SOCIAL TENSION IN SOCIETY AND ITS IMPACT ON LIFE

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Annotation. In social and psychological terms, social tension is the experience of a stable and long-term situation of mismatch between needs, interests and values, on the one hand, and level of them to be met, on the other. This leads to accumulation of irritability and mental fatigue, negative expectations, increase in dissatisfaction among the population, intensification of various social fears and loss of trust in leaders and social institutions, loss of a sense of life stability and established order in the state, which results increase in aggressiveness of certain groups and categories of people and emergence of protest moods. The level of tension increases by accumulation of the prerequisites for social conflict. It is reflected in the psychology of the population and mass consciousness as an unclear sense of danger and threats, which are then undergone reflection and justified as unjust violations of rights and freedoms of certain social subjects. All these motivate them to appropriate behavior aimed at changing the existing conditions.
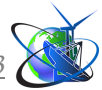
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Introduction.

Social tension in their phenomenal hypostases is manifested primarily at the social and psychological level, and later – at the behavioral one. First, dissatisfaction with the situation in a particular vital sphere of public life is formed and as a result, negative expectations, various kinds of fears are intensified and all these lead to the spread of all sorts of rumors and fake information; pessimism; uncertainty about the future; disappointment in authorities; loss of trust in state and local governments; and the media. There is a thickening of the atmosphere of mass anxiety and emotional arousal, which finds a way out in spontaneous mass actions (for example, the rush demand for goods and products in order to create stocks "for a rainy day"), mass migrations to other regions and outside the country, various forms of mass disobedience and protest.

Markers of social tension have its nature primarily in the realm of subjective and mass consciousness (people's opinions on various socially significant events, leaders, organizations and their activities, perception or rejection of means and ways to meet own vital needs, evaluations of opportunities for self-realization, scenarios of possible events, effectiveness of the government and public institutions, degree of their legitimacy in the public eye). At the social level, tension should be primarily considered as a complex social phenomenon that accumulates dynamics of social subject's emotional and psychological states (society as a whole, its part or individual social groups are considered).

Tension arises as a result of exceeding the subjectively permissible measure of pressure from the natural or social environment and orients subjects to active actions to neutralize the activators of tension. This condition is caused by the action of situational configurations of various factors. The most influential ones include the following: degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with conditions and quality of life in

the society; degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their social conditions; features of social self-identification; contradictory interests, aspirations, orientations of social groups interacted. The level of social tension gives reason to judge the degree of social stability; its growth indicates a violation of the existing social order.

Main text.

Any society is characterized *by a certain level of social tension*, which in one way or another determines its state and the nearest prospects for transformation – from the confident growth to open conflict, from strong stability to uncertainty and imbalance. As an integral indicator of the social interaction state, social tension is a result of mutual influences of performers of different levels, a kind of "intermediate result", which at the point of bifurcation sets the direction of movement towards a constructive or, conversely, destructive way of resolving the contradictions accumulated. But the level of social tension can serve as an indicator of possible social changes, as it shows a potential lack of self-regulatory mechanisms involved.

Intensifying feelings of dissatisfaction can lead to an increase in the level of social tension, and if an acceptable option for a compromise solution to such a contradiction is not found, then in behavioral terms, performers move from constructive forms of social activity to destructive practices which results an increase of disorder and instability among the community.

To determine a state of social tension, it is necessary not only to take into account the state (tone) of the segments which it consists of; determine the proportion of each of them, taking into account the significance for society life, but also to do so in relation to a certain situational configuration of circumstances. After all, each of the segments is characterized not only by its own dynamics, but also by systemic dynamics, which is caused by nature, intensity, focus of interaction between a significant number of multi-vector and multi-level factors. From these positions, the arithmetic sum of the opinions of those who consider the political situation as the tense one and those who evaluate it as critical and explosive looks simplified. Indeed, a conflict situation is mostly preceded by a common mass social and psychological state: emergence of social tension, on the one hand, is the result of existing or anticipated (real or imaginary) trends in the unfavorable course of events, and on the other hand, the result of misbalance of mechanisms for regulation of behavior and social control. [1] That is, social tension causes and fixes barriers that are subjectively perceived as negative stereotypes that deform perception and interpretation of the conflicting interests of the participants interacted. This is accompanied by feelings of dissatisfaction, discomfort, frustration, even fear. However, first, emergence of social tension, is not simultaneous, and depends on the perception, evaluation and means of information transfer, and second, it goes through certain stages.

One can argue that formation of social tension is always developed according to a typical scenario, but usually it goes through the following phases of growth:

1) Latent increase in discontent accompanied by anxiety and frustration in the society: this phase is characterized by unorganized and mainly verbal manifestations of discontent, increase in the level of concern and spread of fears due to lifestyle and course of events misbalance with no clear awareness of causes and scale of the upcoming changes;

2) Escalation in feeling of tension associated with awareness of dissatisfaction with the current conditions, comprehension of the situation as one that really threatens the interests of social subjects, where an increase in the level of tension leads to polarization in interests of social groups and their reaching the level of conflict interactions. During this very phase majority of population understand the abnormality of conditions they live in and give the way to evaluations with arguments and at the same time people search for reasons and subjects responsible or guilty for the current situation;

3) Formation of attitudes towards protest actions aimed at neutralizing sources of tension, readiness for active actions in order to achieve the goals. This phase is characterized by emergence of confrontation centers like "we and they" at the level of individual social groups, which disappear as soon as a crisis gets a solution or a conflict is over.

Finding out the stage of tension makes it possible to explain the reasons for such situation to become an open conflict or remain a latent phenomenon. However, the most significant point is that the level of tension does not depend purely on satisfaction/dissatisfaction with individual or group needs. Thus, many issues of public life not only remain unresolved practically, but also do not even have a theoretical solution that would satisfy the vast majority of the population.

Contradictions of mass consciousness, which can be subsided from time to time but does not disappear completely, are the reason of certain confrontational solidarities formation (political, economic, social, and cultural). It comes about a certain type of rational and emotional attitude to a particular urgent social problem which has become widespread under the conditions of this social chronotype. Such varieties of attitudes, claiming to be dominant in the system of social values, under the conditions of a modern society are actually partial. Even with a relatively high level of solidarization, particularism which is perceived by supporters of solidarity as a manifestation of the universalism of its provisions, leads to the ignorance of negative attitudes, while at the same time encourage opponents of the ideologeme being at the background of solidarity.

Therefore, coming back to the topic of satisfaction / dissatisfaction with multi-level needs of social performers, it can be stated that this is a necessary condition, but not the only ones for social tension formation.

First, social tension go through several stages in its development; second, the lability of social strata experiencing tension should be noted: transitions from an extreme state to intermediate one and vice versa occur quite dynamically, which is marked with a real willingness to act; third, the fundamental point is the stochastic nature of the social tension phenomenon where the causal relationship works as a trend, but by no means a rigid determination. From these points of view, the role of a social situation in emergence of tensions is extremely important: the situational configuration of tension factors serves as a direct cause of its emergence. Fourth, which is perhaps the most important concerns the necessity to emphasize the variety of social tension factors as their combinations can lead to unexpected consequences. In particular, it is important in the studies that there is no correlation recorded between the actual income indicated by respondents and their subjective evaluation of

the level of tension in the society. Therefore, dissatisfaction arising from the discontentment of certain needs should not be considered as the only source of social tension.
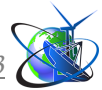
The research field includes patterns of emergence and dynamics of social tension processes, reasons and consequences of deviations of social tension level comparing to the standards, ways of predicting and preventing crisis situations associated with these deviations from the background level. [2] From this point of view, the existing state of tension causes some concern. The thing, a high level of anxiety at the individual level and uncertainty/ precariousness of the situation on the society level can be developed not only under conditions of prolonged anomie and lack of social patterns of behavior. The type of tension developed in the society is not only the result of contradictions regarding the choice of the further steps or vector of change, but also the result of mass discontent from what has already been done. The task is not to reduce the degree of social tension, but to direct its energy into a constructive direction, or at least to prevent its development into an uncontrollable and destructive conflict that does not imply a compromise solution and possibility of consensus.

At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the variety of social tension forms existing. The latter as a phenomenon is manifested at the social, psychological and behavioral levels and is expressed in such forms as:

1) spread of moods of dissatisfaction with the existing situation in a certain vital area;
2) loss of trust in the authorities, political elite and the most important social institutions;
3) increased fears, negative expectations, growing pessimism and uncertainty about the future;
4) voluntary and forced migration to other regions and abroad;
5) protest forms of behavior that indicate conflict escalation, mitigations, demonstrations, strikes and other forms of civil disobedience;
6) Intensification of crime and activities carried out by various kinds of extremist groups, terrorist acts, and various forms of direct confrontation and struggle of social groups including the armed ones.

Social tensions are closely related to the dynamics of public opinion and social sentiment. Subjective referents of social tension are opinions of people expressing their attitude to certain events, evaluation of living conditions and degree of satisfaction of vital needs, state of social relations in various spheres of life, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, trust in social institutions and the social environment, etc.

Thus, social tension characterizes the functional state of social subjects ranged from those of calm and balanced nature of interaction between social subjects (as manifestation of social tone of both a society as a whole and individual social groups) to their conflict confrontation and, depending on the configuration of the entire set of factors affecting the situation, is able to create the basis for social transformations. At the same time, the state (level) of social tension can be characterized by analysis of both its obvious and latent signs.

The scope of the modern sociological science includes certain methods of measuring indicators of social tension level for particular collective subjects, regions, and large social communities, study of problems and quality of life, tension of social ties, activity, awareness and size of social capital. There are effective methods that make it possible to accurately evaluate the level of internal conflict, dissatisfaction in small social groups and communities. At the same time, there are three types of indicators which are used as typical ones when work with measurement of social tension:

– dissatisfaction of individuals and social groups with their position in the society, various aspects of public life, which is expressed in open statements against the administration and decisions made;
– Readiness for active actions by individuals and social groups;
– Experience in protests participation.

Unfortunately, the main peculiarity is in the fact that most techniques are aimed at identifying the level of social tension through its obvious signs, while, tension is considered as a predominantly latent state. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for astonishment of some researchers, who receive indicators of low social tension, against the background of a high level of growth in crisis signs of social development. The situation will be different if these indicators are combined with the latent level of social tension determination. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account contradictions in social processes; the latent level of social tension as a phenomenon, of course, leaves a lot of room for free interpretation; it is equally important that a researcher is not protected from the situationally sharp, abrupt switch from the latent form to an open one, an increase in obvious signs of social tension and its development towards a direct confrontation of certain subjects within social interactions.

Conclusions.

Therefore, despite the risk of standing behind the rapid pace of real events, forecasting and diagnosing social tensions will be promising and productive in terms of identifying its latent signs, which conceptually include the following:

a) negative expectations of the population, in particular, regarding the conservation or degradation of their current plight, prospects for the further existence of a society;

b) fears about various threats (real or imaginary); growth in fear of poverty among a certain part of the population; dissatisfaction with regional differentiation in the level and quality of life among a part of the population; migratory sentiments; painful perception of changes in social status and other among a part of the population.;

c) degree of distrust in leading social performers and their activities, in particular, representatives of the main power and public institutions;

d) Ideological crisis and doubt about the possibility to change something for the better with the help of legal means in reality. Obviously, it is quite difficult to identify these signs in minds of the population, because they can have different levels of development and the true level of social tension in the society can be determined only in their organized and systemic complex.

However, from the point of view of prognostic potential regarding the scale and power of the brewing conflict, this analysis seems more productive than forecasting which is built on the study of the most obvious signs. The problem is not only about a latent and hidden until time phenomenon, but also operating with evaluations on existing reality and establishing of what is only potentially possible.

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