків. Наводяться і аналізуються визначення, системні зв'язки і способи операціоналізації і індикалізації категорій «соціальне», «порядок соціального», «потужність порядку». Окремий акцент зроблено на аналізі того, як категорія «потужність порядку» дозволяє синтезувати мікро- і макропроблематику дослідження порядку соціального. Тут найважливішим сюжетом виявляється зв'язок порядку соціального зі свободою як соціальним конструктом на макрорівні, а також структур порядку з подієвістю процесів на мікрорівні. Крім того, важливим сюжетом є співвідношення виробництва і споживання порядку соціального з точки зору приросту (диференціації) або занепаду (дедиференціації) потужності порядку. Тут важливими виявляються фігури щоденного діяча, виробника та споживача порядку соціального як чинників динаміки стану цього порядку. Досліджуються можливості соціології знання в дослідженні порядку соціального. Окремий акцент зроблено на ролі уяви як способу виробництва соціального і

порядку соціального. Формулюється висновок про можливості та обмеження операціоналізації і індициалізації порядку соціального через мікро- і макропараметри.

**Ключові слова:** соціологія знання, соціальне, порядок соціального, режим, потужність порядку, уява, виробництво порядку, споживання порядку, знання.

*Is this a court?  
Where are the trustworthy witnesses?  
Where are the fear-inspiring guards?  
(Johann Baptist Straus II "Der Zigeunerbaron")*

**Formulation of the problem.** The sociological understanding of society as the central object of a disciplinary and disciplined study of the science of sociology at the end of the 20th century received a number of powerful blows. Many theoretical sociologists and academic teachers have abandoned attempts to comprehend the central systemic and discipline-forming category altogether, making attempts to shift the main emphasis to other sociological categories as basic for a disciplinary field and forming it. The most successful of these attempts include attempts to transfer to a systemic discourse performed by N. Luhmann [1], abandon society in favor of the «social» (J. Baudrillard [2]), and shift sociologists' views to microsocioal framing phenomena (I. Hoffman [3]) and incorporation – objectification – institutionalization [4], introduce into sociology the traditionally philosophical (for example, P. Shtompka's «event» [5]), economic (for example, neo-institutional developments [6]) and mathematical-model (N. Kristakis with his chains of interactions [7]) research methods. The sheer multiplicity of such attempts at a relatively compact historical interval indicates an existing of a significant epistemological problem. Whereas initially sociology as a discipline arose precisely on the wave of interest in (explicitly or implicitly shown) systemic epiphenomena of society. Here, to illustrate, one can cite both O. Comte's identification of society and humanity [8], and G. Spencer's organismic allusion to the emergence of a social order comparable to the emergence of biological systems [9], and political economy borrowings of the study of equilibrium systems performed by V. Pareto<sup>1</sup>, and the general philosophical Marxist search trying to separate the nature of the physical, chemical, biological, psychical and social as five different levels irreducible to each other [11], and – as the culmination of this process – the concept of sociology of E. Durkheim [12].

This contradiction between the original epistemological and theoretical mission of sociology and its current theoretical and methodological position is certainly problematic for sociology itself. It is precisely because of this contradiction that sociology is constantly losing its social position in the symbolic struggle on foreign fields (for more details see [13]), it is losing its original epistemological territories<sup>2</sup>, is subjected to multiple and varied social and epistemological attacks. «A house divided in itself» becomes an easy scientific and social prey for interventionists. This process is manifested in the reprofiling of sociological faculties, in changing the subjects of sociological research, in eroding disciplinary identity, and in destroying the scientific sovereignty of sociology under the soothing melodies of multi-paradigmality and transdisciplinarity.

Without denying the importance of inter-scientific and transdisciplinary work, we note that any connection should be preceded by an unambiguous, categoric and categorical disengagement. It is this that determines the need for (re)(dis)tribution of not only sociological apparatus as is<sup>3</sup> but also sociological subject. The epistemological side of the relevance of our study is determined by these motives.

Our previous developments were partially devoted to this problem [17], in which we carried out the preliminary construction of the categorical ladder «social – order of the social – social order regimes». However, it was, of course, impossible to uncover fully the heuristic potential of this category ladder within the framework of this publication cycle, which suggests further developments in this direction.

Based on all this, the *goal of* our article will be a theoretical and methodological substantiation of the operationalization of the systemic category «social order» as an important aspect of its heuristic potential.

**Methodological basis.** We'll recall that:

- the «social» we've defined as a way of nonrandomness of the joint action of people;
- «Order» – as a way of saving (effort, resources, time, attention) in the process (re)production of this randomness (at the micro level – predictability, «transparency» to a certain limit);
- finally, «regime» – as an order of implementation order (that is, in a sense, a derivative of an order) [18].

<sup>1</sup> We point out just in case that he carried them out from the development of his own teacher Leon Walras [10] as part of the Lausanne school of marginalism.

<sup>2</sup> Here we can recall about physicalist interventions [14], and about economizing [15] or geopolitical (and in fact geographic-reductionist [16]) attempts in modern humanitarian studies.

<sup>3</sup> For example, pushing off from counter-sociological proposals like the «antisociology» of J. Baudrillard [2].

Over the past century and a half, sociology, overcarried away by various metaphors of social, and especially postmodern metaphors revolving around the game, has overlooked the fact that the production and reproduction of systems, including social systems, is always an effort to establish an order.

Generally speaking, social without the order is impossible, and in this sense our heuristic idea of distinguishing social and its order would be tautological. However, it is important for us to note that social is not reducing solely to order, on the one hand, that the order of the social is a structural dimension (G. Simmel would say the formal dimension [19]), – on the other, and, finally, that social is also the processuality of its own implementation – on the third. So, for example, in the nature of social, in addition to the social order (which is precisely its procedural nature), one can isolate the fabric of social, that is, the totality of specifics that distinguish society as a system from any other communication system, using N. Luhmann's language [1].

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Sociologists are accustomed to the fact that the social, both in its tissue and in its ordinal dimension, is (re)producing unproblematically, latently<sup>4</sup> and effective. However, a number of processes in (post)modern society have undermined this confidence. This is globalization as the establishment of a «society of flows» according to J. Urry [21], permeating traditional physical and social spaces, and, consequently, depriving them of centuries-old tools of (self)control of themselves and of (self)control of selection. This is the process of individualization, which, contrary to the hopes of N. Elias [22] expressed in his later work, is not accompanied by a deepening of the civilization process of all those involved in it<sup>5</sup>. This is the process of Weberian «spell» and «rationalization» of the world [23, p. 713], which turned to the state, as critics of neoliberal world argue [24], that the icy water of capitalist calculation gradually swallowed up the whole multiplicity of «cities of justice» by L. Boltanski and L. Thevenot [25]. The illusions of honor, the ecstasy of faith, philistine naivety, family sentimentality, the burning of service, and the virtue of duty. This is the «collapse of methanarratives» praised by postmodernists [26], which actually led to the triumph of the next metanarrative, and which at the same time only hides its own metanarrative nature. By the beginning of the 21st century it was exposed – by the efforts, for example, of S. Zizek [27], who showed the completely ideological character of the apparently non-ideological postulates of «anti-metanarrative» postmodern world.

**Main material.** Such erosion and destruction of the traditional, once indisputable (and therefore non-negotiable) foundations of (re)production of social and its orders poses a completely different question to sociology. It is in the process of «breakdown», as M. Heidegger would describe [28]. We'll recall that in such process the habitually and practically hidden phenomena and their structures reveal themselves: we can discover the habitually used thing during three possible «break-ins» of habit, one of which is breakdown. The «breakdown» of modern sociality with its usual, traditional, systemically organized orders and regimes gives sociologists a unique chance to look behind the scenes of the social without additional efforts.

And here we finally notice that social as an order is the result of (purposeful or not) efforts to (re)product<sup>6</sup> the social. Of course, production differs from reproduction, and differs significantly. Reproduction is a secondary process, requiring the involvement (often no less than the production itself) of the actor, but the production of the plurality of possible<sup>7</sup> is a much more important act. That is why the actors who have produced a new way(s) of establishing order (economy in production) are mystified, sacred, elevated to the status of ascetics, saints, icons, fathers-founders, leaders, lifecoaches, ideological inspirers, and so on. All these diverse (and often ethnographically specific) categories are united by the «hero» category. They are described as a figure superior in principle to a layman: the hero is the producer of order, the converter of Chaos into Space<sup>8</sup>. Sociologically, this means that a society is developing in the right direction<sup>9</sup>, elevates to the rank of heroes those who participated in the production of its complexity<sup>10</sup> – material, symbolic, practical, memorial, communicative production of the whole variety of possible (and therefore conceivable and imaginable) methods of articulation and interaction<sup>11</sup>. In the same way, an actor who manages to save, reproduce and extend this or that complexity, this or that imaginable and practiced method in non-trivial, atypical conditions is

<sup>4</sup> This is precisely what T. Parsons, who blames this process on cultural institutions, refers to [20].

<sup>5</sup> This is due primarily to the fact that individualization and civilization, which went hand in hand for a long time, demanded the involvement of personality structures, mental systems in these processes, addressing again N. Luhmann. Current state of the civilization process is characterized by its deep and sophisticated development, often carried out in spite of and without involvement of personality structures.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this concept «surfaced» already earlier, at the level of the category of «social order».

<sup>7</sup> Something possible is not purely theoretical, abstract, fetishized: something possible is conceivable, feasible, implemented by someone before in this society, functional for it.

<sup>8</sup> Let us recall how act and who the heroes are in ancient mythology archetypal for all modern Western culture.

<sup>9</sup> The direction that G. Spencer described as increasing connectivity with increasing diversity [9], and his distant epistemological descendant N. Luhmann – as differentiation and redifferentiation [1].

<sup>10</sup> I.e. imaginable, «opened», invented, fixed way of communication, interaction, cooperation in this society.

<sup>11</sup> Note that it is here in fact the sociology of knowledge risks grow from the branch of sociology in a separate paradigm of general theoretical level with pretensions to universality: if society is the set of all possible (conceivable, imaginable, virtually affordable) ways of interaction and articulation, the sociology knowledge in its subject of research completely coincides with sociology as is.

declared a «hero». For example, a baker is not a hero in trivial conditions, but the baker of besieged Leningrad [28], who died of starvation cooking bread, is interpreted as a hero.

The «zero» figure in this (re)production is the (re)producing philistine, a typical actor described by R. K. Merton as a conformist [30]. This is a normal character in theoretical and sociological literature<sup>12</sup>, well and correctly socialized, having mastered the basic arsenal of roles, adopted and accepted key social norms and rules, quietly juggling frames and transposing them. This character is actually a virtuoso of using orders, modes and regimes, filled with a huge number of protocols, knowledge, prohibitions, restrictions (making, in fact, his freedom possible). Social paths in the configuration of the order of this layman are not destroyed behind him; the social «transition» used by him (that is, speaking the language of P. Sztompka [4], an event) is not burned by him after use, but is confirmed, reproduced, and practiced steadily. The conformist is free, but free precisely in the sense in which his freedom was produced (systemically or personally, macro-socially or micro-socially). His freedom is determined by his being, that is, the trajectory that he has traveled at the moment. It is not determined, that is, it is not put uniquely into functional correspondence: it is namely defined, in Latin meaning of word «fine» (end; border). That is, a limit has been set for the freedom of the conformist, which the conformist himself is not aware of as the limit, since it is unimaginable and unthinkable for him, what is beyond this limit. In this sense, the process of social production and its order (that is, the ordering of production) is the process of expanding possible acts of joint (i.e. more than a single) action, and therefore, from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, it is the process of expanding the catalogue of the imaginable and thinkable.

That is why we argue that the processes of social production at the macro level and the production of freedom at the micro level are synonyms in the conceptual sense. Freedom, which is ideologically reified and fetishized, is not absolute; it is a relativity of sociality, that is, the result of certain relationships, awarenesses, thinkings and imaginations. Hence, one of the key threats to the social as an order arises, namely the consumption of the social, arising as a result of fetishization and the reification of freedom.

Naturally, the concept of consumption turns out to be a paired concept to production / reproduction. However, this concept, in isolation from political economy, although it retains its essential characteristics, is changing somewhat. The main indicators of consumption (that are completely transposed from political economy) are the appropriation (i.e. partial or complete restriction of access for others) and depreciation (partial or full) of the consumed. In relation to such common and shared benefits (using the terminology of neoinstitutionalism [6]), as the possibility of joint action or set of conceivable co-actions, this means a number of possible manifestations: from the occupation of the right to nomination and the definition of a phenomenon to «destruction after use». For example, the prohibition of a certain action in public and in personal space is certainly different from the point of view of conformist reproduction and nihilist consumption; the prescription of a certain action in open and closed spaces. Fetishized individual freedom<sup>13</sup> here turns out to be the main instrument, legitimation, and ideology of the consumption of social orders. Consumption, which ultimately (taking into account any of the two criteria for consumption above) implies a decrease in the number of generally available possible options for action and thinking. Such a fetishized freedom is precisely why it turns out to be freedom-at-the-expense-of-others, freedom of non-freedom and non-freedom of freedom.

Thus, the complexity of social systems, expressed in Luhmannian terms [1], or a set of nonrandom (that is, repeatable, that is, not singularly) conceivable and / or practiced actions of compatibility (that is, the actually order of social), expressed in the terminology of the sociology of knowledge, can grow, differentiate; may fall, dedifferentiate; and can remain at the same level, zero-differentiate. These outlined processes allow us to talk about such an important quantitative sign of the social order as *cardinality*, which, by analogy with set theory, can be understood as a generalization of the number of order elements, where the order element is a connection or the possibility of communication. The cardinality of the order of the social increases with the mass successful production of new ways of interaction, cooperation, co-action and co-being. The cardinality of the order of the social decreases with the mass effective destruction (including through consumption without compensatory production) of conceivable or fundamentally imaginable ways of coexistence, co-action and co-existence of people. The cardinality of the order of the social remains at the same level if these processes are in equilibrium or if R. Merton's conformists dominate in society.

This explains and operationalizes the famous Spinoza maxim «Freedom is a conscious necessity» [31] (albeit understood by B. Spinoza as exclusively deterministic, anti-emancipatory). It is precisely this, one can

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<sup>12</sup> Note in brackets, that in sociology in that sense there is a curious paradox in general: the theory is often a reflection and systematization of the normal persons (where abnormal characters appear as the background and basis for comparison), whereas sociological empiricism often – description and typology of abnormal characters, the anomaly and anomie of which appears as a reason and basis for conducting such a study. Perhaps, including this discrepancy explains the huge distance between theory and empiricism in modern sociology?

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, since it is fetishized, it is taken out of the context of its genesis, from the sum of the rights and obligations from which it grows and in which it is rooted; since it is fetishized and individualized, that is, it has severed all its ties with its collective, social origin, its support, its reproduction.

suppose, that N. Elias had in mind, linking the process of civilization as a person's entry into external requirements and the process of individualization as penetration and consolidation of external requirements in a person. That is why freedom cannot be absolute, because the «strategy of riding on the tram footsteps» [32; 33], the strategy of «appropriating the collective good» [34] is not freedom collectively and socially (re)produced, but arbitrariness opposing both freedom and collectivity, which does not increase the cardinality of the social, but «collapses» it. And the substrate causes and manifestations of this process – material, reifical, communicative, symbolic, discursive, practical, – are already completely secondary. People who have lost the possibility to freely move around their city without the threat of being robbed; tourists who refused to hike due to the threat of getting into the war zone; a scientist who was suddenly put before the limit of his right to comprehend the object of study; an artist deprived of his favorite theme for political reasons; an average man who, as a result of deception, has ceased to trust counterparties and now cannot painlessly and calmly carry out a trivial economic transaction, – all these actors are in a structurally identical situation. This situation is micro-socially defined through the categories of «restriction», «freedom», «distrust», «deficit of social capital», «destruction of the frame», «erosion of norms», and macro-socially – «anomie», «decrease in the power of the social order», «destruction social institute».

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** Thus, sociology is faced with the challenge of researching social systems, and one of the possible options is our proposed concept of these systems as systems of social order. The sociological-knowledge approach to these phenomena allows us to understand them synthetically, that is, at the same time as macrophenomena and microphenomena, as processes and phenomena, as products of the system and as epiphenomena of actor's actions. This approach, of course, contains possible limitations and problems. For example, it returns to sociology a normative statement: it turns out that, contrary to the implicit ideology of the postmodern world, society still encounters both functional and dysfunctional phenomena<sup>14</sup>. This throws not only an epistemological challenge to many phenomena that have become established in recent years and decades, if not as normal, but as minimum as massively presented. However, mass does not always mean functionality for society, as evidenced by many examples of mass and dysfunctional or openly threatening society as a complex of possible and conceivable combinations.

In addition, at the current stage of conceptualization and operationalization of the social order, it is aimed primarily at quantitative distinctions, while the completely trivial evidence is the fact that the power of the social order is constituted by diverse, heterogeneous, complexities, thinkings and imaginariums. However, this is solely a matter of further development of the concept.

On the whole, it must be noted that sociology, if it is «on the side of society» (which, as we know, was advocated by M. Foucault [35], who called sociologists «to protect society»), will inevitably have to return to this formulation of the question, no matter how threateningly biased it is looked like. In this sense, the question of the objectivity of sociology will not consist in neutrality (which is simply impossible in the relationship between sociology and society), but in effectiveness, in the practice of applying and changing the power of the social order in one direction or another.

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<sup>14</sup> Which we in our everyday life often, although not always, designate as «good» and «bad», reproducing the banal social intuitions of the ratio of the phenomenon and processes of (de)differentiating the order of social and its cardinality.

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#### **«Порядок социального» как категория: возможности операционализации**

В статье раскрывается эвристический потенциал категории «порядок социального», предложенной автором для исследования сложности социальных систем. Основываясь на историко-социологическом материале и концептуальном анализе, автор демонстрирует потенциал данной категории с позиции социологии знания. Анализируется проблема операционализации категории «порядок социального». Подчеркивается, что ключевым эвристическим ходом в данной проблеме становится вычленение и построение признака «мощность порядка», под которым по аналогии с теорией множеств понимается обобщение количества элементов порядка, то есть количества существующих или возможных связей. Приводятся и анализируются определение, системные связи и способы операционализации и индикализации категорий «социальное», «порядок социального», «мощность порядка». Отдельный акцент сделан на анализе того, как категория «мощность порядка» позволяет синтезировать микро- и макропроблематику исследования порядка социального. Здесь важнейшим сюжетом оказывается связь порядка социального со свободой как социальным конструктом на макроуровне, а также структур порядка с событийностью процессов на микроуровне. Кроме того, важным сюжетом является соотношение производства и потребления порядка социального с точки зрения прироста (дифференциации) или упадка (дедифференциации) мощности порядка. Здесь важными оказываются фигуры обывателя, производителя и потребителя порядка социального как факторов динамики состояния этого порядка. Исследуются возможности социологии знания в исследовании порядка социального. Отдельный акцент сделан на роли воображения как способа производства социального и порядка социального. Формулируется вывод о возможностях и ограничениях операционализации и индикализации порядка социального через микро- и макропараметры.

**Ключевые слова:** социальное, порядок социального, режим, мощность порядка, воображение, производство порядка, потребление порядка, социология знания, знание.

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