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Preliminary comments on the reinterpretation of "symbolic universe" concept

Abstract

The paper is devoted to revealing theoretical and methodological foundations of the conception of symbolic universum by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The author analyzes which conceptions and ideas of other sociological theories were integrated by these scientists into their own conception, what changes were they subjected to within its framework. Then the conception of symbolic universum itself is considered in detail, and conclusions are made as to its cognitive functions in the system of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The above steps are a necessary condition for further reinterpretation of the notion symbolic universum with the purpose to extend its heuristic potential.

Keywords: *symbolic universum, legitimation, finite ranges of the value, religion*

1

The idea of "symbolic universe", which was developed into a concept by the students of Alfred Schütz, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger, in my opinion, has not received adequate attention in the phenomenological paradigm in sociology. However, it is this concept — along with the notion of "legitimation" — has extremely high heuristic potential and is able to give new push to the development of the theoretical core of this approach in social sciences. Moreover, the notion of "symbolic universe" can be not only used for clarification and justification of categorically conceptual connections within the framework of phenomenological paradigm. The development of the concept of the symbolic universe will allow transition from micro level to macro level and, thus, claim the universality

and theoretical completeness of the phenomenological paradigm in sociology. Very often its focus on social actor and his/her daily interactions is noted as one of the main complaints about the cognitive potential of a phenomenological approach, whereas the concept of symbolic universes, supplemented by the concept of legitimation, could become an another step for phenomenological analysis to enter new areas of social reality.

The potential of the concept of symbolic universe can and should be applied to address not only gnoseological and epistemological issues, but ontological problems as well. It's about the concept of symbolic universes, their existence and change, their structure, the internal hierarchy of the elements, etc. Such theoretical superstructure will allow describing and explaining of processes occurring in post-soviet societies, one of which is Ukrainian. This concept will allow a fresh look at what has been happening in Ukrainian society in the last few decades: the change of the pattern perception of the same historical events, language preferences, political and geopolitical orientations of the population, level of religiosity, change in systems of values, etc.

Although, it is necessary to conduct theoretical groundworks. For a similar analysis, deconstruction of "symbolic universe" concept should be carried out first, its attribute functions, as well as a fresh look at its place in the system of categorically conceptual apparatus of the phenomenological paradigm in sociology. As a result, we will be able not only to receive a modified definition of the term, but also to reinterpret and get a renewed concept of existence and exchange of symbolic universes. Thus, Ukrainian reality will be the object of analysis, which will allow us to transit from abstract theorizing to studying social reality.

In turn, in order to proceed with the re-interpretation of the symbolic universe concept, it is necessary to consider it in the way it was created by its authors. It is exactly the main purpose of this article: to set theoretical grounds of the symbolic universe concept, find out what scientists have previously used this term, and whose approaches P. Berger and T. Luckmann used as basis, when they developed it. Moreover, it is necessary to investigate what functions these scientists attached to the concept of "symbolic universe", what cognitive tasks it had to perform in their theoretical system.

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According to the described above purposes of this article, the analysis should be started with examining who, on the whole, used the term "symbolic universe" and what definition one did use.

In this regard, Ernst Cassirer should be mentioned, as the one who proposed to identify human not as "an animal rationale", but as "animal symbolicum".

He wrote, "man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art and religion are parts of that universe. They are various threads connecting the symbolic network, the tangled ball of human experience. All human progress in the field of thought and experience improves and strengthens that network. Man can no longer directly face reality; he cannot see it, the same way as before, face to face. Physical reality becomes smaller in proportion to increasing symbolic activity. Instead of dealing with the things that matter, man, in fact, is constantly engaged

in dialogue with himself. He crammed himself into linguistic forms, images of art, mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except the intersection of these artificial intermediaries" [Cassirer, 1962: p. 25].

Here we must make an important terminological clarification. Ernst Cassirer, just as Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, indeed, used the term "symbolic universe"[1].

However, in my opinion, this concept's russian translation should be versatile, in relation to each of these authors and those semantic horizons, which stood behind the use of this term in their concepts.

In favor of this translation, versatility speaks the fact that E. Cassirer also used the term "symbolic space" as a metaphor [Cassirer, 1962]. Thus, he was rather talking about the "symbolic universe". Whereas Berger and Luckmann used the term "symbolic universe" to outline the notional complex — universe of meanings.

Cassirer's concept of symbolic universe was organically linked with his main concept of symbolic forms. It is worth noting of Ernst Cassirer at other times also refers science and history to symbolic forms together with the above mentioned language, myth, art and religion [Cassirer, 1962: p. 222]. The symbolic universe is based on these symbolic forms.

"In language, in religion, in art, in science, — Cassirer writes, — man cannot do anything else but building his own universe — a symbolic universe, which allows understanding and interpreting, articulating and organizing, synthesizing and universalizing one's human experience" [Cassirer, 1962: p. 221].

As we will see further on, these functions of symbolic universe — understanding, interpretation, organization, universalization, etc. — are also fully represented in the concept of the symbolic universe of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Moreover, it is also possible here to trace a certain parallel with the "finite domain of values" — a concept developed by Alfred Schütz[2].

However, this will be discussed below. As for Cassirer, in his concept of symbolic forms, out of which the symbolic universe is built, are quite tightly interconnected. So, regarding language and myth, the philosopher notes that in the early stages of human history these two symbolic forms were almost inseparable [Cassirer, 1962: p. 109].

The presence of these symbolic forms, according to Cassirer, allows a person to break free, to rise above nature. They define a qualitatively new state of human society, which fundamentally distinguishes us from ant or bee societies.

So, the main thing is that, even though, Cassirer used the term "symbolic universe", he at the same gave a somewhat different understanding of it than P. Ber-

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[1] It is about the English version of the given term, since the work "Essay on man" was written in the U.S. where E.Kassirer fled from the Nazis, like many other thinkers of Jewish descent.

[2] It is noteworthy that, like Schütz, Ernst Cassirer also paid a lot of attention to the distinction between symbols and signs, delineation of their nature and functions: "the Symbols ... cannot be reduced to simple signals. Signals and symbols belong to different universes of discourse: the signal is a part of the physical world of being; a symbol is a part of man's world of sense. The signals are "operators"; the symbols are "pointers". Signals, even when understood and used as such, however, have something similar to a physical or substantial existence; the symbols have an exceptional functional value" [Cassirer, 1962: p. 32].

ger and T. Luckmann. Obviously, that is why the latter also do not mention Cassirer as a precursor to their own concept of symbolic universes. "Our concept of "symbolic universe" — P. Berger and T. Luckmann write, — is very close Durkheimian [concept of] "religion". Schütz's analysis of "finite domain of values" and their relationship to each other, as well as Sartre's notion of "totalization" were very relevant for our reasoning from this point of view" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 201–202].

First, let's examine Schütz's concept of finite domain of values. It should be noted, from the very beginning, that Schütz's concept is quite closely linked to William James's concept of sub-universes[1].

However, Alfred Schütz does not agree with William James at all times. In particular, this is applied to the term "sub-universes" itself.

"In order to remove this important conjecture from its psychological background — Schütz writes, — instead of many sub-universes of reality we prefer to speak about *finite domains of values*, to each of which we can add the accent of reality. We're talking about the domains of values, and not sub-universes because it is the values of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects that constitutes reality" [Schutz, 1962: p. 229–230].

Let's consider the concept of finite domains values in more detail, because it, as you can see from our further analysis, will be directly linked to the concept of the symbolic universe. Using the "finite" predicate in relation to different domains of values, Alfred Schütz wanted to emphasize that they are closed spheres. Moreover, to switch from one to another, the consciousness of an individual must make a "leap". This is because each area of the final value corresponds to not only the accent of reality, but also their own cognitive style. Alfred Schütz distinguishes such domains of values, as the world of everyday life, a world of phantasms and dreams, etc.

"The world of dreams, images and phantasms, — Schütz writes, — especially the world of art, the world of religious experiences, the world of scientific theorizing, the game world of the child and the world of madness are the finite domains of values. This means that (a) they all have a specific cognitive style; (b) all experiences within these worlds are consistent within themsleves in relation to this cognitive style and compatible with each other; (c) each of these finite domain values can get a specific reality accent" [Schutz, 1962: p. 232].

While the world of everyday life is not supreme in its nature, or, as identified by Alfred Schütz, it is the "archetype" of our reality experiences, while the rest of the finite domain values are its modifications[2].

Among the main qualities that define cognitive style of the everyday life world as the finite domain of values, Alfred Schütz outlines a specific tension of consciousness. It is exactly the specific tension of consciousness that matches

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[1]   For more detail on the influence of William James on Schütz's system, see: [Schütz, 1971]. The role of the legacy of William James in the development of the phenomenological paradigm in sociology, see: [Shul'ga, 2011].

[2]   Here you can see the close relationship of the concepts of finite domains of values with a number of other concepts that are developed by Alfred Schütz: "supreme reality", "attention a la via", etc.

each individual's cognitive style and necessitates a "jump" of something akin to the shock experienced by the consciousness during the transition from one finite domain of values to another, for example, from the world of scientific thought, theorization in the world of religious experiences. However, unlike other cognitive styles finite domains of values in the everyday life world this tension is higher. This condition of clearest wakefulness and full attention to life. Such a state is conditioned by, among other things, doing work that involves the formulation of projects to achieve the desired state of affairs and physical movement needed to achieve it. In the working process, the individual is also aware of himself as a self. Unlike other finite domains of values, the world of everyday life implies intersubjectivity, communication and interaction with other individuals. All this takes place in a particular temporal perspective, which is presented as a constellation of inner time and cosmic (natural) time. This state of consciousness, which determines this finite domain of values, is based on the natural setting that makes this world self-evident for the individual[1].

Thus, Alfred Schütz proposed the concept of finite domains of values, describing multiple realities, which included each individual by necessity. The main features of these domains are their isolation, special reality accent and cognitive style, which is determined by, among other things, the degree of tension of the consciousness of the actor. In the future, we will return to this concept to compare which of its elements Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann used in their own concept of the symbolic universe.

After we reviewed the concept of A.Schütz's "finite domains of values", you can briefly refer to E.Durkheim's concept of religion, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of "totalization". After tracking down the legacy of E. Durkheim and other scientists with the concept of symbolic universes we can go directly to the place of this concept in the works of P. Berger and T. Lukman and to examine it in detail.

In the beginning I will highlight Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of totalization, who asked one of the gnoseological foundations of the concept of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann — the dialectical approach to examination of the relationship of individual and society. According to the concept of the French scientist, the individual is both creator and product of history. Acts of totality are a result of the continuous totalization, which appear as crystallizations in the social practice of traces of these relations between the individual and history [Sartre, 2004].

Such approach can be considered a proto-concept of the triad, to which Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann have considered to be of great importance: "externalization-objectification-internalization".

With the definition of religion, according to Durkheim, is closely related to P. Berger's and T. Luckmann's concept of the symbolic universe, to what they themselves point to. "Religion, — writes E. Durkheim, is a unified system of be-

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[1]   Here, once more, an organic connection is traced to many other concepts of Alfred Schütz's system: "natural setting", "durée", and others. We cannot, considering the current purposes of this article, examine these concepts in detail. Read more about categorically-conceptual relationships of Schütz's system see: [Shul'ga, 2008].

liefs and actions related to the sacred, that is to separate, forbidden things; beliefs and actions, uniting into a single moral community, which is called Church, of all those who are devoted to them" [D'urkgeim, 1998: p. 230–231].

From the given definition several, outlined by the scientist, religious characteristics are interesting for us. The question is, first of all, that religion, according to Durkheim, is a single symbolic system. As the sociologist himself wrote, despite the fact that religion consists of various rituals, ceremonies, dogmas, etc., they all will eventually form an indivisible unity. This vision of religion as an indivisible symbolic system, that possesses an organic unity between its components, has a direct connection with the concept of P. Berger and T. Luckmann about the symbolic universes. In addition, it emphasizes that unlike Cassirer, who uses the term "symbolic universe" in the sense of "symbolic universe" by P. Berger and T. Luckmann presented their concept and this term as a single semantic complex, a universe of meanings. Every religion has its own internal unity and, therefore, cannot be reduced to forming her beliefs and rites. The latter, in their entirety, constitute a symbolic system with new (emergent) properties. It is worth noting that the problem of religion had been occupying Thomas Luckmann long before writing, together with Peter Berger, the "Social construction of reality". A few years before that, he published the "The problem of religion in modern society" monograph [Luckmann, 1963a][1]. In it Thomas Luckmann, along with Max Weber indicates the high relevance of Emile Durkheim's works for the understanding of religion, its role and functions.

"No matter how different sociological systems of Durkheim and Weber are, it is noteworthy that both were looking for the key to understanding the social position of man in religion. For Durkheim religion is the core of the "collective consciousness". "Socio-symbolic" reality of the "collective consciousness" is a prerequisite for social order and integration" [Luckmann, 1963a: s. 12].

As an important point in the above-mentioned piece, the role of religion in establishing of the social order should be noted. In his work, Thomas Luckmann constantly emphasizes that religion reflects the semantic structure of the existing social order[2]..

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After preliminary observations, which are important for understanding the methodological influence, under which were Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, the direct examination of their justification of the concept of the symbolic universe is possible. Most fully and in detail, it is presented in their work "the Social construction of reality".

The first thing you should highlight, is the close connection to the concept of a symbolic universe with the concept of "legitimation", which is defined by them

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[1]   The problem of religion remained as one of the key ones for T. Lukman even after writing "the Social construction of reality". He paid much attention to its internal mechanisms and societal purpose. См.: Luckmann, 1991.

[2]   This essential characteristic of religion was integrated, as we will see later, into the concept of symbolic universes of Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger.

as "explanation" and, at the same time, "justification" of the existing institutional order in society. Firstly, the legitimation is carried out to maintain the continuity of generations. Before each new generation, the created earlier meanings appear as already existing. They are objectified and should be internalized by the representatives of the new generation.

Scientists divide this process into several levels. The first of these they call "pre-theoretical" statements that explain the established order and more private aspects of the tradition, the fact that this situation existed long before the appearance of an individual and will exist after him. The second level includes explanations and excuses of the order, which claim to be very complex and can be regarded as rudimentary theoretical constructs. To such constructs P. Berger and T. Luckmann ascribe proverbs, moral maxims, fairy tales, legends, etc.[1]

The third level of legitimacy, unlike the previous two, "contains explicit theories, by means of which institutional sector gets legitimated in terms of a differentiated system of knowledge. Such legitimations envisage well-understood reference systems for the respective sectors of institutionalized behavior. Because of their complexity and specialization they are often performed by specialist personnel, who transmit them via formal procedures of initiation" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 94–95].

In comparison with the first two levels of legitimation, this level is more independent and can break away from daily practice, changing into a more abstract form.

Thus, scientists build a hierarchy of levels of legitimation, and it is purely logical that the fourth, which is the last of them, is the most difficult one. This level of legitimation is a symbolic universe as well. Speaking of the symbolic universe, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann explain that they used the "symbolic" predicate to indicate the process of designation. Moreover, these symbolic complexes transcend daily life and thus exhibit the highest degree of Theoretical nature in comparison to the other three levels of legitimation.

"Symbolic Universe — the scientists write, — is understood as the matrix of all socially objectified and subjectively real meanings; the entire historical society and whole individual biography are treated as phenomena that take place within this universe. And most importantly, marginalized individual life situations (marginal in the sense that they are not included in the reality of everyday existence in society) are also covered by the symbolic universe" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 96].

From this definition, we can draw two conclusions. The first refers to the fact that the symbolic universe gives the individual a coordinate system and characterized by the highest degree of integration of meanings into a single complex. The second conclusion refers to the above-mentioned concept of the finite domains of value Alfred Schьtz. As it was already mentioned, Alfred Schütz pres-

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[1]   It is worth noting the important role that scientists divert to the language. By their assertion, explanations and justifications of the existing order have already rooted exactly in the language. T. Luckmann has devoted to this issue more than one work. See, eg.: [Luckmann, 1963b]. For our subsequent analysis, a specific role of language in the process of legitimation will also gain a great relevance.

ents them as closed domains, each of which has its own cognitive style and a particular accent of reality. In this everyday world ranks at the top of the hierarchy of these domains of values, because it involves the highest tension of the individual's consciousness, due to the practical activity. In turn, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger put emphasis on the universality of the semantic matrix, which offers a symbolic universe that gives it a universal integrative and a unifying ability. Thanks to the symbolic universe of different domains of values — and the fantasy world and the world of dreams or insanity, etc. — are arranged within the framework of the world of everyday life. In addition, it is exactly symbolic universe that is responsible, in the works of T. Luckmann and P. Berger, for the weakening of the shock from the transition of the consciousness of the individual from one domain of values to another and displacement as a result of this reality accent and tension of consciousness, A. Schütz called it a "leap"[1].. Hence, they use the concept of finite domains of values of A. Schütz, which was mentioned not far above, and incorporate it into their own concept of the symbolic universe. The latter is the basis for integrating all domains of values and determines their hierarchy, where the supreme position saves the world of everyday life.

Apart from the fact that symbolic universes are used to organize past, present and future, they are the result of past theorizations, united in one semantic complex. They are socio-historical products. If you need to understand their importance, one must understand the history of their creation. It is especially important that these products of human consciousness, by their very nature, represent quite developed and inevitable totalities" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 97][2].

Each symbolic universe needs funds to sustain it. As shown by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, such means are different levels of legitimation that were mentioned earlier: beginning with pretheoretical level up to the most abstract forms of theorizing concerning claims for the divinity of the existing order of social relations. However, they prefer not to talk about the evolution of these mechanisms throughout history from relatively simple mythology to a complex and formalized science, although they acknowledge the fact of their various differentiation, the reasoning and consistency. These conceptual mechanisms are rather

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[1]   As an example of such leap and arrangement of different realities, scientists use the reality of death as the most extreme experience. However, thanks to the symbolic universe individual's knowledge of his/her own finiteness does not create permanent shock for the individual, because his death is presented by the symbolic universe as a natural and inevitable result. "It is exactly in the legitimation of death, — P. Berger and T. Lukman write, — the ability of symbolic universes to transcend is most distinctly manifested and revealed the fundamental nature of extreme legitimations of the supreme reality of everyday life that softens the horror. The primacy of social objectivity of everyday life can retain its subjective importance only in the case when everyday life is constantly protected from the horror. At the level of sense, the institutional order is a protection against terror" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 101–102]. Here we also see the connection between concepts of the symbolic universe of P. Berger and T. Luckmann with A. Schütz's notion of "fundamental anxiety", which in his system was designed to describe the knowledge of the individual about his imminent finiteness, and served as incontestable background of his organization of the world of work and outlining his projects of activity.

[2]   Here we see the scientists using the already mentioned Jean-Paul Sartre's term of "totality" and the reference to its socio-historical nature.

ideal types that, if necessary, do not function individually, though they do function when combined together.

However to resort to using different levels of legitimation, that is, explain and justify this procedure, it is necessary only under certain conditions. "The need for special procedures of maintenance of universe, — P. Berger and T. Luckmann write, — appears when the symbolic universe becomes a problem. Until it doesn't become so, the symbolic universe is self-sustaining, i.e. self-legitimizing thanks to transparent factuality of its objective existence in a given society. If you represent a society in which this would be possible, it would be a harmonious, closed, complicated functioning system. In fact, such a society does not happen. Due to the tensions that are inevitable in the process of institutionalization, and due to the fact that all social phenomena — cunstructs created by man in the course of history, none of existing societies and, a fortiori, none of the existing symbolic universes is self-evident" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 106].

As one of those situations when the symbolic universe and its self-evident character become problematic and non-obvious, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann define generational change. As a result its new generation stands before the current semantic complex, which, however, in the process of socialization isn't necessarily being fully internalized. The second problematic situation requiring the inclusion of mechanisms of legitimation of the symbolic universe, scientists call — the existence of alternative, "heretical" interpretations of reality. Thus, the symbolic universe is forced to transform and become more complex to meet the challenges of these alternative semantic complexes[1].

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann highlight two practical mechanisms, which are used by symbolic universe to sustain itself and reduce the impact of alternative interpretations of reality: therapy and annihilation.

The first mechanism, therapy, is concluded in adjustment of the semantics by means of any kind of social control and pressure. It's, above all, about singular cases, when an individual "drops out" of the common symbolic universe. Through the influence of team, norms, rules, etc. symbolic universe "cures" this individual, and thus restores his legitimacy even on this singular level.

Annihilation, in turn, is designed, more likely, for groups and individuals, to which, by virtue of their physical distance, it is impossible to apply the therapy. Their meanings and their universe during annihilation is endowed with a negative tone, perceived as something extraneous, unnatural. In fact, unlike therapy, extraneous meanings are not being adjusted, but are being denied. At the same time the superiority and necessity of their symbolic universe is being emphasized[2].

"Therapy, — Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann write, — uses conceptual machinery, in order to keep all within the given universe. Annihilation, in turn,

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[1]   Although P. Berger and T. Luckmann, themselves, recognize that they do not consider the violent suppressions of one universe by another, since in such scenarios, the question of superiority is decided not by the sophistication of the theoretical design, but only the use of military force.

[2]   And again scientists emphasize that political and military intervention in these processes is a separate issue.

uses similar mechanisms for conceptual elimination of all that is out of this universe. This procedure can be described as a kind of negative legitimation. Legitimation supports the reality of socially constructed universe; the annihilation denies the reality of any phenomenon and its interpretations, which are not suitable for this universe" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 114].

However, the contradictions are inherent for not only the relations between one symbolic universe and the representatives of the other, alien universe. As shown by scientists, conflicts occur within the symbolic universe. Here, scientists once again emphasize the dialectical relationship of social systems and individuals, which becomes apparent in the fact that the essence of social actors are that they're creators and products of the social system. As already mentioned, the symbolic universe, as a theoretical system of the highest degree of abstractness, needs a special kind of "experts" engaged in the creation of certain meanings, updating existing ones or denial of alien to the system of values.

With the increasing complexity of the system and its differentiation, contradictions between the "experts" of the same symbolic universe on their authority and place in the hierarchy of this community is possible[1]. This leads to the fact that in the framework of one universe several symbolic subsystems can emerge, which, although while still remaining in the conceptual framework of this semantic system, yet they compete for very specific social and political influence in society.

In conclusion of the review of the symbolic universe concept of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann one more detail should be noted. While being on the subject of existence of different symbolic universes in society, they emphasize: "...it is important to remember that most modern societies are pluralistic. This means that there is a central universe within them, which is considered self-evident as such, and various private universes that coexist with each other and are in a state of co-adaptation" [Berger, Luckmann, 1966: p. 125].

As can be seen from the aforementioned quotation, they use the term "Central universe". In addition, it should be especially emphasized, according to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, besides it there are "private" universes that "adapt" to each other in society. These two statements will be important for our further developments, and we'll get back to them more than once. We'll note only that this kind of interpretation of the relationship of symbolic universes seems to us as a highly problematic and requiring more rigorous development.

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So, we found that the theoretical and methodological basis of the main concept of the symbolic universe of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann were: the concept of finite domains of values of Alfred Schütz, from which they generally adopted a phenomenological way of thinking; the Emile Durkheim's concept of religion; Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of totalization, which brought the dialectics in their approach to relations of the individual and the social system.

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[1] The role of "experts" in the alteration and maintenance of a symbolic universe, the techniques used by them, will be discussed in detail in our further analysis.

After clarifying the theoretical platform on which the concept of the symbolic universe was developed, we should turn directly to this concept.

Scientists are presenting the symbolic universe as a semantic complex, which is characterized by a higher degree of abstractness. It is the highest level of the process of legitimation, which lies in "explanation" and "justification" of the existing social order. The integrating ability of the symbolic universe is that it organizes a "from birth to death" coordinate system for the individual. Even this extreme and highly personal experience has the same scope of claims of the symbolic universe, as other spheres of life of the individual.

According to the results of consideration for further analysis, we should identify a few elements of the symbolic universe concept, developed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann.

The first and main task, for our purposes, is clarification of the conceptual connections between the "legitimation" and "symbolic universe". It can be stated that the concept of "symbolic universe" in its attributive functions is a category in the system of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann because it performs a heuristic function(it is used to obtain new knowledge), knowledge synthesis (combining of other concepts in itself), methodological (sets the angle of the research interest) and logical (arrangement of other concepts) functions. In turn, the concept of "symbolic universe" and "legitimation" in the system of these scientists are in a relationship of subordination: the first is used to justify the second. The symbolic universe is, as it was already mentioned, one of the levels of the process of legitimation and, thus, the scope of the definition of "symbolic universe" is smaller and is part of the definition of "legitimation". In my opinion, in the reinterpretation of the concept of "symbolic universe" it is necessary to rethink these relationships, which will be dictated by a slightly different definition of the concept and other cognitive tasks.

Another important element of the original concept of the symbolic universe are different mechanisms to sustain it. As such mechanisms, in particular, "therapy" and "annihilation" are highlighted. It should be noted that these concepts have a high heuristic potential. However, in its original conceptual form they are in need of more elaboration, because, in my opinion, they only reveal the latent mechanisms of the sustenance of a symbolic universe. These concepts are presented only in general terms and do not convey all possible modifications of processes directed at self-sustenance of symbolic universe. Looking ahead, it can be said that there are a lot more of such mechanisms than the given number of denoted ones by P. Berger and T. Luckmann, and each of them plays an important role along with therapy and annihilation.

The third aspect that should be highlighted is the lack of attention to the means of symbolic universe's distribution. Even speaking of the problematic nature of the symbolic universe, which among other things may occur during socialization of new generation, scientists do not disclose through which institutes it can be overcome. Obviously, this issue requires separate elaboration.

This aspect is quite closely connected to the next, the fourth, which concerns the role of "experts" in symbolic universe's sustenance and its change. P. Berger and T. Luckmann designated quite a lot of place for this group and the need for its emergence. However, they did not present even a general structure of this group,

its hierarchy. Speaking of "experts", they merely outline the possible deviations in the interpretation of certain areas of reality and the resulting conflicts. However, due to the nature of symbolic universe as a meta-sensual system, distribution of its values among public body already itself seems extremely complex and multistage process, which, for its part, requires a complex and differentiated group of "experts". Such description we can't find in the "Social construction of reality", or in subsequent works of these scientists. And again, the need for further development of this concept can be ascertained.

Finally, the fifth important point is presented by scientists an consists of the relationship between the symbolic universes and more specifically, their lack of sufficient representation. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann recognize existence of different symbolic universes in society. One of them is central, as is perceived by most members of society as self-evident. Others co-adapt. This interpretation can be considered controversial based on the definition of the very essence of symbolic universes. The last — as closed systems — claim to be absolute and uncontested definition of social reality and therefore by its very nature cannot "adapt" to each other, but only to be in a constant state of tension and struggle for the affirmation of their meanings.

Our subsequent analysis will be devoted to the questions listed above, answering on which we can get an updated concept of symbolic universes, with a higher cognitive capabilities not only within the phenomenological paradigm, but also within general sociological theory.

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