

Social psychology

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Integrational processes in contemporary social psychology and the order approach to the study of organizational culture

Introduction

Development and sophistication of the post-contemporary social reality inevitably brings about development and sophistication of social sciences which assure and interpret this reality. This statement holds true for social psychology as well. Sophistication of social psychology which is manifested among other things in its differentiation results in exigence to “cope” with the new scale of sophistication by means of a search of approaches which enable discovery of the “new simplicity” of the world of various socio-psychological knowledge, both theoretical and applied.

The “coping” theoretical behavior reveals itself in two active strategies – the strategy of fight and the strategy of cooperation. The strategy of fight (dissociation), confrontation with “alien” approaches, principles methods, etc is powered by the hope to defend and affirm the “solely correct” point of view, tendency or tradition, and, therefore, to dismiss the issue of excessive complexity of one’s science. The strategy of cooperation / dialogue / integration is aimed at the same task – the task of search of the “new simplicity”. However, such strategies are more tolerant towards ambiguity and heuristic capabilities of the “cognitive pluralism”, which – according to V.P. Zinchenko – we have long called a dull word “eclecticism” [4. P. 167].

Objective of this paper is to reveal the essence and directions of the integrational processes of the contemporary social psychology and to present the order approach to the study of the organizational culture as a symptom and a version of integration in the social psychology.

Integration

Analyzing the state of contemporary social psychology N.P. Shihirev wrote in 1999: “The general... tendency of development of contemporary social psychology lies in the growth of the mutual influence and convergence of paradigms determined by the logic of development of both the object of the socio-psychological research and the social process itself” [11. P. 15]. Discussing integrational processes in the contemporary science in more detail, P.N. Shihirev reasoned his conclusions referring in particular to P. Sorokin’s prognostics (“Major tendencies of our time”, 1997), who predicted facilitation of integrational processes and proposed “the integral concept of the absolute reality” which can be viewed as a complete analogue of H. Hesse’s famous metaphor of culture and equivalent of the post-modern “everything is possible” principle. For social psychology this forecast means consecutive movement from sensuous to integral type of science.

The patriarch of the Russian social psychology B.D. Parygin in his “Social Psychology” (2003) describes the modern state of social psychology as the state of urgent need for theoretical comprehension of the newly accumulated empirical facts. According to him, the socio-psychological theory necessary for these purpose must meet three requirements: a) to specify and enrich the subject of social psychology, b) to enhance the area of mutual interests of the disciplines bordering social psychology and to acknowledge the “transparency of borders” between social psychology and other human sciences, c) to reconsider the nature of socio-psychological knowledge and to understand that, for instance, religion is one of the attributes of the multi-dimensional phenomena studied by social psychology [8. P. 33-35].

The on-going process of “renewal and enrichment of notions and apprehensions included in the conceptual apparatus of the scientific knowledge” is referred to by B.D. Parygin as one of the major tendencies of our time. [8. P. 40]

V.E. Semyonov in his discussion of methodological problems of the socio-psychological science in contemporary Russia also highlights nuances of integrational processes. In particular, he offers a new methodological principle for socio-psychological research – the principle of poly-mentality, which “takes into account the growing pluralism of trends and schools in contemporary human and social sciences in our country ...” [9. P. 169]. Besides, when V.E. Semyonov introduces his systematic classification of social psychology methods he argues that the majority of methods “are now practically inter-disciplinary due to strengthened ties between social sciences” [9. P. 172].

The integrative tendency is represented in the works of V.V. Kozlov who, having singled out five basic paradigms in comprehension of the subject of psychology (physiological, psycho-analytical, behavioral, existentially-humanistic, trans-personal) for several years now has been constructing the integrative paradigm in psychology on the basis of dialogue between existing traditions and schools [6. P. 94-97].

In his article on methodology of the psychological science V.A. Mazilov writes that though psychological science undergoes a “spontaneous” and natural integration - which means that some “psychological concepts go beyond the “boundaries” of scientific school” - it is not enough for assurance of integration of the psychological knowledge in full [7. P. 68-72]. V.A. Mazilov identified four types of integration of psychology: a) within scientific psychology, b) between psychology and other scholarly disciplines, c) between scientific and practice-oriented psychology, d) between scientific psychological knowledge on the one hand and non-scientific or ascientific knowledge on the other hand). Also, V.A. Mazilov singled out three types of methodology of psychological research: a) cognitive methodology, b) communicative methodology and c) methodology of psychological practice. Communicative methodology, which “assures correlation of various psychological concepts and the real interaction of various trends and schools in psychology” [7. P. 69] – the idea suggested by V. A. Mazilov – is probably the first attempt to create the theory and technology of integration which allows to elevate the issue of integration to the level of practical solutions, i.e. move from

discussion of the necessity of integration of the psychological knowledge towards creation of special means allowing to actually implement this.

A special emphasis should be placed on discussion of integrative possibilities of post-modern psychology. Very often one may find that post-modern psychology is identified with social constructionism and constructivism. The issue of “inclusion” of psychological theories of S. Moskvich and Tajfel H [e.g. 2; 10; 5] into post-modern psychology is also discussed. Practical discussions of various concepts in the context of post-modernism (or comparisons to post-modernism) bring about a certain contradiction: on the one hand, we expect that post-modernism will play its “liberating” and “unifying” role and will allow to include the new knowledge or approach in the body of already existing ones. On the other hand, the “unifying” capabilities of any of the post-modern psychological concepts which are known today are clearly not enough. Thus, it is rather hard to imagine that discourse-centered psychology could be easily combined, for instance, with genetic or action approaches. At times, however, some find it possible to consider the cognitive approach, criticized by social constructionism, as something which fits the fashionable intellectual trend rather well.

The reason for these discrepancies lies in the so-called mistakes of the logic level definition. Here we talk about the following levels: the level of philosophical post-modernism, the level of the post-modern science (post-modern methodology of scientific research), post-modern psychology and the level of particular psychological concept.

Integrative Potential of Post-modernism

One should note that some critics of post-modernism in its application to science do not track the stage-by-stage fashion of development of this intellectual and world-view tendencies; in effect, they criticize their own notions of post-modernism which do not have such relevancy anymore. Post-modernism itself has outgrown its somewhat provoking stage of de-constructivism classics and now undergoes the stage of revision of the original presumptions called “afterpostmodernism”. Secondly, an important feature of post-modernism is its incompleteness and lack of unity due to the ongoing process of its development and establishment both on the level of the content and on the level of the terminological apparatus.

At the same time, post-modernism definitely has a paradigmatic status; its base scientific world model is synergetics (with an emphasis on process nature of the universe, discovery of chaos, non-linearity and self-organization as the process of self-creation of new orders and the notion of prevalence of the Whole in relation to the part).

Post-modern methodological principles of scientific research include:

The principle of radical plurality (it is understood as the possibility to appeal to different, including opposing explanatory models and practices without limitations. Such approach is interpreted as a dialogue / poly-logue between the West and the East, between science and religion, science and art, between various approaches within specific types of activities and scientific disciplines);

The principle of rejection of binary oppositions conflict (it is understood as a possibility to perceive polar notions, for instance, chaos and order, not as mutually

exclusive, but as related to each other with single process, as something located on a scale and something which can flow and transform in one another);

The principle of principle (cognitive) relativism (it is understood as a possibility to freely construct ad hoc models, not considering any solution to a scientific problem to be solely correct and ultimate);

The principle of the “end of time” or new archaics (it is understood as a possibility to view post-contemporary global situation as a sort of return to the origin of the human history and culture, but on a different qualitative level. This is a movement on the field of all existing cultural meanings and concepts from archaics viewed as the primeval “simplicity” towards “sophisticated simplicity”, “new archaics”, produced by the culture as a result of spiritual and intellectual effort to handle this emerged complexity [1].

H. Hesse’s “The Glass Bead Game” is considered to be the general metaphor of the post-modernistic culture. From the point of view any idea or theory known to the culture belongs to the post-contemporary world, and, therefore, is post-modernistic regardless of when it appeared. Another criterion which allows to classify a concept as post-modernistic is its pertaining to post-modernistic world-view dominant, which is revealed through interpretation of the state of the post-contemporary world (in post-modernism this state is referred to as the total civilization crisis caused by the disproportion in development of technological and ethical aspects of culture). Therefore, pertaining of a concept to ethical problems can prove its post-modernistic “pertaining”. Both these circumstances – inclusion in the cultural catalogue used by the post-contemporary world and pertaining of a concept to the realm of ethical quest of the post-contemporary world is an enhancing way to establish connection of a scientific concept with post-modernism (or the post-modern, to be more precise). In a narrow sense, pertaining of a scientific concept to the post-modernistic paradigm and methodology can be identified by means of checking if this concept uses the mentioned above post-modernistic principles of scientific research. From this point of view, social constructionism can be related to the narratological project of post-modernism (base philosophy) and studied to see if it uses the four mentioned methodological principles. For instance, severe criticism of cognitivism on the part of social constructionism will not probably allow to consider social constructionism to be a concept which fully absorbed the spirit of post-modernism at the afterpostmodernistic stage. In M.M. Bahtin’s terminology, ability of a concept (or its author) to get involved in any dialogue / poly-logue not for the sake of victory, but for the sake of finding the truth is the key criterion of pertaining to the post-modernistic scientific paradigm which is oriented towards establishment of connections and revealing of the principle unity of phenomena and knowledge which seemingly do not look alike.

Therefore, post-modernism creates principally new environment for the inter – and intra-paradigmatic communications and elevates the process of scientific search of social and human sciences to a totally new level. On the level of specific psychological concepts (the lower logical level) certain approaches, theories and models may seem non-resemblant and incompatible. Analysis of concepts which are executed a) on a higher logical level, and b) in the inter-disciplinary and intra-

disciplinary environment of thematic communication allows to identify their interrelation and at the same time pertaining to a particular intellectual trend.

The tendency of post-modernistic science towards identification of connections between facts, concepts and approaches is its very important but not the only peculiarity. Another skill of post-modernism which is also hard to use nowadays is its ability to “play” the “glass bead” of all cultural contents and its capability to improvise and to play which always proves the mastery of the “player” and high class of the “game”. The founder of the improvisational approach in the Russian social psychology is T.Y. Bazarov. Discussing the issue of improvisation in business and organizational psychology he wrote the following explaining the interest towards improvisational approach: “First of all, in the age of the economy of knowledge the competitive advantages turned out to be related to the ability of organizations to permanently generate original, creative and innovational solutions. <...> Secondly, uncertainty of the organizational environment has grown, and now the managers have to act fast in changing conditions and rely on their intuition when there is lack of information, the forecasts are hopeless and no preliminary planning takes place” [3. P. 120].

Thus, the practice also initiates certain requirements for scientific knowledge.

Scientific knowledge must be more diverse, it should react to the realia of everyday practical activities more sensitively and assist them in a flexible way. All this, of course, is a new requirement applied not only to scientific knowledge, but to the producer and “user” of this scientific knowledge represented by a professional psychologist – researcher and practitioner. It is this very circumstance through which the integrational potential of the post-modernistic psychology reveals itself in a new quality.

The Order Approach to the Study of Organizational Culture as a Symptom and Version of Integrational Processes in Social Psychology

Order approach (from the Latin word “ordo” – order) to the study of organizational culture developed by me includes the order concept, methodology, socio-psychological model and technology for changing of the organizational culture. For the purposes of this approach organizational culture is understood as ethically determined order and is defined as a complex socio-psychological order of organizational and managerial interactions which are constituted and regulated by the systems of ethical meanings of participants of this interactions.

The order definition of organizational culture appeared as a result of deductive analysis of the notion “culture” in psychology. It was shown that there is certain tradition of contentive interpretation of the notion “culture” which statically uncovers the socio-psychological content of culture, and when studied in the dynamic aspect, it demonstrates the socio-psychological mechanism of organizational culture. Schematically, this tradition can be shown as follows: culture is the social (Vygotskiy) – the social is interaction (Shpet) – interaction is relation (Shpet, Myasishchev) – relation is selective psychological connection (Myasishchev, Kunitsyna and Panfyorov) – selective psychological reaction is determined by demand (Kunitsyna, Panfyorov) – demands are regulated by perception (evaluation and persuasion) (Kunitsyna, Panfyorov) – perception

(evaluation and persuasion) is determined by meaning (Kunitsyna, Panfyorov, D. Leontiev) [1].

Not only does this scheme demonstrate relations between psychological phenomena / concepts which take part in generation and functioning of culture, but also shows inevitability of disciplinary cooperation within the psychological science, because each of the mentioned phenomena / concepts is studied by a specific psychological discipline. Among these disciplines we should highlight the following:

- For the phenomenon “culture” – analytical psychology, psychology of culture, cultural and historical psychology;
- For the phenomenon “social” - etogenics, social psychoanalysis;
- For the phenomenon “interaction” - interactionism, action psychology, social constructionism and constructivism;
- For the phenomenon “relations” – psychology of relations ;
- For the phenomenon “psychological connections” - behaviorism, psychology of unbalanced states;
- For the phenomenon “demands” – psychoanalysis, psychology of demands, humanistic psychology;
- For the phenomenon “perception”- cognitive psychology, hermeneutic psychology, theory of social hermeneutic theory, theory of social apprehension and so on;
- For the phenomenon “meaning” - psychology of meaning, hermeneutic psychology and so on.

This list may be significantly extended and specified. But even in this form it clearly shows that the study of culture is not possible without participation of many (if not all) existing approaches and schools in psychology. Otherwise we will be doomed, just like the old Eastern parable tells, to “partial knowledge” of blind men trying to give a definition to an elephant by declaration of the elephant’s parts its essence.

And if a researcher appeals to the data of various psychological sciences / concepts when working on organizational-cultural issues this shall not be qualified as eclecticism anymore, but should be understood as an attempt to implement a systematic and comprehensive approach to the study of organizational culture. One cannot understand culture as a whole through the knowledge of its partial aspect; therefore, inter- and intra-disciplinary integration becomes an essential condition for resultative study of organizational culture. Here, of course, we do not talk about mechanical combination of the data received by different “psychologies”, but about identification and establishment of connections between these heterogeneous and different-level data items.

Candid acknowledgment of the complexity of the organizational culture phenomenon reflected in the poly-disciplinary space of its study and acceptance of inevitability of mutual consideration of the knowledge accumulated by different disciplines brings about the next logical step. This is a step towards composition of methodological schemes which could be the basis for theoretical and practical study of organizational culture.

Order methodology of study of the organizational culture is an attempt to construct such integrative methodological scheme for purely pragmatic purposes.

Order methodological scheme is multi-level by nature (in accordance with the concept of existence of levels in methodological knowledge of R. Harre and G.M. Andreeva).

In accordance with R. Harre's statement saying that cognition should begin with identification of the ethical task [10. 220], the starting point of construction of the methodology for study of organizational culture was an ethical task formulated within the post-modern framework (necessity to overcome the gap between technological capabilities of the humankind and the level of its ethical development).

Then, 6 "descending" (in the deductive sense) methodological levels of socio-psychological research of organizational culture are singled out: 1) philosophical level of methodology, 2) level of general scientific methodology, 3) level of general humanitarian methodology, 4) level of psychological methodology, 5) level of socio-psychological methodology, 6) level of specific methodology. Now I would like to give a brief description of each level.

The philosophical level of methodology for the study of organizational culture is represented by post-modernism (methodological principles of radical plurality, rejection of the binary opposition conflict, principle (cognitive) relativism, of the "new archaics"), in particular by the essential version of post-modernism of P. Kozlovskiy, and also by methodological principles of cognition of the Russian "moral" philosophy (the principle of consideration of the moral aspect of any studied problem; the principle of wholeness of cognition as acknowledgment of importance of all types of the human experience; the principle of intuition as the chief method of cognizing of the man ("solid truth is revealed only to the solid man")); the principle of the unity of the theoretical truth and the "truth of righteousness" (it is understood as inseparable unity of the cognitive and ethical aspects of the being).

The level of general scientific methodology is represented by the systematic approach (organizational culture is viewed as a complex system) and synergetic approach (organizational culture is viewed as self-structuring and self-organizing system).

The level of general humanitarian methodology is represented by the semiotic approach (organizational culture is understood as sign and symbolic system), hermeneutic approach (organizational culture is understood as a hermeneutic universum accessible to understanding and interpretation) and prosaics (organizational culture is understood as an everyday ethical practice).

The level of psychological methodology is represented by methodological standard of the humanistic psychology (methodological principles of rejection of empirical methods cult, acknowledgment of not only verified knowledge, legalization of intuition and the sound sense of the researcher, possibility to generalize on the case study, unity of the research and the practical study of holistic personality included in the "life context").

The level of socio-psychological methodology is represented by the methodological approach (organizational culture as social interaction regulated by

regulations and norms), theory of relations (organizational culture as a system of relations), cognitive approach (organizational culture as a system of meanings and internal models), action approach (organizational culture as a process and product of co-acting), analytical psychology (organizational culture as symbolized joint experience of the organization members), humanistic psychology (organizational culture as spiritual phenomenon), evolutionary psychology (organizational culture as interaction of genes and memes), historical and psychological approach (organizational culture as micro-level representation of processes and results of the culture genesis of psyche and psyche genesis of culture).

The level of specific methodology is represented, first of all by the model approach (the modeling method and metaphorical modeling in particular) as well as various types of observation.

The theoretical base of research includes a number of ethics-centered models which allow to relevantly understand the phenomenon of organizational culture. These are: a) ethics-centered model of culture by A. Schweitzer, b) ethics-centered model of economy by P. Koslovsky and ethics-centered model of the man in the Russian idealistic philosophy, c) M. Foucault's concept of "the care of the self".

- The order methodology for study of organizational culture defines the following research principles as the body of base ethics-determined principles:
- The principle of ethical progress as the leading factor of spiritual and cultural process (in addition to the cultural and technological progress);
- The principle of prevalence of the ethical factor in institutionalization of culture and economy;
- The principle of prevalence of the ethical factor in the human psyche;
- The principle of changeable order as the ethics-generated state of comprehensibility of the reality;
- The principle of compensation of inefficiency of ethics as the guarantor of responsible behavior of religions;
- The principle of ethics as an everyday practice of the man and in-depth mechanism of decision-making;
- The principle of ethical regulation of the social / administrative interaction
- The principle of ethical basis of the socio-psychological order in the form of the system of moral meanings .

Methodological peculiarity of the approach to the study of the organizational culture can be defined as primarily humanitarian (oriented towards the humanity science standards), humanistic (oriented towards interpretation of culture through uniqueness of the man manifested in the ethical inherent only in the man), phenomenological (oriented towards the use of descriptive methods, qualitative analysis and so on), constructionistic (emphasizing the task of development and use of the methods of formation and transfiguration of the organizational culture reality).

Methodological scheme of the order approach to the socio-psychological study of organizational culture was formed at the crossroads of theoretical as well as practical needs. The practical work with organizational culture is targeted towards

resultative changes allowing organizations to improve efficiency of their performance. Therefore, the practice “absorbs” everything that “works” and everything that assures solution of a real practical problem from theory and specific methodology . At the same time, however, the bona fide mind-frame and professional discipline of consulting psychologists put forth their own requirements which do not allow changing of the theoretical and methodological “pantophagy” into promiscuity, sloppiness and the lack of system inherent in the “bad eclecticism”. These are requirements to the scale of theoretical comprehension of levels involved in scientific and practical search and also to discovery of connections between the levels and inside them.

The present methodological scheme uses deductive logics for construction of methodological levels – from the most general philosophical level to the most specific level of methods and techniques used in a transformational research. Ranking of the levels by the “from general to specific” criterion allows to qualify this description as a system of methodological levels. Relations between the levels are also identifiable and can be described.

Impressions of “eclecticity” may only be sensed during evaluation of the content of two levels – psychological and socio-psychological. The reason is objective: it is the lack of works which describe relations between the mentioned disciplines and concepts. Presently, the issue of conformity of these “parts” (disciplines, concepts, approaches) is resolved empirically in the course of practical work and later undergoes theoretical reflection. Generally, we need to more clearly articulate the necessity of resolution of the problem of concordance of all “parts” into one whole. The set of the mentioned psychological and socio-psychological concepts mentioned above and applied to order research, can be systematized just like the chemical elements in the Mendeleev periodical table. Such systematizing will probably uncover the “blind spots” on the map of psychological knowledge.

Conclusion

Integrational processes in the post-contemporary social psychology are growing stronger. The practice of order research and projects as well as theoretical reflection of their results allowed to construct a relevant methodological approach which reflects the post-modernistic methodological principles on which this approach is based (the principles of radical plurality, rejection of the binary oppositions conflict, the principle (cognitive) relativism of the “new archaics”); this approach does demonstrate the practical demand for integrative solutions in the area of socio-psychological study and changing of organizational culture.

The Literature

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