

ПРОБЛЕМЫ В ПРОЦЕССЕ КОММУНИКАЦИИ МЕЖДУ НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННЫМИ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯМИ И ОБЩЕСТВОМ

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Рассматриваются и анализируются особенности социальной коммуникации неправительственных организаций (на примере Польского содружества, Хельсинкского фонда по правам человека, группы мониторинга расизма и ксенофобии, Ассоциации правовой интервенции, Польского общества антидискриминационного права, фонда «Открытый диалог», Комитета по защите демократии и др.) с обществом в зависимости от целей ее участников. Коммуникация анализируется с социологической точки зрения. Сделан вывод о том, что коммуникация, как один из изменяющихся компонентов в описаниях и переводах социальных феноменов, имеет еще одну скрытую функцию, определяемую специфическим термином *picklock* (отмычка). Детальное описание исследования и выбор методов включали в себя анализ аккаунтов и интервью акторов социальной коммуникации, природы и контекста наблюдаемых ситуаций коммуникационных дилемм. Область исследования, согласно теории Т. Поплавского, находится между периферией и социальным центром, которым может быть любой город в данной местности, включая столицу. Основной момент состоит во взаимосвязи бюрократии и коммуникации. Бюрократия, базирующаяся на веберовской модели, отягощена все увеличивающимся весом максимальной рациональности и смещается в сторону все большей иррациональности. Убедительно доказана необходимость и практическая целесообразность социологических исследований в области бюрократизма.

Ключевые слова: социальные институты; социальная коммуникация; негосударственные общественные организации; бюрократия.

THE PROBLEMS IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS BETWEEN NGOs AND SOCIETY

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The article considers and analyses the specificity of social communication on the base of considerations about communication of aid organizations (for example Wspólnota Polska, Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka, Zespół Monitorowania Rasizmu i Ksenofobii, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, Polskie Towarzystwo Prawa Antydyskryminacyjnego, Obywatele RP, Fundacja Otwarty Dialog, Komitet Obrony Demokracji, Akcja Demokracja and other) with the society. The article analyses this problem from a sociological point of view. Using the sociological analysis, the authors prove that communication, as one of the variables in the description and translation of social phenomena, also has another hidden function, thanks to which it becomes a specific term – a «picklock». A detailed description of the research and the selection of methods were included in

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previous studies, and there were also extensive accounts of the encountered actors regarding the nature and context of the observed situations of communication dilemmas. The research area was stretched between the periphery and social centers according to T. Popławski's theory. The main focus here is on conclusions about communication and bureaucracy. The bureaucracy based on the Weberian model seems to be imploding more and more under the weight of extreme rationality, turning into irrationality. The authors sum the article up with practical advice on resolving the issues related to bureaucratism.

Keywords: social institutes; social communication; NGO; society; bureaucratism.

Introduction

The question of the contemporary face of social communication is especially problematic today. It seems that there is still a fairly common belief that information contained in communication requires a reliable representation of the actual reality. In the face of the currently developed and practiced disciplines such as marketing, neurolinguistics, or recently extremely trendy coaching and other fields using social engineering, such an approach seems quite naive. These disciplines often produce and diffuse an artful sophistry of ambiguity.

In the following article, the specificity of this phenomenon will be analyzed, as an example of considerations, communication of aid organizations with the society was chosen. This is just one of many problematic areas where there is a progressive erosion of primary language based on a social contract in which communication, its thoughts and words mean what they evoke [1]. In the described area, this unwritten agreement is, as the author can prove, further broken. Although the title of the article points to system and not to organizations, the administrative system is de facto a collection of organizations, and the organizations themselves, according to the definition of management science, are systems [2]. It would be not only difficult, but probably impossible. The article below is an analysis from a sociological point of view. Sociology more often deals with institutions that are generally defined as a set of fixed, repetitive activities. Therefore, since administrative organizations have the form of institutionalized entities (established forms and activities), the terms organization and institution will be used interchangeably below. Because it does not make much sense to insert

a clear demarcation line between these conventional terms. Using the sociological analysis, the authors will try to prove that communication, as one of the variables in the description and translation of social phenomena [3, s. 13], also has another hidden function, thanks to which it becomes a specific term – a «picklock». Earlier anthropological research by M. Miszkiel, conducted cross-sectionally – from the peripheral excluded, through the provided assistance offered by the activities of the institutional system and the services provided within the third sector, to the world of social policy. The research area was thus stretched between the periphery and social centers according to T. Popławski's theory [4]. This cross-sectional location placed the considerations at the very center of L. Strauss's dichotomy: between people, who perceive reality usually through the information on hand, so called «handymen» or *bricoleurs* pursuing their own interests not infrequently at the expense of the rest of society, i.e. those whom the aforementioned anthropologist called specialized *ingénieurs* engineers. A detailed description of the research and the selection of methods were included in previous studies, and there were also extensive accounts of the encountered actors regarding the nature and context of the observed situations of communication dilemmas. Based on this material, the focus here is on conclusions about communication and bureaucracy, without what has already been said. Extraction from theoretical issues regarding the process of institutionalization of communication, in order to go on to critical remarks on dilemmas, problems and even pathologies of the previously indicated social areas.

Names of institutions as the component of external system communication

As indicated earlier, from the sociological point of view, an institution is a fixed activity. Therefore, in the case of the aid institutions analysed in this article, it can be assumed that these are fixed activities aimed at the implementation of the aid mission, which is socially beneficial. They are formed from a network of entities (here aid institutions) with complex structures that are part of a wider system. The cited definition is only an operational definition for the purposes of this article.

This formula corresponds to the definitional constructs used in management sciences, which in turn emphasize the mission of the institution as an important definition component of the term organization. In this

way, the concept of an institution/organization is anchored, the most important component of which is the mission, answering the questions: ***why and for what purpose this institution was established and functions?*** This signals to the society not only the task field of the organization, but also its kind of entitlement, i. e. the scope of expectations towards the subject. The mission of the institution also has a much broader meaning, it can be used to define not only expectations but also, for example, control instruments that will allow the evaluation of such activities. Thus, the mission of the organization is of fundamental communication importance, it is a carrier of various attributes of institutions,

which are included in organizational statutes, ordinances, laws and other normative acts, the chaos of which (often deliberate) resembles the contemporary cabal understandable only to a narrow group of initiates. So much the worse when it comes to the mission related to the social utility of the activities of the organization, non-governmental NGO, non-profit. Among them, most famous *Obywatele RP*, *Fundacja Otwarty Dialog*, *Akcja Demokracja*, *Polska Zielona Sieć*, *Zespół Monitorowania Kaszımı Ksenofobii*, *Acsociiıya polıkyturova «Nomada»*, *Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka*. However, in general, the society that is the *bricoleurs* community does not delve into these documents, contenting itself with the very name of the institution – that is, in fact, the carrier of information that, in Levi Strauss' language, is «on hand». Similarly, Robert Merton suggested that **the key to understanding the institution is its very name**, which evokes obvious references and reflects social expectations, thus constituting a specific promise of their implementation [5, s. 129]. So it is clearly seen that the name of the institution plays a key role in communicating with the society. References to this reasoning can also be found in ontological considerations on truth contained in M. Heidegger's analysis of being (Dasein), according to him, the place of truth is not in the object itself but in the judgment about it. Heidegger defined this as the synthetic judgment of a priori. Hegel spoke about the role of Mienungen, i. e. opinions, pre-judgments, and in today's language – stereotypes in the colloquial understanding of reality.

In the subject under consideration, such a judgment is included in the name, which allows, by assumption, to infer about the essence of the subject (here the institution) [6, s. 304]. At this point, however, it is appropriate to ask the fundamental question that Jean Baudrillard once posed: «If the declaration perfectly pretends to be reality, does it become reality?» [7]. He also notices that such a message, as well as advertising, are rather prophetic. Thus, the name of the institution as a kind of advertising is aimed rather at creating an «image in the consciousness of society». W. Lippman referred to this as public opinion. In this sense, the name of the organization defining the scope of its activities has now become a propaganda advertisement, which hardly anyone believes in because its task is to attract attention rather than to reliably reflect the actual reality. Since the name is not a very reliable source; how to determine what an institution really is and how much truth is in such declarations? To answer this question, you can use T. Veblen's suggestions, who recommended that: the consciousness of individuals inside the institution should be reached, because the ways of thinking of its employees are determined by the methods of operation. Therefore, since the actions of employees determine their thinking. So their perception and awareness also shows the actual way of operating inside the institution

[8]. According to T. Veblen, **an institution is in fact the dominant way of thinking within it**.

In this way, starting from the issue of communication incoherence, we reach the problems and dilemmas created by bureaucratization. Usually, the thinking of employees, and thus – their actions, are far from the message contained in the name of the institution and predominantly do not correlate with the declared mission of the institution. This relationship is generally quite limited, and in extreme cases – it does not exist or is quite the opposite. In the course of research by M. Miszkiel, it was found that in the minds of aid institutions' employees there was usually a routine activity performed mechanically and quite thoughtlessly in the prescribed mode of a full-time working day (from 9 to 5) [9]. Therefore, if you analyze the behavior of an official at work, you can usually reduce his role to activities related to bureaucratic routine. Their role was largely reduced to the reproduction of top-down guidelines, standardized plans, programs and projects. Thus, the activity of the entire institution was also reduced. As a result, **the referentiality at the communication level between the name, i. e. the default carrier of the institution's mission, and real actions has also been broken**.

While learning about the practical side of the functioning of institutions and bureaucracy, **the mechanism of a standardized mass approach to satisfying the needs of applicants** gradually emerged, which was associated with the rationalization of Max Weber or the term mcdonaldization [10, s. 13] introduced by G. Ritzer, which he used to define a unified approach aimed at meeting the needs of masses. As A. W. Gouldner notes, «the regulations governing the work of officials usually define the minimum acceptable behavior of members of an organization. And those who are aware of this act on the minimum levels of commitment» [11]. As the assistance of the systemic institution was deformed by the bureaucracy and its shortcomings, attention was shifted to the non-systemic aid institutions of NGOs. However, this area also suffered from similar disadvantages to those previously identified. On the other hand, the services declared in the name or mission of the institution were often empty promises. The activities of the third sector organizations were nothing less than the implementation of projects and plans co-created by the system. They were a source of profits for these institutions and often the only motivator for action. As in the case of the systemic aid institution, the calculated implementation of normative reality deformed the activities of NGOs and **the hyper activity attributed to this area turned into incompetence and futility of actions**, which the social activists explained by repeating the mantra of the argument «because this is how it is in the project and it must be so» [12]. It is clear, therefore, that this attitude is dominated by – as J. Staniszkis put it – after K. Marx «Official Reason», that is, **focus on correctness not on effectiveness, in the absence of awareness of the**

existence of the main goal, i.e. the mission of social benefit of the organization [13]. The analyzes in the report of the team of T. Popławski, J. Paszkowski [14] also indicates a similar conclusion about the lack of relationship between the mission of the organization and activities that boil down to routine. These studies show, among others that with time **the petrification of the clerical routine grows**, turning into a ritualism in which the interest of the petitioner and the mission are of marginal importance. Then, such awareness translates into the operation of the institution, which transforms into a bureaucratic machine, usually without clear links with the mission of the institution.

However, an important question needs to be asked: does society really expect the institution to be a bureaucratic routine or have specific results? There is no need to do extensive quantitative research in order to reach the awareness of the majority, i. e. the society and its expectations, in line with the sociological perspective. It is enough to use the already mentioned thesis of R. K. Merton. In this way, the considerations presented «come full circle» and again refer to his previously quoted words, since the name reflects social expectations and is «a promise of their implementation, that is, this is what society expects». However, instead of these often noble declarations, the mission and organizational goals are lost in the chaos of standardized structures of activities, and these organizations themselves become de facto: a soulless bureaucracy whose goals disappear in the maze of institutional structures in its programs, regulations, projects and plans. In turn, this mode of operation is a blind mechanism set in motion, which is no longer related to the applicants and their affairs and their service satisfactory for them, but works almost independently, somewhere in their background, in the shadow of the matters that he was supposed to deal with. In the light of this, the remark of M. Crozier, who characterized bureaucracy with the words «slowness, heaviness, routine, complicated procedure, maladjustment of the organization to the needs that should be satisfied and the frustration experienced by members of the organization, its clients and those who are subject to it» [15, s. 16–17].

Therefore, we should consider **whether the role of the name is actually to inform?** And even if so, is it a dominant function? It seems that considerations of this type should take as the focal point the thesis in which, according to the mentioned suggestions, the name of the institution plays the role of a message addressed to the society. Should such information, then, contain the truth

or half-truths or lies? As M. Drożdż claims: «The right to truth is a fundamental human right, it is the basic value around which mass communication focuses». [16, s. 9]. Of course, the issue of truth itself is complicated and refers to much deeper philosophical reflections. However, the authors will not elaborate on this thread, as it would be too extensive a digression. A fairly insightful discussion of the topic can be found in the works of J. Derri-da [15, s. 16–17]. It is also worth getting acquainted with the ontological considerations in M. Heidegger [6].

Therefore, one should consider whether the name of the institution can be treated as a reliable information carrier? The inconsistency between these declarations and the different actual actions, including the awareness of employees, make us look at the name rather «through my fingers». It most often plays the role of advertising, trying to deceptively impress on the public, i.e. in the case of NGOs, on the public opinion, a certain impression of persuasion with a positive emotional tone. In this sense, the promises contained in the name should not be believed, but, as J. Baudrillard claimed, «hope in them» [17, s. 168]. He also notes that: «...truth and falsehood become inconceivable and indistinguishable from each other» [17].

In deliberating on the subject of institution names, other critical questions should also be asked, e. g. **is such communication inconsistency a side effect of the system's inefficiency? Or maybe the communication of the system and its institutions is a deliberate measure to escape from social control and the pragmatics of activities that could be assessed and evaluated?** When formulating the answer to these dilemmas, it is worth referring to the philosophy of M. Heidegger, who in his interpretation of the concept of truth states: «truth or appearances do not appear in the object but in the judgment about it» [6]. If, therefore, according to the sociological perspective, we should be heading towards the consciousness of the majority, i. e. the society, then, as noted earlier, it is created by the information flowing from the communication, e. g. contained in the name. Thus, the communication itself creates sophisms and inconsistencies as to the compatibility of the judgment with its subject. Therefore, such communication of the system can be defined using the philosophical metaphor used by George Barkeley to describe the communication confusion with the words «have you raised clouds of dust and you complain that you cannot see anything?» [18, s. 18]. Another significant problem in the applicant-institution relationship is described in the following section.

Linguistic incompatibility

The institution's communication not only contained in the name but also in the complexity of the bureaucratic procedure. The systemic language that describes it creates deliberate chaos, which with its complexity discourages full understanding and deceptively diverts

attention from difficult or critical questions about the validity of complex procedures and the merits of such actions. In this it resembles Kabbalah or magic. At the same time, it should also be remembered that for society, especially its weakest members, such as excluded people

(recipients of aid activities), actors often not well educated, the name of the institution of its tools and activities is most often the only available source of information that is «on hand» and they usually lack the competence to explore this «cabal» of regulations, laws, statutes, projects or other normative provisions. The chaos resulting from the multitude of norms and guidelines causes trouble for institutional employees, initiators and «Kabbalistic» people who are apparently familiar with this code. However, **applicants of institutions who use a primary language**, based on a social contract and not defined by

the norms of the system, usually have great difficulties. However, these are not the only problems because institutions and their activities are part of an even larger system and sometimes – even many systems. These in turn, while managing the entrusted resources in a prophetic manner, plan in advance not only the allocation of resources but also each individual action. In this way, a «great plan» is created which presupposes, by anticipation, in the language of B. de Spinoza, an increase in being caused by an event [19]. Then, as J. Baudrillard put it, a hyper-reality is created [7].

The multi-level lie in communication confusion as a system escape tool

Analyzing the discussed topic in an ontological way, it can be stated that in the discourse of the system and its support institutions, not only one type of communication falsehood can be found, but several of its symptoms, therefore we can speak par excellence about communication fraud.

Firstly, according to the traditional Aristotelian definition of truth, a falsehood can be said when there is no agreement between the content and the actual state, as is the case in the discussed area of institutional communication (it occurs when there is no clear relationship between information and actual actions and effects or their lack).

Secondly, according to M. Heidegger's analysis of being, falsehood results from the lack of a concordance relation (*Übereinstimmungsbeziehung*) between the content of the judgment and something real, which this content concerns [6, s. 302]. If we adopt the sociological perspective, then the content of judging should be considered as social expectations regarding the object, i. e. the activities carried out by the system and its institutions. Therefore, since the actions of institutions very often remain in fundamental contradiction to social expectations, another lie occurs. These are not the only lies because at the same time the fulfillment of these expectations is **simulated** and at the same time actions contrary to the public interest are denied. Moreover, it is also denied that the pursuit of one's own interests (belonging to the field of *Gesellschaft* [20]) and therefore **dissimulation** takes place at the same time. This often happens when the social interest is replaced by the particular actions of individuals and/or social centers [4]. As is the case in many areas of social life.

Another and probably the most important reflection on the area in question results from the comments presented earlier. Today, the production of communication chaos and the replacement of **real aid with simulacra** have one more negative effect. These elements become a lockpick that makes it possible **to «escape the system», e. g. from social control**. In addition, the freedom of communication manipulation also enables an **escape from referentiality**. As J. Baudrillard once wrote: «...the era of simulation first eliminates all referentiality, worse: it allows it to resurrect artificially in sign systems» [21, s. 177]. Since contemporary communication

constructs are inconsistent with the common sense of the average person, under the emblem of the proclaimed actions there may be a gap between theory and practice. Thus, there does not have to be a dependency linking communication between the system and reality. Even if one already exists, it does not have to be referential with the reality expected by society. Thus, **the system may, with the help of such freedom of communication, create its own reality** which is more favorable, easier, requiring less effort and commitment. Such simplifications are possible thanks to shifting referentiality from reality to communication. This is due to the fact that the language of signs is more plastic than reality. The role of communication is then the conviction that the new reality is the only reality, even if its pillars are elements belonging to the so-called field of «bullshit things» [22], which nowadays includes many «empty» activities hidden under «beautiful» emblems. In the discussed area, these are numerous help simulacra, which the author described in other studies. Thanks to such measures, **the system has the opportunity to avoid specific, hard effects of its actions** (which it could be held accountable for and which society expects) – it is therefore also an escape from *pragmatism*. Symptoms of this can be quite easily observed today in the form of a «flood» of various abstractions. As an example, there are recently fashionable words that officials willingly use in their aid activities, such as: social capital, reintegration, civil society or subjectivity. These terms are so vast and amorphous that it is difficult to clearly identify them. Besides, as Z. Bauman rightly observes, «the fate of fashionable words is similar – the more experiences a clear explanation gains thanks to them, the more they become vague and unclear themselves» [23, s. 3]. The «flight of the system» is also realized **in the attitudes of officials who, thanks to systemic assimilation, can escape from responsibility, a phenomenon which the author describes as the «pilate effect»**. It is a way for them to achieve a kind of ataraxia in the workplace and at the same time transform a responsible public position into a carefree idyll, because this is how you can define an attitude that is free from thinking and responsibility. Such interactions of the system and its aid institutions with the environment suggest an analogy to the moralizing story of Plato about the

Gyges ring, which made people invisible, freeing them from social control. Thanks to this, they could bend and break all laws because the only limitation was their own ethos. Such a Gyges ring in the analysed topic is the bu-

reaucracy of the system combined with communication confusion, thanks to which every official can implement the Gluco morality, according to which «under the mantle of invisibility, all become regicides»¹.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the mentioned areas correlating with communication and bureaucracy, there are still many unresolved pathologies, such as conformism, false transparency, and the prevalence of manipulation. All this deforms the reality which is more and more deviating from moral values, and becomes reality as if out of a crooked mirror. Contemporary people do not have any problems with the complete reversal of values. As a result, **communication is able to absolve any crime or heresy and even, worse, to ennoble it**. What is wholly unacceptable can and often becomes normal and even «godly». Conversely, unique positive values can be labeled as something unacceptable, bad. All this is largely due to the driving force of communication – this not only **defines the world, but also transforms and deforms it at will**. This process leads not only to corruption in the

area of linguistics, but also to the whole of reality, as today the elementary skill of evaluating which allows to distinguish between good and bad is becoming blurred. **The significant disadvantages mentioned above are related to bureaucratism. The bureaucracy based on the Weberian model seems to be imploding more and more under the weight of extreme rationality, turning into irrationality**. The remedy for improving the activities of institutions should be seen in the functioning of free-market institutions, where the mission accompanies all levels of the organization and control, management or delegation of tasks do not exclude the flexibility of employees, but it is compatible with **the compromise between customer satisfaction and the effectiveness of the entire enterprise**, which the authors discuss in another place.

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