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**PRODUCTS AND MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATION\***

*SUMMARY. The article substantiates importance of studying patterns and specificity of social representation, presents the results of an empirical study of its products and their possible use in the interdisciplinary field of measurement of social processes.*

*KEY WORDS. Cognitive research, social representation, symbologem, symbolization, language of the society.*

What language does a society speak and whether it can tell about itself? Such a question turns us to area of cognitive research of social processes, which focuses on mechanisms of social meaning-creation and social memory, specificity and laws of socialization of products of spiritual manufacture, and also the social nature of knowledge and its symbolical forms of social representation. Interest to this area of social knowledge, judging by discussions in the Russian publications, is invariably high, but sociologists do not hasten to develop cognitive methodology, though there is a number of interesting works [1]. The classical sociology carefully concerns cognitive theories, however the latter, in particular concepts of social representation, are capable to expand essentially horizons of research of the social phenomena and processes. Foreign scientists in this area have made much more progress, having addressed to it much earlier [2].

*1. Need in cognitive research in sociology.* It is stated that use of cognitive methods is actual in view of convergence in a modern science and dynamically developing cognitive science as an interdisciplinary area of research. Rapprochement and diffusion of sciences also makes it possible to interact between sociological and cognitive strategy and research methods. On the other hand, transitivity of modern Russian society determines formation of new social processes, transforms structural elements of public system that also staticizes interdisciplinary vectors of their studying. Social transformation has created "a wide field of a symbolical manipulation" (P. Burdeau) as social processes proceed in symbolical social space where struggle for monopoly of a legitimate nomination, for a manipulation with the outlook and principles of construction of the social validity develops [3; 148-152, 197-199].

Studying the social nature of mental processes was initiated by founders of its new directions in meta-theoretical area of the sociology, designated a subject

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and problematic issues of cognitive research. For example, M. Weber (ideal types of social actions), A. Shutz (idea of intersubjectivness and semantic structure in phenomenological sociology), H. Blumer, C. Kuli, J.G. Mid, G.S. Bekker, E. Hoffmann (symbolical interactionism), G. Garfinkel (social competence), K. Manheym (spirit sociology), T. Parsons (constitutional symbolism), P. Burdeau (a symbolical field of social action), N. Luman (symbolical generalization), A. Sikurel (cognitive sociology). Knowledge sociology conceptualized collective judgments, sights, ways of thinking (P. Berger), and also collective representations (E. Durkheim) [4].

2. *Specificity of social representation.* The concept of representation (world's representations in a head of the person) is key in cognitive science as it clears up specificity of cognitive process [5; 48-49, 137, 157]. Of particular interest is concept of mental representation, or thought language (J. Fodor, A. Peyvio), and also debatable concept of propositional representation as special operative structure of consciousness which establishes connection between actual and constant (propositional) sense in cognitive process.

Social representation shows universal cognitive process of representation, expression and a designation of a social and cultural reality. Its inter-subject character means dissipation of cognitive properties of a society as "the cumulative subject" to the simple sum of individual qualities of its members. A social reality being represented in public consciousness as interactions, communications and relations of social events, objects, phenomena, processes. Representations of communications and relations between objects are formed along with representations of objects and generate a special type of representation of knowledge — propositional, giving them the chance to fix and broadcast.

Social representation has a complex structure, representing complex system of coherent processes of meaning creation, an objectivization (sense registration), symbolization (investment in sense of objects and phenomena of social reality), interpretations (interpretation, judgments and reconsiderations of cognitive products), etc. Analysis of mechanisms of social representations on the example of a ritual is presented in E. Durkheim, R. Belly's works and by other sociologists [6].

Products of social representation are not only knowledge, but also categories on social origin of which insisted E. Durkheim. Specificity of designing a semantic reality by means of categories is analyzed in works of A. Shutz, N. Luman, P. Burdeau, P. Bergman and other authors with application of various methodology. As a specific product and the tool of social representation we consider a symbologem, designating this concept as one of ways of designing semantic reality, and also the form of social memory. A symbologem is formed in social-cultural interaction, in inter-subject process of symbolization and interpretations of senses.

3. *Structure, functions and typology of a symbologem.* Structure of a symbologem consists of its form and content. The form has frame specificity\* which is actively discussed in foreign research in connection with manipulation of mass consciousness in mass-media, advertising, etc. [7]. The form of symbologem structures perception of the social facts frameworks of the system of basic categories and valuable criteria, separating from "stranger's" social-cultural space.

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\* Term "Frame" is used in cognitive (frame) semantics. Frame concepts (M. Minski, C. Fillmore, G. Bateson) reflect it as cognitive schemes, scenarios, space limits of image, structure of data processing.

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The content of symbologem consists of social experience which is expressed in categories and has level specificity. Elements of emotional level are explicated, for example, in E. Durkheim's works (the concept of social lifting) and V. Turner (the concept of "communitas") [8]. At rational level social values and knowledge, and the social relation to objects and phenomena (social trust, approval and censure) are presented, as well as the social motivation is formed at both levels.

The basic functions of symbologem are functions of social control and socialization, social evaluation, development of social information and the knowledge forming social memory, and also functions of meaning-creation and investment with sense of the social phenomena and processes. Symbologem represents social relation to something or someone (the social trust-mistrust, expectation, approval and censure, etc.), therefore on its basis a model of social action is formed.

Symbologems are classified on the various bases, but more often there can be met symbologems of mixed types. By the relation symbologems are allocated into rating, status, standard, by functional criterion — invariant, constant, and actual (dynamical) state. By the form a symbologem may be typologized as symbologem of mass consciousness, world outlook (a world picture), morally-valuable (social samples), scientific (paradigms), ethnocultural, political, economic, religious, etc. The object of the relation is a variable component of symbologem, its object can become a person, group, institute, event, idea, etc., and accordingly the type of a symbologem is defined.

*4. Practical value of the analysis of a symbologem.* Application of cognitive toolkit of sociological research confirms functional value of a symbologem and the practical importance of cognitive research in sociology\*.

1. An example of ethno-cultural symbologem of constant type is Russian adaptation-activity model of development which in detail was analyzed by S.V. Lurie [9]. It is a symbologem which is formed by the ethnic culture, its ethnic constants. The adaptation-activity model represents algorithm of the functional conflict which is realized in the course of interaction of intraethnic (intracultural) groups. Under various external circumstances it can have a different external expression, has no steady valuable substantiation, but always possesses the same internal structure.

In S.V. Lurie's work the formation mechanism of a symbologem is presented. People see the world through a prism of representations about a way and character of the actions as a tool of rationalization of the world as arena of activity of the person. Such representations are invariable throughout all life of ethnos (ethnic constants). With their help people attribute to themselves certain qualities in order "to enter themselves into a certain generality of the people capable of joint action". In each ethnic culture vision of this generality is special [9].

2. As the cognitive tool for measurement of social trust to religion and religiousness, the status of a symbologem serves to a religious person as a social sample (anti-sample). Value-semantic transformation of a symbologem is an indicator of change of the social status. Owing to legitimating metamorphoses of a symbologem of religious people today it shows high ratings of trust as in its semantic field there

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\* The research was carried out in frames of an experiment during 2009-2011 at Common and Economic Sociology department of the Tyumen State University with assistance of students. Data of content-analysis, interactive survey and Internet resources were also used.

are positive properties (high spirituality, unconditional reliability, etc. dominate). Religiousness viewed from outside turns to the social quality of the person determining its high status. There occurs social legitimation of a personal world outlook choice, the world outlook status rises to common-citizen that serves status stratification and hardly promotes society consolidation.

Status symbologem of church shows a characteristic substitution of legitimation in the course of social representation of religious ideas. The church as "a spiritual body of the Christ, the Divine House" (a religious ideal) is identified with the social institute of church (also abstraction, sociological concept), then with a concrete historical confessional unit (Russian Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, etc.) and, at last, with a concrete community of people in the country or a city. Thus, the last link of cognitive chain is allocated with the status of the first.

3. The results of studying of symbologems have actual applied value in studying the social order to exclude substitution of this concept which is today frequently idealized or is identified with concept of the state order. It is represented as important in opening new possibilities in connection with the analysis of symbologem in studying social memory which traditionally is understood as set of social-cultural means and the institutes which are carrying out selection and transformation of the actual information for the purpose of preservation and translation of social experience. Studying transformation of products of social representation (on an example of a symbologem of an intellectual, scientist, millionaire, professor, worker, the retired, etc.) allows to analyze specificity of value-semantic evolution of social samples and anti-samples in Russian society, accompanying process of social and economic transformations.

So, the society acts as the creator, the interpreter and adapter of value-semantic categories, and social representation is a universal language of the society. The understanding of specificity of this social language is claimed today in management, political strategies, advertising, etc. For this reason cognitive research parameters take an important place among various parameters of social diagnostics, measurement of character of social processes.

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