



## Social Services: Essential Approach

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The system of social services is a social institution aimed to respond to the major requirements of social development. Definition of its essence, contents and structure is the subject of research for professionals in different areas of science: political science, philosophy, sociology, economy, physicians etc.

The leading role in the elaboration of the theoretical basis of social services belongs to the founders of sociology.

In the first group of research it is possible to include the concepts, considering the central problem of institutionalization formation of the external shape of social institutions, which exists in society as set of certain ways of independent action. In this group, the importance is placed on the structural-functional approach (H. Spencer, E. Durkheim, R. Merton, N. Smelser, J. Szczepanski and the other foreign sociologists).

To the second group of sociology concepts of institutionalization belong subjective orientation theories, which consider institutions as characteristics of internal society organization, predetermining regularities of the development of society and providing its integrity; theories, taking into focus problems of institutionalization of social action of an individual and its social identification, subjective sense, which people put in social activity (M. Weber, G.H. Mead, H. Blumer, P. Berger, E. Goffman, T. Luckmann, A. Schutz. etc.).

Analyzing conceptual M. Weber's approaches to sociology as a science of a social activity, it is necessary to mention, that he puts special focus on objective essence, which some authors give to the actions in their mutual orientations in the frames of concrete socio-historical contexts. Understanding the sense and meaning of human actions is an initial prerequisite of sociological research. M. Weber pointed out four main types of sociological actions [6, p.31] which characterize social services sphere. Its formation is conducted from the point of view of rationality, depending on requirements of the population, possibilities of social service system, professional level of personnel.

Definition "social services system" in modern domestic sociological literature methodologically is defined by the theory of action of T. Parsons. The services according to T. Parsons are "obligations of performers of roles to "the employer" or the counter drawing-up agent including the employing organization". T. Parsons untraditionally interprets a service in economic sense [8, p.304];

therefore it is considered by this scientist as category of the power creating favorable opportunity for efficiency of collective activity. The service, as a result of economic process, "utilized in a political context", according to T. Parsons, it is necessary to distinguish from "work" as production factor in a traditional sense [1, p.164-165].

Social services sphere in the context of theory of action of T. Parsons represents part of system of actions within the social service of people. The social services sphere fulfils functions of social adaptation, goal orientation (extremely important goal - improving quality of life of people), integration, socialization, solidarity. And, as a final result - promotes society development in general. In order to achieve this goal the above system should be supported by the other systems of society - economic, political, and cultural. Beside that, social service should be considered in the context of macro-processes and structural properties of the system of social protection of population, social sphere and society in general.

The attempts to construct theory of society in the frame of structural-functional explanatory idea have been taken by Robert Merton, Jurgen Habermas, Niklas Luhmann.

Noticeable influence on development of social services theory was made by alternative paradigm of structural functionalism elaborated by R. Merton, allowing analyzing limited and concrete circle of social phenomena, including empirical data.

According to R. Merton's theory system of social services is subject to functional consequences. In the author's opinion it is not universal and represents "mirror" of social processes in society.

R. Merton criticized the statement on existence of necessary "universalia", which allegedly attributive in relation to society. In principle he agreed with Parsons that any system at the heart of the existence has to have opportunity to satisfy necessary (obligatory) functions. At the same time, he categorically denies existence of structures - attributes which would be indispensable for all human societies. R. Merton offers the concept of functional equivalents and functional alternatives which, as the author considers, have a direct bearing on system of social services.

Thus, M. Weber developed the theory of action, T. Parsons developed it further, and R. Merton outputs the concept of functional equivalents [3].

Unlike traditional concepts of system of classical sociology, N. Luhmann puts not a problem of the relation of part and whole, but the relation between system and environment. His work "Forms of the Help in Process of Change of Public Conditions" N. Luhmann [2, p.16-35] is devoted to process of transformation of interpersonal mutual aid into the professional depersonalized service with the guaranteed quality of granting. From N. Luhmann's position, an institutionalization of service professionalizing of many kinds of activity and equalizing of needs of individuals in time is the cornerstone. It belongs as well as to the modern system of social services. Highly appreciating efficiency of organized forms of support in comparison with unformalized mercy and mutual aid, N. Luhmann at the same time, realizes immanent discrepancy of realization of a current state of this institute [2, p.16-35].

Y. Habermas considers society as the product of human interaction structured by norms and values which allow understanding the happening changes in social system [5, p.17-18]. The system of social services is also a product of interaction of people. Investigating specifics of social institutes of late capitalist society, a place of services in modern social activity, Y. Habermas considered that the power in the bourgeois state has to formulate social programs which implementation is a subject to control: "The developed system of social protection becomes the content of mass democracy" [7, p.510]. In activity the state social policy is brought to the forefront.

Towards the middle of the twentieth century, sociologists believed there was a need to create a social theory which could overcome the polarization of objective and subjective, structure and an individual. In 1986 Anthony Giddens made the report "Nine Theses on the Future of Sociology".

To A. Giddens the social reality was considered as integrity, and as the main criterion of its development the facts of institutional changes and transformation of structures in structures were applied. In fact A. Giddens opposed the evolutionary theory of post-industrial society and offered "faltering" interpretation of modern social development where modern social institutes are unique. At the same time A. Giddens considered that the present has not reached a postmodern condition yet defines its present state as a radical modernist style.

Thus, from the point of view of theorists of classical sociology, the structurally functional analysis is the principle of system research of the social phenomena and processes as the structural dismembered integrity in which each element of structure has functional value.

The socioeconomic structure acts as structural formations of society: material and spiritual production; basis and superstructure; economic, social, political relations; social and economic, political

and cultural institutions, etc. The concept of function has thus two values: an office role of one of elements of social system in relation to another or to system in general (for example, functions of the state, the rights, education, etc.); dependence within this system at which changes in one part become function coming from changes in the other part.

As a result of the structurally functional analysis has to be: 1) received the branched and complex typology of communications of parts and elements between each other and with the whole, 2) registered possible and admissible (that is stability preservations) conditions of social system (system of systems) in general, 3) defined sets of the functions (which are subject to realization through systems of actions), 4) carried out the conclusion of the received results to the level of research of variables in concrete researches. At the methodological level the main perspective of the structurally functional analysis was realized as studying of the relations between a class of structures and a class of functions. It was concretized, in turn, in problems of functional need and functional alternatives of action [4, p.997].

Thus, investigating paradigmatically approaches to development of social services of classics of sociology, it is possible to note that they developed the base of conceptual approaches to this problem, defined its intrinsic contents.

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